



Course Syllabus: Legal & Ethical Practice

College of Education
SPED 6203 Section X41

Summer II 2026, July 06-Aug 06

Contact Information

Instructor: Emmanuel Sefah, Ph.D.
Office: 319 #
Office hours: By Appointment
Office phone: (940) 397-4800
E-mail: emmanuel.sefah@my.msutexas.edu

Course Description

Analysis of legal and ethical practices in special education and its relationship to assessment and leadership. Provides a foundation for candidates who are going to assume leadership positions in the field of special education, with an emphasis on organization and structure of special education programs, policy analysis, and the role of the special education administrator.

Historical foundations of special education law, federal and state regulations, and case law related to special education; includes assessment-related law.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

Specific learning objectives for the course derive from the TExES Examination Framework/Standards and Texas Ed Diag Standards. This course provides teacher candidates with a knowledge base of the environment in which they may serve as a diagnostician. Satisfactory completion of the course will document that students have demonstrated the ability to:

1. Apply understanding of the special education process to assist parents/guardians and school staff in navigating through initial referral, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, reevaluations, transition planning, and dismissal and/or graduation.
2. Apply understanding of the special education process to assist parents/guardians and school staff in navigating through initial referral, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, reevaluations, transition planning, and dismissal and/or graduation.

3. Apply knowledge of the roles of students with disabilities, parents/guardians, teachers, and other school and community personnel in collaborating on and planning Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students.
4. Apply knowledge of legal and regulatory timelines, schedules, and reporting requirements; methods for maintaining eligibility folders; and strategies for organizing, maintaining, accessing, and storing records.
5. Apply knowledge of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations related to the roles and activities of the educational diagnostician, including the assessment and evaluation of individuals with educational needs and compliance with local, state, and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements.
6. Apply knowledge of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations related to the roles and activities of the educational diagnostician, including the assessment and evaluation of individuals with educational needs and compliance with local, state, and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements.
7. Apply knowledge of issues, assurances, and due process rights related to evaluation, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services (e.g., least restrictive environment) and of effective communication with parents/guardians on these issues.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes, rules, and procedures as determined by state and federal regulations.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians, schools, students, teachers, and other professionals in relation to students' individual learning needs.
10. Apply knowledge of professional ethical practices (e.g., in relation to confidentiality, informed consent, placement, and state accountability measures).
11. Professional Learning and Ethical Practice - engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate his or her practice, particularly the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community) and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

The candidate will meet the following Special Education Standards all beginning Special Education Teachers of Candidates in Individualized General Curriculums in Texas.

The candidate will meet the following Texas Educator Standards for special educators. These are aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) knowledge and skills standards as they apply to students with disabilities.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes	Standards:	Competency	Assignments
Students will review ethical standards of practice, roles, and responsibilities regarding assessment including state and federal regulations relevant to the role of the educational diagnosticians, FERPA, and procedural safeguards.	Standard II. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethical and professional practices, roles, and responsibilities.	Competency 7 Apply knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.	Weekly Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethics, Sped, and Professional Development Project
Students will address ethical issues in regard to student with behavioral and social interaction skills.	Standard IX. The educational diagnostician addresses students' behavioral and	Competency 7 Apply knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities	Weekly Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethics, Sped, and Professional Development Project
	social interaction skills through appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies.	and the legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.	

<p>Students will use a case-based approach to address ethical dilemmas and decision-making scenarios.</p>	<p>Standard II. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethical and professional practices, roles, and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Competency 7 Apply knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.</p>	<p>Weekly Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Sped, and Professional Development Project</p>
<p>Student will be able to articulate the purpose and philosophy behind educational evaluation and special education, as well as demonstrate an understanding of relevant legal foundations, enabling them to apply this knowledge effectively in practice using case studies of due process hearing.</p>	<p>Standard I. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy, and legal foundations of evaluation and special education</p>	<p>Competency 001: Apply knowledge of requirements for identifying students who meet disability criteria and for determining the need for specially designed instruction and related services.</p>	<p>Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Due Process Hearing, Discussions, and Professional Development Project</p>
<p>Students will be able to explain the key principles and legal frameworks governing evaluation and special education, and apply these concepts to assess diverse learners, ensuring their educational needs are met effectively</p>	<p>Standard I. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy, and legal foundations of evaluation and special education</p>	<p>Competency 001: Apply knowledge of requirements for identifying students who meet disability criteria and for determining the need for specially designed instruction and related services.</p>	<p>Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Due Process Hearing, Discussions, and Professional Development Project</p>

<p>Students will be able to effectively demonstrate skills in scheduling, time management, and organization by developing and implementing a personal study plan that optimally allocates time for coursework, projects, and extracurricular activities, resulting in improved academic performance and reduced stress levels.</p>	<p>Standard VIII. The educational diagnostician knows and demonstrates skills necessary for scheduling, time management, and organization.</p>	<p>Competency 006: Understand strategies and approaches for effective consultation and development of collaborative relationships with students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and other professionals and apply skills for scheduling and management of timelines and reporting requirements.</p>	<p>Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Due Process Hearing, Discussions, and Professional Development Project</p>
<p>Apply knowledge of issues, assurances, and due process rights related to evaluation, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services (e.g., least restrictive environment) and of effective communication with parents/guardians on these issues.</p>	<p>Standard I. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy, and legal foundations of evaluation and special education</p> <p>Standard IV. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.</p>	<p>Competency 007: Apply knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.</p>	<p>Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Due Process Hearing, Discussions, and Professional Development Project</p>

<p>Demonstrate knowledge of Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes, rules, and procedures as determined by state and federal regulations.</p>	<p>Standard IV. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.</p>	<p>Competency:004 Apply knowledge of educational implications of disabilities, appropriate curricula, and instructional strategies, including accommodations, modifications, and interventions, for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Competency: 001 Apply knowledge of requirements for identifying students who meet disability criteria and for determining the need for specially designed instruction and related services.</p>	<p>Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Due Process Hearing, Discussions, and Professional Development Project</p>
<p>Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians, schools, students, teachers, and other professionals in relation to students' individual learning needs.</p>	<p>Standard I, II 007</p>	<p>Competency 7: Apply knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.</p>	<p>Assignment, Readings, Quizzes, Ethical Analysis, Due Process Hearing, Discussions, and Professional Development Project</p>

Dispositions

Students will demonstrate the dispositions of dependability, sensitivity, and a commitment to becoming practitioners and leaders in the profession of education who practice within the CEC Code of Ethics.

CEC Code of Ethics

- Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity and exercising professional judgment to benefit individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
- Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in their schools and communities.
- Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with exceptionalities.
- Developing relationships with families based on mutual respect and actively involving families and individuals with exceptionalities in educational decision making.
- Using evidence, instructional data, research, and professional knowledge to inform practice.
- Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptionalities.
- Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptionalities.
- Practicing within the professional ethics, standards, and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in laws, regulations, and policies.
- Advocating for professional conditions and resources that will improve learning outcomes of individuals with exceptionalities.
- Engaging in the improvement of the profession through active participation in professional organizations.

Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills. *Adopted by the CEC Board of Directors, January 2010*

Methods of Instruction

This course will be presented in a manner that will allow you to learn independently, from each other, through the discussion board, recorded lecture, reading, and postings. While you may work somewhat at your own pace, I have found that most students appreciate the structure of due dates. Please adhere to the due dates and adjust your study schedule accordingly. Internet courses are a convenient and effective method of learning; however, they require as much work and attention as traditional instruction. The following will ensure success this semester:

1. Do not think you can do this course in your spare time. Plan, plan, and plan some more. Schedule at least 12-15 hours a week to dedicate to this course.
2. Please adhere to all deadlines and due dates-this will help you plan-you may complete assignments early but do not turn them in late.
3. Please read and re-read assignments. Get clarification as soon as you can (do not wait until the night before it's due).

See Appendix A for a complete list of standards/competencies (if applicable) and Appendix B for assignment/standards alignment matrix

AI / Chat GPT

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

You may type a question into ChatGPT, you may not exactly copy and paste its response and turn it in as your own.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Yell, M. (2019). The law and special education (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson.

Howe, K. R., Boelé, A. L., & Miramontes, O. B. (2018). The ethics of special education. Teachers College Press

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Discussions (2-100 points each)	200
Quiz (4-50 points each)	200
Due Process Hearing (2@ 100 points each)	200
SPED Legislation Research Project	200
Professional Development Project	200
Total	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Due Process Hearing and Discussion

Post what you have learned from the law and special education, Ethics, and due process hearing. To receive credit for this assignment, you must also read and comment on at least 2 other post from your peers.

Quizzes

Students will complete (4) short quizzes, each worth 50 points. The quizzes consist of short True/False questions and Multiple Choice. No Time Limit. 1 Attempt.

Projects Required

[SPED Legislation Research Project](#)

****This is a key Assessment;** students must turn this in and score at least an 80% in order to receive credit for the course.

Important Note:

Both submissions (D2L and TK20) are required. If the assignment is not submitted to TK20, it will not be graded. Since this is a **key assessment**, failure to submit to TK20 may result in not passing the course. **Due 8/6.**

Professional Development Project

****This is a key Assessment.** The Professional Development Project assessment measures the ability of the candidate to design professional development suitable for training educators to improve instructional programs for students with Exceptional Learning Needs (ELN). *This is a major grade for the class.

This assignment will be submitted in TK 20 and D2L. You are required to select a topic relevant to your area of study, such as Learning Disability, Emotional Disturbance, Dyslexia, Low-Incidence Disability, Autism, or Parent Advocacy, etc. Your task is to create a training session with a PowerPoint presentation (maximum 20 slides), training notes and clear references to the research literature used in creating the training, citing all sources appropriately.

Important Note:

Both submissions (D2L and TK20) are required. If the assignment is not submitted to TK20, it will not be graded. Since this is a **key assessment**, failure to submit to TK20 may result in not passing the course. **Due 8/6.**

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments will not be given in this course.

Late Work

Late will only be accepted in extreme circumstances (death in the family, illness, etc.). I must be contacted prior to the assignment due date and appropriate documentation must be provided. **Late work should not be sent to me in an email. All assignment should be submitted to D2L.**

Make Up Work/Tests

Make up work will only be accepted in extreme circumstances (death in the family, illness, etc. I must be contacted prior to the due date and appropriate documentation must be provided.

Important Dates

- Deadline to file for graduation: September 21, 2026. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" July 22, 2026. Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to actively participate in all class discussions and engage meaningfully in course activities and collaborative learning opportunities. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor in accordance with the General University Policies.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ****Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!*** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Instructor Class Policies

All assignments for the course must be submitted in order to receive a final grade. An assignment submitted to my email because it is late and the Dropbox is close will be given zero grade.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice: Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.**

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 July 6-11	Course Introduction & Foundations of Special Education Law (Read Chapters 1-8 (Law Textbook)) Complete Quiz 1 Complete Due Process Hearing 1	7/11@ 11:59pm
Week 2 July 13-18	Assessment, Child Find, Eligibility and Ethics Read Chapter 9-14 (Law Textbook) Read Chapter 2: The Nature of Ethical Deliberation (From Ethics Book) Complete Quiz 2 Complete Due Process Hearing 2	7/18@11:59pm
Week 3 July 20-25	Ethical Leadership in Special Education Read Chapter 1-5 (Ethics Textbook) Complete Quiz 3 Complete Discussion 1	7/25@11:59pm
Week 4 July 27-Aug 1	Texas Legal Framework Complete Discussion 2-Legal Framework Complete Quiz 4	8/1@11:59pm
Week 5 Aug 3-6 Short Week	Professional Development Project SPED LEGISLATION RESEARCH PROJECT	08/06@11:59pm

References/Scientifically-Based Research/Additional Readings:

- Ballard, J., Ramirez, B, Winetraub. F., (Eds.) (1982). *Special education in America: Its legal and governmental foundations*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children
- Bonfield, L. (2006). *American law and the American legal system in a nutshell*. Eagan, MN: Thomson West.
- Davis, J. (2007). *Legislative law and process in a nutshell*. Eagan, MN: Thomson West.
- Hilyerd, W. A. (2004). Using the law library: A guide for educators-Part 1: Untangling the legal system. *Journal of Law and Education*, 33 (2), 213224.
- Levine, E.L. & Wexler, E.M. (1981). P.L. 94-142: An act of Congress. New York: Macmillan.
- Martin, E. (2013). *Breakthrough: Federal special education legislation 1965-1981*. Sarasota, FL: Bardolf & Company.
- Reynolds, W.L. (2003). *Judicial process in a nutshell (3rd ed.)*. Eagan, MN: Thomson West.
- Tatgenhorst, A., Norlin, J, & Gorn, S. (2014). *What do I do when...The answer book on special education law (6th ed.)*. Beach Garden, FL: LRP Publications.
- Valverde, J.R (2017). An indefensible idea: Eliminating individualization from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *Journal of Law and Education*, 46 (2), 235-243.
- Winzer, M.A. (1993). *History of special education: From isolation to integration*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet Press.
- Yell, M.L., Katsiyannis, A., & Bradley, M.R. (2017). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: The continuing evolution of special education law. *Handbook of Special Education*. In J. M. Kauffman, D. P. Hallahan, and P. Pullen, *Handbook of Special Education (2nd ed.)*, (pp. 55-71). Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis/Routledge.
- Yell, M.L., Shriner, J.G., Thomas, S.S., & Katsiyannis, A. (2019). Special education law for leaders and administrators of special education in J. Crockett, M.L. Boscardin, & Billingsley, B. (Eds.). *Special education leadership handbook (2nd ed. pp. 77-99)* Philadelphia, PA: Routledge.

Appendix A: Standards/Competencies

Course Objectives or Student Learning Outcomes	Standard or Competency	Assignment
Demonstrate knowledge of effective culturally responsive consultation and collaboration skills (e.g., knowledge of family systems, parents/guardians supporting student development and educational progress).	Standard I, III, VII 006	Reading, Case Study, Research Project
Apply understanding of the special education process to assist parents/guardians and school staff in navigating through initial referral, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, reevaluations, transition planning, and dismissal and/or graduation.	Standard I , III 006	Reading, Case Study, Research Project
Apply knowledge of the roles of students with disabilities, parents/guardians, teachers, and other school and community personnel in collaborating on and planning Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students.	Standard I, III 006	Reading, Case Study, Research Project
Apply knowledge of legal and regulatory timelines, schedules, and reporting requirements; methods for maintaining eligibility folders; and strategies for organizing, maintaining, accessing, and storing records.	Standard I , IV, VIII 006	Reading, Case Analysis, Research Project
Apply knowledge of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations related to the roles and activities of the educational diagnostician, including the assessment and evaluation of individuals with educational needs and compliance with local, state, and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements.	Standard I 007	Reading, Case Study, Case Analysis, Research Project
Apply knowledge of issues, assurances, and due process rights related to evaluation, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services (e.g., least restrictive environment) and of effective communication with parents/guardians on these issues.	Standard I, IV 007	Reading, Case Analysis, Research Project
Demonstrate knowledge of Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD)/Individualized Education Program	Standard I , IV 007	Reading, Case Analysis, Research Project

Course Objectives or Student Learning Outcomes	Standard or Competency	Assignment
(IEP) processes, rules, and procedures as determined by state and federal regulations.		
Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians, schools, students, teachers, and other professionals in relation to students' individual learning needs.	Standard I, II 007	Reading, Case Study, Research Project
Apply knowledge of professional ethical practices (e.g., in relation to confidentiality, informed consent, placement, and state accountability measures).	Standard I, II 007	Reading, Case Study, Case analysis, Research Project

Appendix B:

[Educational Diagnostician Standards](#)

Educational Diagnostician Standard I

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy and legal foundations of evaluation and special education.

Educational Diagnostician Standard II

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethical and professional practices, roles and responsibilities.

Educational Diagnostician Standard III

The educational diagnostician develops collaborative relationships with families, educators, the school, the community, outside agencies and related service personnel.

Educational Diagnostician Standard IV

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning and instructional decision making

Educational Diagnostician Standard V

The educational diagnostician knows eligibility criteria and procedures for identifying students with disabilities and determining the presence of an educational need.

Educational Diagnostician Standard VI

The educational diagnostician selects, administers and interprets appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations.

Educational Diagnostician Standard VII

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity and the significance of student diversity for evaluation, planning and instruction.

Educational Diagnostician Standard VIII

The educational diagnostician knows and demonstrates skills necessary for scheduling, time management and organization.

Educational Diagnostician Standard IX

The educational diagnostician addresses students' behavioral and social interaction skills through appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning and instructional strategies.

Educational Diagnostician Standard X

The educational diagnostician knows and understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for individuals with disabilities.

[Framework with Competencies](#)

DOMAIN I—IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Competency 001 (Identification for Special Education Evaluation and Services): Apply knowledge of requirements for identifying students who meet disability criteria and for determining the need for specially designed instruction and related services. For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of federal and state criteria and identification procedures for determining students' eligibility for special education services, including all components of Child Find mandate requirements.
- B. Apply knowledge of the educational diagnostician's role in assisting local educational agencies (LEAs) in complying with Child Find.
- C. Apply knowledge of risk factors, characteristics of disabilities, and other indications that a student may have a need for specially designed instruction and related services.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of issues related to the identification of and the overrepresentation and underrepresentation in special education of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.
- E. Demonstrate knowledge of important student information needed (e.g., cognitive, academic, communicative, social, physical, functional, adaptive, and emotional characteristics) from a variety of sources, including information regarding students' educational, developmental, medical, and family histories.

F. Demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between assessment and evaluation, goals and objectives, and services for students with disabilities.

Competency 002 (Evaluation, Planning, Selection, and Administration): Apply knowledge of the functions and principles of assessment, assessments used to make educational and instructional decisions about students, and procedures and considerations in selecting and administering appropriate formal and informal assessments for individual students. For example:

A. Demonstrate knowledge of terminology and statistical concepts used in assessment and evaluation (e.g., data distributions, measures of central tendency).

B. Demonstrate knowledge of standards for test norming, reliability, and validity; procedures used in administering and scoring assessment instruments; and sources of measurement error and potential bias.

C. Apply knowledge of the uses and limitations of various types of assessment instruments (e.g., norm-referenced, criterion-referenced) and observation techniques (e.g., anecdotal, frequency, temporal) to identify students with disabilities and determine the presence of an educational need.

D. Demonstrate the ability to choose relevant and appropriate assessments based on the technical quality of the instruments, referral concerns, data needed to make decisions, and individual student characteristics (e.g., ethnic, cultural, linguistic, age, or socioeconomic factors), and demonstrate knowledge of how to ensure fairness in assessment results.

E. Apply knowledge of targeted individualized assessment strategies to inform instruction (e.g., authentic assessment, contextual assessment, curriculum-based assessment, progress monitoring, teacher observations, student feedback).

F. Apply knowledge of methods used for academic and nonacademic assessments (e.g., vocational, developmental, behavioral, assistive technology, motor skills).

G. Demonstrate understanding of procedures for student screening; prereferral, including Response to Intervention (RtI) and multi-tiered support; referral; and eligibility.

H. Apply knowledge of administration and scoring procedures for various standardized assessments (e.g., basal, ceilings, testing the limits) and nonstandardized assessments.

I. Apply knowledge of procedures and strategies for effectively collaborating with families and with other professionals in assessing and evaluating students with disabilities.

Competency 003 (Interpretation and Reporting of Evaluation Results): Apply skills for interpreting, reporting, and communicating the results of the Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE). For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the uses and limitations of various types of formal and informal assessment and evaluation data.
- B. Demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate application and interpretation of derived scores (e.g., standard scores, percentile ranks, age and grade equivalents, stanines, T-scores, z-scores).
- C. Apply knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity in making appropriate evaluation and interpretation decisions.
- D. Apply performance data (including prereferral data) and information from teachers, other professionals, student, and parents/guardians to make appropriate educational recommendations within learning environments and to determine the effectiveness of instruction, modifications, and/or accommodations.
- E. Apply knowledge of strategies for effectively communicating to parents/guardians, classroom teachers, and other professionals about assessment purposes, assessment methods, and the implications and uses of assessment results.
- F. Analyze the need for further student assessment, adjustment of services, and/or evaluation as appropriate, including assessments conducted by other professionals, in specific areas (e.g., language skills, social skills, physical skills, emotional skills, assistive technology needs).
- G. Apply knowledge of components required to create Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE) reports according to federal and state guidelines.

DOMAIN II—CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND INTERVENTION

Competency 004 (Academic Instruction and Strategies): Apply knowledge of educational implications of disabilities, appropriate curricula, and instructional strategies, including accommodations, modifications, and interventions, for students with disabilities. For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of characteristics and educational implications of disabilities for students of different ages, in various environments, and from culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
- B. Demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based instruction and curricula for the development of individual students' academic skills within the continuum of services in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of targeted instructional strategies, technology, and curriculum materials to address the individual needs of students with disabilities within the continuum of services.
- D. Apply knowledge of making individualized recommendations to assist the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee in developing appropriate and ambitious Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that target students' individual academic needs and goals.

- E. Demonstrate general knowledge of how to create, monitor the progress of, and collect data from appropriate, nonbiased, and culturally responsive interventions to assist in the ongoing appraisal of students' academic growth.
- F. Analyze individual results of assessments, evidence-based practices, interventions, and previous recommendations to assist with making decisions about individualized instruction for students.

Competency 005 (Functional Skill Instruction and Strategies): Understand the use of appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies for developing students' social, behavioral, communication, and adaptive skills.

For example:

- A. Apply knowledge of functional skills (e.g., social, behavioral, communication, adaptive) that students need in order to participate in and contribute effectively to their school, home, community, and work environments.
- B. Demonstrate general knowledge of appropriate, nonbiased, and culturally responsive evidence-based interventions, curricula, and instructional strategies for the development of functional skills based on knowledge of individual students with disabilities.
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of the effects of antecedents and consequences (e.g., environment, teacher attitudes and behaviors) on the behavior of students with disabilities.
- D. Analyze assessment and evaluation results in collaboration with members of the multidisciplinary team (e.g., licensed specialists in school psychology [LSSPs], special education teachers, related service providers) in addressing educationally relevant behavior (e.g., vocational, functional, academic, social) for students in various settings.
- E. Apply knowledge of requirements and procedures for functional behavioral assessments (FBAs), manifestation determination reviews, and behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) that incorporate positive behavioral supports and interventions.
- F. Apply knowledge of functional skills instruction for transitioning across environments (e.g., preschool to elementary school, school to work) and the supports needed for transition and integration into various program placements.
- G. Apply knowledge of key concepts in behavior intervention (e.g., least intrusive intervention within the learning environment, social skills curricula, cognitive behavioral strategies) and ways of applying these concepts in collaboration with staff across educational settings (e.g., LSSPs, special education teachers).

DOMAIN III—PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Competency 006 (Consultation and Collaboration): Understand strategies and approaches for effective consultation and development of collaborative relationships with students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and other professionals and apply skills for scheduling and management of timelines and reporting requirements. For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of effective culturally responsive consultation and collaboration skills (e.g., knowledge of family systems, parents/guardians supporting student development and educational progress).
- B. Apply understanding of the special education process to assist parents/guardians and school staff in navigating through initial referral, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, reevaluations, transition planning, and dismissal and/or graduation.
- C. Apply knowledge of the roles of students with disabilities, parents/guardians, teachers, and other school and community personnel in collaborating on and planning Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students.
- D. Apply knowledge of strategies for encouraging students' and families' active participation in the educational team, addressing families' concerns, and fostering respectful and beneficial relationships between families and education professionals.
- E. Apply principles for maintaining accurate and detailed records of assessments, evaluations, and related proceedings (e.g., Full and Individual Evaluation [FIE], Admission, Review, and Dismissal [ARD]/Individualized Education Program [IEP] meetings, parent/guardian communications and notifications).
- F. Apply knowledge of legal and regulatory timelines, schedules, and reporting requirements; methods for maintaining eligibility folders; and strategies for organizing, maintaining, accessing, and storing records.

Competency 007 (Legal and Ethical Practice): Apply knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education. For example:

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of models and theories that provide the basis for special education evaluations and recognize the purpose of evaluation procedures and their relationship to educational programming.
- B. Apply knowledge of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations related to the roles and activities of the educational diagnostician, including the assessment and evaluation of individuals with educational needs and compliance with local, state, and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- C. Apply knowledge of issues, assurances, and due process rights related to evaluation, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services (e.g., least restrictive environment) and of effective communication with parents/guardians on these issues.

- D. Demonstrate knowledge of Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes, rules, and procedures as determined by state and federal regulations.
- E. Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians, schools, students, teachers, and other professionals in relation to students' individual learning needs.
- F. Apply knowledge of professional ethical practices (e.g., in relation to confidentiality, informed consent, placement, and state accountability measures).
- G. Demonstrate knowledge of qualifications necessary to administer and interpret various assessment instruments and procedures for consistent use of these instruments across instructional settings.
- H. Demonstrate knowledge of organizations and publications relevant to the field of educational diagnosis and recognize the importance of engaging in activities that foster professional competence and benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and/or colleagues.

DOMAIN IV—ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE

Competency 008 (Analysis and Response): In a written response, analyze qualitative and quantitative data to identify a given student's strengths and needs, provide a thorough evaluation, and determine evidence- and research based recommendations for meeting the student's educational needs. For example:

- A. Analyze and interpret assessment information on a given student, including qualitative and quantitative assessment data (e.g., anecdotal notes, student work samples, parent/guardian checklists) from a variety of formal and informal assessments (e.g., cognitive, academic, communicative, social, physical, functional, adaptive, emotional) to identify the student's strengths and needs, including the presence or absence of a disability according to state and federal eligibility criteria.
- B. Synthesize data and information on the individual student to generate one recommendation for evidence-based instruction and/or intervention.
- C. Describe how a teacher would implement and monitor the progress of the recommendation.
- D.