

Texas Educator Certification Examination Program

Field 186: Special Education Specialist EC–12

Examination Framework

September 2024

Domain	Range of Competencies
I. Legal and Ethical Guidelines and Knowledge of Learners	001–002
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DOMAIN I—LEGAL AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNERS

Competency 001 (Legal and Ethical Guidelines): *Apply knowledge of applicable state and federal laws and procedures that pertain to special education services.*

For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the major state guidelines (e.g., Texas Administrative Code [TAC]; transition guidelines; Admission, Review, and Dismissal [ARD] committee guidelines), federal legislation (e.g., Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], Section 504, Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act [ADAAA]), and key court cases (e.g., *Board of Education v. Rowley*, *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*) that have affected knowledge and practice of the education of students receiving special education services and their families.
- B. Demonstrate knowledge of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) eligibility categories for special education and related services.
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of the special education teacher's roles and responsibilities regarding Child Find.
- D. Apply knowledge of the similarities and differences between Section 504 plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- E. Demonstrate knowledge of confidentiality, components, and maintenance of special education eligibility folders (e.g., documentation of receipt of Individualized Education Programs [IEPs] by required staff, storage of folders according to local education agency [LEA] and Texas Education Agency [TEA] requirements).
- F. Demonstrate knowledge of the components of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and procedures for developing, implementing, and amending Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in collaboration with the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) team.
- G. Demonstrate knowledge of the components of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and procedures for developing, implementing, and amending Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in collaboration with the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee.
- H. Apply knowledge of auditing student class schedules to ensure compliance with least restrictive environment (LRE) and schedule of services in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- I. Demonstrate knowledge of the legal responsibility of all school staff to fully implement Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and protect the confidentiality and dignity of students with disabilities.
- J. Apply knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the required members of an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee and the required components of a standard Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting agenda.
- K. Apply knowledge of the state and federal requirements for transition planning beginning at age 14 and of the federal requirements for transfer of rights at the age of majority.
- L. Apply knowledge of graduation options and requirements for students receiving special education services according to Rule §89.1070 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

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Competency 002 (Knowledge of Learners): *Apply knowledge of understanding how to address each student's developmental, communication, and learning needs.*

For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of how disabilities can impact students' developmental milestones, executive functioning, social skills, and learning.
- B. Apply knowledge of the multiple influences (e.g., biological, physical, emotional, psychological, social, environmental, cultural, linguistic) that may affect the individual strengths and needs of students who need varying levels of support in learning and development across the continuum of instructional options (e.g., one-on-one, high support needs, collaborative teaching model) from birth through early adulthood.
- C. Apply knowledge of the multiple influences (e.g., biological, physical, emotional, psychological, social, environmental, cultural, linguistic) that may affect the individual strengths and needs of students with other identifiers (e.g., gifted and talented, English learner [EL], highly mobile, at risk) in learning and development from birth through early adulthood.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of factors contributing to stress and trauma and differentiate these factors from learning disabilities or other disabilities.
- E. Apply knowledge of how to address stress, trauma, protective factors, resilience, and supportive relationships and of how these factors may impact learning, behavior, motivation, and development in students.
- F. Apply knowledge of how brain development from birth through early adulthood impacts students' learning and development (e.g., decision making, problem solving, impulse control, executive functioning, interpersonal relationships).

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DOMAIN II—ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM PLANNING

Competency 003 (Assessment for Data-Driven Decision Making): *Apply knowledge of the evaluation and assessment process and of appropriate assessment strategies to inform instructional design and to support students.*

For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of various forms of assessments (e.g., formative, summative) and their purposes, interpretation, and applications to inform development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to plan and deliver instruction.
- B. Apply knowledge of and strategies for assessing students' learning, behavior, and preferred mode of communication and the structure of the learning environment to evaluate and support classroom and school-based intervention and instruction.
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of administering, interpreting, and gathering baseline data from screening instruments and diagnostic assessments, including reading, mathematics, and behavior assessments.
- D. Apply knowledge of formative and summative assessments administration, data collection, and record maintenance.
- E. Apply knowledge of best practices for obtaining additional expert guidance and collaboration (e.g., English as a Second Language [ESL] specialists, bilingual specialists, translators, speech-language pathologists [SLPs], behavior specialists, related service specialists), as needed, to ensure an appropriate and valid assessment process.
- F. Apply knowledge of how to interpret results of multiple assessments and evaluation data (e.g., state assessments; district assessments; measures of student functioning; students' educational, physical, and medical needs) to determine if a student is making progress toward measurable outcomes in functional, academic, and/or behavioral goals and to determine students' transition needs.
- G. Apply knowledge of identifying, recommending, and implementing appropriate accommodations and/or modifications during assessment (e.g., for classroom, behavior, state, district, or other assessments) as determined by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee.
- H. Apply knowledge of interpreting the results of a variety of assessment data (e.g., classroom, state, and district transition assessments) to describe students' present levels of student academic achievement, functional performance, and progress on annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.
- I. Interpret and respond to the results of multiple points of assessment data to inform students' mastery of grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that will advise instructional decision making.
- J. Apply knowledge of interpreting the results of a variety of assessment data to describe students' progress on and mastery of grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- K. Apply knowledge of supporting students in understanding their own assessment data and using these results to self-monitor, self-regulate, self-advocate, and build self-efficacy.

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Competency 004 (Developing, Implementing, and Monitoring Individualized Programs): *Apply knowledge of contributing to, monitoring, and reporting on individualized programming for students.*

For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of the special education teacher's role in creating and implementing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) with fidelity, including implementing data collection and progress monitoring of students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and reporting interpretable progress to students and their parents/guardians throughout the year.
- B. Apply knowledge of how to use a variety of formative and summative assessment data to identify learning goals and to plan, design, adjust, and adapt instruction or intervention.
- C. Apply knowledge of how students' academic, social, communication, and functional developmental characteristics impact their levels of support needs in Individualized Education Program (IEP) development.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of coordinating effectively with staff and service providers to utilize assessment data in order to provide appropriate academic, social, communication, and behavioral supports.
- E. Apply knowledge of using a variety of assessment data to inform the drafting of students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (e.g., writing measurable annual goals, present levels of academic achievement and functional performance [PLAAFP], accommodations and modifications, considering continuum of placement and least restrictive environment [LRE]).
- F. Apply knowledge of creating, scheduling, and facilitating ongoing Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition activities to build students' readiness for postsecondary living and transition.
- G. Apply knowledge of preparing for an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting (e.g., collecting required data, interpreting the results of progress monitoring and classroom assessment data, visually representing and interpreting data to show student progress).
- H. Apply knowledge of preparing and supporting students in leading Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee discussions regarding progress on Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals; mastery of grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); appropriate accommodations (e.g., academic, behavior, state and district assessments); transition planning, needs, and goals; and other supplements as needed.

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DOMAIN III—CURRICULAR KNOWLEDGE AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Competency 005 (Subject Matter Content and Specialized Instructional Strategies): *Apply knowledge of implementing curriculum through relevant and appropriate content and specialized instructional strategies to guide and support students' learning and development.*

For example:

- A. Apply content-specific knowledge to develop specially designed instruction, goals, and objectives that are aligned with early numeracy, early literacy, and pre-academic skills according to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines for students receiving special education services and those suspected to have a disability, including students with high support needs.
- B. Apply content-specific knowledge to develop individualized instruction, goals, and objectives that are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for students receiving special education services and those suspected to have a disability, including students with high support needs.
- C. Apply content-specific knowledge to develop individualized instruction, goals, and objectives that are aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for students receiving special education services to progress in individualized programs toward completion of a range of graduation plans.
- D. Apply knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) subject matter and specialized curricula to inform programmatic and instructional decisions for students receiving special education services.
- E. Apply content-specific knowledge to modify and differentiate and/or develop specially designed instruction as well as provide access to instructional materials for a wide range of student performance levels (e.g., content-specific vertical alignment).
- F. Apply knowledge of designing appropriate learning and performance accommodations and modifications for students across academic subject matter content of the general education curriculum.
- G. Demonstrate knowledge of specialized curricula, including curriculum and specialized instructional strategies for social skills, life skills, transition, orientation and mobility, independence, and self-advocacy, and of how to accommodate, modify, and/or adapt the curricula across contexts based on individual students' strengths and needs.
- H. Apply knowledge of how to integrate Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) subject matter with specialized instructional strategies and specialized curricula implementation to inform individual students' needs in different contexts (e.g., center-based, home-based, and school-based classrooms; specialized and general education classrooms).
- I. Demonstrate knowledge of the key components of various postsecondary education, career options, and pathways, including employment models.
- J. Apply knowledge of how to promote student readiness for various employment models and pathways and how to provide students with access to community-based instruction and vocational training.
- K. Demonstrate knowledge of barriers to accessibility for students receiving special education services and how to plan for ways to address those barriers through the implementation of specialized curricula (e.g., low-incidence and high-incidence supports).

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Competency 006 (Supporting Learning Using Effective Instruction): *Apply knowledge of diverse strengths and needs of students to plan appropriate, effective, meaningful, and challenging instruction.*

For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of the key differences between Individualized Education Program (IEP) accommodations and modifications.
- B. Apply knowledge of how to plan instruction with appropriate delivery of accommodations and modifications according to the requirements of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) (e.g., supplements, assistive technology, related services) and of the potential impacts of modified curriculum on a student's graduation plan.
- C. Apply knowledge of designing explicit, scaffolded, systematic, and individualized instruction that adapts instructional intensity and/or intervention to build on students' strengths and accommodate students' needs based on various factors (e.g., learning processes, content, pedagogy, assessment results).
- D. Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to promote high academic expectations of students and active student engagement, motivation, self-reliance, and self-advocacy.
- E. Apply knowledge of creating opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills using different modalities (e.g., kinesthetic, visual, auditory, olfactory, equilibrioception) and allowing each student to advance in rigor and depth of knowledge as they demonstrate understanding.
- F. Apply knowledge of learning processes to select and use a variety of grouping strategies (e.g., whole group, small group, individual) to meet the learning needs of each student.
- G. Apply knowledge of the universal design for learning (UDL) guidelines to create and incorporate strategies for making content and instruction inclusive, culturally responsive, accessible, and challenging for students with all support needs in a range of instructional and educational settings (e.g., co-teaching classroom, self-contained classroom, resource room, content mastery program).
- H. Apply knowledge of types of assistive technology (e.g., low-tech, medium-tech, high-tech) and how to plan for strategic integration of assistive technology into daily teaching practices based on students' developmental and learning needs.
- I. Apply knowledge of promoting and supporting the transfer (e.g., generalization) of concepts and skills across content areas, educational settings (e.g., co-teaching classroom, self-contained classroom, resource room, content mastery program), and environmental settings (e.g., community, job placement).
- J. Apply knowledge of planning, adapting, and delivering high-quality, inclusive, meaningful, and age-appropriate learning experiences for students with high support needs across instructional settings to develop the highest possible learning outcomes.
- K. Apply knowledge of selecting, adapting, and applying instructional strategies that support transition goals and of planning and integrating transition-focused activities into high-quality classroom instruction.

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Competency 007 (Supporting Social, Behavioral, and Emotional Growth): *Apply knowledge of strategies to create effective and safe learning environments, methods to promote students' positive behavior, and supports to develop and measure behavioral interventions.*

For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of effective procedures and routines (e.g., visual supports, schedules) to create safe, organized, and universally accessible learning environments and experiences to support and engage students.
- B. Apply knowledge of strategies and methods for establishing, teaching, and maintaining high expectations for students' behavior; providing constructive, specific, and developmentally appropriate feedback to guide students' behavior; and building positive relationships with students based on understanding of individual strengths and needs, mutual respect, and rapport.
- C. Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate procedures and routines to facilitate safe and efficient transitions and to promote independence, self-regulation, and executive functioning with students in varying environments.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of how factors (e.g., family, community, trauma) may impact students' behavior in the learning environment and of the impact of behavior on the development and learning of students and classmates.
- E. Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate preventative and responsive practices that promote students' social competence and communication and contribute to a positive and safe learning environment, including classroom and schoolwide systems, such as the implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS).
- F. Demonstrate knowledge of research-based de-escalation strategies, key components and purposes of nonviolent crisis intervention, and restorative discipline practices to effectively prevent, de-escalate, and address externalizing behavior.
- G. Demonstrate knowledge of the key components and purposes of functional behavioral assessments (FBAs), behavioral intervention plans (BIPs), and behavioral interventions, including applied behavior analysis (ABA), that conform to legal and ethical guidelines.
- H. Apply knowledge of interpreting functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) to collect and analyze data to design behavioral interventions.
- I. Monitor effectiveness of behavioral interventions through progress monitoring data as defined in the behavioral intervention plan (BIP) to evaluate the effects of behavioral interventions.
- J. Demonstrate knowledge of preventative practices to address possible traumas, including harassment, bullying, maltreatment, violence, and sexual assault (e.g., physical, racial, emotional, digital); report any instances through appropriate channels; and access appropriate school and community supports for students who need social, physical, and/or emotional learning support.

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DOMAIN IV—PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION, LEARNING, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Competency 008 (Consultation and Collaboration): *Apply knowledge of strategies, approaches, and techniques for effective consultation and collaboration with students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and other professionals to support students' development and learning.*

For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of collaborating in a culturally responsive manner with parents/guardians, school personnel, and specialists to address students' instructional, emotional, behavioral, and social needs in a variety of situations (e.g., during meetings, when making content and instruction accessible and challenging).
- B. Apply knowledge of supervising, collaborating with, and mentoring paraprofessionals to identify and define the responsibilities, skills, and professional development needed for their roles.
- C. Apply knowledge of and best practices in consulting, co-planning, and co-teaching with campus staff and/or colleagues using collaborative strategies, supports, and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- D. Apply knowledge of coordinating effectively with administrators, school counselors, and related service providers to build students' schedules according to identified least restrictive environment (LRE) as stated in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- E. Demonstrate knowledge of implementing transition activities in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that include community resources and service providers.
- F. Apply knowledge of best practices associated with various co-teaching strategies and models based on setting (e.g., inclusive, self-contained) and the individual needs of students (e.g., all support needs, high support needs) when delivering, adapting, differentiating, and/or developing specially designed instruction to meet students' needs (e.g., instructional, emotional, behavioral, social).
- G. Apply knowledge of effective collaboration with general education teachers to deliver, adapt, differentiate, co-teach, and develop specially designed instruction to address students' instructional, emotional, behavioral, and social needs; and understand the reciprocal relationship with general education teachers for effective and inclusive practices.
- H. Apply knowledge of collaborating and consulting with multidisciplinary teams to plan and implement instruction (e.g., career and technical education, electives, extracurriculars, community resources) in accordance with students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- I. Apply knowledge of selecting and utilizing resources to improve communication and collaboration with families and the community.
- J. Demonstrate knowledge of coordinating with related service providers and community agencies to identify and access services, resources, and supports to meet the needs of students who receive special education services.

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Competency 009 (Professional Learning and Responsibilities): *Apply knowledge of the professional roles and responsibilities of the early childhood–grade 12 special education teacher.*

For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood–grade 12 special education teacher and of other professionals who deliver special education services, including related and instructional service providers.
- B. Demonstrate knowledge of effective strategies to advocate for improved outcomes for students who receive special education services needing varying levels of support and their families while considering their social, cultural, and linguistic diversity.
- C. Apply knowledge of the importance of and the process involved in setting short-term and long-term professional goals based on ongoing analysis of student learning, self-reflection, and professional standards.
- D. Demonstrate understanding of the barriers that exist for students who receive special education services needing varying levels of support from early childhood to postsecondary educational settings, with consideration of graduation requirements, and how to work with stakeholders to design environments and select curriculum resources that include supports that address a range of students' needs.
- E. Apply knowledge of advocacy for social, legal, and environmental changes and/or priorities for students who receive special education services needing varying levels of support and their families, recognizing students' identified needs.
- F. Apply knowledge of advocating for family and student participation in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process; Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings; transition plan development; and the graduation plan decision-making process.

DOMAIN V—ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE

Competency 010 (Analysis and Response): *In a written response, analyze and interpret varying types of data (e.g., qualitative, quantitative) to identify a given student's strengths and needs and design appropriate instruction.*

For example:

- A. Analyze and interpret assessment information on a given student, including varying types of data (e.g., qualitative, quantitative) from a variety of formal and informal assessments (e.g., progress monitoring data, student work samples, anecdotal observation notes) to identify a student's strengths and needs.
- B. Synthesize data and information on the given student to generate one (1) recommendation for instruction and/or intervention.
- C. Describe how a teacher would implement and monitor the progress of the generated recommendation.