COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System:

Practical Ideas for Evaluating Special Education Teachers

Developed by:
Consortium of Directors of Special Education

Document Version 1: Fall 2015
To provide feedback, please email: Educator_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us

PLEASE NOTE: The purpose of this document is to highlight possible approaches for districts and BOCES to consider when constructing their approach to evaluating culturally and linguistically diverse education specialists. CDE will be collecting on-going feedback to improve this guidance.

Following the passage of Senate Bill 10-191, commonly referred to as the great teachers and leaders act, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) began creating the state's evaluation system for all educators whose positions require them to hold a state license. During the first two years of development of the new system (2010 to 2012), CDE staff members focused on the processes and materials for evaluating teachers and principals. Those processes and materials were pilot tested during the 2012-13 school year, and a validation study was conducted during the 2013-14 school year.

Throughout the development, pilot testing, and validation study activities, CDE heard from groups of teachers and their evaluators whose positions require them to fulfill unique roles and responsibilities. Comments included concerns that the teacher materials do not provide adequate guidance for evaluating staff members in such positions. They have requested additional guidance regarding evidence/artifacts that may be used by such specialized teachers. In addition, they have asked about specific practices to "look-for" to guide their classroom observations and help ensure that all licensed teachers receive fair, valid, and reliable evaluations.

In response to such requests, CDE initiated the development of a set of practical ideas guides written by practitioners for practitioners. They are intended to provide informal advice to teachers and their evaluators to help them understand the evaluation process within their specific context. Unless otherwise noted, the contents of this brief are not policy requirements but merely ideas to help educators make the best use of the state model system for all teachers. Practical ideas guides are currently under development for the following groups:

- Early Childhood Education Teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Teacher Librarians
- Teachers of English Language Learners/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Specialists
- Teachers of the Arts (Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts)

It is CDE's hope that these briefs will help everyone involved have a better understanding of how the teachers' rubric and evaluation process may be fairly used to ensure that all teachers, including those in the groups listed above, are evaluated in a manner that is fair, rigorous, transparent and valid.

Acknowledgements

The many contributions of the Consortium of Directors of Special Education (Consortium) are gratefully acknowledged. Consortium members generously gave their time and expertise to write this practical ideas guide as a service to their colleagues. It is their hope that the brief will be used as an informal set of suggestions and ideas to help special education teachers and their evaluators better understand the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System and how it applies to them. Consortium members who contributed to the development of this brief include:

Deborah Bruce, Special Education Teacher, Scott Elementary School, D11 School District
Jon Paul Burden, Director of Exceptional Student Services, Weld RE-4 School District
Callan Clark, Director of Student Services, Englewood School District
Hillary Douglas, Special Education Teacher, Scott Elementary School, D11 School District
Kimberly Hill, Special Education Teacher, Scott Elementary School, D11 School District
Lisa Humberd, Executive Director of Special Education, Widefield School District #3
Lucinda Hundley, Retired Assistant Supt., Littleton Public Schools, Consortium Coordinator
Sharon Hurst, Director Exceptional Student Services, Aurora Public Schools
Kirsten Javernick, Director/Consortium Representative, Canon City Schools
Troy Lange, Executive Director, Mountain BOCES
Tamara Sobin, Assistant Principal, Scott Elementary School, D11 School District
Carolena Steen, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Cheyenne Mountain School District
Jackie Whittington, Executive Director of Student Services, St. Vrain Valley School District

Support from Colorado Department of Education:
Tanni Anthony, Director, Access, Learning and Literacy Team, Exceptional Student Services Unit
Dee Blecha, Support Specialist, Educator Effectiveness Unit
Courtney Cabrera, Principal Consultant, Educator Effectiveness
Faye Gibson, Supervisor, Statewide Professional Development Initiatives, Exceptional Student Services Unit
Ellen Hunter, Literacy Specialist, Exceptional Student Services Unit
Paul Jebe, Support Specialist, Educator Effectiveness Unit
Toby King, Director of Evaluation and Support, Educator Effectiveness Unit
Linda Lamirande, Standards, Accommodations and Assessment Specialist,
Gina Quintana, Supervisor, Access, Learning and Literacy and Significant Support Needs and Deafblindness Specialist, Exceptional Student Services Unit
Jean Williams, Evaluation Design Specialist, Educator Effectiveness Unit

Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System: Practical Ideas for Evaluating Special Education Teachers

Introduction

Colorado's S. B. 10-191 requires schools, school districts, and the Colorado Department of Education to evaluate all licensed educators against state approved quality and performance standards at least annually. This requirement applies to evaluating the performance of principals, assistant principals, teachers and specialized service professionals. The Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System, developed in response to the passage of S. B. 10-191, requires special education teachers to be evaluated using the processes and materials used for all teachers. Throughout the development and pilot testing of the new system, educators involved in Colorado's special education programs have expressed concerns about the applicability of the new evaluation system for educators such as themselves. Because of the uniqueness of the roles and responsibilities of special education teachers, the teacher evaluation materials do not provide evaluators opportunities to review and rate all facets of the special education teacher's work. This practical ideas guide is intended to help special education teachers and their evaluators maximize the flexibility options built into the new system to ensure a fair, valid and reliable evaluation of teachers serving in this unique role.

The Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System

The new evaluation system is being planned, developed and implemented with a focus on continuously improving educator performance and student results. S.B. 10-191 guides the state and school districts in the transformation of current evaluation processes from a focus primarily on compliance to more rigorous and supportive processes that provide for continuous professional learning and improvement. To support school districts in implementing the new evaluation requirements, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) developed a model system that provides consistent, fair and rigorous educator evaluations, saves district resources and enables them to focus on improving teaching, learning and leading.

The basic purposes of this system are to ensure that all licensed educators:

- Are evaluated using multiple, fair, transparent, timely, rigorous and valid methods, 50 percent of which is determined by the academic growth of their students.
- Receive adequate feedback and professional development support to provide them a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness.
- Are provided the means to share effective practices with other educators throughout the state.
- Receive meaningful feedback to inform their professional growth and continuous improvement.

Successful implementation of the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System is dependent upon attending to the following priorities, or guiding principles for the evaluation system:

1. Data should inform decisions, but human judgment is critical.
2. The implementation of the system must embody continuous improvement.
3. The purpose of the system is to provide meaningful and credible feedback that improves performance.
4. The development and implementation of educator evaluation systems must continue to involve all stakeholders in a collaborative process.
5. Educator evaluations must take place within a larger system that is aligned and supportive.

The Colorado State Model Evaluation System uses a meaningful process for educator evaluation. The year-long

cycle includes regular conversations between the evaluator and person being evaluated; it is not a one-time event or observation, but rather a process that focuses on continuous improvement of the skills, knowledge and

student outcomes of the person being evaluated. S. B. 10-191 requires that at least one observation be conducted annually for non-probationary teachers and at least two for probationary teachers. Districts may choose to conduct additional observations if necessary. The evaluation cycle includes, but is not limited to:

- Annual orientation to the system/tools
- Educator self-assessment
- Review of annual goals and performance plan
- A mid-year review
- An evaluator assessment based on observation(s) and review of artifacts
- An end-of-year review
- A final rating
- Goal-setting and performance planning for the next school year

Who Should Use This Brief

This practical ideas guide is intended for use by special education teachers and their evaluators as they determine the effectiveness of special education teachers from a perspective that recognizes the intricacies of working with students with disabilities. Such teachers provide a range of specialized instruction and support for students with disabilities, across all disability areas and ages of students. Their roles and titles will vary according to student needs and in accordance with various service delivery models across school districts and BOCES. Rather than refer to special education teachers by specific job titles or by type of population served, this document references the context for instruction. The following guidance is intended to support the use of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers (the rubric) in the context of the unique role of an individual special education teacher, as well as to ensure that all special education teachers receive an evaluation that accurately considers their performance on all of the Teacher Quality Standards.

This brief is intended for teachers holding specialist positions who are being evaluated for their work with students who require specially designed instruction, that may include learning unique accommodations in order to work toward meeting or exceeding Colorado's Academic Standards.

General Guidance for Special Education Teachers:

It is critical for the special education teacher to be familiar with the rubric, and to be able to talk about the context of their instructional role. It is also important for the evaluator and teacher to have a common understanding of student comparison, whether they are referring to typical (non-disabled) peers, like peers (with similar disabilities and/or learning needs) and/or if comparing a student to himself/herself. This brief stresses the importance of the pre-conference process, with specific questions and areas to be addressed.

Also, evaluators and special education teachers should consider flexibility in changing or adjusting the weighting of the standards in determining effectiveness, in consideration of that teacher's unique role and population being served. With written justification, specific elements or sections of the rubric may warrant a deeper conversation regarding their applicability to the special education teacher's role.

Successful evaluation practices rely on human judgment. It is the intent of this brief to allow enough flexibility and customization to provide a meaningful process that will support and enhance special education teacher effectiveness.

Review of Annual Goals and Performance Plan

The evaluation system requires a review of the special education teacher's annual goals and professional growth plan as soon as the teacher completes a self-assessment, very early in the school year. This discussion between teacher and evaluator is intended to serve as a pre-conference for the year-long evaluation process. This discussion is critical for establishing a common understanding around the evaluation process, potential problem areas, and any unique issues associated with using the teacher rubric for evaluating the special education teacher.

Discussing the following questions during the pre-conference will help the special education teacher and evaluator set the stage for all subsequent steps in the year-long evaluation process. This conversation should lead to agreement regarding the context for the evaluation, any unique features of the teacher's work that should be considered, and what evidence will suffice to demonstrate that the teacher has performed each professional practice satisfactorily. Of particular importance for special education teachers is establishing a clear understanding of the professional practices that are likely to be difficult to demonstrate. The evaluator should help the teacher understand the observation look-fors and/or range of evidence appropriate to demonstrate adequate performance on all standards, elements, and professional practices included in the rubric.

Discussing the following questions during the review of annual goals and performance plan discussion will help the special education teacher and evaluator develop a common language and common understanding of expectations for the teacher.

1. **What are the settings and service delivery models used for students on the special education teacher's caseload?** The setting may include or be a combination of the following:

Settings:

- **a.** General Education
- **b.** Resource Room
- **c.** Center based
- **d.** Traveling/multi-site (Itinerant)
- **e.** Itinerant
- **f.** On-line
- **g.** Specialized School
- **h.** Homebound

Service Delivery Models:

a. Co-Teaching
b. Pull Out
c. Push In

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of all possible settings and service deliver models used by special education teachers.

2. What is the role of the special education teacher?
Special education teachers provide specially designed instruction that:

Replaces core content instruction.

and/or

Supplements (is in addition to) core content instruction.

Example: A special education teacher who provides specially designed literacy instruction for students with disabilities is held accountable for demonstrating the professional practices for Standard I Element B: Teachers demonstrate knowledge of student literacy development in reading, writing, speaking and listening. *Professional practices for the accomplished and exemplary levels may seem difficult for the students to demonstrate. The accomplished professional practices for Standards 1 Element B state:*

STUDENTS
apply literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening):
- To new/unfamiliar material.
- While communicating during the school day.

It may be difficult for some students with disabilities to demonstrate that they apply literacy skills at the same level as students who do not have disabilities. In such cases, the special education teacher and evaluator should refer to the Extended Evidence Outcomes to determine the most appropriate ways for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate proficiency on these competencies. The determination should take place during the pre-conference discussion early in the year, and prior to observations or evaluation evidence/artifacts collection.

Extended Evidence Outcomes

A strong command of academics is vital for being a successful student and ultimately a productive member of the 21st century workforce. Language, math and science skills have always been fundamental for academic and professional success. However, students in the 21st century are now facing more complex challenges in an ever-changing global society. These challenges have created the need for rigorous standards which include content knowledge and application of skills.

On August 3, 2011, the State Board of Education unanimously adopted the EEO. EEO provide the alternate standards in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Reading, Writing and Communicating for students with significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for the alternate assessment. These alternate expectations are directly aligned to the grade level expectations for all students.

3. What data will the special education teacher provide that ties the specially designed instruction to individual student growth?

Special education teachers should provide individual as well as aggregated data that supports accelerated growth on individual learning targets. Discussion should also include the concept of sufficient time for learning and student growth related to particular students with disabilities. It is reasonable to expect that data is being collected specific to ongoing individual student progress. Results of this conversation lead to an agreement about who the students are that the evaluator and special education teacher are using to compare for purposes of the evaluation.

4. **What data will the special education teacher provide that ties the specially designed instruction to individual student growth?**

Special education teachers should provide individual as well as aggregated data that supports accelerated growth on individual learning targets. Discussion should also include the concept of sufficient time for learning and student growth related to particular students with disabilities. It is reasonable to expect that data are being collected specific to ongoing individual student progress. Results of this conversation lead to an agreement about who the students are that the evaluator and special education teacher are using to compare for purposes of the evaluation.

Except for the evidence required by S.B. 10-191 and described in Exhibit 1, additional evidence/artifacts are not necessary unless the evaluator and person being evaluated have differing opinions about final ratings. In such a case, additional evidence about performance on the specific rating(s) in question may be considered. During the final evaluation conference, the evaluator and special education teacher should agree on the specific evidence needed to support the rating(s) each believes is correct. Such evidence can include documents, communications, analyses, or other types of materials that are normally and customarily collected during the course of conducting their everyday activities.

Exhibits 1 and 2 may prove to be useful for evaluating special education teachers. Evaluators may find them helpful as they think about the work of special education teachers and how their specialized knowledge and skills can be evaluated accurately. They may also help special education teachers develop their own roadmaps to success as they complete their self-assessments, participate in the evaluation process, and develop professional goals.

Exhibit 1, in the first three rows, provides information about what is required by S.B. 10-191.

The fourth and fifth rows of the chart provides ideas for artifacts and other types of evidence that **may** be used to help confirm the accuracy of observations and ratings on non-observable items. It is important to note that these are ideas for evidence/artifacts, but they are not required to be used during the evaluation. Nor should a teacher be expected to collect all of these items. These examples are meant to serve as a catalyst for helping teachers and their evaluators generate a short and focused list of artifacts that may prove beneficial in fully understanding the quality of the teacher's performance. It must be noted that evaluations performed using the state model system may be completed without a consideration of any artifacts.

EXHIBIT 1: Observations, Required Measures and Other Evidence/Artifacts for Special Education Teachers

This exhibit includes information about requirements for observations and multiple measures as described in S. B. 10-191. In addition, examples of artifacts and other evidence that may be used to support final evaluation ratings or to demonstrate proficiency on professional practices are provided. It should be noted that artifacts and other evidence are not required by S. B. 10-191, but are suggested by the Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System as a way to confirm that final ratings are fair and accurate.

S.B. 10-191 REQUIRES MULTIPLE MEASURES OF EDUCATOR PERFORMANCE MEASURED ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. For special education teachers, this requirement is defined as observations, required measures and optional additional measures (evidence/artifacts). While the teacher rubric serves as the data collection tool for observations, districts and BOCES must determine the method for collecting data regarding required measures and additional evidence/artifacts. This chart serves as a reminder of the required measures that must be discussed annually and evidence/artifacts that may be discussed at the end of the evaluation cycle to confirm the accuracy of ratings.

OBSERVATIONS REQUIRED BY S.B. 10-191:

- **Probationary -** At least two documented observations and at least one evaluation that results in a written evaluation report each year.
- **Non-probationary – At least one documented observation every year and one** evaluation that results in a written evaluation report, including fair and reliable measures of performance against Quality Standards every three years.

The frequency and duration of the evaluations shall be on a regular basis and of such frequency and duration as to ensure the collection of a sufficient amount of data from which reliable conclusions and findings may be drawn. Written evaluation reports shall be based on performance standards and provided to the teacher at least two weeks before the last class day of the school year.

REQUIRED MEASURES:

Include at least one of the following measures as a part of the annual evaluation process.

- Student perception measures, where appropriate and feasible;
- Peer feedback;
- Feedback from parents or guardians;
- Review of lesson plans or student work samples.

Continued on next page.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE/ARTIFACTS:
Evaluation of professional practice may include additional measures such as those listed below, which are provided as examples of evidence the evaluator and/or educator being evaluated may share with each other to provide evidence of performance in addition to observations and evaluator ratings collected on the rubric.

Lesson Plans that Reflect:
- Colorado Academic Standards
- The developmental levels of students.
- Individual student learning expectations (the context for the activities observed).
- Individual Education Program (IEP) goals, student strengths/needs, accommodations and modifications
- Progress monitoring and goal/assessment data
- Action plans

Uses feedback from a variety of sources:
- Staff, students and/or parents.
- Families.
- Input from similarly licensed colleagues.
- Evaluator designee with special education expertise.
- IEP team members how the teacher handles specific situations.

Information Collected Outside the Regular Classroom
Maintains a safe and nurturing environment:
- Systems (classroom behavior/ reward systems).
- Schedules (teacher's schedule for serving students).
- Strategies (different instructional strategies, intervention work).
- Methodologies/strategies (variety of methodologies used, token system, check in, check out).
- Picture schedule.
- Caseloads (number, range of needs of students, level of service for individual students)
- Behavior Plans.
- Small group and large group instruction

Communication and Collaboration with families and other significant adults in the lives of the students:
- Progress reports
- IEP documents
- Contact logs.
- IEP meetings
- Department meetings.
- Assessment sessions
- Child find meetings
- Informal and formal interactions with colleagues
- Collaboration with general education teachers
- Planning sessions between the teacher and paraprofessional staff
- activities in the community

Uses a variety of assessment strategies:
- Student portfolios.
- Progress monitoring.
- Adheres to standards of professional practice found in IEP compliance, including timelines, paperwork completion, including all required elements specific documents, etc.
- Samples of student work
- Student goal-setting logs

- **Student schedule reflecting Least Restrictive Environment**

- **Attendance at training opportunities to enhance skills required for special population students.**

Evidence/artifacts listed in Exhibit 1 are examples of items that **may** be used to demonstrate proficiency on any given standard. The evaluator and/or special education teacher being evaluated may use additional evidence/artifacts to address specific issues that need further explanation or illustration during the end-of-year performance discussion. The evaluator and/or special education teacher may also use other evidence/artifacts to provide the rationale for specific element or standard ratings. CDE built flexibility into the use of artifacts and/or other evidence.

Exhibit 2 provides ideas for the evaluator during the observation process. The "look-fors" lists suggest behaviors and activities that may be found in classrooms where the teacher demonstrates proficiency on the Teacher Quality Standards.

EXHIBIT 2: **Teacher Quality Look-Fors: Special Education Teachers**

This exhibit provides information about behaviors evaluators may observe in dance classrooms. The behaviors illustrate that the professional practices included in the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are appropriate for evaluating arts education teachers. They are articulated here to provide specific information about how effective arts education teaching practices not only meet Colorado's Teacher Quality Standards but also how they meet the educational needs of students enrolled in art classes.

QUALITY STANDARD I

Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).

Elements	Practices that May be Observed During Special Education Teacher Observations*
A. Teachers provide instruction that is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards; their District's organized plan of instruction; and the individual needs of their students.	**The Teacher:** • Makes clear to students: o Purpose of the lesson. o Standards applicable to the lesson. o Conditions under which the goal/lesson objective is able to take place. • Uses specially designed instruction to assist students in meeting enrolled grade level expectation/EEO. • Collaborates on lessons/instructional strategies with their general education colleagues in order to meet the needs of all students. • Plans individualized instruction for students that other professionals implement/support (e.g. related service providers, paraprofessionals, etc.).
B. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of student literacy development in reading, writing, speaking and listening.	**The Teacher:** • Demonstrates and implements an understanding of literacy skills/development in order to meet the needs of individual student. • Adjusts content to be appropriate for the skill level of the student. • Collaborates with the general education teacher to provide literacy strategies for the students to access grade level curriculum/material. • Monitors literacy skills/development and adjust lessons in order to address any skills deficits of their students when necessary. • Develops individualized literacy goals for the students to address individual student needs.

C. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of mathematics and understand how to promote student development in numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and measurement, and data analysis and probability.	**The Teacher:** • Emphasizes to students the importance of acquiring various mathematical content and skills with real life applications. • Uses diagnostic instructional strategies that require students to apply and transfer knowledge to other settings/environments/disciplines. • Monitors appropriate mathematical skills and adjusts lessons to address skill deficits of their students when necessary. • Develops individualized mathematical goals for the students in order to address individual student needs.

QUALITY STANDARD I

Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he/she teaches. The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his/her content endorsement area(s).

Elements	Practices that May be Observed During Special Education Teacher Observations*
D. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of the content, central concepts, tools of inquiry, appropriate evidence-based instructional practices and specialized character of the disciplines being taught.	**The Teacher:** • Breaks down concepts into instructional parts and teaches each part using appropriate, effective diagnostic strategies and/or tools. • Uses research-based instructional materials that are accurate and appropriate to meet the individual student needs or learning styles in order to access various lessons across all environments. • Provides explanations of content that are accurate, clear, concise, comprehensive and individualized. • Provides opportunities for students to explore new ideas and concepts. • Collaborates with the classroom teacher to reinforce newly learned content skills in unique situations and different disciplines.
E. Teachers develop lessons that reflect the interconnectedness of content areas.	**The Teacher:** • Scaffolds concepts in order to connect previously learned knowledge in content areas. • Guides students to apply knowledge/skills throughout a variety of disciplines and/or content areas. • Collaborates with the general classroom teacher to reinforce previously taught skills or strategies. • Develops lessons that teach skills necessary for the student to make connections by applying the skills in other environments and disciplines. • Develops lessons that align to the students' individual needs and the standards or EEO's.
F. Teachers make instruction and content relevant to students and take actions to connect students' background and contextual knowledge with new information being taught.	**The Teacher:** • Teaches to the student's individualized learning style and provides background information or other information to help students connect to prior knowledge. • Provides opportunities for students to self-select tasks that reinforce their learning. • Provides various materials that are relevant to the student's individual needs in order for the student to make connections to a variety of content areas. • Allows lessons to be driven by student questioning. • Provides strategies/skills that will allow the student to access new information being taught. • Provides supports to facilitate student engagement.

*The practices included in these tables are examples only and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list. They are provided to help the evaluator and teacher understand how teacher quality standards may be met through dance instruction.

QUALITY STANDARD II

Teachers establish a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.

Elements	Practices that May be Observed During Special Education Teacher Observations
A. Teachers foster a predictable learning environment in the classroom in which each student has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults and peers.	**The Teacher:** • Greets students at the door. • Creates an environment conducive to learning for all students. • Understands and accommodates the unique learning needs of each student. • Clearly communicates the lesson objectives as appropriate for individual student needs. • Establishes learning targets individualized for age, developmental level, and learning levels of students. • Provides meaningful feedback to students during and following lesson. • Provides explicit instruction to enhance the acquisition of social and interpersonal skills.
B. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to and respect for diversity.	**The Teacher:** • Demonstrates respect for all students regardless of their diversity characteristics or learning needs. • Uses visual media that depicts a variety of learning approaches and cultures. • Provides experiences that foster understanding of all types of diversity characteristics, such as disability, culture, ethnicity, religion. • Provides experiences and role models for students with a variety of learning needs. • Promotes self-advocacy in students. • Provide materials and activities that affirm and respect diversity. • Provides families with information and support materials that respect the family's diversity.
C. Teachers engage students as individuals with unique interests and strengths.	**The Teacher:** • Provides optimal learning environment based on individual needs of students • Provides opportunities for students with diverse learning needs and strengths to engage in age, developmental level and learning level appropriate experiences. • Conducts preference probe (inventory) and ties instruction to identifiable preferences, interests, and strengths (e.g., environmental preferences such as lighting, seating, room arrangement, visual schedules, free of auditory distraction, etc.). • Organizes classroom, materials, and instruction to address students' individual needs and interests. • Allows choice of materials and activities to motivate students. • Balances opportunities for independent and small group exploration.

QUALITY STANDARD II

Teachers establish a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.

Elements	Practices that May be Observed During Special Education Teacher Observations
D. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students, including those with special needs, across a range of ability levels.	**The Teacher:** • Differentiates classroom materials in order to provide meaningful/challenging learning experiences for every student. • Differentiates classroom materials and experiences to accommodate learning needs and preferences. • Scaffolds learning experiences to allow all students to experience success. • Models new skills and adjusts strategies for gradual release of responsibility. • Establishes reasonable, yet challenging, learning progressions specific to each student's unique needs. • Adjusts instruction as needed within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). • Uses progress monitoring data to adapt and inform instruction. • Provides structure for frequent distributive practice. • Creates an environment in which students are encouraged and enabled to articulate their needs.
E. Teachers provide proactive, clear and constructive feedback to families about student progress and work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students.	**The Teacher:** • Provides immediate and constructive feedback to students. • Provides families with ongoing progress updates and positive feedback about student performance. • Uses multiple channels of communication to ensure that families and significant adults are able to access and respond to feedback. • Addresses challenges and/or concerns with families as soon as they manifest themselves, taking into account the age and developmental level of the student. • Provides communication to support appropriate practice at home. • Seeks input from families and student for IEP. • Partners with families and significant adults to support student learning.
F. Teachers create a learning environment characterized by acceptable student behavior, efficient use of time, and appropriate intervention strategies.	**The Teacher:** • Plans for and effectively manages transitions throughout the day. • Provides opportunities for students to be consistently engaged. • Supports student in making appropriate behavioral choices. • Minimizes behavioral disruptions by use of positive behavioral supports. • Clearly articulates and posts classroom expectations. • Structures the classroom environment to maximize use of instructional time. • Demonstrates knowledge and use of a variety of behavioral intervention strategies which may include the development and implementation of Behavior Plans. • Understands and is able to conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments.

*The practices included in these tables are examples only and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list. They are provided to help the evaluator and teacher understand how teacher quality standards may be met through dance instruction.

QUALITY STANDARD III

Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students.

Elements	Practices that May be Observed During Special Education Teacher Observations*
A. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of current developmental science, the ways in which learning takes place, and the appropriate levels of intellectual, social, and emotional development of their students.	**The Teacher:** • Uses age-appropriate research-based instructional materials/strategies as outlined by approved district documents. • Uses instructional strategies that address individual learning styles (aural, kinesthetic, visual etc.). • Collaborates with IEP Team/administration to educate them on the best instructional approaches/ accommodations and/or modifications for the student to include their intellectual, social and emotional levels. • Creates lesson plans that incorporate principles of universal design (multiple means of presentation, multiple means of engagement and multiple means of response).
B. Teachers plan and consistently deliver instruction that draws on results of student assessments, is aligned to academic standards, and advances students' level of content knowledge and skills.	**The Teacher:** • Regularly collects progress monitoring data to inform their instruction and next steps for students in meeting their IEP goals. • Collects data on student performance in relation to enrolled grade-level expectations, taking into consideration any needed classroom/material adaptations. • Uses student performance and progress monitoring data to facilitate student's meaningful engagement, participation and access to the general curriculum.
C. Teachers demonstrate a rich knowledge of current research on effective instructional practices to meet the developmental and academic needs of their students.	**The Teacher:** • Selects and implements strategies and practices that reflect a high level of understanding of the characteristics of the learner. • Relates to the student's significant adults the student's individual characteristics, learning styles, needs and applicable instructional practices.
D. Teachers thoughtfully integrate and utilize appropriate available technology in their instruction to maximize student learning.	**The Teacher:** • Advocates for and demonstrates effective use of low to high-technology solutions for student access. • Investigates and applies adaptations for presentation of curriculum and for students to communicate their response. • Ensures that each student has access to and is able to use a variety of effective methods of communication (e.g. low-tech to high-tech).
E. Teachers establish and communicate high expectations for all students and plan instruction that helps students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.	**The Teacher:** • Hold students responsible for meeting/exceeding enrolled grade-level standards/EEOs. • Uses lesson plans that reference enrolled grade-level Colorado Academic Standards and/or aligned EEO. • Utilizes higher-level questioning strategies in order for students to fully demonstrate their Depth of Knowledge. • Gives students opportunities to articulate or self-select solutions, paths to learning and needed accommodations. • Provides opportunities for students to set their own goals and engage in self-monitoring.

QUALITY STANDARD III

Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students.

Elements	Practices that May be Observed During Special Education Teacher Observations*
F. Teachers provide students with opportunities to work in teams and develop leadership qualities.	**The Teacher:** • Utilizes effective collaborative learning strategies for students to engage actively with peers to problem solve and/or produce assigned products. • Provides support for students to take active leadership roles within an assigned group. • Promotes inclusive learning practices in order for students to learn from each other. • Uses flexible grouping strategies.
G. Teachers communicate effectively, making learning objectives clear and providing appropriate models of language.	**The Teacher:** • Demonstrates communicative competency using a variety of communication tools and/or languages. • Instructs students and encourages student responses utilizing the student's preferred mode of communication. • Trains staff on the child's mode and method of communication. • Seeks appropriate training if needed.
H. Teachers use appropriate methods to assess what each student has learned, including formal and informal assessments, and use results to plan further instruction.	**The Teacher:** • Designs/selects appropriate formative strategies and summative tools to evaluate individual student's learning. • Utilizes collected data to drive individual student's instruction. • Regularly conferences with student to share data results and provide specific targeted feedback for student to plan how to improve their skills (academic, social-emotional, executive function, behavior etc.). • Collaborates with general education partners to review data sets in order to determine grading options and levels of meaningful student participation. • Presents and interprets data results during IEP team meetings so the IEP team can determine eligibility and appropriate services.

*The practices included in these tables are examples only and should not be considered requirements or an all-inclusive list. They are provided to help the evaluator and dance teacher understand how teacher quality standards may be met through dance instruction.

It should be noted that Teacher Quality Standards IV and V are not included in Exhibits 2, 4, 6 and 8 because their professional practices are not easily observable during classroom observations. These two standards are well-represented in Exhibits 1, 3, 5 and 7, which provide ideas for evidence/artifacts to demonstrate proficiency on non-observable practices.

Measures of Student Learning:

When considering the measures of student learning, guidance allows for tailoring Standard VI for individual special education teachers. Because of the diversity of the unique roles that special education teachers play, districts should consider reflecting that diversity in the determination of which measures of learning will be included and how they should be weighted. This may include measures of growth sensitive enough to indicate accelerated achievement toward closing the achievement gap accurately.

Note: CDE has prepared guidance documents for determining the measures of student learning to use, how to use them and how to combine them with the overall professional practices rating to determine the final teacher effectiveness rating. The guidance documents may be found here: www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/implementationguidance#practicalideasguid

Conclusion

The evaluation of special education teachers presents unique challenges for both evaluators and the special education teachers who are being evaluated. The most common concern regarding such evaluations is that the full range of responsibilities is not reflected in the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers.

This brief addresses the first concern by explaining how special education teachers and their evaluators can take advantage of the flexibility built into the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers to address the unique responsibilities of special education teachers. The exhibits in this guide are designed to be helpful in understanding how evaluation requirements may look for special education teachers.

It is CDE's hope that this brief will prove helpful to special education teachers and their evaluators by providing them with real-life examples of evidence/artifacts, what to look for in observations, and ways in which special education teachers may discuss their performance with their evaluators