

Indiana University South Bend – School of Education

# **Letter of Concern Policy and Forms**

## Policy and Procedure for Addressing Concerns with Students' Professional Dispositions or Conduct through a Letter of Concern

When concerns about a IU South Bend School of Education student's professional disposition, performance, or conduct occur, direct and honest communication and a supportive, but realistic approach to addressing such concerns are important. If a faculty member, classroom teacher, or other personnel have concerns about a student's ability to become an effective teacher, administrator, or human services provider, creating a plan to help the student is essential. Concerns may be related to conduct or dispositions in the university setting or in the field. IU South Bend students must maintain the highest level of professional conduct while completing field experiences in the schools or in agency settings. In these settings improper conduct can have adverse effects on the lives of children, youth, or adults. Unsatisfactory professional conduct or performance on the part of an IU South Bend School of Education student may result in dismissal from the School of Education. The following steps outline the procedure for addressing concerns with a student's professional dispositions or conduct. The process is intended to encourage needed changes and facilitate growth in the student toward success as a teacher.

1. A faculty member, classroom teacher, or other personnel identifies an area or areas of concern in writing using the "Letter of Concern" form. This form is discussed with the student and then forwarded to the Education Student Services office. The date of the discussion with the student is noted on the form and additional documentation may be attached. The student must receive a copy of all documents. The student is invited to submit a letter of explanation to be attached and to submit that letter to the Program Coordinator and Education Student Services office. In addition to copies of the letter of concern and other documentation, the student must be provided a copy of this policy.
2. When a student receives a second letter of concern, and with each subsequent letter, the Program Coordinator and the student meet to discuss the concern and develop and implement a plan to address the concern. The plan consists of specific objectives, procedures for remediation, a method for assessment of progress, and a timeline. As appropriate, objectives and remediation goals should be written in behavioral terms. The attached form must be utilized and further details must be expressed in writing. In the case of a student who has been assigned multiple plans, the Program Coordinator may recommend for dismissal from the program.
3. Successful completion of and continued adherence to the plan indicates that the student may continue in the program. The Program Coordinator sends a letter to the student, the advisor, and the student's file expressing successful completion of the plan.
4. In the case of unsuccessful completion of the plan after an initial attempt, the Program Coordinator has the option of working with the student to revise or extend the plan, or the Program Coordinator may choose further action as described below in 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d. Non-completion of the plan will result in a recommendation for discontinuation in the professional or teacher education program as described in 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4d.
  - a. When 1.) there has been no attempt to complete the plan, or 2.) if a plan has not been completed satisfactorily or 3.) after an unsuccessful second attempt, the Program Coordinator will recommend discontinuing the pursuit of a professional or teacher education program. At this point, the student may voluntarily choose to withdraw from the School of Education. If an initial plan has not been completed satisfactorily or adhered to, the Program Coordinator may make additional recommendations to the student prior to proceeding to step "b" and share these recommendations in writing

with the Curriculum and Standards Committee for informational purposes, or the Program Coordinator may proceed to step "b".

- b. Upon 1.) non-completion of the plan, 2.) unsatisfactory completion of the plan, 3.) a failed second attempt of the plan, or 4.) non-adherence to a plan, and if a student does not choose to withdraw, the Program Coordinator shall forward a recommendation for dismissal of the student to the Curriculum and Standards Committee. Before the recommendation is forwarded to the committee, the Program Coordinator shall put the recommendation for dismissal in writing and discuss it with the student. The Program Coordinator can invite the advisor to participate in this meeting. The student shall receive a copy of the recommendation. The student shall be informed that he/she may share a letter of explanation with the Curriculum and Standards Committee. The deadline for submitting the letter of explanation will be provided.
- c. If the Curriculum and Standards Committee does not support the recommendation for dismissal of the student, the improvement plan must be redone or extended. The Program Coordinator may appeal the Curriculum and Standard decision to the Dean.

If the Curriculum and Standards Committee approves the dismissal recommendation, copies of a letter communicating the recommendation that the student withdraw from the School of Education are sent to the student, the Program Coordinator, the student's file and to the Dean. The student may appeal the decision to the Dean.

- d. Activities that lead to the involuntary withdrawal or termination of students from the School of Education will be implemented by the Dean or a designee. The Dean or designee will notify the student and the IU South Bend Student Affairs Office.

If there are two or more letters of concern, successful resolution of all concerns is required prior to admission to and retention in all phases of the teacher education program or in activities that are designated in graduate programs, most notably, but not limited to, field experiences and/or internships. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the letters documenting successful resolution of concerns are available.

# Letter of Concern Cover Page

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of referring faculty member: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Date student was informed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date plan of action was developed: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*(student's signature does not indicate agreement with this concern; student's signature only indicates receipt of form and supporting documentation).*

Briefly explain the nature of the concern in two sentences:

**Please attach a typewritten/word processed document that includes a complete and detailed explanation of the concern in question. Attach all supporting documentation available.**

\_\_\_ Check here if there are additional letters of concern or forms in the student's folder.

## Plan of Action Cover Page

**Attach the plan of action.**

Date Plan of Action was given to student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date the plan of action was successfully completed: \_\_\_\_\_

If the plan of action is not successfully completed, explain the subsequent actions or recommendations.

**If the plan of action was revised, attach a copy of the revised plan of action.**

Date of subsequent action or recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

### Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Coordinator Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Academic Advisor Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date \_\_\_\_\_

Attach copies of any previous written communication with the student or logs of relevant discussions. If relevant, please attach course syllabus or other documentation.