



Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) Implementing TEAM: Observations for Special Education Settings

This question and answer document is based on current information and is subject to change with ongoing refinement and modifications to TEAM in the future..

Will there be a specially designed rubric for special educators?

The regular educator rubric will be utilized for this group. In some cases the observer may need to adapt the bulleted descriptor points, as there may be some that don't necessarily apply in every Special Education teaching situation. However, the general principles of the indicators themselves do apply.

Special education teachers provide instruction in a variety of settings. How can the current rubric be applied when evaluating teachers who work in/with: a) Inclusion classrooms (co-teaching or assisting) b) Life Skills (i.e. CDC) classrooms c) those with multiple and severe disabilities (i.e. non-verbal, medically fragile, visually or hearing impaired) d) homebound settings e) resource classrooms?

During the pre-conference meeting a thorough discussion must occur as to how the components of the rubric apply to a special educator's unique instructional settings.

What is the role of the special educator during the pre-conference meeting?

The special educator should clearly describe to the observer the unique circumstances in the classroom setting where they will be observed. Special educators should use the pre-conference meeting to explain to the evaluator how the indicator descriptors are addressed in the specific instructional setting in which they are being observed.

What are some of the responsibilities of the evaluator in preparing for the evaluation of special educators?

It is important for observers and evaluators to be familiar with the unique needs of the students and the structure of the classroom settings when observing special educators. Observers should also be familiar with Federal and State special education requirements and, if not, should contact the Special Education Supervisor of the school system for further assistance with these requirements. Additionally, an informal classroom visit(s) might be helpful in advance of the required observations. On page 69 of the TEAM Evaluation Handbook, questions are provided that the observer may find helpful when preparing for the pre-conference meeting.



As students with disabilities often require and receive a variety of services, what type of evaluation rubric will be used for staff providing unique services and who are licensed as “school services personnel” (i.e. School Audiologists, School Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists and Speech Language Pathologists)?

A modified version of the TEAM rubric entitled “School Services Personnel Rubric” has been developed for staff that fall under these headings and may be found on the TDOE website at http://www.team-tn.org/assets/educator-resources/TEAM_School_Services_Personnel_Rubric.pdf

Will special education teachers be required to create artificial settings or perform in an a typical manner to meet the criteria of the evaluation model?

No. Each teacher will be evaluated based on a set of criteria adapted to the setting in which he/she instructs his/her students.

How will the “growth measures” portion (35%) of the evaluation be addressed for special education teachers?

For 2011-12, special education teachers will receive the school-wide value added score as their growth measure. Goal setting is being pilot tested this year to determine if this can provide a comparable growth measure for special education teachers in the future.

In an inclusion setting, how will the special education teacher be evaluated if he/she is not the lead teacher on the day of the observations, especially for the unannounced observations?

For unannounced observations, the special education teacher will be evaluated based on his/her role during that period and indicators may be adapted as necessary by the observer.

How will the indicators on “presenting instructional content” and “teacher content knowledge” be addressed for special education teachers who are not content certified, especially on the secondary level?

The descriptors for the “presenting instructional content” indicator are based on instructional techniques that could apply to any teacher and any instructional content. The descriptors for the “teacher content knowledge” indicator follow the same pattern except that the first descriptor should be adapted based on which teacher is identified as teacher of record.

If oral and/or written feedback from students is a descriptor that the evaluator is looking for as part of the “academic feedback” indicator, how will the special education teacher be evaluated if the students are unable to respond orally or in writing?

These descriptors would be discussed and adapted to fit student modes of communication during the pre-conference meeting between the teacher and observer.



How could the “visual presentations” descriptor of the “presenting instructional content” indicator be applied to teachers of students with visual impairments?

This would be discussed during the pre-conference meeting and a determination made as to whether or not the descriptor could be utilized or needs to be adapted based on the students in the classroom.

How will evaluators who do not have expertise in working with students who have severe intellectual disabilities, autism, etc., be able to provide recommendations or suggest resources that meet the refinement requirements of the evaluation process.

Evaluators who need more assistance should rely on the expertise of the school system’s Special Education Supervisor.

Is there an official lesson plan template to be used as part of the TEAM evaluation process?

TDOE does not require or recommend any particular lesson plan template. Districts can create or require a specific template at their discretion.

Will special education teachers be asked to develop individual lesson plans for each of their students who also have individualized education plans (IEPs)?

Teachers should create a lesson plan that includes differentiation for students in the classroom, but there is no need to develop multiple lesson plans for individual students.

If there are two teachers (general education and special education teachers) in an inclusion class, will they be required to produce their own lesson plans or may they generate one lesson plan that will be used by both with specific areas of responsibility identified?

One lesson plan can be generated with duties defined for each teacher or a supplement can be written to the main plan defining the role of the special education teacher in this instructional setting.

During “unannounced observations” the special education teacher might be doing re-teaching or small group instruction. How could the entire rubric be reviewed in these instances, especially if the time period for these types of activities is short?

Lessons vary in length but should still have the main components in the rubric. The rubric is applied to a lesson in Pre-K and high school. These lessons may vary in length, but are all evaluated on the instruction rubrics. Observers can ask a teacher when the lesson will start on the day of the observation, in order to ensure that they are able to see all parts of the lesson.

If a special education teacher is working in numerous schools, where does the evaluation occur and who acts as the principal evaluator? Which school data would be utilized for the growth portion of the evaluation?

This should be discussed and decided based on the amount of time the teacher spends at their assigned schools. District wide data would be utilized for the growth portion of the evaluation in these cases.