

Executive Summary: Northern Illinois University Clinical Student Placement Agreement

This summary introduces the clinical student placement agreement with Northern Illinois University, officially known as The Educator Licensure Affiliation Agreement. This agreement continues a long-standing, mutually beneficial partnership that provides clinical and student teaching placements within our schools.

Background & Context

For years, the District has partnered with NIU to host educator candidates, helping train the next generation of teachers while maintaining a strong recruitment pipeline for our schools. This contract is a standard renewal of that practice. It formally outlines the operational responsibilities, liability protections, and student safeguards required for these placements.

Key Agreement Terms & Responsibilities

The agreement cleanly delineates responsibilities to ensure our classrooms remain safe, stable, and highly effective environments for learning:

- **University Commitments:** NIU retains core academic direction, evaluates candidate progress, and ensures all students meet eligibility criteria before entering our classrooms.
- **District Commitments:** The District provides hands-on learning experiences under the direct supervision of certified, licensed Meridian staff. Candidates are never left unsupervised as primary instructors.
- **Student Safety & Candidate Removal:** Crucially, both the District and the University retain the right to immediately remove any candidate deemed clinically unsafe to students or staff. The removing party must notify the other within 48 hours, and the District reserves the right to block a candidate's return until a satisfactory corrective plan is established.

Value and Financial Benefits to the District

Beyond serving as a direct pipeline for vetting future teaching talent, the agreement provides tangible financial incentives. NIU issues instructional tuition waivers directly to the District on a per-candidate basis, which can be utilized by our current professional employees for their continuing education.

The waiver structure is scaled based on the depth of the placement:

Placement Type	Duration / Scope	Tuition Benefit to District Staff
Initial / Observational	Early Clinical	1-credit hour tuition waiver
Non-Initial / Interactive	Early Clinical	2-credit hour tuition waiver
Student Teaching	8-Week Placement	3-credit hour tuition waiver
Student Teaching	10-Week Placement	4-credit hour tuition waiver
Student Teaching	15 to 16-Week Placement	6-credit hour tuition waiver

Note: These waivers are issued per candidate (not per cooperating teacher) and apply to standard undergraduate or graduate instructional tuition rates for Meridian CUSD 223 professional employees.

Term and Termination

To reduce future administrative overhead, the agreement introduces an efficient multi-year structure:

- **Duration:** The agreement is active for an initial term of one year and will automatically renew annually for a total period not to exceed ten (10) years.
- **Flexibility:** Either party can opt out of the automatic renewal by providing a 90-day written notice prior to the end of the current term.
- **Protection for Active Candidates:** If the agreement is terminated or non-renewed, any candidate currently placed in our schools will be permitted to complete their term.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the Board of Education consider the approval of the recurring renewal of the Educator Licensure Affiliation Agreement between Northern Illinois University and Meridian CUSD 223, effective June 10, 2026. This agreement safeguards our student environment, offers free professional development credits to our existing staff, and secures our relationship with a primary university partner.