Job Descriptions for Special Education Teachers: Note-Taking Template

# Explore Examples

Follow the links to the following examples of job descriptions for special education teachers. Look through them and respond to the questions below.

* Denver Public Schools: [Secondary Special Education Moderate Needs](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RToSHjUROs-xuik93SGKuKWATwbToFTg9bHp6kGicMU/edit?usp=sharing)
* Salem, MA: [Special Education Teacher](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GgDmt_FC06WyiY1Drm6W-GKKdxc5Ad3pPKkSd093X0I/edit?usp=sharing)
* San Mateo, CA: [Self-Contained Classroom Teacher](https://docs.google.com/document/d/19E4viG6i6VJFclTaWOGKAIRcPiE45ScgRbuG0DB99eQ/edit?usp=sharing)
* Two Rivers Charter School, Washington, DC: [Elementary Special Education Teacher](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DzebT4wb_wkqsmwsrf4JyTNVXOrAlj0PaUdDbpOK0d8/edit?usp=sharing)
* Bancroft School, Mt. Laurel Township, NJ: [Special Education Teacher](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1537TtzENlFhFRZN8rA95OKT0XcUQs6XwhsbXVk6808A/edit?usp=sharing)

*What do you notice in these job descriptions?*

*What content or types of information might you want to include in your own job descriptions for special educators?*

*What are some key words/phrases you noticed that you may want to include in your own job descriptions for special educators?*

# Self-Assessment Notes

Access a draft or posted version of a job description for a special education teacher in your LEA.

As we go through slides related to the following effective practices for special education job descriptions, make notes on your own LEA’s job description/s.

**Describe your special education program and students**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *What are we doing well?* | *What could we improve?* |
|  |  |

**Highlight the supports you offer for special educators**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *What are we doing well?* | *What could we improve?* |
|  |  |

**Explain how special educators collaborate with colleagues**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *What are we doing well?* | *What could we improve?* |
|  |  |

**Include testimonials**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *What are we doing well?* | *What could we improve?* |
|  |  |

**Be intentional about desired skills and knowledge**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *What are we doing well?* | *What could we improve?* |
|  |  |

# Desired Teacher Competencies

Look at the list of special education teacher competencies, adapted from the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators from the [Council for Exceptional Children](https://exceptionalchildren.org/standards/initial-practice-based-professional-preparation-standards-special-educators).

While all competencies listed are important for effectively serving students, put in **bold** any listed competencies that should be priorities for your schools to include in job descriptions and to communicate to candidates.

# Special Educator Standards

**1. Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines**

1.1 Practice within ethical guidelines and legal policies and procedures

1.2 Advocate for improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families while addressing the unique needs of those with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds

1.3 Design and implement professional learning activities based on ongoing analysis of student learning; self-reflection; and professional standards, research, and contemporary practices

**2. Understanding and Addressing Each Individual’s Developmental and Learning Needs**

2.1 Apply understanding of human growth and development to create developmentally appropriate and meaningful learning experiences that address individualized strengths and needs of students with exceptionalities

2.2 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, including exceptionalities, to plan and implement learning experiences and environments

**3. Demonstrating Subject Matter Content and Specialized Curricular Knowledge**

3.1 Apply their understanding of academic subject matter content of the general curriculum to inform their programmatic and instructional decisions for individuals with exceptionalities

3.2 Augment the general education curriculum to address skills and strategies that students with disabilities need to access the core curriculum and function successfully within a variety of contexts as well as the continuum of placement options to assure specially designed instruction is developed and implemented to achieve mastery of curricular standards and individualized goals and objectives

**4. Using Assessment to Understand the Learner and the Learning Environment for Data-Based Decisions Making**

4.1 Collaboratively develop, select, administer, analyze, and interpret multiple measures of student learning, behavior, and the classroom environment to evaluate and support classroom and school-based systems of intervention for students with and without exceptionalities

4.2 Develop, select, administer, and interpret multiple formal and informal, culturally and linguistically appropriate measures and procedures that are valid and reliable to contribute to eligibility determination for special education services

4.3 Assess, collaboratively analyze, interpret, and communicate students’ progress toward measurable outcomes using technology as appropriate, to inform both short- and long-term planning, and make ongoing adjustments to instruction

**5. Supporting Learning Using Effective Instruction**

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

5.2 Use effective strategies to promote active student engagement, increase student motivation, increase opportunities to respond, and enhance self‐regulation of student learning

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

5.4 Use flexible grouping to support the use of instruction that is adapted to meet the needs of each individual and group

5.5 Organize and manage focused, intensive small group instruction to meet the learning needs of each individual

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

**6. Supporting Social, Emotional and Behavioral Growth**

6.1 Use effective routines and procedures to create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities

6.2 Use a range of preventive and responsive practices documented as effective to support individuals’ social, emotional, and educational well-being

6.3 Systematically use data from a variety of sources to identify the purpose or function served by problem behavior to plan, implement, and evaluate behavioral interventions and social skills programs, including generalization to other environments

**7. Collaborating with Team Members**

7.1 Utilize communication, group facilitation, and problem–solving strategies in a culturally responsive manner to lead effective meetings and share expertise and knowledge to build team capacity and jointly address students’ instructional and behavioral needs

7.2 Collaborate, communicate, and coordinate with families, paraprofessionals, and other professionals within the educational setting to assess, plan, and implement effective programs and services that promote progress toward measurable outcomes for individuals with and without exceptionalities and their families

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 of individuals with exceptionalities and their families

7.4 Work with and mentor paraprofessionals in the paraprofessionals’ role of supporting the education of individuals with exceptionalities and their families

*Does your LEA have a uniform profile or description of an effective special education teacher?*

* *If so, what skills are required, and how can you more clearly reflect those in a job description?*
* *If you do not have this, who would you need to involve in the discussion to develop one?*

# Next Steps

*Looking over your notes, what next steps would be useful in making changes to special educator job descriptions? Who should be involved?*

*What are the most important messages about your LEA to communicate about special education in your schools? Which of these messages can you communicate in a job description?*

*What are the most important messages to communicate about who you are looking for and your expectations of special educators?*

*We’ve discussed content to add to job descriptions. Looking at your current special educator job description/s, is there any content that isn’t necessary and that you could remove?*

# Additional Resources

* The [educator job descriptions for online posts guide](https://info.iu13.org/hubfs/Statewide%20Initiatives/Toolkit_EducatorJobDescriptionsforOnlinePosts.pdf) reviews content from this session and provides additional ideas related to job posts for all teacher roles.
* The [job description writer](https://www.careeronestop.org/BusinessCenter/Toolkit/GettingStarted.aspx) tool from the U.S. Dept. of Labor generates lists of suggested technical, interpersonal and other skills to use in a job description for various school positions. For example, you can enter “teaching assistants” in the “Enter an Occupation” textbox.

# We appreciate your feedback.

[Please respond to a brief survey about this workshop.](https://forms.gle/pKHvPpLpf3ySYyHF7)