

Inclusive Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

RESOURCES



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Goals:

To improve and innovate teacher preparation content, delivery and performance measures in order to prepare effective elementary teachers for inclusive classrooms.

To improve teacher candidates' knowledge, skills and dispositions to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students with exceptional needs.

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CEC Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards¹

Among the sine qua non characteristics of mature professions are the identification of the specialized knowledge and skill and the assurance to the public that practicing professionals possess the specialized knowledge and skill to practice safely and effectively (Neville, Herman, & Cohen, 2005). Through credentialing of professionals and professional recognition of preparation programs, special educators assure the public that practicing professionals have mastered the specialized skills for safe and effective practice.

Reflective of the personalized needs of individuals with exceptionalities, agencies prepare and credential special educators in a variety of specialty areas. To address these important specialty preparation areas, CEC has developed the seven CEC Preparation Standards in a three-step pyramid. CEC uses a rigorous consensual validation process to identify sets of knowledge and skills for entry-level and advanced special educators in the variety of specialty areas. These specialty sets capture the professional knowledge base, including empirical research, disciplined inquiry, informed theory, and the wisdom of practice for their area of expertise for each proposed knowledge and skill. As a part of the validation process, CEC uses a rigorous consensual validation process (CEC Validation Study Resource Manual, 2010).

CEC synthesizes the specialty sets into seven major preparation standards organized around: learners and learning environments, curricular knowledge, assessment, specialized pedagogical skills, and professional and collaborative skills. CEC has further analyzed the seven preparation standards into key elements with which preparation programs align program assessments of special education candidates for CEC Professional Program Recognition.

While the CEC Preparation Standards cross special education specialty areas, CEC uses the specialty sets to inform and differentiate the content, contexts, and issues among and between the respective specialty areas (e.g., early childhood, mild/moderate, developmental disabilities, and learning disabilities). Preparation program faculties align their program assessments to the seven preparation standards with the key elements and program reviewers review for alignment between the program assessments and the seven preparation standards with the key elements.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 1:

Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

1.0

Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.

¹ NCATE approved November 2012.

Key Elements	
1.1	Beginning special education professionals understand how language, culture, and family background influence the learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
1.2	Beginning special education professionals use understanding of development and individual differences to respond to the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.

Supporting Explanation

From its roots, special educators have placed the learning needs of the individual at the center of special education instruction. Historically, pedagogy or teaching skill has been at the heart of special education. Whether helping individuals with exceptionalities master addition, cooking, independent living, or philosophy, special educators have altered instructional variables to optimize learning for individuals with exceptionalities. The *raison d'être* for special education lies in the specialized professional knowledge and skills to individualize² access to learning in both specialized and general curricula for individuals with exceptionalities. Development of expertise begins with a thorough understanding of and respect for similarities and differences in human growth and development. Like all educators, beginning special educators first respect individuals with exceptionalities within the context of human development and Individual learning differences.

Additionally, beginning special educators understand the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptionalities. They know exceptionalities can interact with multiple domains of human development to influence an individual's learning in school, community, and throughout life.

Moreover, beginning special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can influence relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Furthermore, the experiences of individuals with exceptionalities can influence families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.

However, beginning special educators' knowledge of human development goes beyond listing and ordering developmental milestones, and reciting legal definitions of exceptionalities. Beginning special educators understand how exceptionalities can interact with development and learning, and modify developmentally appropriate learning environments to provide relevant, meaningful, and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities. Beginning special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and family interact with the exceptionality to influence the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career and post-secondary options.

² As used herein the term "individualize" is used as synonymous with terms such as "personalize", "customize", "adaptive", and "differentiated."

These learning differences and their interactions provide the foundation upon which beginning special educators individualize instruction to provide developmentally meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 2

Learning Environments

2.0	<i>Beginning special education professionals 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.</i>
Key Elements	
2.1	Beginning special education professionals through collaboration with general educators and other colleagues create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments to engage individuals with exceptionalities in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.
2.2	Beginning special education professionals use motivational and instructional interventions to teach individuals with exceptionalities how to adapt to different environments.
2.3	Beginning special education professionals know how to intervene safely and appropriately with individuals with exceptionalities in crisis.

Supporting Explanation

Like all educators, beginning special educators develop safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments for all students. Beginning special educators also collaborate with education colleagues to include individuals with exceptionalities in general education environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and social interactions.

Beginning special educators modify learning environments for individual needs. Knowledge regarding an individual’s language, family, culture, and other significant contextual factors and how they interact with an individual’s exceptionality, guides the special educator in modifying learning environments, and providing for the maintenance and generalization of acquired skills across environments and subjects.

Beginning special educators structure environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with exceptionalities, and directly teach them to adapt to the expectations and demands of differing environments.

Frequently, special educators safely intervene with individuals with exceptionalities in crisis. Special educators are also perceived as a resource in behavior management that include the skills and knowledge to intervene safely and effectively before or when individuals with exceptionalities experience crisis, i.e. lose rational control over their behavior.

3.0	3
<i>Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general 4 and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.</i>	
Key Elements	
3.1	Beginning special education professionals 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	Beginning special education professionals understand and use general and specialized content knowledge for teaching across curricular content areas to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities
3.3	Beginning special education professionals modify general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to individuals with exceptionalities.

Supporting Explanation

The professional knowledge base in general education has made clear that the educators’ understanding of the central concepts and structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry related to the academic subject-matter content areas they teach makes a significant difference in student learning. There is good reason to generalize this conclusion to special educators.

Within the general curricula, beginning special educators demonstrate in their planning and teaching, a solid base of understanding of the central concepts, structures of the discipline, and tools of inquiry of the academic subject-matter content areas they teach so they are able to organize knowledge, integrate cross-disciplinary skills, develop meaningful learning progressions and collaborate with general educators in:

- Teaching⁵ or co-teaching the content of the general curriculum to Individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of performance levels.

³ As used “general curricula,” means the academic content of the general curricula including math, reading, English/language arts, science, social studies, and the arts.

⁴ As used, “specialized curricula” means the content of specialized interventions or sets of interventions including, but not limited to academic, strategic, communicative, social, emotional, and independence curricula.

⁵ Because of the significant role that content specific subject matter knowledge plays at the secondary school level, special education teachers routinely teach secondary level academic subject matter content classes in consultation or collaboration with one or more general education teachers appropriately licensed in the respective content area. However, whenever special education teachers assume sole responsibility for teaching a general curriculum academic subject matter course at the secondary level, the special educators possess a solid subject matter content knowledge base sufficient to assure the students can meet state curriculum standards.

- Designing appropriate learning and performance accommodations and modifications for individuals with exceptionalities in academic subject matter content of the general curriculum.

Additionally, beginning special educators use a variety of specialized curricula, e.g. academic, strategic, social, emotional, and independence curricula, to individualize meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with exceptionalities.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 4

Assessment

4.0	<i>Beginning special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data-sources in making educational decisions.</i>
Key Elements	
4.1	Beginning special education professionals select and use technically sound formal and informal assessments that minimize bias.
4.2	Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of measurement principles and practices to interpret assessment results and guide educational decisions for individuals with exceptionalities.
4.3	Beginning special education professionals in collaboration with colleagues and families use multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about individuals with exceptionalities.
4.4	Beginning special education professionals engage individuals with exceptionalities to work toward quality learning and performance and provide feedback to guide them.

Supporting Explanation

Like all educators, beginning special educators understand measurement theory and practice for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. Like their general education colleagues, beginning special educators regularly monitor the learning progress of individuals with exceptionalities in both general and specialized content and make instructional adjustments based on these data.

Beginning special educators also use assessment information to support a wide variety of decisions within special education. Beginning special educators understand the legal policies and ethical principles

of measurement and assessment related to special education referral, eligibility, program planning, individualized instruction, learning, and placement for individuals with exceptionalities, including individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Beginning special educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments, and collaborate with families and other colleagues to assure nonbiased, meaningful assessments and decision-making.

Beginning special educators conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to individualize the learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with exceptionalities.

Beginning special educators make multiple types of assessment decisions including strategic adaptations and modifications in response to an individuals' constellation of social, linguistic, and learning factors in ways to minimize bias.

Beginning special educators use assessment information to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with exceptionalities to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs.

Beginning special educators integrate the results of assessments to develop long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special education curricula, and translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives. They also have a central role integrating the results of assessments in developing a variety of individualized plans, including family service plans, transition plans, behavior change plans, etc.

Beginning special educators use available technologies routinely to support their assessments. With the rapid advance and use of technology, special educators use technologies to support and manage assessment of individuals with exceptionalities. The appropriate and efficient use of technology to support assessment tasks is rapidly becoming an essential tool for special education professionals.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 5

Instructional Planning and Strategies

5.0

Beginning special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies³ to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities.

Key Elements

5.1

Beginning special education professionals 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.

³ Instructional strategies, as used throughout this document include intervention used in academic and specialized curricula.

5.2	Beginning special education professionals use technologies to support instructional assessment, planning, and delivery for individuals with exceptionalities.
5.3	Beginning special education professionals are familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
5.4	Beginning special education professionals use strategies to enhance language development and communication skills of individuals with exceptionalities
5.5	Beginning special education professionals 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	Beginning special education professionals teach to mastery and promote generalization of learning.
5.7	Beginning special education professionals teach cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills such as critical thinking and problem solving to individuals with exceptionalities.

Supporting Explanation

Whether in individualizing access to general and specialized content, individualized decision-making and individualized instruction are at the center of special education practice. In the selection, development, and adaptation of learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities, beginning special educators consider an individual’s abilities, interests, learning environments, and cultural and linguistic factors. The interactions of these factors with the implications of an individual’s exceptionality guides the special educator’s selection, adaptation, and use of a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies in promoting positive learning results in general and special curricula and in modifying learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities appropriately.

Beginning special educators teach personalized literacy and numeracy to individuals with exceptionalities who are often non-responsive individuals in tiered intervention models. In their planning and teaching with these individuals, beginning special educators emphasize explicit instruction with modeling, and guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency, as well as, the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the life span through approaches such as cross curricular lesson planning. Moreover, they enhance 21st Century student outcomes such as critical thinking, creative problem solving, and collaboration skills for individuals with exceptionalities, and increase their selfawareness and reliance, self-management and control, and self-efficacy and advocacy.

Beginning special educators provide effective language models and use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with exceptionalities whose primary language is not English. Beginning special educators match their communication methods to an individual’s language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Beginning special educators are familiar with augmentative and alternative communication systems, and assistive technologies to

support and enhance the language and communication of individuals with exceptionalities, and use individualized strategies to enhance their language development and teach communication skills to individuals with exceptionalities.

Beginning special educators implement a variety of individualized learning plans across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences, including individualized family service plans, individualized transition plans, individualized behavior change plans.

Transitions are specific points of potential difficulty for individuals with exceptionalities.

Beginning special educators develop a variety of individualized transition plans, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts.

For individuals with exceptionalities in early childhood, special educators focus the individualized instruction plan within the context of family services taking into account the needs, priorities, and concerns of families, as the primary providers of instruction.

Beginning special educators facilitate all personalized instructional planning within a collaborative context including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate.

Beginning special educators use technologies routinely to support all phases of instruction planning. With the rapid advance and use of technology, special educators use technologies to support and manage all phases of planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction.

CEC Initial Preparation Standard 6

Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

6.0	<i>Beginning special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and the their professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.</i>
Key Elements	
6.1	Beginning special education professionals use professional Ethical Principles and Professional Practice Standards to guide their practice.
6.2	Beginning special education professionals understand how foundational knowledge and current issues influence professional practice.
6.3	Beginning special education professionals 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	Beginning special education professionals understand the significance of lifelong learning and participate in professional activities and learning communities.

6.5	Beginning special education professionals advance the profession by engaging in activities such as advocacy and mentoring
6.6	Beginning special education professionals provide guidance and direction to paraeducators, tutors, and volunteers.

Supporting Explanation

Beginning special educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges that requires ongoing attention to legal matters and serious consideration of serious professional and ethical issues. The Ethical Principles and Professional Practice Standards of the Council for Exceptional Children guide beginning special education professionals. These principles and standards provide benchmarks by which special educators practice and evaluate each other professionally.

Beginning special educators understand special education as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, policies, historical points of view that continue to influence the field of special education and the education of and services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families in both school and society. Beginning special educators understand how these factors influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation.

Beginning special educators are sensitive to the aspects of diversity with individuals with exceptionalities and their families, how human diversity can influence families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex issues can each interact with the delivery of special education services. Of special significance is the growth in the number and prevalence of English Language Learners (ELL) and the provision of effective special education services for ELL with exceptionalities and their families.

Beginning special educators understand the relationships of the organization of special education services to the organization of schools, school systems, and education-related agencies within the country and cultures in which they practice. Beginning special educators are aware of how their own and others' attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice, and use this knowledge as a foundation to inform their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education.

Beginning special educators engage in professional activities and participate actively in professional learning communities that benefit individuals with exceptionalities, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. Beginning special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice, and develop and use personalized professional development plans. Beginning special educators plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based practices. Beginning special educators also know how to recognize their own skill limits and practice within them.

There has been substantial growth in the use of special education paraeducators over the past few years, and beginning special educators frequently provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

7.0

Beginning special education professionals 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.

Key Elements

7.1	Beginning special education professionals use the theory and elements of effective collaboration.
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7.2	Beginning special education professionals serve as a collaborative resource to colleagues.
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7.3	Beginning special education professionals use collaboration to promote the well-being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and collaborators.
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Supporting Explanation

One of the significant changes in education over the past several decades is the rapid growth of collaborative educational teams to address the educational needs of students. The diversity of the students, complexity of curricular demands, growing influence of technology, and the rising targets for learner outcomes in the 21st century has created the demand for teams of educators collaborating together to ensure all students are effectively learning challenging curricula.

Special educators view general educators as possessing knowledge and expertise in curriculum, and general educators reciprocally view special educators as having knowledge and expertise in the education of individuals with exceptionalities. Beginning special educators embrace their role as a resource to colleagues and use the theory and elements of collaboration across a wide range of contexts and collaborators.

Beginning special educators collaborate with their general education colleagues to create learning environments that meaningfully include individuals with exceptionalities, and that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement. Additionally, special educators use collaboration to facilitate personalized instruction planning and transitions of individuals with exceptionalities in promoting the learning and well-being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and different learning experiences.

Beginning special educators routinely collaborate with related-service providers, other educators including special education paraeducators, personnel from community agencies, and others to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities.

Special educators have long recognized the positive significance of the active involvement of individuals with exceptionalities and their families in the education process, and special educators involve

individuals with exceptionalities and their families collaboratively in all aspects of the education of individuals with exceptionalities.

Glossary

Individuals with Exceptionalities Individuals with exceptionalities include individuals with sensory, physical, emotional, social, cognitive differences, developmentally delays, exceptional gifts and talents; and individuals who are or have been abused or neglected; whose needs differ so as to require personalized special education services in addition to or in tandem with educational services available through general education programs and other human service delivery systems.

Special Education Services Special education services are personalized, i.e. individualized, services that appropriately credentialed special educators provide directly or indirectly to individuals with exceptionalities.

Promises to Keep:

Transforming Educator Preparation to Better Serve a Diverse Range of Learners

Licensure

Standards

RECOMMENDATION #1: States will revise and enforce their licensure standards for teachers and principals to support the teaching of more demanding content aligned to college- and career-readiness and critical thinking skills to a diverse range of students.

NEXT STEP: Ensure that revised standards include *the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to implement differentiated core instruction, monitor student progress, and apply evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all students within a tiered system of support.*

The key purpose of licensure standards is to outline the knowledge and skills educators should have on “day one” of entry into the profession when they receive their initial license, and how they should grow and develop as they move through advanced licensure. A description of this knowledge is provided through definitions of a learner-ready teacher and a school-ready principal,

based on the InTASC⁵ and ISLLC⁶ standards, in the *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* task force report. The key is to identify and distinguish the knowledge and skills needed within a tiered system of support, such that educators are prepared and licensed to provide the level of intensity needed across and within the tiers.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

3 Council of Chief State School Officers. (2013, April). *Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium In- TASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0: A Resource for Ongoing Teacher Development*. Washington, DC: Author.

See www.ccsso.org/intasc for more information.

4 Council of Chief State School Officers. (2015, forthcoming). *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium ISLLC 2015 Standards*. Washington, DC: Author. See www.ccsso.org/resources/programs/developing_and_supporting_school-ready_leaders.html for more information.

· **Define and implement a core threshold of knowledge and skills necessary for licensure for all teachers on how to provide high-quality core instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners within a tiered system of support. Key skills at Tier 1 or core instruction might include:**

- o Understanding of a range of student needs and learner profiles, influenced by student diversities (e.g., language, culture, disability), various ways students learn, and emphasizing the strengths and assets of each learner
- o Knowledge of content and developmental learning progressions
- o Knowledge and ability to implement evidence-based instructional practices
- o Knowledge of types and purposes of assessments within a multi-tiered framework
- o Ability to design, deliver and analyze assessments to determine student progress, gauge effectiveness of instructional practices, and identify students that would benefit from additional instructional support,
- o Ability to use student performance data to inform instructional decisions
- o Ability to implement culturally responsive practices
- o Knowledge of strategies to differentiate instruction based on student need
- o Understanding of the role of self-determination and self-regulation in learning

· **Define a knowledge and skill base for teachers to implement evidence-based instruction at the supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) levels within a tiered system of support for students in need of more intense, individualized instruction. In addition to the skills needed at Tier 1 to identify the need for more intensive services and to coordinate/collaborate with specialized educators, key skills might include:**

- o Understanding of disability characteristics and various learning preferences (i.e., visual, auditory)
- o Understanding of levels of instructional intensity and how to intensify instruction (i.e., change group size, increase session frequency, change instructional delivery method, change environment)
- o Ability to choose, develop, and administer assessments that are culturally and linguistically responsive and targeted on students' specific area of need
- o Ability to use student data to inform decisions about which intervention to implement and for how long
- o Ability to choose, develop, and implement evidence-based interventions that are targeted and aligned to grade-level standards
- o Ability to identify and administer evidence-based progress monitoring tools
- o Ability to frequently monitor student progress and analyze student data to determine responsiveness to intervention and instruction
 - o Ability to coordinate and collaborate with other educators to ensure intensive interventions are aligned and integrated with core (Tier 1) instruction
 - o Ability to communicate with families across a range of cultures, as well as other teachers and stakeholders about student data
 - o Ability to use data to adapt and modify instructional practice or intervention
 - o Ability to individualize interventions for students who are persistently non-responsive to supplemental intervention
 - o Ability to integrate strategies that support cognitive processing

· **Clarify expectations for base content knowledge for all teachers at the elementary and secondary levels within a tiered system of**

support.

- o Require teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities, and other groups of students with disabilities who have historically received little or no academic instruction, to demonstrate the same core threshold and content knowledge base as their peers.

- **Define and implement a core threshold knowledge base for all school leaders for initial administrator licensure that includes what they need to know and do to provide the instructional leadership and infrastructure to employ a tiered system of**

support, including:

- o Ability to use student performance data to make school-wide decisions about instructional focus and resource allocation
- o Ability to analyze data and communicate needs to families and stakeholders across a range of cultures and languages
- o Ability to develop systems to monitor fidelity of instructional practices and interventions
- o Ability to create a culture of data-sharing
- o Ability to advocate for and adhere to the legal requirements for disability determination and education of students with disabilities
- o Actively lead and develop systems that encourage collaboration between teachers around student needs and instructional practices
- o Understand and support a continuum of instructional support for students
- o Facilitate professional development opportunities and communities around multi-tiered systems of support, evidence-based practices for struggling learners, and data-based decision-making
- o Ability to create a shared vision and mission around educating students who struggle and students with disabilities
- o Ability to create an infrastructure to enable multi-tiered systems of support (i.e., schedules, data-teams, data reviews, fidelity checks)

Performance Assessments

RECOMMENDATION #2: States will work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that are aligned to the revised licensure standards and include multiple measures of educators' ability to perform, including the potential to impact student achievement and growth.

NEXT STEP: States will work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that assess each candidate's ability to perform within a tiered system of

NEXT States will work together to influence the development of innovative performance assessments that assess each candidate's ability to perform within a tiered system support, including the potential to impact all students' achievement and growth.

Licensure tests and performance assessments are strong policy levers that can be used to drive change in preparation curriculum. Performance assessments for all teacher candidates should capture a candidate's ability to create universally designed curriculum, provide quality core content instruction that is differentiated, monitor student progress, employ evidence-based instruction and interventions with fidelity, and collaborate with families and other professionals.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Require all teacher candidates to include evidence in their licensure tests or performance assessments that demonstrates they have the professional judgment, mindset, and ability to:**
 - o Provide high-quality core content instruction
 - o Understand a Universal Design for Learning framework
 - o Identify the essential components of differentiated instruction
 - o Implement accommodations and use technology successfully
 - o Collect and use data to monitor student progress and identify needs for evidence-based instructional practices and intensive interventions and support, and
 - o Coordinate and collaborate with other educational personnel to align and integrate intensive supports where necessary

- **Require administrator candidates to include evidence in their licensure tests or performance assessments that demonstrate they can create conditions for success of a diverse range of learners within a tiered system of support, including how to create a culture of inclusion and teamwork where all educators share responsibility for all learners.**

- **Create robust measures that accurately capture a range of student performance to inform effective teaching of diverse learners, including students with disabilities.**

- **Design a certification and licensure process that assesses educator capacity to function effectively within a tiered system of support (e.g., understanding of roles and teamwork). Potentially develop a unique and/or tiered licensing assessment or suite of**

assessments that addresses each educator’s ability to provide services within and across a tiered instructional and support model.

- Review assessment rubrics and evaluator training for bias that may inadvertently

discount best practices with diverse learners or diminish an educator’s success when working with struggling learners (e.g., penalizing the appropriate use of direct instruction to develop key skills and self-regulated learning; ensuring that student growth models used in educator evaluations capture the smaller grain size of student improvement for struggling learners).

Tiered Licensure

RECOMMENDATION #3: States will create multi-tiered licensure systems aligned to a coherent developmental continuum that reflects new performance expectations for educators and their implementation in the learning environment and to assessments that are linked to evidence of student achievement and growth.

NEXT STEP: Ensure that new systems reflect the performance expectations to work within and across tiered systems of support, that promote ongoing growth through strategies of deliberate practice and feedback.

The state’s goal in building a tiered licensure system is to promote a continuum of professional growth and development and not just provide a mechanism for automatic renewal or for acquiring an ad hoc collection of endorsements. At its best, it is a strategy for talent development and deployment of educator expertise designed to address student needs within a tiered system of support.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

- Use multi-tiered licensure systems to create a pathway that can develop the talent and expertise required to deliver instruction to a diverse range of learners at all tiers of support. Address how best to use “endorsements” or “micro-credentialing” for domain-specific, competency-based expertise within and across tiers.
- Align tiered licensure for both teachers and school leaders to the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) tiers. “Tier 1” knowledge should be established as a threshold for an initial license and additional support tiers should inform the acquisition of expertise as educators seek additional or advanced credentials.
- Consider the creation of a tiered licensure system that is tied explicitly to the varying expertise and responsibilities of a team approach to meeting student needs within a tiered system of support.
- For a master teacher credential, require demonstration of

effectiveness in working with students with disabilities and struggling learners, either through teacher evaluation results and/or a performance assessment task.

- 5 Micro credentialing provides teachers with the opportunity to gain recognition for skills they master throughout their careers. To earn a micro-credential, teachers submit artifacts such as classroom videos, student work, or project plans that demonstrate their competence in a particular skill. For more info, see Digital Promise at <http://www.digitalpromise.org/initiatives/educator-micro-credentials#educator-micro-credentials>.

Accommodations and Resources To Enhance and Differentiate Within Inclusive Classrooms: Literacy



Collected by:
Lauren Patrusky

Academic Difficulty	Potential evidence that a student is struggling with this area	Classroom Accommodations	Resource
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<p>-Phonics</p>	<p>-Difficulty matching letters and sounds -Decodes in very labored manner -Difficulty with spelling and reading phonetically -Guesses on words based on the first letter or two</p>	<p>-Explicit & Systematic Phonics Instruction -<u>Analytic Phonics</u>: Teaching students unfamiliar words by analogy to known words <u>Embedded Phonics</u>: Teaching students by embedding phonics instruction in text reading <u>Synthetic phonics</u>: Teaching students explicitly to convert letters into sounds (phonemes) and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words -multisensory techniques -Help students sort pictures and objects by the sound you're teaching -Engage students in the reading and writing activities what requires them to apply the phonics information you've taught them -Use manipulatives to help teach letter-sound relationships (ex. counters, sound boxes, and magnetic letters)</p>	<p>http://www.readingrockets.org/article/254 http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/phonics#perspectives http://www.teleread.com/education/50-best-ipad-apps-for-users-with-reading-disabilities/</p>
<p>-Phonological Awareness</p>	<p>-Difficulty with identifying and manipulating units of oral language (words, syllables, onsets, and rimes) -Difficulty with clapping out the number of syllables in a word -Difficulty with recognizing words with the same initial sounds like 'money' and 'mother'</p>	<p>-Identify the precise phoneme awareness task on which you wish to focus and select developmentally appropriate activities for engaging children in the task -Substituting different sounds for the first sound of a familiar song -Guess-the-word game: blending & identifying a word that is stretched out into its component sounds (ex saying ffffflllllaaaaag). Student has to look at the pictures and guess the word you are saying -Segmentation activities</p>	<p>http://www.ldonline.org/article/6254/</p>
<p>Reading Fluency</p>	<p>-Sound 'choppy' -Difficulty with decoding skills -Difficulty with speed, accuracy, and proper expression</p>	<p>-Give the student independent level texts that he or she can practice again and again, time the student and calculate words-correct-per-minute regularly; have student chart his or her own improvement -Ask the student to match his or her voice to yours when reading aloud or to a tape recorded reading</p>	<p>http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/fluency</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read a short passage and then have the student immediately read it back to you -Have the student practice reading a passage with a certain emotion, such as sadness or excitement, to emphasize expression and intonation -Incorporated timed repeated readings -Plan lessons that explicitly teach students how to pay attention to clues in the text 	
Reading Comprehension	-Inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Metacognition (have the student identify where the difficulty occurs, identify what the difficulty is, restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words, look back through the text, look forward in the text for information that might help them resolve difficulty) -Graphic & Semantic Organizers -Answering Questions (“Right There,” “Think and Search,” “Author and You,” and “On Your Own”), Generating Questions, -Recognizing Story Structure -Summarizing 	http://www.readwritethink.org/ http://www.fcrr.org/
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Questions about a lot of word meanings in a grade appropriate text -Seems to have a weak vocabulary -Difficulty with making connections among words in various texts -Often not able to find the right word to describe something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Help build language skills in class by playing oral and written word exercises and games -Teach students about the important, useful, and difficult vocabulary words before students read the text -Have students use taught vocabulary words often and in various ways both orally and in writing so they are better able to remember the words and their meanings -Help students learn to use context clues to determine meanings -Read to class each day; when book contains a new or interesting word, pause and define the word for students -Teach the meanings of common prefixes, roots, and suffixes -Teach common roots in a variety of words (ex, vision, visual, visible, invisible) 	http://www.fcrr.org/

Processing	Difficulties Vary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Seat the student near the teacher and away from noisy or visually distracting areas -Teach the student to recognize key words and phrases related to directions/instructions to facilitate his/her ability to accurately follow directions -Use simple demonstrations and reduce abstractions by giving concrete examples and firsthand experiences -Deliver the information in both verbal and written form -Have the student carry out directions as soon as they are given to minimize the effect of irrelevant and distracting information on his/her ability to follow instructions -Stop at key points when delivering directions, explanations, and instructions to determine student comprehension. Ask questions about what she/he needs to do. -Teach the student to make reminders for himself/herself (notes, lists, etc). -Repeat/Review key points -Have the student repeat/paraphrase directions, explanations, and instructions as soon as possible after receiving them 	<p>http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Understanding-Auditory-Processing-Disorders-in-Children/</p> <p>http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/ears/central_auditory.html</p> <p>https://www.undertood.org/en</p>
Difficulty with Long and Short Term Memory	Difficulties Vary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assign one task at a time. Give the student adequate time to complete it. -Consider carefully the student's ability level and experience when assigning responsibilities for him/her to complete it. -Establish a specific time at the end of each class period for the 	<p>http://www.readingrockets.org/article/10-strategies-enhance-students-memory</p>

		<p>student to take care of responsibilities (e.g, copying homework assignment, collecting materials, clarifying directions, etc).</p>	
Does not remain on-task		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have the student maintain a chart representing the amount of time he/she has spent on task -Schedule a fun educational activity (e.g. computer games) during the day to provide incentive for the student to stay on task and behave appropriately -Provide the student with a list of assignments for the day and allow the student to choose the order in which he/she will perform the tasks -Provide the student with a predetermined signal (eg hand signal, verbal cue, etc) when he/she begins to display off-task behaviors -Schedule highly desirable activities contingent upon staying on-task a required amount of time (ie staying on-task for a required amount of time earns the student the opportunity to participate in a desirable activity) -Have the student define a goal. Assist the student in developing specific strategies to achieve his/her goal and following through on those strategies 	<p>http://www.interventioncentral.org/behavioral-interventions/challenging-students/school-wide-strategies-managing-task-inattention</p>

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Accelerating Access to the Curriculum

Universal design for learning targets new supports and on-ramps to the high-speed highway of instruction for students

By Sheldon Berman/School Administrator, November 2015

The architectural concept of universal design revolutionized our thinking about access to buildings, streets and playgrounds. Access issues were considered endemic to persons with certain physical disabilities — they had the problem and they were responsible for adjusting to the environment.

What reframed our thinking was the realization that the problem existed not in the users but rather in a deficient design that failed to accommodate people's natural variability. As universal design became

commonplace, architects and city planners discovered that a wide array of individuals — those using bicycles and baby strollers or those who simply enjoyed the incline of a ramp — took advantage of the alternative access. Universal design benefited everyone.

In similar fashion, universal design for learning, or UDL, is transforming access to the curriculum. And just as universal design revolutionized architectural design, UDL is revolutionizing curricular design and instructional planning by providing the academic curb cuts and other pathways that facilitate access to core concepts and skills development by all students.



Patricia Ganley (right), who works with schools on applying the universal design for learning through the CAST resource center, with students in a middle school science classroom. (Photo by CAST, Wakefield, Mass.)

mastering the curriculum places them along a spectrum from gifted to average to failing or disabled. By contrast, UDL contends that the underlying cause of inadequate mastery is not the disability of the learner but rather the “disability” of a text- and print-dominated curriculum that fails to support and accommodate learners’ diversity.

Curriculum Centric

As school and district leaders, we want to help teachers meet the learning needs of students with disabilities and of varied cultural, language and economic backgrounds. We understand that students learn in varied ways and may require different strategies to achieve the same goals. Our challenge is to plan for that natural variability and make the means of learning as flexible as possible while upholding essential goals.

Our traditional approach to teaching is curriculum-centric — that is, students’ success in

Our discovery that ramps and auditory traffic cues aid persons beyond those with disabilities has informed the UDL approach to curriculum. Instead of focusing on fixing problems, UDL strives to make all options as widely available as possible to support every student. More than just acknowledging variability in learning, UDL accepts it as the norm and argues we should plan for it.

UDL's principles were articulated first in the 1990s by a Massachusetts nonprofit known as CAST (www.CAST.org), which today serves as the national center for UDL policy, research and professional development. Central to UDL's effectiveness is predesigning curriculum and instruction to include flexible options that address the natural and predictable variability among students. Through intentional planning that removes barriers within a learning environment, we can eliminate circumstances that contribute to failure.

CAST developed a framework to support teachers and curriculum developers in their planning and instructional design. Within that framework, UDL offers all students access to the curriculum by accommodating three systematic dimensions of variability: How students understand information, how they engage in learning, and how they express their learning. Because these dimensions are predictable, we can plan for them in advance and provide students with multiple ways to encounter new knowledge, participate in the learning experience and demonstrate their understanding and growth.

Means of Representation

Formal instruction long has been dominated by verbal communication and print media, which pose a barrier for some students. By instead presenting a lesson through a variety of modalities, media and materials, teachers can address differences in how learners perceive, interpret and understand information. The routine incorporation of digital, video, audio and imaging options provides broader access to key concepts and skills.

For example, a classroom setting can provide a variety of media to learn about a subject with students selecting the media that feel most comfortable for their learning needs. Students choose among multiple stations that include books to read, audio selections, text-to-speech reading of material and video. They can select more than one station, thereby gaining various perspectives on the same topic.

Although each student may do something different, the options enable all students to focus on the same learning target together and to enter the learning experience with confidence because they have been able to access and understand the material in a way that works for them.

Means of Engagement



Sheldon Berman checks on the learning of elementary school students in Eugene, Ore., where he previously was superintendent. (Photo by Eugene School District 4J)

Sparking students' interest is key to effective learning, yet each student may be motivated by different ways of engaging with the material. Choice and options are by their very nature motivational. Making individual choices about how to access information, what challenge level to take on and what medium to use to demonstrate understanding are effective ways to support a high level of investment and ownership of learning.

By offering many ways to connect with concepts, teachers both enrich the learning environment and enable students to choose how they want to interact with the content. Teachers can provide various entry points by planning instruction that builds in options for hands-on applications, simulations, puzzles and games, real-world problem-solving exercises, collaborative group activities or other avenues that enlist student participation and engagement.

Using these multiple options as a base for individual and group projects encourages students to explore the material in a variety of ways and is an effective strategy for addressing learner variability. Access to varied technology tools and applications further broadens the vehicles for that engagement. Given the freedom to choose how to interact with the material, students become more engaged in their learning and assume more responsibility for their learning.

Means of Expression

We often assume that fairness demands all students express their understanding or be assessed the same way. However, to generate the most meaningful performance data, students should be encouraged to exhibit their learning in multiple ways and times. Allowing for such variability enhances students' understanding and engagement while providing richer data on the degree to which the curriculum and instruction are effective in supporting student learning.

One of the critical differences in the UDL approach is that scaffolding and supports are built into assessment to ensure the accuracy of the construct being assessed and to enhance students' ability to focus on the core task. For example, in an assessment of the main idea of a reading passage, providing supports such as text to speech, an online graphic organizer or integrated highlighting may enable students to accomplish the task successfully.

Similar supports have been incorporated into such summative assessments as the Smarter Balanced assessment of Common Core standards used by 18 states last spring. Smarter Balanced embedded into its assessment instrument "universal tools," such as a calculator, digital notepad, highlighter, glossary and spell check; "designated supports," such as a translator, text to speech, masking, color contrast and magnification; and "accommodations," such as braille, closed captioning and American Sign Language. New diagnostic technology also enables students to experience ongoing self-monitoring with mastery-oriented feedback that promotes reflection and ownership.

Supporting Variability

With professional development and collegial support, teachers can — and often do — make adjustments to their instructional strategies. However, the cutting edge of UDL work is in the redesign of curriculum and materials to enhance their accessibility and flexibility. This is where technology can play a key role by embedding flexibility in how materials are accessed, how supports are provided and how the student

and teacher measure progress.

Multimedia tools, simulations and animations provide multiple means of presenting material. Digital and online tools help us create scaffolding that enables students of all ability levels to fully access the concepts being taught — tools such as text to speech and speech to text; hyperlinked multimedia dictionaries and glossaries; links to background information and multimedia source material; embedded rubrics and exemplars; graphic organizers, checklists and integrated highlighting; electronic notepads and interactive concept maps; and voice threads and onscreen coaching through animated hints.

In addition, a growing body of online analytics accompanies new curricula and charts progress in multiple dimensions, not just the correctness of answers — thereby providing sophisticated diagnostic information that can further refine our instructional effectiveness and targeted assistance.

As school districts adopt digital curriculum in one-to-one environments, we need to evaluate these materials against a new scale that measures the degree to which they are universally designed and offer multiple means of representation, engagement and expression, as well as a full array of supports for student success.

Reframing Teaching

Universal design for learning reframes the way we think about diversity in the classroom and enables teachers and schools to effectively reach and engage a far broader range of learners. The basic tenet of UDL is that all children can learn if we create multiple avenues of accessibility to the learning targets. Rather than seeing inability or disability in our students, we recognize natural variability.

Through UDL, customization and personalization are built into curriculum and instruction so that students can access the tools, strategies and supports they need to succeed. In this way, the UDL framework also helps address cultural and language differences and the achievement gap common to low-income students and students of color.

Though we have learned much about how to design accessible curriculum and instruction, we are still in the early stages of systemic transformation. A few states now extend leadership and support for embedding UDL in state policies and district practices.

As we select new materials, plan new instructional lessons and work with colleagues to provide the collective scaffolds necessary for student learning, we should ensure our choices and decisions embody the principles of universal design for learning. We need to seek out professional development that will develop UDL-related attitudes and aptitudes districtwide. And we need to become the architects and outspoken champions of classrooms, schools and districts where every student is offered effective on-ramps to positive engagement with a full curriculum and higher levels of achievement.