



RUBRIC OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities *Action Plan for Continuous Improvement*

Teacher/Team: _____

Initial Date: _____ Follow-up Date: _____

Campus: _____

District: _____

This rubric highlights best practices to facilitate learning for students with the most complex access needs. The document should be used as a guide by a campus/district team as they engage in reflection of their current practices and plan for program growth (T-TESS Dimension 4.2).

To aide administrators in completing the T-TESS for teachers of these students (whose instruction, assessments, schedules, and classroom arrangement may vary greatly from a traditional classroom because of the emphasis on customizing learning for each individual student), the document makes note of where Rubric Indicators may align with the T-TESS Dimensions. This document SHOULD NOT be used as the sole source of evidence for determining teacher performance, as it guides planning and growth for a campus/district team and does not focus on only the role of the teacher.

Quality Indicator I: Alignment with State Standards *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 4.4*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
1. Instruction is aligned with state standards at grade level (TEKS), focusing on priority concepts and skills relevant to student needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
2. Instruction is aligned with state assessment concepts and skills throughout the entire year. <i>For teachers who service ONLY students grade 2 and below, this is not applicable.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
3. IEPs are developed by aligning student strengths, needs, and interests with grade-level standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
a. IEPs consistently incorporate family concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
b. Students are included in the IEP process as much as is possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
	Total: ____ of 5*			Total: ____ of 5*	

*Score N/A (not applicable) as "evident" when recording total.



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Quality Indicator II: Effective Teams *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
1. Team members (administrators, teachers, paras, parents, instructional/related services staff, and students) have clear roles and responsibilities that contribute to effective instruction and consistent preventive behavioral strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
2. Team members advocate for the needs of students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
3. Administrators support the specific needs of students across instructional environments (such as scheduling, staff assignments, assistive technology, and other supports).	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
4. Administrators support staff in obtaining professional development related to the unique needs of their students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
5. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related services staff participate in professional development related to the unique needs of their students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
6. Special education and general education teachers collaborate on pacing, materials, and instructional strategies for the TEKS.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
7. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related services staff collect data routinely (through methods such as anecdotal records, teacher observations, teacher-made tests, checklists, photos/videos, inventories, rubrics, student work samples, portfolios, etc.) to measure progress.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	



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Quality Indicator II: Effective Teams *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
8. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related services staff collaborate on a regular basis to analyze data to improve instructional and behavioral decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
9. Team members collaborate to solve problems proactively.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
10. Team members maintain the confidentiality of the student. They avoid discussing the student (disability, personal care, academic performance, behavior, etc.) around other students/adults outside of the team.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
11. Teachers regularly communicate (both progress and general information) with families in positive and productive ways.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
12. Transitions to new educational settings are facilitated for student success:	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
a. Student portfolios are sent to the next educational setting.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
b. Prior to a planned transition within the same school or district, current staff accompanies the student on a visit to the next educational setting.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
c. After the transition occurs, prior setting staff consults with new setting staff for a follow-up.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
	Total: _____ of 14			Total: _____ of 14	

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Quality Indicator III: Classroom Climate *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
ORGANIZATION					
1. Classrooms are organized into clearly defined areas that promote different types of learning experiences (such as spaces for a large group, small group, individual work, break/sensory activities).	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
2. Areas are clearly labeled in ways that students understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
3. Organizational strategies to maintain a clutter-free age-appropriate classroom are consistently implemented (storage of instructional materials, sensory/leisure items, data tracking systems).	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
SCHEDULES					
4. Each class schedule is posted in terms that most, if not all students, understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
5. The class schedule is referred to throughout the day as activities are completed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
6. Beyond the class schedule, individual schedules are in place for students that need additional structure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	

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Quality Indicator III: Classroom Climate *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
7. Mini-schedules/checklists are in place for specific activities for students that need additional structure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
8. Work systems are in place for students that need additional structure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
9. Schedules are consistently implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS					
10. Staff consistently interacts with all students in positive and respectful ways.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
a. Staff does not talk about a student in front of the student.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
b. Staff uses age-appropriate tone, language, and vocabulary with students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
c. Staff refrains from personal conversations and phone use.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	



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Quality Indicator III: Classroom Climate *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
11. Expectations are clarified visually in ways students understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
12. Positive behaviors are consistently reinforced.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
13. Data is collected on antecedents, behavior, and consequences (ABC).	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
14. Teachers and paraprofessionals prevent problematic behaviors most of the time through antecedent-based interventions and a variety of positive behavioral strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
15. Visual strategies are consistently used to support difficult or unexpected transitions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
16. Teachers and paraprofessionals consistently respond to problematic behaviors with strategies that teach alternative and/or replacement behaviors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
17. Strategies are revised based on data and outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
	Total: ____ of 20*			Total: ____ of 20*	

*Score N/A (not applicable) as “evident” when recording total.

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Quality Indicator IV: Differentiated Instruction *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.4*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
1. Lesson plans aim for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and incorporate a variety of differentiated instructional and assessment strategies to meet a wide range of student interests, abilities, and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
2. IEP goals and objectives are consistently incorporated in meaningful ways within lesson plans.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
3. Visual supports and accommodations (such as checklists, work systems, graphic organizers, etc.) are implemented consistently to promote focus, engagement, and independence during instructional activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
4. Instructional and assistive technology is integrated throughout instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
5. Teachers and paraprofessionals consistently provide specific and frequent feedback to students, including positive reinforcement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
6. Student sensory needs are met to engage positively with instructional activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
7. Special education students have access to peers without disabilities and general education settings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
	Total: ____ of 7*			Total: ____ of 7*	

*Score N/A (not applicable) as “evident” when recording total.

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Quality Indicator V: Social Communication *T-TESS Dimensions: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1*

	Initial Status	Total	Comments/Notes	Follow-Up Status	Total
1. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related service providers consistently interact with students in ways that each student understands (such as AAC, sign language, visual cue, verbal, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
2. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related service providers consistently explain to students what is about to happen to them before they perform any task related to the student (e.g., "I'm going to put your shoes on now." "This towel might feel wet on your face." "It's time for a snack, I'm going to move your wheelchair to the table.").	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
3. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related service providers consistently honor communication attempts and interpret student gestures and vocalizations for meaning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
4. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related service providers coach other staff and students on how to communicate with each student (such as speak directly to the student - not "through" a staff member, allow time for a response, accept responses in their communication mode, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
5. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related service providers ensure that individual communication systems are available and consistently used across environments for all students who lack expressive language.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
6. Teachers consistently create opportunities to promote functional and spontaneous communication throughout the day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
7. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional/related service providers consistently use data to plan for systematic integrated instruction on individual student communication goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident			<input type="checkbox"/> Not evident <input type="checkbox"/> Evident	
	Total: ____ of 7			Total: ____ of 7	