

TASB Student Solutions

ADMINISTRATION

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICE PERSONNEL

September 2025



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Special Education and Related Service Personnel

What is Required

All Campus Special Education and Related Service Personnel must be certified, endorsed, or licensed in the area or areas of assignment in accordance with federal and state law or appropriate state agency credentials. This includes, but is not limited to, any individual employed as a: teacher, teacher intern or trainee (only in the area for which the intern certificate is issued), librarian, educational aide, paraprofessional, administrator, educational diagnostician, school counselor, audiologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, physician, nurse, school psychologist, licensed professional counselor, marriage and family therapist, social worker, and speech language pathologist. However, an individual employed by the district prior to September 1, 2011, to perform marriage and family therapy is not required to hold a license as a marriage and family therapist to provide marriage and family therapy with that district. A Provider of Dyslexia Instruction (PDI) is not required to be certified in special education unless this person is employed in a special education position that requires such certification.

The Texas Education Agency will establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of the IDEA are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve students with disabilities. The qualifications must include qualifications for Related Service Personnel and Paraprofessionals that are consistent with State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services. In addition, Related Service Personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession may not have their certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis.

Special Education Teacher Qualifications

A qualified special education teacher is one that:

- Has obtained a full state certification as a special education teacher, including alternative certification, or passed the state special education teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in the state as a special education teacher;
- Has not had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and
- Holds at least a bachelor's degree.

In Texas, an assignment of Special Education Teacher is allowed with one of the following SBEC-issued certificates:

- (1) Bilingual Special Education Supplemental: Early Childhood-Grade 12;
- (2) Core/Special Education with the Science of Teaching Reading: Early Childhood-Grade 6;
- (3) Deafblind Supplemental: Early Childhood-Grade 12;
- (4) Special Education Specialist: Early Childhood-Grade 12;
- (5) Special Education Supplemental (valid at grade level and subject area of the base certificate);
- (6) Special Education: Early Childhood-Grade 12;
- (7) Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments Supplemental: Early Childhood-Grade 12;
- (8) Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Early Childhood-Grade 12; or
- (9) any special education certificate issued before September 1, 2003, and deemed appropriate by the employing school district for placement into the assignment.

Alternative Certification

The district may consider a teacher in an alternative certification program who is not yet fully certified as qualified if the teacher is participating in an approved State Board of Education certification alternative route to special education certification program under which the teacher:

- Receives high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom focused to ensure the teacher has a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction, before and while teaching;
- Participates in a program with intensive supervision consisting of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers or a teacher mentoring program;
- Assumes functions as a teacher only for a specified period of time not to exceed three years; and
- Demonstrates satisfactory progress toward full certification as prescribed by the state.

Assignment

The district may assign a teacher who holds a special education certificate or an endorsement to any level of basic special education instructional program serving students with disabilities ages 3 to 21, as allowed by certification, with the following exceptions:

- Individuals assigned to provide speech therapy instructional services must hold a

valid Texas Education Agency certificate in speech and hearing therapy or speech and language therapy, or a valid state license as a speech/language pathologist.

- Teachers certified in educating students with visual impairments must be available to students with visual impairments, including deaf-blindness, through one of the district's instructional options, a shared services arrangement with other districts, or an education service center. Teachers assigned full-time or part-time to instruct children from birth to age two with visual impairments, including deaf-blindness, must be certified in the education of students with visual impairments. A teacher of students with visual impairments must be certified in either Deficient Vision, Visually Handicapped, or with Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments Supplemental: Early Childhood-Grade 12.
- A teacher of students with deaf-blindness must be certified with the Deafblind Supplemental: Early Childhood-Grade 12 certificate and one or more of the following certificates: Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments Supplemental: Early Childhood-Grade 12, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Early Childhood-Grade 12, Teacher of Students who are Visually Impaired, Deficient Vision, Visually Handicapped, Deaf and Severely Hard of Hearing, Hearing Impaired.
- Teachers certified in educating students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be available to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, including a regional day school program for the deaf, or a shared service arrangement; and teachers assigned full-time or part-time to instruct children from birth to age two who are deaf, including deaf-blindness, must be certified in the education of students who are deaf and severely hard of hearing, hearing impaired, or teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing: early childhood-grade 12.
- When the ARD Committee has specified in the student's IEP that a student requires specially designed instruction in physical education, physical education may be provided by those authorized under 19 Texas Administrative Code § 231.703 (relating to requirements for Teachers of Adaptive Physical Education) and other licensed professionals who may be eligible to provide adaptive physical education services to students with disabilities under the scope of practice of the specific license held by the individual.
- A certified orientation and mobility specialist who is certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals must provide orientation and mobility instruction.

Teacher of Record Requirements

If a special education teacher serves as the teacher of record and is responsible for evaluating student achievement and assigning grades, the teacher must either hold a valid certificate that matches the subject and grade level of the assignment, or demonstrate content area competency through requirements as applicable in the “Texas Content Competency Worksheet for Special Education Teachers of Record.”

Content area competency could previously be achieved through the “High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation” (HOUSSE). Teachers who qualified under HOUSSE prior to September 1, 2025, may still demonstrate competency through the HOUSSE process upon administrator assurances in the Content Competency Worksheet.

Teachers of Record who did not meet the HOUSSE requirements prior to September 1, 2025, must meet the competency requirements in the Content Competency Worksheet by amassing the required number of points in each core content area for which they are assigned. An elementary school special education teacher of record must demonstrate competency in each core content area (math, science, social studies, and ELAR) with a combined total of 24 points across all content areas with no one area having less than 3 points. A secondary special education teacher of record must demonstrate competency in each core content area for which they assigned with at least 18 points in that assigned area. Points may be awarded through:

- Being a National Board-Certified Teacher in the content area;
- Minor or major in the content area;
- Passing score on an aligned PACT exam;
- College credit hours in the content area of closely related field;
- Teaching experience in the content area or closely related field;
- Documented professional development in the content area/closely related field within the last 3 years;
- Completion of an approved residency placement under supervision of a special education teacher of record in the content area or closely related field;
- Paraprofessional experience under the supervision of a special education teacher in the content area;
- Science of Teaching Reading Exam and Texas Reading Academies; and
- Teacher Incentive Allotment designation.

First year teachers (first year providing instruction to students, not the educator’s first year assigned as a special education teacher of record) and secondary teachers of multiple subjects have a calendar year in which to meet content competency requirements. Administrators will work with the educator to identify pathways to content certification, the appropriate PACT exam(s), and/or targeted professional development opportunities that would satisfy content competency requirements during their year-long runway.

The district will make every effort to secure educators trained in the specialized skills and knowledge needed to serve the special education students. If a staff member does not have the skills and knowledge needed for the assignment, the district is responsible for making provisions for the person to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge.

Paraprofessional Personnel

All Paraprofessional Personnel employed by the district must be certified.

Certified Paraprofessional Personnel working as educational aides may be assigned to work with eligible students with disabilities, general education and special education teachers, and related service personnel. Paraprofessional Personnel may also be assigned to assist students with special education transportation, serve as a job coach, or serve in support of community-based instruction. If the Paraprofessional Personnel are paid from state administrative funds, they may be assigned to special education clerical or administrative duties such as the Special Education Resource System, the Special Education Management System, or other special education clerical or administrative duties.

Personnel for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing

A student who is deaf or hard of hearing must have an education in which teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, progress assessors, administrators, and others involved in educating the student understand the unique nature of deafness and the hard-of-hearing condition. A teacher of students who are deaf or hard of hearing either must be proficient in appropriate language modes or use an interpreter certified in appropriate language modes if certification is available. Interpreting services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be provided by an interpreter who is certified in the appropriate language modes, if certification in such modes is available. If certification is available, the interpreter must be a certified member of (or certified by) the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or the Texas Board for Evaluation of Interpreters.

Personnel for the Visually Impaired

Students receiving Orientation & Mobility services must have services provided by a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist who is certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals.

Definitions

A “Special Education Resource System (SERS)” is a local school district's clearinghouse for all instructional materials used to teach handicapped students in any given

instructional arrangement. It gives teachers ready access to instructional resources that correlate with the district's curriculum objectives and the student's individual educational plan. Services offered by a SERS may include loaning materials and equipment, training personnel to use materials and educational technology, providing access to information retrieval programs, disseminating information, and providing other services related to instructional materials.

A "Special Education Management System" is a school district's computer program designed to collect and maintain data to implement the IDEA and other related educational laws and regulations.

Additional Procedures

Certification to Teach Students with Visual Impairments

To be eligible to be issued a certificate to teach students with visual impairments, a person must complete either:

- All course work required for that certification in an approved educator preparation program; or
- An alternative educator certification program approved for the purpose by the Board.

The person must also perform satisfactorily on certification exams for certification to teach students with visual impairments after completing the requisite course work or program and satisfy any other requirements prescribed by the Board. These eligibility requirements only apply to applications for the initial certificate submitted after September 1, 2011.

Special Education Instruction

While general education teachers may provide accommodations and modifications to students with disabilities under the direction of Special Education Personnel, special education services (i.e., specially designed instruction) required in the IEP must be provided by appropriately certified Campus Special Education Personnel and/or Related Service Personnel. Providers of Dyslexia Instruction (PDI) may provide dyslexia instruction without special education certification unless otherwise employed in a position that requires special education certification.

Notice to Parents

At the beginning of each school year, the district must notify the parents of each student that the parents may request, and the district must provide upon request (and in a timely

manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's teachers, including, at a minimum, the following information:

- Whether the student's teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; is teaching under emergency or other provisions status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if they are, the qualifications of the paraprofessionals.

The district must also provide each parent timely notice that the student has been assigned, or has been taught for thirty (30) or more consecutive instructional days by, a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned. The district should make a good-faith effort to ensure that all notices are provided in a bilingual form to any parent or guardian whose primary language is not English. Campus Special Education Personnel shall place a copy of the notice in the student's special education file.

Professional Development

Campus Special Education Personnel teaching students with disabilities must participate in evidence-based professional development that:

- Relates to the instruction of students with disabilities, including students with disabilities who also have other intellectual or mental health conditions; and
- Is designed for educators who work primarily outside the area of special education.

The district must provide such training to Campus Personnel who work primarily outside the area of special education only if the educator does not possess the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the IEP developed for the student receiving instruction from the educator. The district may determine the time and place at which the training is delivered.

The district should consult with persons with expertise in research-based practices for students with disabilities, including colleges, universities, private and nonprofit organizations, regional education service centers, qualified district personnel, and any other persons identified as qualified by the district when developing or maintaining this training.

Evidence of Implementation

- SBEC Certification Documents
- Notice to Parents Related to Certification
- Professional Development Transcripts
- Job Assignments
- Offer Letters/Contracts

Resources

[The Texas Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process: Special Education and Related Service Personnel - Region 18](#)

[OSERS Questions and Andrews on Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\), Evaluations, and Reevaluations \(Sept. 2011\) – U.S. Department of Education](#)

[OSERS Dear Colleague Letter \(Dec. 5, 2014\) – U.S. Department of Education](#)

[Certification - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Texas Content Competency Worksheet for Special Education Teachers of Record - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Becoming an Educational Aide in Texas - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Approved Educator Standards - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Certificate Look Up - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Official Record of Educator Certificate Search - SBEC](#)

[School District Personnel Certification Information- Texas Education Agency](#)

[Interpreter Certification Guidance - Texas Education Agency](#)

[Planning for Effective Professional Development - Texas Education Agency](#)

Citations

Board Policy DBA, DK, and DMA; 20 USC 1412(a)(14)(C), 6312(e)(1); 34 CFR 156(a)–(c); Texas Education Code 21.003, 21.0485, 21.057, 21.451, 29.304(a); 19 Texas Administrative Code 89.1131(a)–(e); 231.701(d); Texas Occupations Code 502.002