Standards for Special Education: General Curriculum Teacher Candidates

Both NCLB and IDEA work to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum and be educated in the least restrictive environment. The new standards for special education teachers have been developed to align with the ABC Plus accountability outcomes and the US Department of Education’s accountability standards established in NCLB legislation. The new standards for special education teachers are in addition to the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards that were adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2007. The new specialty area standards for Special Education: General Curriculum were developed in the spring 2008 to better prepare teachers to address the unique needs of students with disabilities in the 21st century. The new standards were aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards and are the basis for teacher program development, teacher preparation program evaluation, and professional development.

In the 21st century, teachers of student with disabilities will need to know and be able to address:

- the policies, process and procedures for providing special education services.
- assessment and how it drives instructional and behavioral intervention.
- research-validated instructional and behavioral strategies.
- mathematics, language and literacy instruction in a systematic, explicit, multi-sensory approach.
- the impact of the environment on behavior and learning for students with disabilities.
- the needs of families, general education teachers and other professionals through effective collaborative and consultation.

Standard 1: Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates know the policies, process and procedures for providing special education services.

Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates have a thorough understanding of the Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. Through this knowledge of the process of referral, evaluation, and development of the individualized education program (IEP), teachers provide appropriate individualized education in the least restrictive environment.

- Know the Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities
- Understand the placement process from referral to delivery of services
- Know the typical characteristics of students in each disability category.
- Understand and facilitate effective planning for transitions (preschool, school, postsecondary/adult).

Standard 2: Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates have the knowledge and skills to use a variety of assessment techniques to plan and implement instruction, monitor student progress, and document learning.

Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates use a variety of assessment strategies and sources to determine students’ prior knowledge, skills, interests and learning styles. They plan appropriate instruction, evaluate progress toward learning goals and inform families and professional service providers. Teacher candidates view assessment as an integral part of the teaching/learning cycle, in which assessment drives instruction, and evaluation of learner outcomes informs further instruction. Teacher candidates use regular, frequent, valid, and reliable outcome measures to evaluate and respond to the progress of individual students toward annual goals and to differentiate instruction in a tiered model.

- Evaluate reliability, validity, and the technical soundness to select measures used in assessing students for eligibility, instructional decisions, and progress monitoring.
• Demonstrate instructional decisions using grade-level benchmarks, CBM, and progress monitoring data in a tiered model for differentiation of instruction.
• Assess students’ reading performance by obtaining measures of phonemic awareness, letter-sound association skills, word identification skills, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.
• Assess students’ written language performance by gaining measures of fine motor skills, mechanics of writing, writing fluency and written expression.
• Assess students’ mathematics performance through analysis of error patterns and an understanding of the components of number sense (quantity/magnitude, form of a number, base ten, equality, numeration, algebraic and geometric equation and proportional reasoning).
• Use age appropriate transition assessments for students ages 14 and above.

**Standard 3: Special Education: General Curriculum**

**teacher candidates have a broad working knowledge of research-validated instructional and behavioral strategies to facilitate learning across the curriculum for K-12 students.**

Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates utilize research-validated instructional and behavioral strategies to facilitate learning across the various disciplines. Cognitive and behavioral techniques support the use of best practices for all students. Research-validated techniques support innovative integration of standards-based content with appropriate use of technology.
• Demonstrate how to teach social skills using explicit and systematic instruction.
• Demonstrate competency to design a self-management program and instruct students on implementation of program.
• Know research-validated cognitive learning strategies.
• Know research-validated meta-cognitive learning strategies.
• Demonstrate the principles of Universal Design for Learning through the use of multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement across the curriculum.
• Plan and facilitate comprehensive transition services.

**Standard 4: Special Education: General Curriculum**

**teacher candidates have the knowledge and skills to use systematic, explicit, multi-sensory methods to teach communication skills, reading, written expression, and mathematics.**

Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates provide a comprehensive series of daily instructional lessons in communication skills, reading, written language and math that are systemic, explicit and multi-sensory.
• Understand the essential components of the English language (phonetics and phonology, sound production, morphology and orthography, semantics and syntax and pragmatics) and the impact of language on learning.
• Understand the critical components of comprehensive reading instruction (phonemic awareness, letter-sound associations, word identification, spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension).
• Understand and provide instruction in the essential components of math instruction (quantity/magnitude, form of a number, base ten, equality, numeration, algebraic and geometric application and proportional reasoning).
• Understand and provide instruction in the essential components of written language instruction (composition and conventions).
Standard 5: Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates have the knowledge and skills to teach students to use behaviors that promote success in the learning environment, which include the development of social competence.

Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates use effective strategies that promote a positive learning environment. They also use small-group and individualized strategies that enable students with behavior problems to develop academic and social competence. Teacher candidates use individualized behavior management strategies for those with more severe behavior problems.

- Know how to establish rules and procedures that convey behavioral expectations.
- Demonstrate how to teach social skills using explicit and systematic instruction.
- Demonstrate competency to conduct and analyze a functional behavior assessment.
- Demonstrate competency to use functional behavioral assessment results to develop a positive behavior support plan based on research-validated interventions.
- Know how to implement individualized positive behavior support strategies based on functional behavior assessment results for students with significant behavior problems.

Standard 6: Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates collaborate and consult with families, general education teachers and other professionals to further the academic and social development of students.

Special Education: General Curriculum teacher candidates recognize how accessing resources and collaborating with families, schools, and the community can impact student success. Communicating and building trusting partnerships with families, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are essential elements that must be implemented. Teacher candidates partner with families to gather critical information to assess student progress and design instruction. Inclusive education and other collaborative teaching models assist with providing access to the general curriculum.

- Demonstrate effective communication strategies
- Establish effective interagency collaboration with adult service providers
- Model evidence based variations of co-teaching
- Collaborate and consult with interpreters, transliterators and other related / adult service providers.
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provide effective paraeducator supervision