

Washington West Supervisory Union Job Description

JOB TITLE: Special Educator

FLSA STATUS: Exempt

UPDATED: FY 2014

POSITION OBJECTIVES: Working in collaboration with teachers, parents/caregivers, the student, and other professional and paraprofessional personnel, and consistent with state and federal law, the Special Educator case manages, coordinates, and oversees the implementation of effective interventions for special education, 504, and EST students. Position shall focus on literacy, math and behavior support services designed to enable assigned students to meet Vermont's learning expectations for students in the least restrictive environment. In addition, the Special Educator develops and evaluates Individual Education Programs (IEP), behavior plans, and specialized reading and math instruction, and provides comprehensive evaluation services with professional and technical assistance from the Director of Student Support Services, district-wide specialists, and other Special Educators within the building.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT: All students on IEPs, 504, and EST plans or other students who have demonstrated behavior and/or learning problems that require intervention and specialized instruction.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: include the following. Other duties may be assigned.

Planning and Preparation

- Integrates knowledge and understanding of assigned students with current best instructional practices and research in reading, math, behavior management, special education, 504, and EST to provide the most effective educational program for assigned students in compliance with federal and state laws/regulations.
- Serves as team liaison to assure a successful transition of assigned students from within and between schools uses assessment information to collaboratively develop effective standards-based instructional interventions, remedial services, or Individual Educational Plan (IEP), 504 or EST for those students who qualify for such services.
- Researches, coordinates, and effectively utilizes available school and community resources and outside agencies to ensure proper delivery of students' IEP, 504, EST, behavior plan, or other remedial programs (Math Specialist; School Psychologist; Director of Student Support Services; Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; SLP; Social Worker; OT/PT; and other internal and external professionals and agencies).
- In collaboration with other Special Educators and district-wide specialists:
 - Interprets research findings related to the improvement of reading and math instruction and assessment and communicates these findings to colleagues and the wider community in order to improve classroom practice.
 - Communicates information about school-wide literacy and math programs, student progress, and program improvements to administrators, other staff members, school board members, parents, and the community.
 - Assists with the program evaluation process to gauge the effectiveness of the school's implementation of literacy and math curriculum using a variety of appropriate indicators of effectiveness.
 - Communicates researched based practices in literacy and math instruction to facilitate and support classroom instruction.

- Plans, develops, and monitors extended school year programs for identified students to assure an effective educational program. Provides technical assistance to summer tutors as needed (if applicable). Communicates students' summer programming to the assignment teachers and Special Educator for the subsequent school year.
- Works with classroom teachers to select, design/modify classroom instruction (including learning activities, instructional groupings, lesson plans, educational materials, curricula, assessments, teaching and behavior management strategies, and the like) for assigned students designed to promote the academic, vocational, physical and social development needs of students, adhering to accommodations as appropriate.
- Administers and/or coordinates a thorough needs assessment for assigned students which may include language, behavior, reading/writing, math, visual motor, gross and fine motor, and cognitive skills using a variety of techniques (e.g. standardized tests, rubrics, checklists, curriculum based measures, developmental scales, observations, behavior objectives).
- Confers with parents, school counselors, classroom teachers, social workers, administrators, testing specialists, and other professionals as needed to determine proper assessment tools and procedures, and to discuss evaluation results.
- Interprets both educational and clinical findings to accurately determine program eligibility and to assess student progress.

Learning Environment

- Creates and maintains an environment of respect and rapport.
- Assists with the integration of assigned students into regular classroom settings using the concepts of inclusion, and least restrictive environment.
- Works with classroom teachers to coordinate services and assures productive, effective, and efficient use of assigned paraeducators.
- In consultation with other Special Educators and/or district-wide specialists, determines appropriate affective and social behavior, identifies student's competencies in their daily living skills, and develops, implements, and monitors effective behavior management plans and crisis prevention/intervention plans for assigned students as needed.
- Works with classroom teachers to monitor students for signs of disruptive behavior such as violence, verbal outbursts, and episodes of destructiveness in efforts to curtail such behavior.
- Identifies and implements appropriate assistive technology devices and other adaptive or augmentative systems that will enhance student communication and accessibility to learning.
- Provides a safe learning environment for all students. Takes all necessary and reasonable precautions to protect students, equipment, materials, and facilities.

Instruction

- Effectively provides academic instruction, social skills training, and other direct services to assigned students individually, and in small/large groups (both outside and within the regular classroom) as decided by team members, using the recommendations of the most current written evaluation report or 504/EST plan.
- In consultation with other Special Educator and/or district-wide specialists, and in collaboration with classroom teachers, teaches students socially acceptable behavior by employing techniques such as behavior modification and positive reinforcement. Uses a variety of social skills curricula (including established school curricula) to teach prosocial behavior and de-escalation strategies.
- In collaboration with classroom teachers, implements appropriate classroom activities/educational materials to effectively engage students in learning and to maximize student comprehension of the lesson; including remedial instruction techniques, implementation of individual educational plans, instructional groupings, behavioral management techniques, peer support, and the like.

- Collaborates with the classroom teacher in providing effective, timely, and quality feedback on student progress to parents, students, and other professionals as needed or required.
- Collaborates with the classroom teacher to accurately assess the effectiveness of classroom services (including learning activities, instructional groupings, lesson plans, educational materials, curricula, assessments, teaching strategies, and the like) to make sure instructional goals of assigned students are being met; and persistently seeks thoughtful alternative approaches/resources to improve student learning.
- In consultation with other Special Educators and/or district-wide specialists, collaborates with classroom teachers to support their implementation of research-based best practices in all aspects of literacy and math instruction and assessment, including modeling or co-teaching of specific instructional approaches when appropriate; joint problem solving; and/or assistance with the acquisition of resources.
- In consultation with other Special Educators and/or district-wide specialists, facilitates the review and selection of specialized instructional materials for literacy and math instruction, including those that are technology based.
- In consultation with other Special Educators and/or district-wide specialists, uses the results of literacy and math assessments to target instruction, to flexibly group students for small groups when needed, to appropriately match students with reading and/or math material, and to assess curriculum-specific learning outcomes as they relate to the students learning and program effectiveness.
- In collaboration with the classroom teacher, uses a range of progress monitoring tools to regularly evaluate individual students' progress, and adjusts approaches, interventions, and supplementary instruction depending on student progress.
- In consultation with other Special Educators and/or district-wide specialists:
 - Based on student needs, supports students both in and out of their regular classrooms by explicitly and systematically teaching one or more of the components of literacy and/or math.
 - Uses a wide variety of teacher and student-selected texts or materials, including authentic and extended texts or materials, appropriate to individual students' reading/writing/math levels, in order to increase students' skills, sense of self efficacy, and motivation to learn.
 - Appropriately selects from a variety of active and engaging individual and/or small group instructional approaches, supplementary programs, or interventions, and adjusts pace and degree of explicit instruction, in order to meet the needs of individual students.
 - Uses remedial and tutorial reading, writing and math programs which have been validated by research, including technology-based tools and programs.

Other Professional Responsibilities

- In collaboration with the classroom teacher, routinely observes student interactions and learning environments in the classroom, school and community to assess instructional effectiveness in reading and math, and the effectiveness of behavior management plans.
- In collaboration and/or consultation with other Special Educators and/or district-wide specialists, identifies, coordinates, and implements training for teachers, paraeducators and other school personnel as it relates to understanding disabilities, managing and implementing student programs, remedial instruction strategies, differentiated instructional strategies, screening and assessment, behavior management techniques, developing IEPs, and evaluating student progress.
- Assists the Director of Student Support Services in planning and evaluating program effectiveness and identifying program needs.
- Prepares and maintains accurate, timely, complete, effective and confidential student records and related reports as required by law, district policy, and administrative regulations.

- Communicates/collaborates effectively with parents to keep families informed of the instructional program and individual student progress; and effectively engages families to help meet the educational needs of the student. Means of communication may include annual open house, observation sessions for parents, conferences, sessions for program discussion, making home visits, and other individual meetings as necessary.
- Implements and evaluates systemic strategies to include parents as partners in the literacy and math development of their children and adolescents.
- Works effectively, cooperatively and respectfully with supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates. Implements strategies such as collaborative teaming, conflict resolution, and mediation strategies to facilitate team decisions around student programs.
- Participates in EST/MTSS functions including (but not limited to) meetings, developing referral processes, screening referred students, providing supplemental support, and consulting services as requested.
- Implement crisis prevention and intervention (CPI) as necessary to ensure the emotional and physical safety of students.
- Actively participates in school events, workshops, in-service meetings, building level staff meetings, district meetings, and other school and district committees/projects.
- Responsible for on-going professional growth activities consistent with supervision and evaluation goals, district goals and school action/strategic plans, and as directed by the Director of Student Support Services and/or his/her designee.
- Keeps abreast of current best practices, research, special education laws, and other applicable federal and state laws/regulations.
- Assists in the development and implementation of school-wide discipline programs.
- Acts as a general resource person for classroom teachers, paraeducators, and administration; and participates as a leader in teacher training activities (both school-wide and district-wide).
- Shows professionalism and considers "What's best for students" in serving and advocating for students, and in decision making.
- Follows and assists in upholding and enforcing school rules, administrative regulations and procedures, policies of the WWSU, and corresponding school district policies.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Reports to, evaluated by, and receives general administrative direction from the School Principal with input from the Director of Student Support Services and/or his/her designee. Receives technical direction and oversight from the Director of Student Support Services in consultation with the Director of Curriculum.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: Trains and plans, assigns/directs the activities, and is responsible for quality of work of assigned paraeducators; plays key advisory role in evaluation, hiring, and continued employment.

QUALIFICATIONS: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily, in addition to the following:

- Education and Experience. Master's degree or equivalent in Special Education or other appropriate discipline plus 3 to 4 years of relevant experience preferred (or Bachelor's degree with a combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and skills are acquired). Working knowledge of Vermont Special Education Law and/or recent experience working in a Vermont school district preferred. Experience working in a psycho-educational environment understanding social/emotional functioning in a public school setting preferred (possibly required).

- Demonstrates knowledge of human development including the implications of a variety of delays, disorders, and disabling conditions for learning and development; appropriate procedures and strategies for identifying the needs and supporting the learning and development of individuals with special needs; and procedural, consultation/collaboration, and case management knowledge and skills essential to implementation of an effective educational support program, as delineated in current national professional standards.
- Demonstrates knowledge of major theories and research-based principles and processes underlying language, literacy and math development, the components of effective literacy and math instruction and assessment at the student and school levels, a variety of literacy difficulties and intervention strategies, and strategies for facilitating best practice school-wide, as delineated in current national professional standards.
- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of assigned students including: intellectual, social, and emotional characteristics of age group; students' varied approaches to learning; student skills and knowledge; student interests and cultural heritage; economic and cultural influences; student's family, school and community context.
- Certifications and Licenses. Valid Vermont Professional Educator's License with a 3-82/3-85 endorsement required (Level II preferred).
- Language Skills. Ability to read, analyze, and interpret common educational and technical journals, periodicals and procedures, and special education regulations. Ability to respond to common inquiries or complaints from parents, regulatory agencies, or members of the community. Ability to write reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals that conform to Special Education regulations. Ability to effectively present information to and respond to questions from administrators, parents, peers, board members and the general public.
- Mathematical/Reasoning Skills. Ability to interpret and use test results by applying math concepts such as standard error of measurement, bands of confidence, standard scores, and percentiles. Ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of concrete variables in situations where only limited standardization exists. Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
- Computer Skills and Experience. Good basic computer skills and experience with word processing programs required. Experience with Microsoft Office preferred. Knowledge and experience of a variety of adaptive equipment and software.
- Communication & Interpersonal Skills. Ability to effectively, efficiently and regularly communicate and work cooperatively with a variety of individuals, including students, peers, subordinates, supervisors, parents, and representatives of outside organizations. Ability to effectively resolve conflicts and handle stress.

Frequency	Code	Description
Sometimes	S	activity may exist sporadically, but not on a consistent basis
Occasionally	O	activity exists on a consistent basis for less than 1/3 of the time
Frequently	F	activity exists from 1/3 of the time up to 2/3 of the time
Constantly	C	activity exists for 2/3 or more of the time
Not applicable	NA	activity is not present in the position

PHYSICAL EFFORT AND STRESS: Employee must have the physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job as outlined above, in addition to the following (Indicate appropriate code from above):

	Frequency Code	Essential	Not Essential
SITTING	F	X	
STANDING	F	X	
WALKING	F	X	
SEEING	C	X	
HEARING	C	X	
TALKING	C	X	
DEXTERITY (hands/fingers)	C	X	
USE OF COMPUTERS AND EQUIPMENT	F	X	
LIFTING			
up to 10 lbs.	F	X	
10-25 lbs.	O	X	
25-50 lbs.	O	X	
50-100 lbs.	O		X
100+ lbs.	NA		X
CARRYING			
up to 10 lbs.	O	X	
10-25 lbs.	O	X	
25-50 lbs.	O	X	
50-100 lbs.	NA		X
100+ lbs.	NA		X
BENDING/STOOPING	O	X	
PUSHING/PULLING	O	X	
TWISTING	O	X	
CLIMBING	O		X
BALANCING	O	X	
CROUCHING	O	X	
KNEELING	O	X	
CRAWLING	O	X	
REACHING (i.e., overhead)	O	X	
HANDLING	F	X	
DRIVING	O	X	
REPETITIVE MOVEMENTS (hands, feet)	O		X
MANAGING STRESS	F	X	
RESOLVING CONFLICTS	F	X	

WORKING CONDITIONS/ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: While performing the duties of this job, the employee shall be exposed to the following:

	Frequency Code
EXPOSURE (dust, dirt)	C
EXPOSURE (extreme heat – non-weather, flames)	NA
EXPOSURE (extreme cold – non-weather)	NA
EXPOSURE (fumes, odors)	O
EXPOSURE (viruses, infectious diseases)	F
EXPOSURE (water)	S

EXPOSURE (hazardous equipment)	NA
EXPOSURE (chemicals, hazardous materials)	O
UNEVEN TERRAIN	O
OUTDOOR WEATHER CONDITIONS	O
VIBRATION/NOISE	C
HEIGHTS	O

Definitions - Physical Demands

- Sitting: remaining in a seated position
- Standing: remaining on one's feet in an upright position at a work station without moving about
- Walking: Moving about on foot
- Seeing: Perceiving with the eye
- Hearing: Perceiving or listening to sound by ear
- Talking: Articulating, speaking or discussing using spoken words
- Dexterity: Skill in the use of hands and fingers
- Lifting: Raising or lowering an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling)
- Carrying: Transporting an object, usually holding it in the hands or arms or on the shoulder
- Bending/Stooping: Bending the body downward and forward by bending the spine at the waist. Occurs to a considerable degree and requires full use of the lower extremities and back muscles.
- Pushing: Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force (includes slapping, striking, and kicking)
- Pulling: Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force (includes jerking).
- Twisting: Rotating; moving to face in alternate direction.
- Climbing: Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles, ropes and the like, using the feet, legs, and/or arms and hands.
- Balancing: Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on narrow, slippery, or erratically moving surfaces; or maintaining body equilibrium when performing gymnastic feats.
- Crouching: Bending the body downward and forward by bending the legs and spine.
- Kneeling: Bending the legs at the knees to come to rest on the knee or knees.
- Crawling: Moving about on the hands and knees or ha
- Reaching: Extending the hands and arms in any direction
- Handling: Seizing, holding, grasping, turning, or working with hands

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 This general outline illustrates the type of work, which characterizes the Job Classification. It is not an all-encompassing statement of the specific duties, responsibilities and qualifications of individual positions assigned to the classification. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.