TEAM Observation Guidance Documents: Cover Sheet

BACKGROUND

Certain subgroups of educators, which are listed in the table below, operate in unique situations that may require additional attention to apply the TEAM evaluation model with fidelity and provide educators with meaningful feedback. As such, we have conducted numerous focus groups, with educators working in these areas, to develop additional guidance to support evaluation. The accompanying documents are meant to serve as an instructive, although not exhaustive, list of areas to which administrators should direct additional attention based on the unique instructional or service setting of the educator. These are meant to supplement, not replace, the TEAM evaluation rubric. Together, the pre-observation questions, key areas for gathering evidence, examples of evidence and artifacts, and examples of excellence present an evaluator with additional resources to use to conduct high-quality evaluations.

COMPONENTS

The accompanying documents for each educator group are broken down into two components.

1. **The *Observation Guidance* document provides:**
    - a quick glance at some guiding questions and overarching concerns for each educator group; and
    - examples of pre-observation questions, key areas to focus evidence gathering, and examples of appropriate evidence/artifacts the evaluator may collect.
        - **NOTE:** Key areas for evidence are not intended to replace the indicators in the TEAM evaluation model, but rather are more detailed guidelines for evaluating indicators that educators have identified as particularly tricky to observe.
2. **The *Observation Support* document provides:**
    - additional context for the evaluator when considering the responsibilities of each educator,
    - detailed examples to illuminate some of the key indicators and areas for evidence, and
    - a platform for meaningful discussion between educators and evaluators around best practices.
        - **NOTE:** This can be especially useful for structuring pre-conference discussions.

Available observation guidance documents include:

GENERAL EDUCATOR RUBRIC	SCHOOL SERVICES PERSONNEL RUBRIC
• Alternative Educators • College, Career and Technical Educators (CCTE) • Early Childhood Educators • Pre-K Educators • Early Literacy K-3 Educators • Gifted Educators • Interventionists • Online Educators • Special Educators	• School Audiologists • School Counselors • School Psychologists • School Social Workers • Speech/Language Pathologists (SLP) • Vision Specialists

TEAM Observation Guidance: Special Educators

PRE-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS
1. **What is being brought to the classroom that would not be present otherwise?** 2. **In what ways do you plan with the regular educator? How do you plan using student data?** 3. **What strategies and modifications do you bring to the classroom?** 4. **What are the unique circumstances in the classroom setting where you will be observed (e.g., inclusion vs. resource vs. life skills)?** 5. **How are the indicator descriptors addressed and what they will look like (if modified) in the specific instructional setting?** 6. **What is the direct link between what is on individual students' IEPs and what will be observed in today's lesson?** 7. **How do you plan lessons in a way that fulfills the goals and objectives of multiple IEPs?** 8. **How did you plan for each student?** 9. **How did you plan for your teaching assistant (TA)?** 10. **What data are you collecting? How are you collecting this data? How will you use this data to drive your instruction?** 11. **What evidence will indicate mastery?** 12. **What is your next step for improving your instruction?** 13. **What do you do for your own professional development?**
KEY AREAS FOR EVIDENCE
1. **Instruction—Standards and Objectives** • **A clear connection between the state standard(s) or the IEP goals/objectives is evident.** • **The IEP goals are designed in a way to accelerate progress (close the gap).** • **Students with IEPs are made aware of the goals/objectives on their particular IEP.**
2. **Instruction—Questioning** • **Students are pushed to generate developmentally appropriate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.** • **Questions are designed in a manner adapted to the students' particular learning styles.** • **Questions glean information from students that probably would have otherwise been unknown.**
3. **Instruction—Grouping of Students** • **Grouping of students maximizes the impact of specific activities during the lesson and deliberately takes into account diverse learning needs.** • **Group composition is flexible in order to be most beneficial for the individual needs of diverse learners.** • **Grouping strategies may be consistently the same depending on the nature of the special educator's role, but in each case the groups maximize student learning.** • **The grouping of students is directly connected to ongoing data collection, progress monitoring, and the needs of the students.**
4. Planning—Instructional Plans • **Goals are measurable and explicit, aligned to state standards or student IEPs, and designed to clearly identify the gap between present level of performance and grade level performance.** • **Goals and objectives are selected in a manner to address deficits, accelerate progress, and close the gap.** • **There is clear evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs (inclusion or pull-out).** • **Instructional plans are written in a concise, efficient manner that maximizes the amount of time spent with the student.**

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE/ARTIFACTS	
• **Instructional plans** • **"I can" statements** • **IEPs** • **List of objectives and sub-objectives** • **Service logs for IEP implementation** • **List of accommodations and modifications**	• Special education specific assessments • Self-assessments with rubric(s) • TA schedule • Data notebooks • Student work products • Data sheets

TEAM Observation Support: Special Educators

The standards and objectives for special educators must be reframed and adapted within the framework of individual student IEPs. Special educators may use alternate standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Questioning must also be reframed according to the diverse needs of the specific populations served. Student grouping strategies do not always apply, depending on the nature of the service or instruction (e.g., grouping may be different in pull-out vs. inclusion). Given this unique setting, lesson plans should be based on and aligned with IEPs. When appropriate, plans should be lesson-specific as well as student-specific.

I. PLANNING

EXAMPLE—INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS
Planning—Instructional Plans: **Teacher develops lesson plans that denote specific groups based on subject and ability to maximize learning for all students. Lesson plans will include grouping instruction for remediation, maintenance, and enrichment of skills. Lesson objectives are clearly scaffolded to build on prior knowledge and provide different levels of learning targeted to specific students' needs.**

II. INSTRUCTION

EXAMPLE—STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES
Instruction—Standards and Objectives: **Special educator instructs students based on their present level of performance while adding rigor to reach grade level standards. Standard-based IEP goals and objectives denote grade-level standards, and objectives denote present level of performance for current instruction. Students are clearly informed of which standards they are working on mastering and how they have been progressing towards those goals; however, it may be difficult for them to articulate these goals without guidance.**

EXAMPLE—QUESTIONING

Instruction—Questioning (Inclusion):

Special educator follows up with individual students or small groups of students to ask additional clarifying questions and scaffold student thinking. Special educator structures questions for individuals and groups to engage in appropriate levels of rigorous problem-solving. The special educator knows his/her students so well that there is an intuitive exchange that gets at what the student knows to a greater degree. Students are frequently surprised by how much they do know. Students are able to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

Instruction—Questioning (Direct Instruction):

Questioning is within the parameters of the curriculum and all questions (forms and frequency) depend on the objective of the lessons. The teacher actively works to develop higher-order thinking skills in students. In order to foster and monitor this development, teacher establishes and maintains communication with students by asking questions.

- **Teacher questions are varied and high-quality, providing a balanced mix of question types:**
  - **What's another way you might…?**
  - **What would it look like if…?**
  - **What do you think would happen if…?**
  - **How was…different from…?**
  - **When have you done/experienced something like this before?**

- **Students ask specific questions :**
  - **Is this problem correct?**
  - **Could you show me the correct way to answer this?**
  - **Could you repeat the directions?**
  - **Should I complete the entire worksheet?**
  - **Can I go on to the next part?**
  - **What does this result mean?**

EXAMPLE—GROUPING OF STUDENTS

Instruction—Grouping of Students:

Teacher develops instructional grouping arrangements (whole class, small group, pairs, individuals, learning style, etc.) to consistently maximize student understanding and learning. The students exhibit evidence of this learning through: group projects, visual presentations, demonstrations, the use of technology, and verbal, gestural, or written communication of their understanding. The teacher then collects data on the effectiveness of these grouping strategies through formative assessment tools. This data is used thoughtfully and effectively to drive future instruction and facilitate meaningful communication with relevant stakeholders.