Guidelines for Co-Teaching in Texas: Administrators

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Texas Education Agency | Texas SPED Support | Meaningful Access

Guidelines for Co-Teaching in Texas: Administrators

Meaningful Access ensures that students with disabilities who receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have equal opportunities to engage with and make progress in the general education curriculum and environment. This concept is deeply rooted in inclusive practices, which involve intentional, systematic actions designed to meet the individual needs of each student. Inclusion is achieved when these practices are implemented with fidelity, allowing students with disabilities to learn, participate, and make progress alongside their peers without disabilities in a meaningful and equitable manner throughout their entire school experience.

This document contains citations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), and the Texas Education Code (TEC). For more information regarding these statutes and rules or further reading and research, you can access them by using the following links or QR codes:

IDEA

TAC

TEC

Scan the QR codes or click on the links below to explore related resources and expand your learning at your own pace:

Collaboration and Flexible Grouping for Educators

Collaboration and Flexible Grouping for Instructional Leaders

Texas SPED Quick Learns

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Introduction to Co-Teaching

Research has shown that co-teaching offers instructional benefits for many groups of students, including those with disabilities (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 2017).

> *One study identified an average boost in test scores of 2.6% of a standard deviation in math and 1.6% of a standard deviation in reading for students in co-taught classes (Jones and Winters, 2023).*

Co-teaching enables teachers to (1) determine students' strengths and weaknesses more readily, (2) deliver instruction and assess learning more efficiently, (3) tailor activities to students' individual needs, and (4) have a sense of mutual support and accountability for improving student outcomes.

This guide provides research-based strategies for teachers to implement co-teaching to maximize benefit for students. It employs the Friend (2019) framework, which was validated through empirical research to contribute to a common understanding of co-teaching fundamentals, from conceptualization to implementation and evaluation. A companion guide, Guidelines for Co-Teaching in Texas: Teachers, provides more detailed information for educators to implement co-teaching effectively in the classroom.

Defining Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is a form of collaborative instruction in which two or more certified professionals share the responsibility of planning instruction, delivering instruction, progress monitoring, and assessing all students assigned to their classroom (Friend, 2019). In a co-teaching setting, **general and special education teachers work together** to determine the unique needs of all students and apply their expertise in a variety of areas (e.g., curriculum, instructional strategies) through flexible grouping configurations to make sure that students meet instructional objectives. In some instances, other licensed professionals, such as occupational therapists or speech language pathologists, may serve as one of the co-teachers (Armstrong et al., 2023)—this support may be offered as itinerant support, with professionals who travel across campuses to provide services.

Co-teaching can help promote **meaningful access to the general curriculum** that aligns with instructional expectations and enrolled grade-level content standards[1] (Murawski and Scott, 2017) and promotes academic success for students (Cole et al., 2019). Co-teaching can support **any of the three tiers within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework** (Tucker, 2024), as students receiving both general education instruction and special education services can fully participate in MTSS. For additional guidance on implementing co-teaching within an MTSS framework, educators can refer to resources from the TEA Special Education Support MTSS resources page and the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII).

Dual Certification

A dually certified teacher cannot simultaneously serve as both the general education and the special education teacher for grades K–12. When a student's IEP requires direct special education support in a general education setting, this support must be provided separately from the general education instruction given by the general education teacher [TEA Student Attendance Accounting Handbook [SAAH] Section 4.7.10.1.1].

Guidelines for appropriate co-teaching roles are provided next.

Roles Co-Teachers May Play

- Allow each teacher to demonstrate their unique expertise as appropriate to meet student needs.
- Provide a partner with whom a teacher can discuss student needs.
- Allow for ongoing reflection and measuring the effectiveness of instructional strategies on student outcomes.
- Afford more opportunities to collect and more deeply analyze student data.
- Offer a partner with whom to celebrate classroom successes.
- Allow teachers to address questions and concerns with one another as part of ongoing planning and discussion.

Roles Co-Teachers May Not Play

- Be teachers simply splitting subjects, serving as the lead on those they are responsible for (e.g., I teach reading and social studies; you teach mathematics and science).
- Be teachers dividing a lesson, with each leading part (e.g., I will lead the warm-up; you teach the mini lesson).

[1] For young children, the content standards are the Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines. For prekindergarten students, the content standards are the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines or the locally adopted prekindergarten curriculum. For K–12 students, the standards are TEKS.

- Be one teacher teaching while the other makes materials, grades student work, or writes Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Be one teacher teaching a lesson while the other sits, stands, and watches without function or specific teaching responsibility.
- Allow one teacher's ideas to determine what or how something should be taught while ignoring the other's ideas.
- Consistently be one teacher acting as a tutor or working exclusively with only one or a few students.

Paraprofessionals

The definition of co-teaching does not include paraprofessionals because their roles are to support students in the classroom, particularly students with IEPs, under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher. Paraprofessionals are not accountable for student achievement and do not require an equivalent certification comparable to that of a certified or licensed professional. For more information on best practices for working with paraprofessionals, see the guide, Working with Paraprofessionals, in the *Meaningful Access* collection.

Instructional Services and Strategies Supported by Co-Teaching

Co-teaching may include one or more evidence-based instructional practices, frameworks, and/or strategies to support all learners, including those with disabilities. Four of these practices emphasized are effective instructional strategies, research-based instructional strategies (RBIS), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and specially designed instruction (SDI) – these practices are discussed next.

Effective Instructional Strategies

Effective instructional strategies may be implemented with all students across curricular and content areas to meet learning goals and objectives (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Rosenshine, 2012; Shemshack & Spector, 2020). Effective instructional strategies commonly implemented in co-teaching classrooms include explicit instruction, differentiation, scaffolding, and multiple grouping formats. More information can be found at TEA's effective instruction resource page as part of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Tiered Interventions Using Evidence-Based Research (TIER) Initiative.

Research-Based Instructional Strategies (RBIS)

Research-based instructional strategies (RBIS) are practices that highlight common misconceptions in the field. They cover topics that may require conceptual or philosophical changes to instructional approaches, and they form a set of practices supported by research that should be present in classrooms, regardless of the instructional materials. The RBIS are based on the science of how students best learn math and reading in K–12 classrooms and provide a **foundation for effective**

instruction that SDI can build upon (Borrego et al., 2012; Courville et al., 2023). More information can be found at the TEA RBIS resource page.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) includes strategies to ensure that all learners can access and participate in the general education classroom. The goal of UDL is "**learner agency** that is purposeful and reflective, resourceful and authentic, strategic and action-oriented" (CAST, 2024). The UDL guidelines provide suggestions for **engaging students, presenting information in various ways, and offering students ways to demonstrate their learning**—all organized by examples and explanations for their implementation (CAST, 2024). The UDL framework has three principles:

Multiple Means of Engagement

Multiple Means of Representation

Multiple Means of Action & Expression

More information can be found at the TEA UDL resources page.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),[2] students with disabilities in all instructional settings, including co-taught classrooms, must be taught using specialized techniques and approaches that are tailored to their unique learning needs and that address their IEP goals (Riccomini et al., 2017). See the Specially Designed Instruction Guide in the *Meaningful Access* collection for more information.

Implementing Co-Teaching

Implementation of co-teaching varies from classroom to classroom—and even from lesson to lesson—and should be determined according to student needs and abilities, as well as the instructional objectives for a particular lesson. Regardless of the approach, co-teaching should always incorporate effective instructional strategies (such as explicit instruction), RBIS, and UDL to address all students' needs simultaneously.

[2] IDEA defines SDI as "adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child . . . the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children" [§300.39(b)(3))].

Co-Teaching Instruction: The Six Approaches

Friend (2019) identified six arrangements commonly found in co-teaching settings. These approaches are summarized below.

Station Teaching

Recommended Use: Frequently.

Teachers divide the content into three segments that can be taught in any sequence and group students so that one-third of the students begin with each part of the content. Two groups are teacher-led and the third group works independently. During the lesson, the students rotate through the "stations" until they complete all three sections of the content.

Parallel Teaching

Recommended Use: Frequently.

Teachers divide the class in half and lead the same instruction with both groups. The groups do not rotate. However, variations include teaching to the same standard but in different ways or with different materials. Student grouping should be flexible and based on students' needs in relation to the standards being addressed.

Alternative Teaching

Recommended Use: Frequently.

One teacher manages the large group while the other teacher works with an identified group of students to target a unique need. Either teacher may work with the small group, and the purpose for the groups can vary widely, including remediation, enrichment, introduction of a specific learning strategy, or even to catch-up students who have been absent.

Teaming

Recommended Use: Occasionally.

Teachers share the responsibility of leading instruction. Both teachers are in front of the classroom. While their roles may shift throughout the lesson, the key characteristic is that "both teachers are fully engaged in the delivery of the core academic instruction" (Friend, 2019).

One Teaching, One Observing

Recommended Use: Frequently for data collection for short time periods only.

One teacher provides instruction to all the students while the other teacher gathers data. The data may pertain to a single student's IEP goals, behavior of several students in the class, or patterns among all students. Either teacher may gather the data.

One Teaching, One Assisting

Recommended Use: Seldom (or less).

One teacher is in the lead role while the other functions as a support in the classroom. The teacher in the supportive role monitors student work, addresses behavior issues, manages materials, and assists with student questions.

School Administrator Support for Co-Teaching

Campus administrators are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day implementation of co-teaching, addressing program challenges, and evaluating the effectiveness of individual co-teaching partners. They therefore must have a strong understanding of the co-teaching approaches and principles. There are six essential activities that school administrators play in supporting co-teaching.

1. Preparing the Campus Master Schedule

The master schedule should reflect an understanding of the level of support needed for each student in a co-taught classroom and should allow for flexibility as student needs change during the school year. Considerations for master scheduling include the following:

- Overall **enrollment numbers**, enrollment of students with IEPs, and full-time employee allotments to ensure a manageable student-to-teacher ratio based on student needs
- Planned **provision of services**, including special programming such as behavior or functional skills; related services; specialized settings and supports; Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee[3] scheduling; or other interventions
- Physical **proximity of co-teachers**, including time to travel between and/or transport materials between classrooms
- Allotment of time for both general and special education co-teachers to **attend ARD committee meetings**
- **Paraprofessional** allocations

Master schedules, including Professional Learning Committee (PLC) time when possible, should allow for collaborative planning time for co-teachers, either face-to-face or via another collaborative approach.

> *School administrators can support co-teachers in setting up effective communication and building in common planning time, ideally with specific, designated, and regular planning times. School administrators may need to coordinate additional collaborative planning with co-teachers at key points during the school year, such as when introducing a new student to a co-teaching classroom, when updating IEPs, or when the roles and responsibilities of one or both co-teachers change.*

[3] The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines the SDI that each student needs as part of their IEP (TAC §89.1050).

Some possible strategies for school administrators to promote collaborative planning are as follows:

- Planning time for co-teachers **during advisory periods**
- Meeting **while counselors or librarians are in classrooms** delivering lessons
- Collaborating **during an instructional, student-led activity**
- Planning time **during assemblies or other school-wide programs**
- **Bringing in substitutes for a day** during the semester to allow for common planning time
- Organizing planning time **before the school year begins**

A checklist for master scheduling is in Appendix A.

2. Identifying and Assigning Co-Teachers

School leaders should carefully select the teachers they pair for co-teaching (Hedin and Conderman, 2019). In the early phases of implementation, campus administrators often begin with teacher volunteers to build momentum and foster a positive view of co-teaching. However, school leaders should emphasize from the beginning the expectation that **all teachers may receive a co-teaching assignment if it is the best approach to meet students' needs**.

School administrators should consider the individual skills of the personnel assigned to co-teaching.

Teachers best positioned to succeed in initial co-teaching arrangements are:

***General education teachers** with a deep understanding of the general curriculum and pacing*

***Special education teachers** with a strong understanding of SDI*

When possible and successful, it is advisable to maintain co-teaching partnerships year after year to allow for continuous growth and refinement of co-teaching practices, along with a deepening of the partnership.

3. Determining Co-Taught Class Rosters

Students with IEPs requiring an entire class period of inclusive support daily may be particularly well-suited for assignment to a co-taught classroom. However, the number of students needing additional support—including those with IEPs, 504 plans,[4] and other support needs—should be limited in co-teaching classrooms. That is, the co-taught classroom should not be double the size (or double the concentration of

[4] 504 plan guidance is provided by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (DoDEA AI 1365.01).

students with more intensive needs) of the traditional single -teacher classroom simply because there are two teachers. School administrators may want to **avoid reaching capacity in co-taught classes at the start of the school year**, thus allowing space for students who transfer during the school year, if co-teaching is a good setting based on their needs and/or IEP.

4. Supporting Co-Teachers

School administrators should provide ongoing support to co--teachers by **ensuring they have the materials needed** to perform their duties, including two teacher desks and chairs, necessary technology, and instructional resources available for both teachers. If either or both teachers change classrooms during the school day, school administrators should **provide a convenient way to transport materials** from one room to another.

School administrators can support co-teachers with internalizing and implementing effective lesson plans for their classrooms. For classrooms with students with disabilities, state law requires that school administrators notify all teachers about students receiving special education services assigned to their classrooms and facilitate access to all necessary IEP documents (TAC §89.1075), including the following:

- Present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements
- Accommodations and modifications
- Annual goals (including benchmarks/short-term objectives, if included)[5]
- Behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and other relevant information

5. Monitoring and Evaluating Co-Teachers

School administrators should conduct **regular monitoring of co-teachers**. Monitoring can help reinforce the goals of the co-teaching arrangement and encourage both teachers to adapt their working styles for a productive relationship.

Administrators should observe co-taught classes regularly—especially in the first months of a partnership—and give regular feedback to both teachers. School administrators should account for the circumstances of a co-teaching arrangement when conducting monitoring. For example, a teacher who is new to the profession or their subject/grade level, or a new co-teaching pair, may still be adapting to the co-teaching arrangement.

If observation or other data indicate that a teacher is not successfully implementing co-teaching, or if there appears to be an interpersonal conflict, the school administrator has three tools to support:

[5] A student's IEP must include a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability [§300.320(a)(2)]

- Administrators can first **meet with the teacher** to discuss their approach and reflect on the co-teaching arrangement, including areas in which the co-teacher feels they need support.
- The school administrator can **connect the teacher with one or more resources** to provide additional support, which may include instructional coaching, professional learning, or other printed guidance.
- Administrators may **conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation** of the teacher to measure the impact of the supports and adjust as needed to help the teacher succeed in the co-teaching arrangement.

6. Considering Needs for Substitute Personnel

School administrators should carefully explain the co-teaching arrangement to substitute teachers and identify reasonable expectations for when a substitute teacher is in a co-taught class. In districts where the same individuals substitute in a school on a regular basis and are familiar with school programs and services, preparing for substitutes may be more streamlined. In districts where substitutes vary, school administrators and teachers should be prepared to clarify what occurs in the co-taught class and what the substitute teacher should expect.

School administrators should not pull co-teachers from their assigned classes to cover teacher vacancies or absences on the campus. ***Co-teaching arrangements are carefully planned and require both teachers to be present to execute with fidelity****.*

The following table presents questions for school administrators to pose to relevant personnel in planning for substitutes in co-taught classrooms.

Questions for Substitute General and Special Education Teachers and Other Personnel

General Education Teachers	Special Education Teachers	Other School Personnel
• Do your plans for substitute teachers clearly explain that co-teaching occurs in your classroom? • What would you expect a substitute teacher to do during a co-taught class? • Should the substitute teacher work on other preparation tasks or grading instead of trying to actively contribute during a lesson when a special education teacher is available to teach the class? • How is co-teaching information communicated to the substitute teacher?	• Do your plans for substitute teachers clearly explain that co-teaching occurs as part of the services you provide to students? • Is it clear from your plans where in the school the substitute teacher should be for each instructional period or segment of the school day? • Which classes or parts of the day are co-taught versus instruction in a separate setting? • What is the expectation for the substitute teacher in co-taught classes? • What arrangement have you made in advance with the general education teacher concerning the role of a special education substitute teacher?	• Is co-teaching addressed in the packet of information that substitute teachers receive about the school? What information should be in the packet? • How could your school develop standard policies for addressing the topic of substitute teachers and the co-teaching program?

District Administrator Support for Co-Teaching

To be most effective, co-teaching requires careful planning, delivery with fidelity, and evaluation (Sayeski et al., 2019). Therefore, **co-teaching is often implemented district-wide** to maintain a consistent program across campuses. Such a system is helpful when a student moves from one campus attendance zone to another or when a student changes campuses based on promotion. Once a district commits to co-teaching, district administrators have three responsibilities. A checklist of considerations for district administrators for implementing co-teaching appears as Appendix B.

1. Communicating About Co-Teaching

Relevant information about co-teaching, including its purpose, use, and approach, should be readily available across district communications, including the following:

- infused into all appropriate district documents
- discussed during school administrator and teacher interviews
- incorporated into teacher evaluation tools, such as routine and formal observation and feedback forms

To ensure that information about co-teaching is consistent and accurate, district personnel should **adopt a common vocabulary** to use when communicating co-teaching principles and values to families and community members. ARD committees should be prepared to answer questions from the families and caregivers of students with disabilities to facilitate their partnership and build support.

2. Planning for Professional Learning

Professional learning is essential for all staff who will play a role in co-teaching and should begin **prior to implementing the program**. Administrators can demonstrate their commitment to collaborative learning and accountability by engaging in professional learning alongside their campus staff. The following table illustrates potential topics for various audiences in ongoing professional learning on co-teaching.

Sample Topics and Audiences for Professional Learning on Co-Teaching

Topic	Audience(s)
Foundational principles of co-teaching	Teachers, school administrators, district administrators, and support staff
Relationship building in co-teaching partnerships	Teachers and support staff
Adapting and blending the six co-teaching approaches	Teachers and support staff
Infusing SDI into co-teaching	Teachers, school administrators, and support staff
Analyzing and using data in co-teaching	Teachers and school administrators
Components of teacher evaluations on co-teaching	Teachers and school administrators
Conducting appraisals of co-teaching	School and district administrators
Supervising staff participating in co-teaching	School and district administrators

As with any new endeavor, the complete and robust **implementation of a district-wide co-teaching program may take time to occur**. Professional learning should therefore be incremental and ongoing to account for the learning process and to provide regular opportunities to refresh and advance mastery and understanding. District administrators should ensure that new teachers and staff who are onboarded throughout the year receive co-teaching professional learning upon arrival.

3. Conducting Programmatic Evaluation of Co-Teaching

A comprehensive program evaluation should be in place to promote continuous improvement for any co-teaching program. This data-driven process should include an **evaluation of student progress** and **incorporate the perceptions of teachers, families, and the community** about the co-teaching program. Programmatic evaluation should be guided by a set of quality indicators, such as those in the following table. Administrators can evaluate co-teaching programs on a scale of "evident, partially evident, and not evident" to determine fidelity of implementation to each of these components.

Quality Indicators for Co-Teaching Programmatic Evaluation

Planning
☐ Administrators have defined and shared their expectations with co-teachers.
☐ A mission and vision for high-quality co-teaching have been established and communicated.
☐ Both general and special education teachers expressed shared understanding of and buy-in for co-teaching that aligns with their unique areas of expertise.
☐ Co-teachers have the appropriate certifications and expertise aligned to their assigned role.
☐ Co-teachers understand their responsibility to provide SDI instruction as an integral part of co-teaching.
☐ Roles and responsibilities for co-teachers and other support staff have been defined.
☐ A shared vocabulary is established and communicated consistently to the larger school and local community.

Implementation
☐ There is evidence that co-teachers are using data to drive their instructional decisions.
☐ There is evidence that accommodations/modifications are implemented in co-taught classrooms.
☐ Co-teachers have adequate co-planning time in the campus master schedule.
☐ A thoughtful process is in place for assigning co-teachers that ensures balanced pairings that accentuate co-teachers' strengths.
☐ Co-teachers have received and participated jointly in training on co-teaching.
☐ A method is in place for measuring student success in co-taught classrooms.
☐ Students are scheduled by need rather than by teacher preference or schedule convenience.
☐ A system is in place for co-teachers to access support.
☐ Evaluators have received specialized training on evaluating co-teaching partners.
☐ A process is established for providing corrective action as needed in co-taught classrooms.
☐ Co-taught classrooms have a feeling of belonging and community.
Resources
☐ Resources (personnel, materials, time) are committed to implementing and sustaining the co-teaching model.
☐ Resources (i.e., books, videos) have been provided for co-teachers.
☐ Co-teachers have received tools with which to evaluate their co-teaching partnerships.

Inputs to Programmatic Evaluation

A comprehensive programmatic evaluation should include **multiple inputs**. District administrators may review data components from students in co-taught classrooms. These data may include the following:

- Attendance data
- Behavior data
- Instructional settings (whether students are in less restrictive settings than before co-teaching implementation)
- Formative assessment scores
- Classroom grades
- IEP progress reports
- State assessment results

Assessment data may be evaluated across co-taught and non-co-taught classrooms to allow for comparison.

Administrators may also consider data components from teachers and other school staff to evaluate the efficacy of a co-teaching program.

These data may include the following:

- Classroom observation data (A sample classroom observation template is in Appendix C)
- Teacher or other personnel survey data
- Individual interview data
- Focus group data

Administrators may seek input from families and community members on their perspectives about co-teaching. This input may be gathered through surveys, focus groups, or informal review of feedback. All stakeholders, including families, the community, and, where feasible, students, should be provided the opportunity to give feedback as part of an outreach effort.

Key Takeaways

School and district administrators play important roles in supporting co-teaching as a tool to promote meaningful access for students with disabilities and to enhance the learning experience for all students. Friend (2019) delineates six arrangements for co-teaching. The three recommended to be used most frequently are the following:

- Station teaching (most frequently)
- Parallel teaching
- Alternative teaching

The three arrangements recommended for less frequent use are the following:

- Teaming (occasionally)
- One Teaching, One Observing (frequently for data collection, but for short time periods only)
- One Teaching, One Assisting (seldom or less)

School and district administrators play important roles in promoting successful co-teaching, both at the onset and throughout implementation.

Important roles for school administrators are the following:

- Preparing a campus master schedule that accommodates co-teaching
- Identifying and assigning co-teaching partnerships that are successful
- Determining co-taught classroom rosters with an appropriate balance of students with disabilities and other special learning needs

- Providing ongoing support for co-teaching, including for implementing IEP activities for students with disabilities
- Monitoring and evaluating co-teachers using observation, feedback, and student performance data
- Considering the needs for substitutes in co-taught classrooms

Important roles for school administrators are the following:

- Communicating about co-teaching to school and district staff, as well as the broader district community
- Providing ongoing professional learning specifically for co-teaching
- Conducting ongoing programmatic review of the co-teaching program and making adjustments as appropriate

These are additional resources available to support co-teaching to promote meaningful access for students with disabilities:

Texas Resources

Texas SPED Support: https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/

Co-Teaching Arrangements: What to Look For: https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/resource-library/co-teaching-arrangements-what-look

Collaboration and Flexible Grouping Instructional Leader Collection: https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/learning-library/collaboration-and-flexible-grouping-instructional-leader-track

Supports for Participation for Students with Complex Access Needs: https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/learning-library/inclusion-practices-students-complex-support-needs/supports-participation-students

Texas SPED Quick Learns Collection: https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/resource-library/texas-sped-quick-learns

Other Resources

Council for Exceptional Children Resources on Co-Teaching:
https://exceptionalchildren.org/topics/co-teaching

IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

Kansas University Resources on Co-Teaching:
https://specialconnections.ku.edu/collaboration/cooperative_teaching

Marilyn Friend, Inc: The Co-Teaching Connection: https://coteach.com/

National Association for Co-Teaching: https://icoteach.com/

Glossary

Accommodations Changes in presentation, response, timing/scheduling or setting that reduce or even eliminate the effects of student's disability on academic tasks but do not change learning expectations.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) A plan developed by the ARD committee and used to teach or reinforce positive behaviors.

Differentiation A process used to recognize the varying background knowledge, readiness, language, learning preferences, and interests of a student. The intent of differentiated instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success.

Explicit instruction A teaching method that uses clear objectives, teacher modeling, and student practice to promote student learning.

Flexible Grouping A teaching strategy in which students are grouped and regrouped based on their individual needs, abilities, and interests, rather than solely on age or grade level, thus allowing for dynamic and differentiated instruction.

Formative data collected by monitoring student learning and providing feedback to help students improve their understanding and learning strategies, and to inform teachers about their teaching practices.

High-quality instructional materials (HQIM) Materials aligned to academic standards, are content-rich with clear learning outcomes, reflect evidence-based practices, and provide a full suite of teacher and student materials.

Itinerant Support Supplementary services provided by staff who travel between different schools, classrooms, or other settings in conjunction with regular class placement. [§300.115(b)(2)]

Modifications Alterations to practices or materials that change what the student is expected to master.

Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) An integrated framework for the systemic alignment of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices to support all the needs of all students.

Paraprofessionals Employees who provide instructional support, including those who provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher; assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials; provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory; conduct parental involvement activities; provide support in a library or media center; act as a translator; and/or provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher. (20 USC, §6319(g)(2))

Progress monitoring The evidence-based ongoing process of collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress.

Related services A wide array of developmental, corrective, and other supportive services required for a child to benefit from special education. Related services include but are not limited to assistive technology, audiology services, counseling services, interpreting services, medical services, music therapy, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility services, parent counseling and training, physical therapy, psychological services, recreation, rehabilitation counseling services, school health services, social work services in school, speech-language therapy, and transportation.

Reteaching Actions or strategies after instruction to support students who did not learn the content, concepts, or procedures from the "first" teaching and learning activities; a second-chance opportunity to refine and target instruction and support students to learn the content, concept, skill, or procedure.

Scaffolding The intentional practice of attending to content, students, and other contextual factors in the design or implementation of temporary, student specific instructional supports that maximize access to grade level concepts and tasks.

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Appendix A. Checklist for Master Scheduling for Co-Teaching

Completed	Master Scheduling Tips
☐	Using the students' IEPs, identify required special education support services by student and content area (e.g., general education with no special education support, meaningful access supports such as itinerant and/or co-teaching support, resource, self-contained).
☐	Review current staff for various class arrangements to determine who is available to support students in general education settings.
☐	Determine a ratio for general education students to students with disabilities based on the students' needs. This ratio may vary from classroom to classroom, depending on student composition and teacher scheduling. It will also likely vary depending on the grade levels of the students (usually fewer students in elementary classrooms because they spend the entire day primarily with a single teacher; slightly higher in middle school and high school because students change classes and are more mature). There is no state-required ratio; this decision is determined locally.
☐	Build the master schedule for general education and special education teacher assignments, ensuring that student needs drive the master schedule. This schedule is especially important at the secondary level because your ratio may determine a need for special education support in multiple sections of the same course.
☐	Schedule students with disabilities into classrooms prior to scheduling nondisabled peers. It is advisable to leave open spots in co-taught classrooms for new enrolling students who will benefit from being in the co-taught classroom.

Appendix B. District Considerations for Co-Teaching

Completed	#	Evaluation Questions
☐	**1**	How have expectations for co-teaching been articulated at the district level? • What formal policies and procedures exist related to co-teaching? • What policies and procedures are needed to ensure the sustainability of co-teaching?
☐	**2**	To what extent have district and campus level personnel received professional learning about co-teaching? (Note: This question pertains to general education as well as special education leaders.)
☐	**3**	What supports has the district offered to create a viable infrastructure for co-teaching (e.g., assistance in scheduling, clarification of service delivery options)?
☐	**4**	How has co-teaching been integrated into options related to strategic and school improvement planning?
☐	**5**	How are resources allocated to support co-teaching (e.g., funding for professional learning, periodic common planning time for co-teachers, data collection and aggregation)?
☐	**6**	How is co-teaching presented in district materials and media (e.g., district website, student handbooks, family communication)?
☐	**7**	How is co-teaching part of the recruiting and hiring practices of the district?
☐	**8**	How are site administrators accountable for co-teaching implementation integrity?
☐	**9**	How is co-teaching incorporated into teacher evaluation protocols and procedures?
☐	**10**	How is co-teaching incorporated into principal and other site administrator evaluation protocols and procedures?
☐	**11**	How is essential information about co-teaching disseminated to site administrators, teachers, and others?
☐	**12**	What data are reported to the district to determine the impact of co-teaching on key student outcomes?

Source: Friend (2017).

Appendix C. Sample Co-Teaching Classroom Observation Template

General Information	Student Engagement	
Teacher Name (special education):	□ Use of graphic organizers	□ Use of visuals
	□ Students moved around	□ Use of technology
Teacher Name (general education):	□ Independent work	□ Partner work
	□ Active response	□ Group work
Date:	□ State changes/transitions	□ Games
Grade/Subject:	□ Whole-class instruction	□ Use of manipulatives
Number of students:	**Co-Teaching Approach**	
Observer:	□ 1 Teach/1 Observe	□ Alternative Teaching*
□ Follow-up observation	□ 1 Teach/1 Assist	□ Parallel Teaching*
□ Video instruction	□ Station Teaching*	□ Team Teaching
□ Video debrief	□ Teachers are comfortable with the selected approach.	
□ Video permission slips: □ Teachers □ Students	□ Co-taught classrooms have a feeling of belonging and community.	
Co-Teacher Communication	**Classroom Management**	
□ Nonverbal communication	□ Rules/routines have been established (transitions, timing, materials).	
□ Verbal communication	□ Both teachers share responsibility for behavior management.	
□ Communication between students and teachers	□ Students respond to management techniques.	
□ Positive teacher-to-teacher rapport/respect	□ Both teachers move freely around the room.	
Lesson Implementation	□ Students are seated heterogeneously.	
□ Beginning (connect prior knowledge to new learning, preassessment, hook, review, lesson objective)	□ Positive behavior support is present.	
□ Middle (guided practice, independent practice)	□ All students have access to and are engaged in appropriate grade-level curriculum.	
□ End (closure, reteaching, assessment, preview, review)		
□ Teachers appear competent with curriculum and standards.	**Differentiation**	
□ Lesson is presented in a variety of ways.	□ Language considerations	□ Modifications
□ Instructional responsibilities are shared.	□ Accommodations	□ Preassessment
Classroom Climate	□ Check for understanding	□ Wait time
□ Teacher-to-student feedback	□ Connect prior knowledge to new learning	
□ Student-to-student feedback	□ Chunked content	
□ Error correction	□ Consideration for student readiness or interest	
□ Praise of effort/affirmation	□ Instructional strategies:	
□ Students are on task		
□ Humor		
□ Class is comfortable with both teachers.	□ Specially designed instruction	
Goal(s) for refining co-teaching knowledge and skills:		

Comments

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