

## **Affiliation Agreement**

Since Larry and I sent out announcements and letters about Affiliation Agreements (AA), we have had a number of inquiries from students and administrators. In order for your administrator and you to understand the AA and the reasons why it is necessary for you to have the signed AA on file, I wanted to provide additional information:

### **What is the AA for and why does it need to be signed?**

- The AA is a five year agreement that outlines the duties and responsibilities of the school district as well as MU for students completing field experiences and 100-hour practicums.
- Neither MU nor the school district assumes any liabilities to each other.
- MU student information is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This means that only basic directory information for students can be disclosed to the school district from the university (name, address, and major field of study). If additional information is needed by the school district, the student must sign a written release.
- It is the responsibility of the SL&IT students to find appropriate mentors to complete the course requirements. However, students must seek approval in their districts for completing the 100-hour practicum and must ensure that mentors meet the criteria as outlined in the Practicum course by submitting the appropriate documents and proof of mentors' certification. Each practicum mentor receives a small stipend from MU.
- The AA stipulates that mentors and students will work closely with the MU advisors/instructors as they complete the required course work and practicum hours. The district will need to designate a liaison to work with the MU instructor/advisor/department chair. This liaison could be the mentor, building principal, etc.

### **General Information about the AA**

- This form is not specific to Mansfield University (MU); it is required by all universities in the PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) for students completing field experiences, student teaching, internships, or practicums.
- Every MU SL&IT student must have a signed AA on file in the SL&IT office, unless the student is living outside the United States.
- The AA must be signed by a Superintendent or his designee (principal, Human Resource director, Curriculum director, etc.).
- Although the wording on the document states that it is for student teaching and practicum, it is also needed for any student completing field experiences (working in a school library to complete assignments for the SL&IT courses). Note: I am trying to obtain permission to

change the wording a bit on the AA form but any change must be approved by PASSHE 's legal counsel.

- SL&IT students may not do any field experiences or their 100-hour practicum until they have signed AAs on file. This pertains to certified teachers or SLMS working in their own school district.
- Any word changes on the AA or companion documents required by a school district must be approved by the PASSHE legal counsel.
- Only one signed AA agreement is required per school district. All MU students who perform in the district are covered by the one signed agreement.
- MU policies and the school district policies should be available for review by the student before completing field experiences and practicum.
- MU, as an agency of the Commonwealth of PA, cannot purchase insurance. Therefore, each student is required to obtain \$1,000,000 liability insurance (see information below). Neither MU nor the school district assume any liabilities to each other.
- Jill Scott, SL&IT secretary will be tracking the districts who have a signed AA on file.

## **Liability Insurance**

### **New Requirement based on the Affiliation Agreement (AA):**

The AA states that students are responsible for procuring professional liability insurance at their own expense. The limits of the policy shall be a minimum of \$1,000,000 per claim and an aggregate of \$3,000,000 per occurrence. This policy impacts SL&IT students as of February 3, 2010 and is effective immediately. This policy requires that students provide proof of having professional liability insurance (in addition to clearances) in order to participate in any field experiences.

### **Rationale:**

Mansfield University understands the need for SL&IT students to be legally protected in the event that something unfortunate happens while working in a school library.

### **Obtaining Liability Insurance:**

If you are currently employed in a school district, it is very likely that the district has a liability insurance policy on you. However, you will need to check to see if it meets the claim amounts stated above. **It is in your best interest to have adequate liability insurance.** Students, who do not have liability insurance or enough coverage via a school district policy, should investigate other insurance providers, i.e. professional associations, unions, etc. Additional insurance can be added to an existing home owner's insurance policy at a reasonable rate.

**Proof of Insurance:**

Please submit proof of your liability coverage to the SL&IT office in 202 Retan. You may forward your confirmation e-mail to Jill Scott, [jlscott@mansfield.edu](mailto:jlscott@mansfield.edu) with the following information clearly stated on the email:

**I have liability insurance to complete any and all field work assignments and the 100-hour practicum in a school district.**

**Professional Response:**

Thank in you advance for you professional response to this important issue. Please contact Cindy Keller, Larry Schankman, or Jill Scott if you have any questions or concerns.