
Special Education Endorsement Revision

ITEM: Shall the VSBPE adopt the revised endorsement competencies for endorsement 5440-82 Special Educator

AGENCY RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the VSBPE adopt the revised language for endorsement 5440-82 Special Educator

BACKGROUND: In 2020 the Council for Exceptional Children made minor updates to the Initial Preparation Standards, which is the foundation of the current endorsement competencies. The revision team made language updates and developed more explicit new competencies to outline the expectations of the Comprehensive Evaluation and IEP processes.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

[CEC Initial Preparation Standards](#)

Special Ed FINAL Draft

5440-82 Special Educator

(Revised March 2023)

The holder is authorized to provide specialized instruction and intervention services, including case management, in any public education setting, to students in grades K-8 and/or grade 7 through age 21, as specified on the endorsement. The holder may also provide comprehensive evaluation and Individual Education Program (IEP) development services with professional and technical assistance from a Consulting Teacher or Director of Special Education. The holder may provide instruction to students who are visually impaired, Deaf, or who have intensive special needs as those terms are defined in federal regulations pertaining to special education eligibility, in consultation with a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or Intensive Special Education Teacher.

1. Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

Special Educators understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to support learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities. Specifically, they:

- 1.1. understand how language, culture, and family background influence the learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 1.2. use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.
- 1.3. utilize knowledge of learning differences to identify resources that better prepare students with exceptionalities for college and career readiness.

2. Learning Environments

Special Educators create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination. Specifically, they:

- 2.1. collaborate with academic teams and other colleagues to create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive routines and learning environments that engage individuals with exceptionalities in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.
- 2.2. use effective routines and procedures to create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments for teaching appropriate student behavior and social skills.
- 2.3. use motivational and instructional interventions to support individuals with exceptionalities to adapt to different environments.
- 2.4. know how to intervene safely and appropriately with individuals with exceptionalities in crisis.

3. Curriculum Content Knowledge

Special Educators use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to support individualized learning for individuals with exceptionalities. Specifically, they:

- 3.1. understand the central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the content areas they teach, and can organize this knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, and develop meaningful learning progressions for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 3.2. understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 3.3. support general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to individuals with exceptionalities.
- 3.4. have knowledge of current student learning standards and relevant state and national education initiatives.
- 3.5. consider needs of students based on their demonstrated proficiencies and help students make progress through needs-based, personalized instruction.
- 3.6. have the requisite content knowledge to help students access the Common Core State Standards.
- 3.7. understands how the Common Core State Standards are constructed and can be used as a resource to design and implement high quality instruction.
- 3.8. use their understanding of evidence-based curriculum to develop IEPs for students who are eligible for special education. Special educators ensure that students receive specialized instruction and related services within the least restrictive environment (LRE) to ensure equal access to education and learning.

4. Assessment

Special Educators use multiple methods of assessment and data-sources in making educational decisions. Specifically, they:

- 4.1. select and use multiple technically sound formal and informal, culturally and linguistically appropriate measures and procedures that are valid, reliable and minimize bias to contribute to eligibility determination for special education services.
- 4.2. use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for individuals with exceptionalities.
- 4.3. collaborate with colleagues and families using multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about individuals with exceptionalities.
- 4.4. engage individuals with exceptionalities to work toward quality learning and performance and provide feedback to guide them.
- 4.5. use comprehensive evaluations to determine appropriate supports and instruction for a student who needs educational services that are different from grade-level peers.
- 4.6. Interpret multiple data sources for reporting progress on IEP goals and objectives.

5. Instructional Planning and Strategies
Special Educators select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies (including intervention used in academic and specialized curricula) to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities. Specifically, they:
 - 5.1. consider an individual's abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors in the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individual with exceptionalities.
 - 5.2. use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with exceptionalities.
 - 5.3. demonstrate familiarity with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
 - 5.4. use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with exceptionalities
 - 5.5. develop and implement a variety of education and transition plans for individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences in collaboration with individuals, families, and teams.
 - 5.6. teach for mastery and promote generalization of learning.
 - 5.7. teach cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with exceptionalities.
 - 5.8. design and implement evidence-based targeted intervention that align with the content area program goals at the grade level at which a student is enrolled.

6. Professional Learning and Ethical Practice
Special Educators use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession. Specifically, they:
 - 6.1. use professional ethical principles and professional practice standards to guide their practice.
 - 6.2. understand how foundational knowledge and current issues influence professional practice.
 - 6.3. understand that diversity is a part of families, cultures, and schools, and that complex human issues can interact with the delivery of special education services.
 - 6.4. understand the significance of lifelong learning and participate in professional activities and learning communities.
 - 6.5. advance the profession by engaging in activities such as advocacy and mentoring
 - 6.6. provide supervision, guidance, and/or direction to paraeducators, tutors, and volunteers.
 - 6.7. Understand special education laws, the rights of families, and the requirements of school-based personnel in ensuring Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

7. Collaboration

Special Educators collaborate with families, other Educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences. Specifically, they:

- 7.1. use the theory and elements of effective collaboration and communication to serve as a resource to colleagues and families.
- 7.2. use collaboration to promote the well-being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and collaborators.
- 7.3. engage classroom teachers in innovative practice to ensure students with disabilities have full access to the content area programs.
- 7.4. facilitate the special education process to assist teams in creating consensus agreements that lead to individualized educational programs with beneficial outcomes for students with disabilities.

8. A minimum of a bachelor's degree with a recommendation for licensure in special education, or a minimum of 21 credits in special education

9. A minimum of a practicum (60 hours), or the equivalent, in special education at the elementary/middle (grades K-8) or middle/secondary (grade 7-age 21) instructional level.

For the full grade K-age 21 endorsement, a minimum of a practicum (60 hours), or the equivalent, in special education at both the elementary/middle (grades K-8) and middle/secondary (grade 7-age 21) instructional levels is required.