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U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

Preparation Strategies Role Guide

	State education agency role	Educator preparation program/ community college role	District role
Professional standards, preparation program standards, and advanced teacher standards	• Align standards to high-leverage practices (HLPs) and evidence-based practices (EBPs) shown in research studies to improve learning for students with disabilities (SWDs). • Strengthen state program approval and reporting requirements to ensure that educator preparation programs (EPPs) are graduating teachers who have the knowledge and skills to support SWDs. • Encourage EPPs and districts to align preservice and inservice field experiences and professional learning with teacher and leader standards to ensure the development of knowledge and skills to support SWDs. • Provide the CEEDAR Center Innovation Configurations to help review and strengthen teacher and leader preparation standards. • Establish pilot program approval standards to streamline paperwork requirements for program approval and emphasize selective entry and performance-based exit standards.	• Integrate the teacher and leader standards into coursework and field experiences, including multiple practice-based opportunities for supporting SWDs. • Align preservice and inservice instructional expectations and professional learning experiences to the teacher and leader standards, including the knowledge and skills to support SWDs. • Conduct program reviews using the CEEDAR Center Innovation Configurations and address any gaps in preparing all teachers to support SWDs. • Pilot new program completion standards as a prerequisite to licensure, including new performance assessments to assess candidates' capacity to support SWDs. Pilot program approval standards to streamline paperwork requirements for program approval and emphasize selective entry and performance-based exit standards.	• Collaborate with the state education agency (SEA) and EPPs to provide input into the preparation of professional teacher and leader standards, including the knowledge and skills to support SWDs. • Provide professional learning opportunities that align with and reinforce the teacher and leader preparation standards. • Address the staffing needs in high-need schools by partnering with EPPs to establish preparation academies that will prepare teachers to support SWDs.

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Evidence-based practices	• Ensure the explicit integration of EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs into the teacher and leader preparation standards. • Include the integration of EBPs and HLPs within coursework and field experiences in program approval. • Encourage coherence between academic coursework and clinical experiences so that candidates make connections between theory and practice, particularly for practices shown in research studies to benefit SWDs. • Ensure evidence of candidate capacity to implement EBPs and HLPs with fidelity within program approval, certification and licensure standards, and assessments.	• Integrate EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs with multiple practice-based opportunities within coursework and field experiences. • Conduct program reviews using the CEEDAR Center Innovation Configurations and use those reviews to strengthen EPPs. • Align content and pedagogy offerings to EBPs. • Integrate culturally responsive practices into coursework and field experiences. • Use the CEEDAR Center's *Learning to Teach: Practice-Based Opportunities in Teacher Education* to integrate high-quality, practice-based opportunities and supports in coursework and field experiences.	• Include EBP and HLP implementation in educator evaluation and professional learning systems for all teachers. • Provide professional learning and support to all teachers in EBP and HLP implementation. • Engage with EPP partners to use the CEEDAR Center Innovation Configurations to strengthen existing professional learning activities. • Use teachers with demonstrated effectiveness to support SWDs as they mentor and provide observation and feedback to novice teachers.

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EPP and district partnerships	• Require district-EPP partnerships through both program approval and district Title II funding. • Engage district leaders in creating policies regarding district and EPP partnerships that prioritize practice-based opportunities, content, and pedagogy for supporting SWDs. • Encourage districts and EPPs to collaborate in offering professional learning to inservice teachers. • Prepare and compensate cooperating teachers who provide coaching and support to new teachers that reinforce the skills needed to adequately support SWDs. • Reinforce any state or federally funded grant program that supports EPP reform to require a meaningful and sustained partnership with a high-need K–12 district and a strong emphasis on clinical training that includes experiences in supporting SWDs. • Support efforts to better align Title II of the Higher Education Act and Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to strengthen recruitment, preservice preparation, induction and mentoring, and inservice professional development for teachers, principals, and other K–12 school leaders so that they are better prepared to support the learning of SWDs.	• Partner with districts to create aligned instructional expectations from preservice to inservice in support of SWDs. • Seek to increase the diversity of district placements, including rural and urban, and diversity in student population (e.g., SWDs, English learners). • Seek to place teacher candidates in school settings that will provide examples of effective coteaching practices and instruction for diverse student populations and SWDs. • Encourage (or require) teachers enrolled in general education preparation programs to gain instructional knowledge and skills in teaching SWDs, including clinical experiences with SWDs. • Collaborate with the state and districts to monitor educator workforce data and select strategies to strengthen the educator pipeline.	• Partner with EPPs to create aligned instructional expectations from preservice to inservice in support of SWDs. • Partner with EPPs to establish aligned observation rubrics between preservice and inservice, including the use of EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to benefit SWDs. • Prepare and compensate cooperating teachers who provide coaching and support to new teachers, with specific attention to the knowledge and skills needed to adequately support SWDs.

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Practice-based coursework and clinical experiences	• Establish clear expectations for clinical experiences, including placement requirements in classrooms with SWDs, as part of program approval requirements. • Offer grants to EPPs and district partnerships to establish yearlong residency programs that include varied experiences in support of SWDs. • Provide stipends for undergraduates in the residency program pursuing a special education teacher certification. • Provide mentors who support teachers of SWDs. • Provide mentor professional learning and support that focuses on the EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs. • Integrate practice-based opportunities that apply EBPs and HLPs into coursework and clinical experiences as part of program approval. • Ensure that program approval requirements include evidence that supervising/cooperating teachers provide teacher/personnel candidates with high-quality feedback on EBPs and HLPs. • Ensure that any federally funded grant program through the state supporting reform in EPPs requires a meaningful and sustained partnership with a high-need K–12 district, with a strong emphasis on clinical training and experience, for all teachers supporting SWDs in classrooms.	• Partner with the SEA and/or district to create and implement residency programs that integrate experiences to support SWDs in classrooms. • Integrate practice-based opportunities into coursework and clinical experiences that provide the application of EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs. • Ensure that the clinical experiences of all teacher candidates occur across different settings and contexts and with diverse student populations (e.g., SWDs, students from low-income households, English learners). • Establish residency programs/models that provide all teachers with experiences in supporting SWDs. • Align preservice and inservice observation instruments, including the EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs. • Establish clear expectations of clinical experiences with districts, including opportunities for candidates to support SWDs. • Require teacher candidates to show how they adapted content and curricula for a variety of learners, paying special attention to race, class, culture, language, gender, and SWDs. • Ensure that programs prepare and support candidates in effective parent engagement strategies, particularly for families of SWDs.	• Partner with EPPs and SEAs to establish high-quality clinical experiences that reinforce teacher application of EBPs and HLPs. • Align preservice and inservice observation instruments, specifically related to EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs. • Gain a clear understanding of expectations within clinical experiences from EPPs—particularly the teaching practices designed to support teachers of SWDs. • Provide student teachers with strong supervising teachers with exemplary practices and attitudes in supporting SWDs.

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Initial certification	• Establish policies that support EPP and district innovation in certification to increase the number of cohorts of general and special educators who are prepared together. • Establish teacher and leader standards for certification and licensure that fully integrate competencies needed to support SWDs and ensure that candidates are high quality. • Use classroom and school-based rigorous performance assessments to ensure that teacher candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills that are reflective of the HLPs and EBPs known to support SWDs. • Engage stakeholders regularly in the review and revision of certification and licensure standards to ensure that they reflect what all teachers need to know and be able to do to effectively teach SWDs. • Require all EPPs to demonstrate and document how their assessments reflect the teacher and leader preparation standards, including competencies to support SWDs. • Ensure that licensure systems allow only the most high-quality, effective candidates to enter the profession and—equally important—do not hinder the entry of such candidates into the field.	• Encourage the development of programs to prepare general and special education teachers collaboratively, including options for dual certification. • Use a variety of assessment models, including performance-based assessments such as observations, knowledge and skills tests, and portfolio assessments, to continually evaluate teacher candidates' capacity to support SWDs. • Align assessments with the teacher and leader preparation standards adopted by the state.	• Capitalize on the allowances for innovation in certification in the Every Student Succeeds Act to address teacher shortages areas.

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Preparation program approval	• Require stakeholders to review the entry criteria of EPPs to ensure that they set high expectations and mitigate barriers to increase the number of candidates entering programs that prepare both general and special educators. • Encourage the development of programs to prepare general and special education teachers collaboratively. • Require EPPs to demonstrate the use of practice-based learning experiences in teaching SWDs within coursework and clinical experiences. • Require EPPs to demonstrate the effectiveness of their general and special education graduates in supporting SWDs as part of program approval. • Collect data on general and special education teachers' effectiveness in supporting SWDs, share the data with stakeholders, and provide support and resources for continuous improvement. • Require candidate knowledge, skills, and capacity to implement EBPs and HLPs shown in research studies to support SWDs as part of program approval standards.	• Encourage the development of programs to prepare general and special education teachers collaboratively. • Partner with the SEA to make program approval requirements student centered rather than compliance focused. • Track outcome measures to demonstrate program improvement. • Ensure that data components reflect state or national standards about what teachers should know and be able to do to be effective in the classroom.	• Seek to partner with accredited programs, including special education programs. • Establish partnerships with EPPs to provide data on candidate performance, including measures of student growth.

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Continuous improvement	• Reinforce continuous improvement cycles within program approval. • Support the execution of an annual teacher conditions survey to identify the root causes of teacher attrition. • Secure appropriations to assist the state in meeting the updated teacher quality requirements set forth under the ESSA. • Use evaluation ratings of early career teachers and their capacity to support SWDs as one measure of continuous improvement, accountability, and EPP program approval. • Tie new or existing educator evaluation systems into the statewide longitudinal data system to share teacher performance data with EPPs while maintaining student and teacher privacy. • Create mechanisms at the state level for opening dialogue and collaboration between EPPs and districts (e.g., forums, working groups, conferences). • Encourage pilot programs among EPPs and districts to address teacher shortages. • Establish a K–12 school advisory board or council for teacher education that includes individuals representing special education and SWDs.	• Establish a continuous improvement mindset within programs that includes data regarding educator capacity to support SWDs. • Engage in pilot programs with districts to address teacher shortage issues. • Ensure that candidates obtain data literacy skills that include student learning and engage in continuous improvement cycles throughout their training program. • Train school leaders to be effective in tracking and projecting their workforce needs and sharing this information with EPPs. • Provide training on how to be effective in providing feedback to EPPs about their candidates and supporting clinical placements in their schools.	• Establish a continuous improvement mindset within schools. • Create data teams to regularly review teacher and student data. • Launch a teacher conditions survey and look for trends within teacher groups, including teachers of SWDs and novice teachers. • Engage in pilot programs with EPPs to address shortage issues.

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