

**505-3-.102 SPECIAL EDUCATION VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM**

Nature of Amendment(s):

Substantive  
 Clarification  
 Further Definition

**Discussion:**

It is proposed that GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.102, SPECIAL EDUCATION VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM, dated July 1, 2021, be REPEALED and that a new rule with the same number and the same title be INITIATED. The new rule includes updated program content standards.

**(1) Purpose.** This rule states field-specific content standards for approving endorsement programs that prepare teachers to teach students with visual impairments in grades P-12. This rule supplements requirements in GaPSC Rule [505-3-.01, REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS](#).

**(2) In-Field Statement.** Completers of the Special Education Visual Impairment Endorsement are qualified to work with visually impaired students in grades P-12 and special education pre-school students (ages 3-5) under the following conditions:

- (a) The educator may work collaboratively with a content area teacher of record in all content subjects.
- (b) To serve as a teacher of record, the educator may teach only the content subjects of the base certificate field(s) and the Special Education academic content concentration with designated cognitive levels identified on the certificate.

**(3) Requirements.**

- (a) A GaPSC-approved educator preparation provider may seek state approval to offer this field as either a stand-alone endorsement program to candidates who hold Special Education P-12 certification or Special Education General Curriculum/Elementary Education (P-5) certification or as an endorsement program embedded in a GaPSC-approved initial preparation Special Education or Special Education/Elementary Education (P-5) program or an advanced (degree-only) preparation program. In addition to meeting all applicable approval requirements and standards, embedded endorsement programs must meet requirements specified in paragraph (e) 4. (ix) of GaPSC Rule [505-3-.01, REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS](#).
- (b) To receive approval, a GaPSC-approved educator preparation provider shall offer a preparation program described in program planning forms, catalogs, and syllabi addressing the following standards published by the Council for Exceptional Children (2020):
  - 1. Engaging in Professional Learning and Practice within Ethical Guidelines: Candidates practice within ethical and legal guidelines; advocate for improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families while considering their social, cultural, and linguistic diversity; and engage in ongoing self-reflection to design and implement professional learning activities.
    - (i) Candidates practice within ethical guidelines and legal policies and procedures;

- (ii) Candidates 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; and
  - (iii) Candidates 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: Candidates use their understanding of human growth and development, the multiple influences on development, individual differences, diversity, including exceptionalities, and families and communities to plan and implement inclusive learning environments and experiences that provide individuals with exceptionalities high quality learning experiences reflective of each individual's strengths and needs.
- (i) Candidates 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; and
  - (ii) Candidates 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: Candidates apply their understanding of the academic subject matter content of the general curriculum and specialized curricula to inform their programmatic and instructional decisions for learners with exceptionalities.
- (i) Candidates apply their understanding of academic subject matter content of the general curriculum to inform their programmatic and instructional decisions for individuals with exceptionalities; and
  - (ii) Candidates 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 Decision Making: Candidates assess students' learning, behavior, and the classroom environment in order to evaluate and support classroom and school-based problem-solving systems of intervention and instruction. Candidates evaluate students to determine their strengths and needs, contribute to students' eligibility determination, communicate students' progress, inform short and long-term instructional planning, and make ongoing adjustments to instruction using technology as appropriate.
- (i) Candidates 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;

- (ii) Candidates 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; and
  - (iii) Candidates 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: Candidates use knowledge of individuals' development, learning needs, and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Candidates use explicit instructional strategies and employ strategies to promote active engagement and increased motivation to individualize instruction to support each individual. Candidates use whole group instruction, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individual instruction. Candidates teach individuals to use meta-/cognitive strategies to support and self-regulate learning.
- (i) Candidates 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. They then interpret the assessment data to appropriately plan and guide instruction to meet rigorous academic and non-academic content and goals for each individual;
  - (ii) Candidates use effective strategies to promote active student engagement, increase student motivation, increase opportunities to respond, and enhance self-regulation of student learning;
  - (iii) Candidates use explicit, systematic instruction to teach content, strategies, and skills to make clear what a learner needs to do or think about while learning. Candidates use flexible grouping to support the use of instruction that is adapted to meet the needs of each individual and group; and
  - (iv) Candidates organize and manage focused, intensive small group instruction to meet the learning needs of each individual. Candidates plan and deliver specialized, individualized instruction that is used to meet the learning needs of each individual.
6. Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth: Candidates create and contribute to safe, respectful, and productive learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities through the use of effective routines and procedures and use a range of preventive and responsive practices to support social, emotional and educational well-being. They follow ethical and legal guidelines and work collaboratively with families and other professionals to conduct behavioral assessments for intervention and program development.
- (i) Candidates use effective routines and procedures to create safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities;
  - (ii) Candidates use a range of preventive and responsive practices documented as effective to support individuals' social, emotional, and educational well-being; and
  - (iii) Candidates 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: Candidates apply team processes and communication strategies to collaborate in a culturally responsive manner with families, paraprofessionals, and other professionals within the school, other educational settings, and the community to plan programs and access services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
  - (i) Candidates 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;
  - (ii) Candidates 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;
  - (iii) Candidates 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; and
  - (iv) Candidates work with and mentor paraprofessionals in the paraprofessionals' role of supporting the education of individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
  
8. Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the Specialty Standards for Special Education Visual Impairment published by the Council for Exception Children (2012):
  - (i) Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences.
    - (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the development of the human visual system and areas of the brain involved in processing visual images;
    - (II) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the most prevalent causes of severe, uncorrectable visual impairment in children and youth ages birth to 22;
    - (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of terminology related to diseases and disorder of the human visual system, including cerebral/cortical visual impairment;
    - (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of implications of prevalent visual conditions;
    - (IV) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of sensory development and its impact on development and learning when vision is impaired;
    - (V) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the impact and implications of sociocultural/psychosocial factors on social-emotional development;

- (VI) Candidates are prepared to accurately read, interpret, and summarize eye reports and serve as liaison to families and other members of the education team to individual services;
  - (VII) Candidates are prepared to select and develop assessment and teaching strategies, accommodations and modifications that address age, visual impairment, family values and priorities, visual prognosis, and other individual characteristics;
  - (VIII) Candidates are prepared to use nonvisual/alternate strategies to promote attachment, early communication/literacy, orientation and mobility, and independence to address the effects of visual impairment on families and the reciprocal impact on individuals' self-esteem; and
  - (IX) Candidates are prepared to select, adapt, and use nonvisual/alternate instructional strategies to address co-occurring disabilities and other individual characteristics.
- (ii) Learning Environments.
- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of physical and virtual environmental factors that impact the acquisition of spatial and positional concepts, access to and synthesis of data visualizations, and other concepts typically acquired through vision;
  - (II) Candidates are prepared to identify and implement physical and virtual environmental accommodations and modifications to facilitate optimal sensory use and multisensory access to, and active participation in, individual and group activities in general and expanded core curriculum environments;
  - (III) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with team members to design and implement environments that promote optimal sensory use, foundational orientation and mobility skills, independence, social engagement, and efficient storage of specialized materials;
  - (IV) Candidates are prepared to identify unique issues specific to visual impairment for accessing digital multimedia and virtually built environments;
  - (V) Candidates are prepared to use ergonomics and appropriate technology settings aligned with students' preferred learning media and low tech strategies to support ubiquitous computing to promote access to the general and expanded core curriculum;
  - (VI) Candidates are prepared to facilitate incidental learning experiences to address nonvisual access to physical and virtual environments;
  - (VII) Candidates are prepared to evaluate social skills and design behavior strategies for learners with visual impairments to maximize positive social engagement and interaction across environments;
  - (VIII) Candidates are prepared to teach developmentally appropriate human guide, self-familiarization with new environments, protective, and

alignment techniques for independent travel to promote safety across environments;

- (IX) Candidates are prepared to teach orientation skills using environmental features, self-advocacy for optimal environmental accommodations and modifications, including requesting and refusing assistance as needed; and
- (X) Candidates are prepared to teach nonvisual and alternate strategies for promoting digital citizenship and secure online practices.

(iii) Curricular Content Knowledge.

- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the relationship of individualized assessment, intervention planning/implementation, development of individualized education programs/individualized family service plans, progress monitoring, and placement specific to unique needs of students with visual impairment including cerebral/cortical visual impairment, and co-occurring disabilities;
- (II) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of a wide range of instructional and assistive technologies specific to visual impairment;
- (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, proofreading, and interlining alphabetic and fully contracted Unified English Braille;
- (IV) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate basic proficiency in reading and writing braille for mathematic and scientific notation and in using the abacus;
- (V) Candidates are prepared to produce braille with braille, slate and stylus, computer (including use of braille translation software), and braille production methods;
- (VI) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate basic proficiency in human guide, protective, alignment, and search techniques in orientation and mobility with developmentally appropriate modifications;
- (VII) Candidates are prepared to identify specialized resources unique to visual impairment to address the specific communication needs of students with varied communication abilities, reading levels, and language proficiency;
- (VIII) Candidates are prepared to develop, implement, and continuously monitor learning objectives and goals for optimizing sensory efficiency, developing concepts, and accessing the general and expanded core curriculum across settings; and
- (IX) Candidates are prepared to identify and adapt general education and visual impairment specific curricula for instruction of literacy, other academic areas, and the expanded core curriculum.

(iv) Assessment.

- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the challenges of assessing students with visual impairments, including cerebra/cortical visual impairment, and co-occurring disabilities;
- (II) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the options for specialized assessment materials and equipment for unique sensory needs;
- (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the role of specialized, individualized assessment data unique to visual impairment for pre-referral, referral, annual, and tri-annual processes;
- (IV) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the implications of short and long terms use of accommodations and modifications unique to students with visual impairments, including cerebral/cortical visual impairment, and co-occurring disabilities;
- (V) Candidates are prepared to interpret medical reports and multiple sources of data, including background information and family history, to plan and implement nondiscriminatory assessments;
- (VI) Candidates are prepared to use multiple sources of valid information/data, including data from formal/informal assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention, instruction, specialized media, materials, equipment, and the physical environment;
- (V) Candidates are prepared to use valid assessment results and medical reports to determine eligibility for vision specific services, for students with and without specific visual diagnoses;
- (VI) Candidates are prepared to use valid assessment data and knowledge of the potential impact of visual impairment on psychosocial functioning to identify when referral for services is needed;
- (VII) Candidates are prepared to adapt assessments when tests are not validated on individuals with visual impairments to determine baseline performance;
- (VIII) Candidates are prepared to identify assessment items and measures that are biased and make recommendations for non-visual or alternate accommodations and modifications;
- (IX) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with team members and families to plan and implement assessment and interpret assessment results on issues specific to visual impairment;
- (X) Candidates are prepared to conduct individualized functional vision, learning media, assistive technology and other expanded core curriculum-related assessments;
- (XI) Candidates are prepared to interpret and/or assess cognitive, motor, social, and language concepts unique to individuals with visual impairments;

- (XII) Candidates are prepared to use multiple sources of data to determine appropriate learning and literacy media (braille, print, or dual) and assistive technology;
  - (XIII) Candidates are prepared to interpret assessment results to determine individual needs to support acquisition of skills in the general and expanded core curriculum;
  - (XIV) Candidates are prepared to advocate for reasonable nonvisual and alternate accommodations and modifications on standardized assessments;
  - (XV) Candidates are prepared to address limitations of standard scores and non-standard data when communicating visual impairment specific assessment data to educational teams and families;
  - (XVI) Candidates are prepared to assess accessibility needs of individuals who are visually impaired who are English learners or from diverse backgrounds; and
  - (XVII) Candidates are prepared to use results of clinical low vision evaluation, functional vision, learning media, and assistive technology assessments to identify optimal assistive technology.
- (v) Instructional Planning and Strategies.
- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate the proper use and care of braille and braille production devices and technology equipment, including maintenance of devices and software updates;
  - (II) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the importance of creating positive, productive learning environments that foster independence and student achievement, and that reduce the tendency of others to engender learned helplessness in learners with visual impairments; and
  - (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of knowledge of evidence-based practices for teaching students with visual impairments, including cerebral/cortical visual impairment, and co-occurring disabilities.
  - (IV) Candidates are prepared to develop, coordinate, and implement appropriate programs for infants and young children with visual impairment, including those with cerebral/cortical visual impairment and co-occurring disabilities, and their families;
  - (V) Candidates are prepared to obtain resources, including published curricula, for braille codes currently in use;
  - (VI) Candidates are prepared to use digital resources, hardware, and software to produce and access materials in accessible media including the conversion of print materials into braille, tactile, and/or digital formats;



- (VII) Candidates are prepared to teach varied visual, nonvisual, and multi-sensory devices, programs, and software to launch, navigate, save, and retrieve information on devices and local systems and online;
- (VIII) Candidates are prepared to select and use various visual, nonvisual, multisensory, and adaptive methods to teach technology skills by integrating students' assessed needs into instructional methods for teaching sensory efficiency skills, use of learning media, individual keyboarding, reading, writing, editing, and listening skills;
- (IX) Candidates are prepared to plan and implement explicit instruction in assistive technology, including digital citizenship, that integrates students' ability to meet, manage, and advocate for their own needs;
- (X) Candidates are prepared to integrate basic principles of accessibility to select, create, adapt, and format text, images, and media to promote usability and accessibility to meet the individual needs of students with visual impairments;
- (XI) Candidates are prepared to provide systematic, explicit braille literacy instruction using embossed materials and digital technologies to meet individual needs;
- (XII) Candidates are prepared to teach the use of the abacus, accessible calculator, tactile graphics, adapted equipment, and appropriate technology for mathematics and science instruction to meet individual needs;
- (XIII) Candidates are prepared to teach students to access, interpret, and create increasingly complex printed and digital graphics in visual and/or tactile forms, including maps, charts, diagrams, and tables, based on individual needs;
- (XIV) Candidates are prepared to teach students to access, interpret, and create increasingly complex printed and digital graphics in visual and/or tactile forms, including maps, charts, diagrams, and tables, based on individual needs;
- (XV) Candidates are prepared to teach students with low vision to use optical, electronic, and non-optical devices to optimize visual efficiency and independently use dual learning media such as visual and auditory information, or auditory and tactile information;
- (XVI) Candidates are prepared to promote and reinforce sensorimotor and physical skills, including gross and fine motor skills, posture, balance, purposeful movement, and strength to meet individual needs unique to visual impairment;
- (XVII) Candidates are prepared to teach basic orientation, body image, spatial, temporal, positional, directional, and environmental concepts based on individual needs to promote motor skill development, orientation and mobility, and academic and social inclusion;

- (XVIII) Candidates are prepared to teach and reinforce human guide techniques to students with visual impairment, their peers, and others who interact with them;
- (XIX) Candidates are prepared to orient students to unfamiliar environments;
- (XX) Candidates are prepared to reinforce skills taught by orientation and mobility specialists to support the use of mobility devices and dog guides, for orientation and mobility;
- (XXI) Candidates are prepared to teach independent living and organization skills using alternate and nonvisual strategies;
- (XXII) Candidates are prepared to teach social communication skills related to appropriate body language, non-verbal communication, and social etiquette;
- (XXIII) Candidates are prepared to teach development and monitoring of relationships and friendships, and knowledge of self, including human sexuality;
- (XXIV) Candidates are prepared to teach skills usually acquired visually to develop and enhance participation in fitness/leisure/recreation activities, hobbies, and team and spectator sports to facilitate inclusion across settings;
- (XXV) Candidates are prepared to teach students to recognize and report behaviors that they may not perceive visually that may threaten their personal safety and wellbeing;
- (XXVI) Candidates are prepared to teach students their legal rights and responsibilities related to being a citizen with a visual impairment;
- (XXVII) Candidates are prepared to prepare students with progressive visual conditions to transition to alternative skills;
- (XVIII) Candidates are prepared to collaboratively develop, implement, and continuously monitor communication goals, objectives, and systems for students with visual impairments and co-occurring disabilities;
- (XXIX) Candidates are prepared to teach students to recognize and report behaviors that they may not perceive visually that may threaten their personal safety and wellbeing;
- (XXX) Candidates are prepared to select, adapt, and use nonvisual/alternate instructional strategies to address co-occurring disabilities; and
- (XXXI) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge of a range of cost effective technological devices from low to high tech for the instructional needs specific to visual impairment.

(vi) Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.

- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of roles and responsibilities of teachers and support personnel in providing services for students with visual impairments in a range of settings;
- (II) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of current knowledge of eligibility criteria for specialized services, funding, and materials sources specific to visual impairment;
- (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the historical, political, and sociocultural forces unique to the education of students with visual impairments;
- (IV) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate awareness of the impact of nonverbal reactions and behaviors that are not accessible to students with visual impairments;
- (V) Candidates are prepared to understand the role in determining and recommending appropriate type and amount of services based on evaluation of needs in all areas of the expanded core curriculum;
- (VI) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of current knowledge of laws that impact and protect individuals with visual impairments;
- (VII) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the roles of all members of educational/vision care teams;
- (VIII) Candidates are prepared to develop and maintain professional learning and practice by actively participating in professional organizations;
- (IX) Candidates are prepared to articulate instructional and professional philosophies and ethical practices to address the specific needs of students with visual impairment across settings including the expanded core curriculum;
- (X) Candidates are prepared to articulate and advocate for individual needs regarding placement, service delivery models, type and amount of service, and key components of services unique to visual impairment across ages and settings;
- (XI) Candidates are prepared to advocate for reasonable nonvisual and alternate accommodations and modifications on standardized assessments;
- (XI) Candidates are prepared to advocate for evidence-based educational policy related to visual impairment and low incidence disabilities;
- (XII) Candidates are prepared to articulate a plan for maintaining continuous professional development to remain current on all areas of the expanded core curriculum, with particular attention to assistive and instructional technology, most prevalent causes of and medical treatments for severe visual impairment, and co-occurring disabilities; and

- (XIII) Candidates are prepared to evaluate and discern credible and scholarly sources of information about visual impairments, including knowledge of valid and reliable research techniques.
- (vii) Collaboration.
- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the role in conveying, to families and teams, information about the impact and implications of visual impairment on development and learning and access to the general and expanded core curriculum;
  - (II) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the role in working collaboratively with families and teams for referral for counseling, therapy, or other services to address the unique needs of visual impairment;
  - (III) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate understanding of the role in increasing awareness of accessibility in physical and virtual environments and improving equitable access to information for families and the educational team;
  - (IV) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate the importance of role models with visual impairment for a full range of individual learners across settings;
  - (V) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with educational team and families on service delivery issues unique to visual impairment;
  - (VI) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with technology and curriculum development staff on accessibility needs;
  - (VII) Candidates are prepared to serve as liaison between medical care providers, families, and other members of the educational team;
  - (VIII) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with vision care professionals to facilitate access to the general and expanded core curriculum;
  - (IX) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with families and orientation and mobility specialists to reinforce orientation and mobility skills and other expanded core curriculum skills;
  - (X) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with families and other team members to plan and implement transitions;
  - (XI) Candidates are prepared to instruct and supervise paraeducators, and provide information to families and the educational team in nonvisual strategies that promote independence and autonomy;
  - (X) Candidates are prepared to instruct and supervise paraeducators and braille transcribers, and provide information to families and the educational team on the production of accessible media;
  - (XI) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with families and the educational team to promote literacy development; and

- (XII) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with assistive technology professionals to identify and support customized tools to meet the accessibility needs of individuals with visual impairment.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200