

5.03 Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired (Ages Birth-21)

To be endorsed as a special education specialist: visually impaired, an applicant shall hold an earned master's or higher degree in special education visual impairment or its equivalent (as determined by the Department) from an accepted institution of higher education; have completed an approved program for the preparation of special education specialists: visually impaired including prescribed field experience requirements; and have demonstrated the competencies specified below:

- 5.03(1) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about the foundations of special education including, but not limited to, the legal framework, historical precedents, auricular foundation and cultural and socio-economic factors affecting students with visual impairment(s) and other disabilities, and is able to:
- 5.03(1)(a) articulate to a variety of audiences the models, theories, historical foundation and philosophies that provide the bases for special education practice related to learners who are visually impaired.
 - 5.03(1)(b) articulate to a variety of audiences variations in beliefs, traditions and values across cultures and their effect on attitudes toward and expectations for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(1)(c) identify and gain access to federal entitlements that provide specialized equipment and materials for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(1)(d) articulate and explain current educational definitions, identification criteria, labeling issues, and incidence and prevalence figures for students with visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness.
- 5.03(2) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about the characteristics of learners, human development and the implications of blindness, visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness upon developmental and academic skills acquisition, and is able to articulate and incorporate into the planning for students relevant information about:
- 5.03(2)(a) the structure, function and normal development of the human visual system.
 - 5.03(2)(b) basic terminology, manifestations and educational implications of diseases and disorders of the human visual system.
 - 5.03(2)(c) effects of medication(s) on the function(s) of the visual system.
 - 5.03(2)(d) the development of other senses when vision is impaired.
 - 5.03(2)(e) the effects of visual impairment(s) on early development of motor skills, cognition, social/emotional interaction, self-help, communication and early literacy.
 - 5.03(2)(f) similarities and differences between the cognitive, physical, cultural, social, emotional, sensory and literacy needs of students with and without visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(2)(g) differential characteristics of students with visual impairments including levels of severity and the impact of concomitant additional disabilities.
 - 5.03(2)(h) the effects of visual impairment(s) on the family and the reciprocal impact on the individual's self-esteem.
 - 5.03(2)(i) psychosocial aspects of visual impairment(s).

- 5.03(2)(j) the impact of visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness on formal and incidental learning experiences.
 - 5.03(2)(k) psychosocial aspects of visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(3) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about visual disorders and is able to:
- 5.03(3)(a) explain the characteristics of visual disorders to families and to other educational service providers.
 - 5.03(3)(b) describe the effects of visual impairment(s) – with and without additional disabilities – on development, learning and literacy.
 - 5.03(3)(c) provide information regarding the cognitive, communication, physical, medical, cultural, social, emotional, sensory and literacy needs of students with visual impairment(s) to their families and to educational and related service providers.
 - 5.03(3)(d) recommend adaptations within instructional environments to identify and accommodate individual sensory need(s).
- 5.03(4) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about assessment and evaluation and is able to:
- 5.03(4)(a) complete accurate assessments of students' developmental and academic performance, apply the information in planning for students and articulate to a variety of audiences regarding:
 - 5.03(4)(a)(i) specialized terminology used in the medical diagnoses and educational assessment(s) of students with visual impairment(s);
 - 5.03(4)(a)(ii) specific assessments that measure functional vision and learning modalities;
 - 5.03(4)(a)(iii) ethical considerations, legal provisions, regulations and guidelines related to the valid and relevant assessment of students with visual impairment(s);
 - 5.03(4)(a)(iv) specialized policies and procedures for screening, pre-referral, referral, classification and placement of students with visual impairment(s);
 - 5.03(4)(a)(v) alternative assessment tools and techniques for students with visual impairment(s) including, but not limited to, state- or district-level alternate assessment practices;
 - 5.03(4)(a)(vi) appropriate interpretation and application of assessment scores for students with visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness; and
 - 5.03(4)(a)(vii) the relationship(s) between assessment, individualized family service plan (IFSP) and individualized education plan (IEP) development, and placements, as each affects the educational services provided to students with visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(5) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about and able to evaluate the validity of individual tests for use with students with visual impairment(s) and is able to:
- 5.03(5)(a) use disability-specific assessment instruments.

- 5.03(5)(b) adapt and implement a variety of assessment procedures in evaluating students with visual impairments and deaf blindness.
 - 5.03(5)(c) interpret eye reports and other information related to the visual impairment(s) including, but not limited to, low-vision evaluation reports to students with visual impairment(s), their families and to other educational and related service providers.
 - 5.03(5)(d) utilize assessment and performance data to develop specific recommendations for modification(s) of and accommodations for the student's learning environment(s) and educational materials.
 - 5.03(5)(e) conduct, interpret and apply the results of formal and informal assessment(s) of functional vision and learning modalities.
 - 5.03(5)(f) create and maintain disability-related records for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(5)(g) gather background information and family history relevant to the individual student's visual status and instructional needs.
 - 5.03(5)(h) incorporate assessment information into the development of IFSPs and IEPs.
 - 5.03(5)(i) utilize assessment information to develop literacy modality plans for students with visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(6) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about instructional content and practice, specialized instructional strategies and appropriate accommodation(s), and is able to demonstrate these strategies and/or teach learners with visual impairment(s):
- 5.03(6)(a) the use of the abacus, slate and stylus, Braille writer, electronic note taker(s), talking calculator, tactile graphics, computers and other types of access and adaptive technology.
 - 5.03(6)(b) basic concepts related to content standards.
 - 5.03(6)(c) increasing visual access to and within learning environments related to instruction, the use of print adaptations and optical and non-optical devices.
 - 5.03(6)(d) increasing non-visual access to learning environments.
 - 5.03(6)(e) alternative reasoning and decision-making skills.
 - 5.03(6)(f) organization and study skills.
 - 5.03(6)(g) structured pre-cane orientation and mobility assessment and instruction.
 - 5.03(6)(h) tactual perceptual skills.
 - 5.03(6)(i) health and health issues.
 - 5.03(6)(j) adapted physical and recreational skills.
 - 5.03(6)(k) social and daily living skills.
 - 5.03(6)(l) developing career awareness and providing them with vocational counseling.

- 5.03(6)(m) promoting self-advocacy.
- 5.03(6)(n) identifying sources of and acquiring specialized instructional and other relevant materials.
- 5.03(6)(o) identifying techniques for the adaptation of instructional methods and materials.
- 5.03(7) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about planning for the instruction of students with visual impairment(s) and is able to:
 - 5.03(7)(a) develop comprehensive short- and long-range individualized learning programs for students with visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness.
 - 5.03(7)(b) prepare appropriate individual and group lesson plans.
 - 5.03(7)(c) involve the student with visual impairment(s) in setting instructional goals and charting progress.
 - 5.03(7)(d) select, adapt and utilize instructional strategies and materials appropriate to the learning needs of the student with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(7)(e) use strategies to help students learn, maintain new skills and be able to generalize those skills across other learning environments.
 - 5.03(7)(f) choose and implement instructional techniques that promote successful transitions for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(7)(g) evaluate and modify instruction according to student need.
 - 5.03(7)(h) interpret and use multiple sources of assessment data in planning for the instruction of students with visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness.
 - 5.03(7)(i) choose and use appropriate forms of technology to accomplish instructional objectives for students with visual impairment(s) and integrate technology into the instructional process.
 - 5.03(7)(j) sequence, implement and evaluate learning objectives based on standards-based education and the expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(7)(k) teach students with visual impairment(s) to think, solve problems and utilize other cognitive strategies to meet individual learning needs.
- 5.03(8) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about effective planning for and management of the teaching and learning environment to provide a setting conducive to group and individualized learning, and is able to:
 - 5.03(8)(a) transcribe, proofread and interline materials in contracted literary, Nemeth and foreign language Braille codes.
 - 5.03(8)(b) utilize specialized equipment and software, such as Braille writers, slate and stylus, computerized Braille transcription and tactile image enhancers, to prepare adapted or modified materials in Braille, accessible print, tactile and other formats appropriate to the assessed needs of students with visual impairment(s).

- 5.03(8)(c) obtain and organize materials intended to implement instructional objectives for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(8)(d) design multisensory learning environments that engage the active participation of students with visual impairment(s) in group and individual activities.
 - 5.03(8)(e) design and implement strategies and techniques that facilitate the inclusion of students with visual impairment(s) into a wide variety of educational and community settings.
 - 5.03(8)(f) direct the activities of a classroom paraprofessional, volunteer, peer tutor or Braille transcriber.
 - 5.03(8)(g) create learning environments that encourage self-advocacy and independence for students with visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(9) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about promoting appropriate student behavior and social interaction skills and demonstrates:
- 5.03(9)(a) effective learning environment management which engenders positive behavior(s) between and among students, such as, but not limited to, strategies that:
 - 5.03(9)(a)(i) identify ways to address attitudes and behaviors that can positively or negatively influence the deportment and achievement of students with visual impairments;
 - 5.03(9)(a)(ii) effectively instruct students in the development of the social skills needed across educational and living environments;
 - 5.03(9)(a)(iii) identify strategies for preparing students with visual impairment(s) to live harmoniously and productively in a diverse world; and
 - 5.03(9)(a)(iv) identify and address inappropriate behaviors attributable to or caused by visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(10) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about and able to manage student behavior(s) and learning through:
- 5.03(10)(a) the modification of the learning environment including, but not limited to, schedule, physical arrangement and/or materials.
 - 5.03(10)(b) the selection, implementation and evaluation of appropriate and applicable classroom management strategies for students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(10)(c) the incorporation of social skills training into the curriculum.
 - 5.03(10)(d) utilization of procedures intended to increase student self-awareness, self- control, self-reliance and self-esteem.
 - 5.03(10)(e) preparing students with visual impairment(s) to present themselves in a socially appropriate manner, providing information about, but not limited to, that related to grooming, dress and interpersonal skills.
 - 5.03(10)(f) preparing students to adapt to progressive eye conditions when necessary.

- 5.03(10)(g) preparing students with visual impairment(s) to appropriately and effectively utilize the services of support personnel.
 - 5.03(10)(h) preparing students with visual impairment(s) to gain access to information about services provided in and for the community.
 - 5.03(10)(i) preparing students with visual impairment(s) to act appropriately in social situations.
 - 5.03(10)(j) preparing students with visual impairment(s) to respond to societal attitudes and actions with positive behavior(s) and self-advocacy.
- 5.03(11) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about communication and collaborative partnerships and demonstrates:
- 5.03(11)(a) effective communication and the ability to collaborate with students, their families, and school and community personnel in identifying and addressing:
 - 5.03(11)(a)(i) typical and/or specific concerns of parents of students with visual impairment(s) and appropriate strategies to assist them in resolving concerns;
 - 5.03(11)(a)(ii) roles of students with visual impairment(s), parents, educational service providers and community personnel in planning individualized programs for students;
 - 5.03(11)(a)(iii) strategies for assisting families and other team members in planning appropriate transitions for students with visual impairment(s);
 - 5.03(11)(a)(iv) unique services, networks and organizations that serve as resources to/for students with visual impairment(s);
 - 5.03(11)(a)(v) roles of paraprofessionals or para-educators who work directly with students with visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness; and
 - 5.03(11)(a)(vi) the necessity for role models for students with visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(12) The special education specialist: visually impaired demonstrates the ability to collaborate with others and is able to:
- 5.03(12)(a) identify and implement strategies for working with students with disabilities, parents, and school and community persons, in a wide variety of learning and learning- related environments.
 - 5.03(12)(b) communicate and consult with students, parents, education service providers and community personnel.
 - 5.03(12)(c) foster respectful and beneficial relationships between and among families and professionals.
 - 5.03(12)(d) encourage and assist families in becoming active participants in the education of their own children.
 - 5.03(12)(e) plan and conduct conferences with families or primary caregivers as required and/or necessary.

- 5.03(12)(f) collaborate with general education teachers and other school and community personnel regarding the integration of students with disabilities into the general learning environment.
 - 5.03(12)(g) communicate with general education teachers, administrators and other school personnel about the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities.
 - 5.03(12)(h) assist families and other team members in understanding the impact of visual impairment(s) and deaf blindness on learning and experience.
 - 5.03(12)(i) report results of specialized assessments to students with visual impairment(s), their families and pertinent team members in relevant and appropriate ways.
 - 5.03(12)(j) manage and direct the activities of para-educators or peer tutors who work with students with visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(13) The special education specialist: visually impaired is knowledgeable about professionalism and ethical practices and demonstrates:
- 5.03(13)(a) appropriate professional practices in contributing to the field of education and to the academic achievement of each individual student including, but not limited to:
 - 5.03(13)(a)(i) decision-making based on the ethical considerations governing the profession of special education, especially as related to the field of the education of the visually impaired learner;
 - 5.03(13)(a)(ii) recognizing cultural bias and how it can affect teaching;
 - 5.03(13)(a)(iii) serving as a role model for students with visual impairment(s);
 - 5.03(13)(a)(iv) participation in consumer and professional organizations and remaining up-to-date with publications and journals relevant to the field of visual impairments; and
 - 5.03(13)(a)(v) the ability to research information related to the learning needs of and outcomes for students with visual impairment(s).
- 5.03(14) The special education specialist: visually impaired functions in a professional manner by:
- 5.03(14)(a) demonstrating professional ethics.
 - 5.03(14)(b) accepting the personal characteristic(s) of students with and without visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(14)(c) remaining up-to-date on literature related to students with visual impairment(s).
 - 5.03(14)(d) participating in professional organizations representing the field of visual impairment(s), as appropriate.
 - 5.03(14)(e) engaging in professional-growth activities which may benefit students with visual impairment(s), their families and/or colleagues.
 - 5.03(14)(f) practicing self-assessment related to instruction, and seeking professional development activities which support the advancement of personal skills and knowledge.