

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Beginning Teacher Programs
Preliminary Education Specialist
Program Summary

Program Design

Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) is the lead educational agency for the LACOE Preliminary Education Specialist Credential Programs. The program focuses on the preparation of mild/moderate, moderate/severe and early childhood candidates. The program is offered in an intern format only. Candidates within the program work in a county where 66% of students are eligible for free or reduced school meals. Since most intern candidates are assigned to schools where they teach poor students who struggle with many aspects of life, the LACOE District Intern Program design focuses on preparing teachers who can be successful teachers in even the most challenging classrooms in California. It is the LACOE program's intent to prepare teachers for the multiple possibilities of special education teacher roles (ie. class teacher, inclusion specialist, co-teacher.) Education Specialist Program coursework is predominantly taught by current Special Education administrators who are able to expertly weave in theory and apply knowledge of the reality of appropriate application in California classrooms.

Leadership & Communication

The Beginning Teacher Program (BTP) is one of three programs within the LACOE Educator Preparation Unit. The BTP approved programs are housed within the Division of Human Resources under the direction of the Project Director. Approved programs include District Intern, General Education Induction, and Special Education Induction and are facilitated by program Coordinators. The Project Director is expected to become completely fluent regarding the standards related to each program. The Chief Human Resources Officer meets monthly with the Project Director of Beginning Teacher Programs to stay abreast of issues and developments within the preliminary, induction and added authorization programs.

Structure of Coursework

The LACOE Preliminary Education Specialist Program's mission of teacher preparation for candidates is based on the vision and emphasis of impacting ALL children represented within the LA area, as defined by the new state standards' definition of the "whole" child. Coursework and fieldwork experiences are designed to support candidates in addressing both the social and emotional needs of students while keeping content rigorous and relevant. Instructors and practicum supervisors guide candidates to see themselves as change agents for the students they serve.

The LACOE Preliminary Education Specialist Program is a job-embedded, two-year Internship. The length of the program, structure of coursework, and field experiences are designed specifically to align with all state preconditions and program standards. Intern candidates are hired as the full-time "teacher of record" for the employing district or charter school. The program leadership maintains strict guidelines as to the placement of employed interns by visiting new sites, meeting with site administration and reviewing assigned district employed support. Candidates are assigned a LACOE Practicum Supervisor to provide programmatic fieldwork support. Candidates also attend courses two nights a week in Downey.

Program Modification

The emphasis of Universal Design for Learning and MTSS led to the incorporation of the SPED 221 and 222 to create SPED 360: Exceptional Learners: Special Education Learners and Differentiation in the Classroom. Because the new verbiage in the TPE's identify inclusion and co-teaching, it was important to ensure that all teachers receive current and relevant information presented in the combined course in order to meet the needs all students.

Two courses, History and Philosophy of Special Education and Special Education Law were incorporated to create SPED 302: Special Education Law and Trends. The creation of this course pedagogy allows for a deeper investigation of relevant Special Education topics including legislation.

Given the continued emphasis of inclusion and least restrictive environments for special education students, all Education Specialist Candidates must take SPED 271: Specialized Health, Mobility, and Sensory Impairments.

Stakeholder Input

The Beginning Teacher Programs facilitate multiple means of gathering stakeholder input. Districts and charters that partner with the LACOE District Intern Program come together twice a year. These meetings are used to review local and state updates regarding legislation and programmatic changes as well as to solicit input on improvements the program can make to better meet the needs of candidates and LEAs.

The partnership between the LACOE District Intern Program and districts and charters across the county is rooted in a belief that as the lead agency in the county, LACOE tries to support LEAs with their intern hiring needs. Stakeholders approach the District Intern Program with specific hiring needs and the program reviews the intern candidates available to find possible matches. At times, interns are placed in settings where they are not successful nor retained. The program will always seek feedback from all parties - candidate, district representative and school administrator to help understand the dynamics that prevented the candidate's success.

The District Intern Program Coordinator builds strong rapport with partnering agencies and guarantees swift responses to emails and phone calls. This consistent availability ensures that that partnering agencies have ways of providing input and requesting assistance beyond the two formal meetings that are held. The District Intern Coordinator collaborates with the human resources staff at partnering districts and charters ensuring the interns are appropriately assigned in settings that will facilitate their growth and development as new teachers. Practicum supervisors visit the school administration team to help build a strong connection between the program, candidates, and the school to which the intern is assigned. This is an important way in which the program dialogues with the stakeholders.

Credential Technician Meetings are scheduled with district and charter personnel to communicate current credentialing updates and protocols. Frequently, the credential technician at the district or charter is the first point of contact between the District Intern Program and the employer. The meetings address optimal ways of ensuring that the intern candidates are hired efficiently and that the appropriate district intern credential is issued in a timely manner. The meetings provide a forum for addressing challenges and sharing best practices.

Candidates, Mentors, Practicum Supervisors, and Instructors are surveyed throughout the year to gather progress and evaluation data.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

Description of the Sequence of Coursework

Below is the course sequence for both the Mild/Moderate, Moderate/Severe, and Early Childhood Special Education programs. Continuous modification to coursework is a product of ongoing Stakeholder input, course evaluations, and faculty research.

Education Specialist	Year 1		Year 2
CURR 391/392	Practicum Supervision	*CURR 393/394	Practicum Supervision
EDU 351	English Language Development	CURR 231	Math Curriculum & Instruction
SPED 277	IEP Development & Transition	SPED 267	Autism Spectrum Disorders
EDU 353	Teaching Culturally Diverse Students	SPED 258	Communication & Behavior for ASD
SPED 261	Assessment to Inform Instruction	SPED 260	Positive Behavior Management
CURR 301	Beginning Reading Curriculum & Instruction	EDU 303	Language Arts, Literacy & Writing Integrated with English Language Learners
*SPED 360	Exceptional Learners: Special Ed Learners & Differentiation in the Classroom	SPED 259	Programming Strategies for ASD
TECH 290	Assistive Technology	SPED 230	Curriculum & Instruction Mild/Moderate
SPED 302	Special Education Law and Trends	SPED 270	Curriculum & Instruction Moderate/Severe
SPED 264	Collaboration	SPED 271	Specialized Health, Mobility, and Sensory Impairments
		SPED 262	Atypical/Typical Development

ECSE	Year 1		Year 2
CURR 391/392	Practicum Supervision	CURR 393/394	Practicum Supervision
EDU 351	English Language Development	SPED 267	Autism Spectrum Disorders
SPED 277	IEP Development & Transition	SPED 272	Assessment and Intervention in Early Childhood
EDU 353	Teaching Culturally Diverse Students	SPED 258	Communication & Behavior in ASD
SPED 277	Curriculum & Environments in Early Childhood	SPED 260	Positive Behavior Management
SPED 360	Exceptional Learners: Special Ed Learners & Differentiation in the Classroom	SPED 259	Programming Strategies for ASD

TECH 290	Assistive Technology	SPED 274	Language & Communication in Early Childhood
SPED 302	Special Education Law and Trends	SPED 271	Specialized Health, Mobility, and Sensory Impairments
SPED 264	Collaboration in Early Childhood	SPED 262	Atypical/Typical Development

Field Supervision

Intern candidates meet with their program Practicum Supervisor twice monthly. Supervisors perform both formal observations and informal meetings each month. In addition, the Supervisors meet each semester with the site administrator and district employed support/mentor as required in the program standards. The Practicum Supervisor provides four semester grades within the length of the candidate's program. The supervisors meet monthly with the program Coordinator to review policies, requirements, and communicate status of intern candidates.

Assessment of Candidates

Intern candidates are assessed on program competencies in three ways. Candidates self-assess on all domains of the Teacher Performance Expectations at the beginning, middle, and end of the two-year program. Practicum Supervisors formally observe Candidates monthly in relation to TPE's and subject-specific pedagogy, as well as assess and grade Candidates each semester using a rubric aligned to the TPEs. Coursework is the third means by which Candidates are assessed. Course objectives are created using the TPE matrix. Instructors assess each objective formatively and summatively.

Intern candidates are advised of program assessment during orientation, at the start of each course, and from communication with the Practicum Supervisor. Assessment results are communicated within the Canvas Learning Management System, where all final grades are posted. The Program Coordinator communicates with all faculty and Practicum Supervisors regarding Intern performance and assessment results. The Program Coordinator meets with candidates at risk of failing to create a remediation plan.