

5440-82 Special Educator

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 Blind and Visually Impaired, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or Intensive Special Education Teacher.

In order to qualify for this endorsement, the candidate shall demonstrate the following:

Knowledge Standards:

Demonstrates knowledge of human development including the implications of a variety of delays, disorders, and disabling conditions for learning and development; appropriate procedures and strategies for identifying the needs and supporting the learning and development of individuals with special needs; and procedural, consultation/collaboration, and case management knowledge and skills essential to implementation of an effective educational support program, as delineated in current national professional standards. Specifically, the educator understands:

Foundations:

Typical and atypical development at the early childhood through early adolescent (for grades K-8) or early adolescent through adult level (for grade 7 through age 21) within each domain, including the wide variation in how individuals learn and typically develop, and the variety of economic, social, and cultural influences which affect each student's life

The interaction of primary language, culture, and familial background with an individual's special needs

The key roles of the special educator as teacher, advocate, consultant, facilitator, and collaborator within the educational support system

The philosophical, ethical, historical, and legal foundations of special education, including the evolution of key litigation, legislation, and regulations affecting special education

Current models and theories that form the basis of special education practice

Current state and federal laws, regulations, and procedures governing referral; identification/evaluation; eligibility determination; Individual Education Program (IEP) development, implementation, and monitoring; and placement of students with disabilities

Professional and ethical standards of practice

Program Development, Consultation, and Collaboration:

Characteristics, processes, and roles associated with effective collaboration, teaming, consultation, facilitation, and communication within school, family, and community systems

Family systems theory and principles of family-centered practice, including how to work cooperatively and respectfully with all families to support children's learning and development

5440-82 Special Educator (Cont'd)

Strategies for effective group facilitation and leadership

Local, state, and community resources, service delivery systems, and systems of care available to support students and their families

The different roles of the various specialized therapeutic service providers (e.g., OT's, PT's, SLPs) available to support students with disabilities

Roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and their supervision

Assessment:

The comprehensive evaluation process, including legal aspects, appropriate procedures, and principles of non-discriminatory evaluation

Selection, administration, and interpretation of data from various forms of assessment, and interpretation of reports from specialized service providers

Measurement theory and practice, including issues of validity, reliability, norming, and bias

How to enable the participation of students with disabilities in all local and statewide assessments through accommodation and/or alternative assessment methods

Disabilities, Specialized Instruction, and Interventions:

Characteristics of the disabilities stipulated in state law, and impacts of these disabilities on an individual's educational performance

A wide variety of developmentally-appropriate, research-based specialized curricula, instructional practices, and curriculum-based assessments to enable students with disabilities to progress in the general education curriculum

Strategies for proactive and nonaversive behavior management

Foundations of Basic Skill Areas:

Development of Oral Language and Literacy – Processes, principles, and dimensions of oral language acquisition; the relationship between oral language development and literacy development; the impact of physical, emotional, and cultural factors on language development and the acquisition of reading and writing; role of metacognition in language and literacy development; elements of effective, age-appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication

Language and Word Study – The purposes of language; the phonemic, morphemic, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic systems of language and their relationship to the reading and writing process; the pronunciation of English phonemes and their graphemes; the developmental progression of phonological awareness; vocabulary development and its relationship to literacy acquisition; the developmental stages of spelling and morphological analysis

Second Language Issues – The process of second language acquisition, challenges second language issues pose to student reading and writing development, and distinctions between language learning issues and learning disabilities

5440-82 Special Educator (Cont'd)

Reading Comprehension and Fluency – Reading as the process of constructing meaning from text; the components of fluency; factors that influence comprehension and fluency; typical elements and features of narrative and expository texts, and how readers' awareness of these features supports comprehension; cognitive strategies and instructional approaches for supporting comprehension and fluency

Written Expression – The continuum of writing development; the composing processes that writers use, and planning strategies most appropriate for particular kinds of writing; dimensions of quality writing and types of writing; the conventions of written English; uses of writing portfolios, and benchmarks and standards for various ages/grade levels

Numeracy – The continuum of development of mathematical thinking, particularly in the areas of mathematical quantification, calculation, and reasoning

Behavior – Typical and atypical social/emotional, psychological, and cognitive development as they relate to behavioral development

Motor Skills – Typical and atypical sensory and motor development; functioning issues associated with various common disabling conditions; relationship of sensory and motor functioning to learning, classroom behaviors, and demonstration of competence in academic and non-academic tasks

Performance Standards:

Working in collaboration with teachers, parents/caregivers, the student, and other professional and paraprofessional personnel, the Special Educator implements and case manages individual educational programs for students with special needs, including identifying and implementing accommodations in order to support inclusion and providing direct instructional services, in order to enable students with special needs to meet Vermont's learning expectations for students. In addition, the Special Educator develops and evaluates Individual Education Programs (IEP) and provides comprehensive evaluation services with professional and technical assistance from the Consulting Teacher or Director of Special Education. Specifically, the educator:

Foundations:

Advocates for the particular needs of students with Individual Education Programs and for an effective, comprehensive system of support services for all students

Adheres to ethical and professional standards, and state and federal legal and regulatory requirements pertaining to the education of students identified as having special needs

Program Development, Consultation, and Collaboration:

Works cooperatively and respectfully with all families to support and enhance student's learning and development, including using collaboration skills to foster respectful and beneficial relationships with parents and to encourage their participation in decision making and planning within IEP and EPTs

Uses a variety of data and resources to develop and evaluate Individual Education Plans in a collaborative context that includes the student, his or her family, and other professional colleagues and personnel from other agencies, as appropriate

5440-82 Special Educator (Cont'd)

Obtains multiple perspectives on the strengths and needs of students with disabilities, and defines authentic, observable, measurable, and sequenced short- and long-term objectives and benchmarks in IEPs

Case manages individual student programs and facilitates coordinated services for students with special learning needs and their families, including using collaboration skills to work with professionals and personnel from other agencies, as appropriate, to jointly plan services for children and youth with disabilities and their families

Supports classroom teachers in accommodating students with special needs within the regular classroom by identifying, developing, or modifying instructional materials, curricula, or aspects of the classroom environment, and by modeling instructional methods and/or classroom management techniques

Demonstrates effective team teaching skills with teachers in general classroom settings

Assessment:

The following competencies shall be performed with the professional and technical assistance of a Consulting Teacher or Director of Special Education:

- a. Facilitates the comprehensive evaluation process, including adhering to appropriate state and federal guidelines and evaluation procedures
- b. Applies appropriate screening and assessment measures in order to identify learning difficulties and strengths, establish eligibility for special education services, and design effective individualized instruction
- c. Interprets reports from specialized service providers
- d. Incorporates the results of eligibility assessments into written evaluation reports that communicate the array of information gathered in a technically correct format that is understandable to all who must be able to use the reports

Specialized Instruction and Interventions:

Supports students to access and benefit from the general education curriculum through specialized instruction and related services

Based on assessment data, selects and implements interventions and accommodations appropriate to individual student needs

Integrates the various specialized therapeutic services into ongoing curriculum and classroom practice

Monitors and assesses the efficacy of instruction based on ongoing observation and data collection, makes adjustments to the students' learning plans based on these assessments, and provides support and feedback to classroom teachers to adjust their practice

Creates and/or modifies learning environments and interactions in order to promote self-directed learning, self-confidence, socialization, and academic achievement of students with disabilities

5440-82 Special Educator (Cont'd)

Develops and implements systemic and proactive procedures that address problem behavior at the building, classroom, and individual student levels

Uses strategies to promote maintenance and generalization of students' knowledge and skills across settings

Additional Requirements:

Bachelor's degree with a recommendation for licensure in special education, or a minimum of 21 credits in special education

A minimum of a practicum, or the equivalent, in special education at the elementary/middle (grades K-8) or middle/secondary (grade 7-age 21) instructional level, depending on the authorization sought. For the full grade K-age 21 authorization, a minimum of a practicum, 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.