



CONNECTICUT SEED

Student and Educator Support Specialists Guidance Document

Special Education Teachers

This document provides guidance to administrators and Student and Educator Support Specialists (SESS) on the application of the Connecticut SEED educator evaluation system to **Special Education Teachers**. Student and Educator Support Specialists are those individuals who by the nature of their job description do not have traditional classrooms, but serve a “caseload” of students, staff or families. In addition, they often are not directly responsible for content instruction nor do state standardized assessments directly measure their impact on students. The following document provides guidance on the evaluation of **Special Education Teachers** in public school settings.

OVERVIEW:

- Most commonly used names:
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Resource Room Teacher
 - Special Education Teacher in co-taught classroom
 - Case Manager
 - Inclusion Facilitator
 - Special Education Teacher in self-contained classroom in district
 - Special Education Teacher in approved private special education facility or RESC program
- Roles of Special Education Teachers:

Special Education Teachers have a wide variety of roles and responsibilities in public school districts. The individual roles of Special Education Teachers in public schools will vary and may be best addressed through the application of the guidance for teacher evaluation and/or the guidance for the evaluation of Student and Educator Support Specialists. Some Special Education Teachers have roles that are more similar to other disciplines defined as Student and Educator Support Specialists, while others may have roles that are very similar to general education classroom teachers. At times, Special Education Teachers may be responsible for a group of students and the primary instructor of their content, at other times they are part of a team of educators supporting students' access to and modification and accommodation of content. Special Education Teachers may teach in a resource room setting where students come in for a short periods of time, they may teach in a self-contained classroom in which students spend the majority of their day, or they may spend their day in general education settings. In addition, special teachers often act as the case manager of the students on their caseload. In some districts, they may also be used to provide Tier II or Tier III instruction to non-identified students as part of the Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) process. Special Education Teachers may be assigned to their own classroom or resource room, but also may be assigned to work in general education settings throughout the school and not have a designated classroom of their own.

A key role of Special Education Teachers in the public school setting, in addition to working directly with students, is working with their general education colleagues, paraprofessionals and parents of students with disabilities. The roles that Special Education Teachers play in collaboration with others and case management of students is an important aspect of the evaluation of these professionals.

The evaluation of Special Education Teachers, as with other caseload educators, needs to begin with defining the role for that individual and the population of students they are responsible for serving. Once this is established, then the identification of Student Learning Objectives can begin. It is worth noting, that although Special Education

Teachers may have multiple roles in a school, all students with disabilities are included in the state wide assessment system. Sometimes these students may take the modified assessment or the checklist is administered as a measure of their annual progress. Student learning objectives for Special Education Teachers should not necessarily vary dramatically from that of their general education colleagues. Often it is appropriate for the SLOs and IAGS identified by the Special Education Teacher to be done in collaboration with general education teachers.

- Caseload (s) that may be served by discipline:
Special Education Teacher caseloads may include students identified in any of the 13 categories of special education designated in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act.

In the context of the Connecticut SEED educator evaluation system, educators will work in conjunction with their evaluators to identify objectives for student learning and corresponding measures of student performance to evaluate progress made towards those learning objectives. Educators will draft Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) that specify:

1. a learning objective focus statement;
2. baseline or trend data relative to that objective;
3. the population of students that will be assessed on the objective (e.g. caseload, grade level, course, etc...);
4. the standards and learning content that are represented by the objective;
5. the length of time across which intervention will occur in order to support students in obtaining the objective;
6. assessments that will be used to evaluate student performance;
7. quantitative indicators of academic growth and development (IAGDs) based on student performance on assessments; and
8. instructional strategies that will be employed to support students in realizing the learning objective.

The following pages provide sample SLO focus statements and corresponding IAGDs that may be appropriate for **Special Education Teachers** given their unique role within school settings.

Sample 1

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
 - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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Subject Area: Executive Functioning

Population of Students: Students in grades 9 - 12 identified to receive support in the Student Support Center

Student Learning Objective Focus Statement:

Students with disabilities will be prepared and organized for the school day.

Baseline Data:

Fifteen students who receive support from the Student Support Center have been identified to improve their organizational skills. Of a possible 25 items on a tracking sheet, students average missing 14 – 18 items on a weekly basis.

Rationale:

Executive functioning is an area that affects the entire school day. If a student cannot find or bring what they need to class, it interferes with learning.

Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development:

1. 100% of my students will exhibit growth in the area of preparedness and organization as evidenced by the use of a checklist to be filled out weekly (progress monitoring schedule) with student and case manager. Each student will increase their weekly average by a minimum of 4 points for 3 consecutive weeks by May.

Standards and Learning Content:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) ELA & Literacy:

SL 11-12 1.a.: Come to a discussion prepared, having read and researched material under study, explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thought, well-reasoned exchange or ideas.

Sample 2

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
 - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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Subject Area: Reading

Population of Students: 7th grade students with disabilities in a general education setting

Student Learning Objective Focus Statement:

Identified students in Grade 7 will show improvements in the application of reading comprehension skills 2013-2014 school year.

Baseline Data:

Ten students on my caseload lack reading comprehension skills based on 2013 CMT results. This SLO addresses strand D of the CMT standardized test: Examining the content and structure, the reader will elaborate on the text and make judgments about the text's quality and themes.

Rationale:

A student's ability to read significantly impacts their ability to succeed in all academic areas and be college and career ready upon graduation.

Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development:

1. 80% of identified students in 7th grade will increase MAS/CMT reading scaled scores by 3 points on the reading comprehension portion of the 2014 CMT.
2. 80% of identified students in 7th grade will demonstrate mastery (4 out of 6 points) on strand D on the reading comprehension portion of the 2014 CMT.

Standards and Learning Content:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) ELA & Literacy:

RL 7.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas and poems in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently.

Sample 3

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
 - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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Subject Area: Self Advocacy

Population of Students: Grade 9 students with disabilities entering high school

Student Learning Objective Focus Statement:

Identified students in grade 9 will improve their self-advocacy skills.

Baseline Data:

80% of the grade 9 students receiving special education services scored below 50% on the Self Determination Checklist Student Self-Assessment from the I'm Determined Project.

Rationale:

Students with disabilities need to develop self-advocacy skills in the general education setting in high school. Often, students will fall behind in their work, impacting their grades, because they are not willing to ask for help or accommodations when needed. Students will need to acquire these skills in order to be successful in high school, higher education or in their future careers.

Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development:

1. 90% of the grade 9 students receiving special education services will earn a combined score of 129 or higher (75%) on the Self-Determination Checklist Student Self-Assessment, Parent Assessment and Educator Assessment from the I'm Determined Project by the end of the 2013-14 school year.

Standards and Learning Content:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) ELA & Literacy:

SL 9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' idea and expressing it clearly and persuasively.

Sample 4

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
 - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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Subject Area: Students involved in the SRBI Process

Population of Students: All students in grades K-1 in need of individualized support to meet grade level benchmarks

Student Learning Objective Focus Statement:

Students will demonstrate improvement in attaining early literacy skills in order to read and understand text.

Baseline Data:

District wide universal screening identified 36 students in need of more intensive support. Data on district common assessments will be reviewed in January to determine if additional students need intervention and to assess student progress.

Rationale:

As the coordinator of the school SRBI process, early intervention provided in kindergarten and first grade increases students' opportunities to meet grade level expectations by grade 3 and become readers.

Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development:

1. 80% of student identified for support through intervention in kindergarten and grade 1 will improve at least 3 - DRA2 levels by June 2014.

Standards and Learning Content:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Foundational skills (K-5):

- K – Read emergent reader texts with purpose and understanding
- K, 1 – Phonological Awareness skills: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables and sounds
- 1 – Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension
- 1 – Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words

Sample 5

- **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE (SLO) FOCUS STATEMENT**
 - **INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (IAGD)**
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Subject Area: English/Language Arts

Population of Students: Seven students with disabilities in the general education classroom of 20 students

Student Learning Objective Focus Statement:

All students in a co-taught English-language arts class will improve their writing skills.

Baseline Data:

The students with disabilities in the class all scored at the basic and below basic categories. Four general education students were below basic and the rest of the class was in the proficient range.

Rationale:

The SLO and IAGD were set collaboratively with the general and Special Education Teacher. This co-taught classroom was created with a high staff to student ratio to assist students with improving their writing skills.

Indicator(s) of Academic Growth and Development:

1. During the 2013-14 school year, all students in the class will improve their informative/explanatory/persuasive writing skills by two rubric levels in one or more sub areas as measured by the CAPT Writing Rubric over the course of quarterly writing assignments.
2. During the 2013 -14 school year, all students will complete quarterly writing pieces utilizing the writing process as demonstrated by completion of all five writing steps which include pre-writing techniques, draft, edit/revise, rewrite and publishing in the areas of Reflective Writing, Expository Writing and two Persuasive Writing pieces.

Standards and Learning Content:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) 9-12 Language Arts Writing:

Standard#2: Write informative/exploratory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective section, organization and analysis of content.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CUSTOMIZING THE OBSERVATION RUBRIC:

The Common Core of Teaching Rubric for Effective Teaching is appropriate to use with Special Education Teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENT, PARENT AND PEER FEEDBACK:

The same feedback methods used for general education teachers should be used for Special Education Teachers.

RESOURCES:

Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012). *Implementing the common core state standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org>
Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED). (ND). Retrieved from <http://www.connecticutseed.org>
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