

505-3-.83 AUTISM ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM

Nature of Amendment(s):

Substantive
 Clarification
 Further Definition

Discussion:

It is proposed that GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.83, AUTISM ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM, dated July 1, 2021, be REPEALED and that a new rule with the same number and the same title be INITIATED.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 general and special education teachers to teach students P-12 with Autism. 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 Autism Endorsement have strengthened and enhanced competencies for teaching children with autism in the grade levels and/or subjects of their base certificates(s).

(3) Requirements.

(a) A GAPSC-approved educator preparation provider may seek state approval to offer this field as either a stand-alone endorsement program or as an endorsement program embedded in a GaPSC approved initial preparation 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 Databased 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 Autism published by the Council for Exception Children (2012).
- (i) Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences
 - (I) The program shall prepare candidates who understand theories grounded in current research that prepare candidates to understand the etiology of Autism and how such theories can be used to develop differentiated learning and social opportunities.
 - (II) Candidates are prepared to understand and demonstrate the following for individuals with autism spectrum disorder:
 - I. Medical aspects and implications for learning;
 - II. Core and associated characteristics;
 - III. Co-existing conditions and ranges that exist at a higher rate than in the general population;
 - IV. Sensory challenges;
 - V. Speech, language, and communication challenges;
 - VI. Adaptive behavior needs; and
 - VII. Effect of self-regulation on learning and behavior.
 - (ii) Learning Environments and Instructional Planning and Strategies
 - (I) Candidates are prepared to use person-centered approaches and collaborate with families, other educators, and other professionals to plan and implement age and ability appropriate differentiated instruction that enhance accessibility to the general education curriculum; and
 - (II) Candidates are prepared to use person-centered approaches and collaborate with families, other educators, and other professionals to plan and implement differentiated instruction that enhances social inclusion, peer relationships, and social communication. (Note: person-centered planning involves instruction based on learner characteristics, interests, and ongoing assessment, and should be embedded into all learning environments.)
 - (iii) Assessment

- (I) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate a basic understanding of frequently used procedures to identify eligibility criteria and monitor progress of learning and other goals of individuals with autism spectrum disorders;
 - (II) Candidates are prepared to describe how Functional Behavior Assessments and assessments of environmental conditions are used to develop databased interventions to support learning and communication of individuals with autism spectrum disorders;
 - (III) Candidates are prepared to identify research-based assessment tools and procedures to describe skills, areas of strength and interest that can be used to differentiate instruction to support learning and behavior;
 - (IV) Candidates are prepared to use preference assessment techniques to identify individual preferences that enhance learning;
 - (V) Candidates are prepared to collaborate with behavior specialists to conduct Functional Behavior Assessments that lead to the development of behavior support plans; and
 - (VI) Candidates are prepared to demonstrate culturally sensitive practices that include collaboration with families in assessment of students with autism spectrum disorders.
- (iv) Professional Learning and Ethical Practice
- (I) Candidates are prepared to understand definitions and issues related to the identification of individuals with autism spectrum disorders at different ages across the spectrum;
 - (II) Candidates are prepared to describe the history of autism spectrum disorder and how the history may impact the current understanding of autism and interventions/supports by parents, teachers, and other community members;
 - (III) Candidates are prepared to differentiate between research-based practices and pseudo-science, and can describe the importance of using effective practices based on research to those who may advocate for practices lacking empirical support;
 - (IV) Candidates are prepared to understand and can identify different perspectives held by individuals with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder; and
 - (V) Candidates are prepared to understand and promote the concepts of self-determination, self-advocacy, and community and family support that impact the lives of individuals with autism spectrum disorder.