

8710.5050 TEACHERS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIST.

Subpart 1. **Scope of practice.** A teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist is authorized to provide evaluation and specially designed instruction to eligible children and youth with disabilities from kindergarten through age 21 who have a range of mild to moderate needs in the areas of academics, behavior, social, emotional, communication, and functional performance. These students come from the primary disability areas of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), developmental cognitive disability (DCD), emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD), other health disorders (OHD), and specific learning disabilities (SLD). This teacher is not prepared to serve needs beyond those that are moderate in these disability areas.

The teacher with this license may work in collaboration with, but not replace the expertise and services of those who serve children and youth with a disability in the areas of: blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, deafblind, speech and language impairment, physical impairments, traumatic brain injury, and severely multiply impaired. For these children and youth, a teacher with the academic and behavioral strategist (ABS) licensure would need to refer to an educational professional with expertise, certification, or specific special education licensure. This teacher is required to collaborate and consult with families, other classroom and special education teachers, and specialized service providers in designing and implementing individualized education program plans.

Subp. 2. **License requirements.** A candidate for licensure to teach students from kindergarten through age 21 who have a range of mild to moderate needs in the areas of academics, behavior, social, emotional, communication, and functional performance shall:

A. hold a baccalaureate degree from a college or university that is regionally accredited by the association for the accreditation of colleges and secondary schools;

B. demonstrate the standards of effective practice for licensing of beginning teachers in part 8710.2000;

C. demonstrate core skill requirements in part 8710.5000; and

D. show verification of completing a Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board preparation program approved under chapter 8705 leading to licensure of teachers of special education: academic and behavioral strategist in subpart 3.

Subp. 3. **Subject matter standard.** A candidate for licensure as a teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist must complete a preparation program under subpart 2, item D, that must include the candidate's demonstration of the knowledge and skills in items A to E.

A. **Foundational knowledge.** A teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist understands the foundations of special education services for students who have mild to moderate needs in the areas of academics, behavior, social, emotional, communication, and functional performance on which to base practice. The teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the:

(1) central concepts, tools of inquiry, history and context, models, theories, and philosophies that form the bases for special education practice for students with academic, behavioral, functional, social, emotional, and communication needs;

(2) laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation of positive behavior supports for students with challenging behavior;

(3) educational definitions, issues related to identification, and eligibility criteria pertaining to students with emotional or behavioral disorders, specific learning disabilities, developmental cognitive disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other health disabilities, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;

(4) etiology, characteristics, and classifications of students with emotional or behavioral disorders, specific learning disabilities, developmental cognitive disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, other health disabilities, and traumatic brain injury;

(5) similarities and differences across disabilities, including impact of coexisting conditions or multiple disabilities, on acquisition of academic, behavioral, functional, social, emotional, and communication skills and how to meet the needs in a range of service delivery models;

(6) levels of support required and a continuum of related services available for students with developmental cognitive and other disabilities to succeed in a range of environments;

(7) research-based theories of behavior and the impact of disability, gender, familial background, socioeconomic status, cultural, and linguistic factors on perceptions and interpretations of behavior for students with emotional or behavioral disorders and other disabilities;

(8) impact of abuse and dependency on individuals, their families, and the community;

(9) impact of information processing deficits on children and youth with specific learning disabilities and other disabilities;

(10) legal, judicial, medical, and educational systems and their terminologies and implications in serving students with disabilities;

(11) how attributions, anxiety, withdrawal, and thought disorders affect learning and behavior; and

(12) the major mental health disorders manifested during early childhood, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood and the complexities of comorbidity including behavioral manifestations of these disorders and their effects on learning and implications for instruction.

B. Referral, evaluation, planning, and programming. A teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist understands and applies principles of prevention and intervening early and procedures for referral, assessment, evaluation, individualized planning, programming, and placement specific to teaching students who have mild to moderate needs in the areas of academics, behavior, social, emotional, communication, and functional performance. The teacher must be able to:

- (1) select, administer, and interpret academic, behavioral, functional, social, emotional, and communication screening tools;
- (2) design, implement, evaluate, and adjust as needed, research-based interventions based on screening results, information from families, and performance data in the context of general education instruction and prereferral interventions;
- (3) consult and collaborate with school personnel and families to maintain educational supports found to be effective during prereferral interventions and needed in the general education classroom;
- (4) apply decision-making procedures based on data to determine when students are not responding to interventions and should be referred for a formal, comprehensive evaluation;
- (5) evaluate one's own knowledge, strengths, and limitations in evaluation planning, administration, and interpretation of results to assemble a comprehensive team with the capacity to assess all known and suspected areas of student needs, disability, and level of severity, in the areas of specific learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, developmental cognitive disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, other health disabilities, and other related disabilities;
- (6) select, administer, and interpret a variety of informal and formal assessments, including rating scales, interviews, observation checklists, direct observations, formative assessments, assistive technology considerations, and academic achievement assessments, accounting for technical adequacy, limitations, and ethical concerns;
- (7) complete, as a member of a team, a systematic, functional behavioral assessment including consideration of the forms and functions of behaviors, context in which behaviors occur, and antecedents and consequences of behaviors for the purpose of developing an individual positive behavior support plan;
- (8) integrate assessment results and information available from family, school personnel, legal system, medical, and mental health providers into the evaluation, planning, and programming process;
- (9) communicate the purpose, procedures, and results of interventions, assessments, and the evaluation process to students, families, educators, and other professionals;
- (10) collaborate with teachers, specialists, and related service providers, to identify patterns of strengths and weaknesses that require systematic explicit instruction, accommodations, and modifications, including the use of assistive technology for access to the curriculum;
- (11) address factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, and familial, cultural, and linguistic diversity that may influence the identification of students in the areas of specific learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, developmental cognitive disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other health disabilities; and
- (12) design and implement individualized education program plans, considering a range of educational placement options and required levels of support in the least restrictive environment,

that integrate student strengths, needs, assessment results, and student and family priorities, incorporating academic and nonacademic goals.

C. Instructional design, teaching, and ongoing evaluation. A teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist understands how to use individualized education program plans to design, implement, monitor, and adjust instruction for students who have mild to moderate needs in the areas of academics, behavior, social, emotional, communication, and functional performance. The teacher must be able to:

(1) utilize principles of universal design for learning in order to meet student needs across disability areas and across settings and provide access to grade-level content standards;

(2) design, implement, modify, and adjust instructional programs and processes and adapt materials and environments to enhance individual student participation and performance when serving students with a range of disabilities and diverse needs;

(3) design, implement, monitor, and adjust goals and objectives to address the individual strengths and needs of students with autism spectrum disorders, developmental cognitive disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, specific learning disabilities, and other health disabilities;

(4) monitor, collect, summarize, evaluate, and interpret data to document progress on skill acquisition and make adjustments to and accommodations in instruction;

(5) select and apply evidence-based instructional practices, including those supported by scientifically based research when available, for academic instruction, social skills instruction, affective education, and behavior management for students with a range of disabilities and diverse needs within a common instructional setting;

(6) apply strategies to increase functional developmental skills, academic skills, reasoning, problem solving skills, study skills, organizational skills, coping skills, social skills, self-advocacy, self-assessment, self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem, test-taking skills, and other cognitive strategies to ensure individual success in one-to-one, small-group, and large-group settings, including preparation for transition;

(7) modify instruction and teach skills to increase accuracy, fluency, academic vocabulary, and comprehension in reading, writing, and listening including modifying pace of instruction, introducing monitoring strategies, and providing organizational cues;

(8) modify instruction and teach skills to increase accuracy and proficiency in mathematical reasoning and calculation;

(9) collect and interpret academic progress monitoring data using a variety of assessment tools, including general outcome measures, curriculum-specific measures, and grade-level content standard measures;

(10) design, implement, monitor, and adjust instructional programs;

(11) utilize assistive technology devices, accessible instructional materials, and accommodations to strengthen or compensate for differences in perception, attention, memory, processing, comprehension, and expression;

(12) design, implement, monitor, and adjust a range of evidence-based instructional strategies and practices and develop and adapt specialized materials that facilitate student engagement and the maintenance and generalization of skills;

(13) access information from functional behavioral assessments in order to develop, implement, monitor, evaluate, and revise as needed an individual positive behavioral support plan across settings and personnel;

(14) design functional and safe school and classroom environments, utilize classroom management theories and strategies, establish consistent classroom-based positive behavioral support practices, and apply individual positive behavioral interventions and practices to support learning, behavior, social, and emotional needs; and

(15) collect, interpret, and use data to monitor the effectiveness of replacement behaviors, prompts, routines, and reinforcers in changing and maintaining positive behaviors.

D. Collaboration and communication. A teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist cultivates and maintains positive, collaborative relationships with children and youth with disabilities who have a range of mild to moderate needs in the areas of academics, behavior, social, emotional, communication, and functional performance, families, educators, other professionals, and the community to support development and educational progress. The teacher must be able to:

(1) access services, networks, agencies, and organizations for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, developmental cognitive disability, emotional or behavioral disability, specific learning disabilities, and other health disabilities and their families;

(2) understand the issues and resources and apply strategies needed when transitioning and reintegrating children and youth into and out of alternative environments;

(3) provide and receive consultation and collaborate with educators, specialists, families, paraprofessionals, and interagency professionals for the purposes of observation, problem-solving, providing positive behavior supports, and coaching in order to improve the academic and nonacademic performance of children and youth;

(4) differentiate the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals and agencies from those of school professionals in order to align services to children and youth with disabilities;

(5) assist children and youth and families in understanding terminology and identifying concerns, priorities, and resources during the identification of a disability and at critical transition points across the life span;

(6) apply cultural competencies, including self-awareness of one's personal perspectives, when communicating and problem solving, taking into account differences in familial background, socioeconomic status, and cultural and linguistic diversity;

(7) collaborate and actively participate with stakeholders to develop, implement, and refine schoolwide systems of academic and behavioral supports;

(8) cultivate professional relationships that encourage peer observation, coaching, and systems for giving and receiving feedback from colleagues to enhance student instruction and program outcomes;

(9) access and evaluate information, research, and emerging practices relevant to the fields of autism spectrum disorders, developmental cognitive disability, emotional or behavioral disability, specific learning disabilities, other health disabilities, and academic and behavioral interventions through consumer and professional organizations, peer-reviewed journals, and other publications; and

(10) engage in continuing professional development and reflection to increase knowledge and skill as a special educator and inform instructional practices, decisions, and interactions with children and youth and their families.

E. Clinical experiences. A teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist applies the standards of effective practice in teaching students who have a range of mild to moderate needs from the primary disability areas of autism spectrum disorders, developmental cognitive delays, emotional or behavioral disorders, other health disorders, and specific learning disabilities in primary (kindergarten through grade 4), middle level (grades 5 through 8), and secondary (grades 9 through 12, including transition programs) settings.

Subp. 4. **Continuing licensure.** A continuing license shall be issued and renewed according to rules of the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board governing continuing licenses.

Subp. 5. **Effective date.** The requirements in this part for licensure as a teacher of special education: academic and behavioral strategist are effective January 1, 2013, and thereafter.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 122A.09; L 2017 ISp5 art 3 s 32*

History: *36 SR 1243; 42 SR 59; L 2017 ISp5 art 12 s 22*

Published Electronically: *December 12, 2025*