



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 6, 2025

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., Chairperson 

SUBJECT: Presentation of the Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers

In support of Goal 7 of [Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#), this proposal is presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) for the adoption of standards for the preparation of special education teachers.

These standards would represent a new endorsement titled Special Education Teacher. The standards will inform program development and continuous improvement efforts at Michigan's educator preparation institutions.

The following teacher preparation standards represent a new K-12 Special Education Teacher endorsement, including the skills and knowledge needed for beginning special educators who can be placed in select special education programs. This special education endorsement is intended to stand alone on a Michigan teaching certificate but can also be combined with other endorsements. This endorsement would be an addition to Michigan's current special education endorsement options.

Teachers with this endorsement would be able to be placed in the following programs: cognitive impairment, emotional impairment, specific learning disabilities, physical impairment or other health impairment, and elementary level and secondary level resource. This endorsement on its own would not be appropriate for placement in programs for autism spectrum disorder, deaf or hard of hearing, early childhood special education, visual impairment, adapted physical education services, or speech and language impairment services.

A stakeholder committee including K-12 special education teacher, administrator, college and university teacher educator, and parent representation was gathered to revise Michigan's teacher preparation standards for special education teachers. This

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

PAMELA PUGH – PRESIDENT • ELLEN COGEN LIPTON / TIFFANY D. TILLEY – CO-VICE PRESIDENTS
JUDITH PRITCHETT – SECRETARY • MARSHALL BULLOCK II – TREASURER
MITCHELL ROBINSON – NASBE DELEGATE • TOM MCMILLIN • NIKKI SNYDER

Attachment A – SBE PRESENTATION DRAFT: Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers

committee met consistently from August 2023 through August 2024 to develop the new special education teacher standards.

The preparation for special education teachers standards committee began with identifying critical components of special educator preparation. The committee then aligned those components with the Council for Exceptional Children's [Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators](#).

These standards encompass the requirements for special education preparation programs for higher education. Programs addressing these standards would also incorporate Michigan Department of Education's [Standards for the Preparation of PK-12 Teachers, Professional Knowledge and Skills, Clinical Experiences Requirements](#), and [Core Teaching Practices](#) to create a comprehensive preparation program for beginning special educators.

Attachment A presents the Draft Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers. Attachment B acknowledges the stakeholders involved in the drafting and reviewing process.

This presentation will be followed by a period of public comment and a request for approval at a State Board of Education meeting in the spring or summer.

Presenters will include:

- Michele A. Harmala, Ph.D., deputy superintendent, Division of Educator Excellence, Career and Technical Education, Special Education, and Administrative Law
- Kelli Brozanski, director, Office of Educator Excellence
- Teri Rink, Ed.S, director, Office of Special Education
- Gina Garner, Ph.D., higher education consultant, Office of Educator Excellence

Following the presentation, the board will have an opportunity for further conversation and questions on this topic.



Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Special
Education Teachers Draft

SBE PRESENTATION DRAFT

Michigan Special Education Teacher Standards

Standard 1: Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 1.1: Meet and exceed the expectations for professional and ethical practices in special education and be able to apply policies and procedures that are mandated through state and federal legislation.

Component 1.2: Identify and challenge systemic and personal biases that may marginalize students, including but not limited to, the special education evaluation process, and within instructional, placement, and behavioral practices.

Component 1.3: Advocate for students and families to provide knowledge of student rights in special education, including procedural safeguards to ensure access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) designed to promote a positive post-secondary outcome.

Component 1.4: Advocate for the discipline protections available to students with disabilities under the IDEA and identify resources available to appropriately implement disciplinary protections while maintaining student access to FAPE.

Component 1.5: Identify, analyze, and actively engage in continuing professional learning and collaborative opportunities based on ongoing analysis of student learning; self-reflection; and professional standards, research, and contemporary evidence-based practices.

Component 1.6: Develop skills and mindsets needed to maintain their own overall well-being, including self-advocacy, which contributes to competencies needed to manage stress and create safe and effective learning environments.

Standard 2: Understanding and Addressing Each Individual’s Developmental and Learning Needs

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 2.1: Apply understanding of human growth and development to create developmentally and transitionally appropriate and meaningful learning experiences that are aligned to K-12 academic standards and tailored to those individualized strengths and needs of students with exceptionalities.

Component 2.2: Identify students' systemic educational and transition needs and work to address those individualized needs in the educational environment across kindergarten through age 26 years for students with disabilities.

Attachment A – SBE PRESENTATION DRAFT: Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers

Component 2.3: Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of state assessment system procedures, which impact the selection of a course of study and the decision about special education programs and related services which support progression to high school completion.

Component 2.4: Use their knowledge and understanding of diverse factors that influence development and learning, including differences related to families, languages, cultures, and communities, and individual differences.

Standard 3: Demonstrating Subject Matter Content and Specialized Curricular Knowledge

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 3.1: Demonstrate mastery of essential reading and math knowledge and skills and apply their understanding of academic subject matter content to provide instruction for individuals with exceptionalities.

Component 3.2: Augment the general curriculum to maximize skill development through specially designed instructional planning and delivery that are appropriately sequenced, scaffolded, explicit, and focused on learning goals, assessment plans, and progress monitoring. Assist in determining the appropriate, goal oriented, next instructional steps.

Component 3.3: Plan and deliver the appropriate, leveled curriculum to provide maximum educational benefit.

Standard 4: Using Assessment to Understand the Learner and the Learning Environment for Data Based Decision Making

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 4.1: Work collaboratively and independently to determine the appropriate evaluative measures needed to plan and deliver interventions and administer, analyze, and interpret multiple measures of student learning.

Component 4.2: Collect, interpret, and present multiple, valid, and reliable data points through the use of assessment tools which contribute to the findings of an eligibility process or a student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, leading to the construction of appropriate individualized goals and objectives, and the ongoing individualized education program (IEP) team determination of evolving individual needs for special education programs, services, and supports.

Component 4.3: Administer and interpret transition assessments to assist students as a member of the IEP team in developing measurable postsecondary goals and transition plans within the IEP process as well as coordinate with other service providers and agencies to support the provision of transition services and supports that lead to positive individualized student outcomes.

Component 4.4: Work collaboratively with other members of the instructional team to make data-informed decisions about student progress toward goals and make data-informed instructional adjustments to meet the needs of each individual learner.

Standard 5: Supporting Learning Using Effective Instruction

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 5.1: Use findings from multiple assessments, including student self-assessment, that are responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity and specialized as needed, to identify what students know and are able to do. Interpret the assessment data to appropriately plan and guide instruction to meet rigorous academic and non-academic content and goals for each individual.

Component 5.2: Use effective practices, including [High Leverage Practices](#), to promote student engagement, increase motivation, generalization, and maintenance, and self-regulation strategies to enhance student learning.

Component 5.3: Use explicit, systematic, and specialized instruction to teach content, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and skills to make clear what a learner needs to do or think about while learning.

Component 5.4: Use flexible grouping, multiple modalities, and assistive technology to promote the implementation of instruction that is adapted to meet the unique learning goals of each individual learner.

Component 5.5: Provide intensive, specialized, small group, and goal-oriented instruction and support student progress with accommodations and modifications within the general education curriculum to meet the needs of each individual learner.

Component 5.6: Plan and deliver specialized, individualized instruction that is used to meet the learning needs of each individual learner.

Component 5.7: Identify and make adjustments to the educational setting and conditions needed for providing intensive instruction.

Component 5.8: Know the rationale for and how to plan, deliver, and make appropriate adjustment to culturally and linguistically diverse instruction to meet the needs of each individual learner.

Standard 6: Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 6.1: Use and teach effective and culturally responsive routines and procedures to create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities. Identify normative routines and procedures and adapt them to be inclusive of all students.

Component 6.2: Use a range of evidence-based positive behavior supports for individuals' social and emotional well-being to promote educational growth in the least restrictive environment.

Attachment A – SBE PRESENTATION DRAFT: Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers

Component 6.3: Systematically use data in collaboration with other support team members to identify, plan, implement and evaluate emotional and social needs and support students with trauma-informed care practices.

Component 6.4: Systematically use data from a variety of sources, including a functional behavior assessment (FBA), to identify the purpose or function served by target behavior(s) to plan, implement, and evaluate behavioral interventions and collaborate with other support team members to identify and teach replacement behaviors, as included in a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) when or where appropriate.

Standard 7: Collaborating with Team Members

A well-prepared beginning special education teacher will:

Component 7.1: Utilize communication, group facilitation, and problem-solving strategies in a culturally responsive and empathetic manner to effectively lead collaborative team meetings and share expertise and knowledge to build team capacity and jointly address students' instructional and behavioral needs.

Component 7.2: Collaborate with families, paraeducators, and other professionals regarding student's unique needs, such as health needs, to assess, plan, and implement effective special education programs and related services that promote progress toward measurable outcomes for students.

Component 7.3: Collaborate, communicate, and coordinate with professionals and agencies within the community to identify and access services, resources, and supports to meet the identified needs and positive post-secondary goals and outcomes of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

Component 7.4: Demonstrate an understanding of how to mentor, utilize, and supervise paraeducators in their role of supporting the education of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

Component 7.5: Promote and provide opportunities to engage parents and families by demonstrating a variety of empathetic and effective communication skills, including the ability to share individual student data and information in an accessible and understandable way to families that considers diverse social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Component 7.6: Demonstrate an understanding of the special education teacher's role and the role of other participants in collaborative multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) and IEP processes for the determination of eligibility across all eligibility areas, as defined by MARSE.



Participants in the Development of the Proposed
Standards for the Preparation of Special Education
Teachers

Participants in the Development of the Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers

Rebecca Adams, assistant principal, Detroit Public Schools Community District

Mary Araujo-Pedroza, lead resource program teacher, Detroit Public Schools Community District

Amy Barto, visiting assistant professor, School of Education, Aquinas College

Valencia Cade, Ed.S, supervisor of special education, Ferndale Public Schools

Laquita Featherstone, consultant for special education

Dr. Gina Garner, higher education consultant, Michigan Department of Education

Becky Garske, coordinator of early childhood education, Mott Community College

Dr. Pam George, assistant professor of special education, Cornerstone University

Eric Hoppstock, superintendent, Berrien Regional Education Service Agency

Sungti Hsu, contractor, Michigan Department of Education

Dr. Anne Tapp Jaksa, professor, Saginaw Valley State University

Lisa Joseph, special education teacher consultant, Detroit Public Schools Community District

Michelle Kennedy, special education teacher, Michigan Virtual Online

John Kirsh, Deaf/hard of hearing education consultant, Michigan Department of Education, Resource for Deaf or Hard of Hearing (MDE-RDHH)

Dr. Myung Koh, professor, special education, Eastern Michigan University

Dr. Paula Lancaster, interim provost, Central Michigan University

Ms. Mary Eva-Rapin Laures, teacher consultant, special education, Midland Public Schools

Katherine Mills, parent

Dr. Greg Morris, superintendent, Blended Learning Academies

Attachment B – SBE PRESENTATION DRAFT: Participants in the Development of the Proposed Standards for the Preparation of Special Education Teachers

Nancy Rotarius, state policy coordinator, Michigan Department of Education

Toni Royer, special education teacher, Ann Arbor Public Schools

Angela Smith, special education teacher, Grand Rapids Public Schools

Dr. Catherine Wigent, consultant, Michigan Department of Education

Dawan Williams, student support services supervisor, West Bloomfield Public Schools

Dr. Peggy Yates, associate professor, director of special education preparation programs, Alma College