# Brandmark of TX CAN - Texas Complex Access Network **Administrator Interview Resource**

This resource was created to assist administrators when interviewing educator applicants who will support students with complex access needs. It aligns with the five quality indicators from the TX CAN training, [*Building a Foundation for Supporting Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities*](http://sped.support/scd_online_courses)*.* Interview questions are listed on the left, with desired responses in the middle, and an area to record applicant responses on the right. While applicant responses will likely not address every point in the desired responses, this document can help guide administrators in making more informed hiring decisions. Additionally, this resource provides a quick overview of some best practices in educating students with significant cognitive disabilities. After hiring, administrators can use this tool to identify gaps in new employees’ performance and refer them to the Texas Sped Support website, [spedsupport.tea.texas.gov](http://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/), to search for resources specific to their area of need.

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| **Interview Question** | **Desired Response** | **Applicant Response** |
| **I. Alignment with State Standards** | | |
| a) What curriculum would you follow for your students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities? | * The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) |  |
| b) Describe the process for developing an individualized Educational Program (IEP). | Using data from multiple sources, identify student strengths and needs in academic (aligned to TEKS) and functional areas  Combine student’s strengths, interests, and required supports with the data to write a high-quality PLAAFP that shows how the student’s disability affects their access to, and participation in, the curriculum  Use the PLAAFP to develop clear, observable, measurable goals, and if applicable, short-term objectives/benchmarks for areas of critical need  Determine progress monitoring methods that will effectively measure growth |  |
| c) How would you align the TEKS with instruction, assessment, and the IEP goals? | * Review all state assessment documents for both the general assessment (or STAAR) and the alternate assessment (or STAAR Alternate 2) - including the TEKS Curriculum Frameworks, the Essence Statements, and the TEKS Vertical Alignments * Review the district’s general education scope and sequence and instructional materials * Review student IEP goals * Develop lesson plans that provide access to the TEKS through appropriate pre-requisite skills and incorporate accommodations and/or modifications addressing corresponding IEP goals where applicable |  |

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| **II. Effective Teams** | | |
| a) How would summarize your expectations for paraeducators? | * Support instructional goals * Support positive climate * Collect data |  |
| b) How would you communicate clear expectations to paraeducators? | * Provide written guidelines and classroom expectations * Meet on a regular basis to discuss needs, celebrate successes, and problem solve any issues * Share lesson plans |  |
| c) How often would you plan to meet with paraeducators to review student progress and plans? | * At least once a week * Short daily briefings at the beginning and end of school day |  |
| d) How would you maximize the effectiveness of paraeducators as part of the team? | * Provide a detailed schedule * Review and discuss lesson objectives and data together * Model teaching and reinforcement strategies * Include their ideas, when appropriate |  |
| e) How would you collaborate with general education staff? | * Attend grade-level meetings * Meet during conference periods * Share lesson plans * Review student work, noting strengths, needs, and IEP goals |  |
| f) How would you communicate with families? | * Through their preferred communication method – email, text, phone calls, home-school journal * Include positive highlights of student success in communication * Progress reports, newsletters, and class website |  |

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| **III. Classroom Climate** | | |
| a) How would you describe the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities? | * Instructional/Academic * Behavioral/Sensory * Communication * Physical/Medical * Post-secondary planning |  |
| b) Given those needs, what are possible key areas to consider when building your classroom environment? | * Large group area[s] * Small group area[s] * Individual work area[s] * Break/sensory areas |  |
| c) How would you determine what your daily schedule would include? | * Consider grade-level curriculum * Balance difficulty of tasks * Provide a variety of learning experiences (large group, small group, individual) * Plan for transitions * Determine student supports for activity type (e.g., small group vs large group) |  |
| d) How will you communicate this schedule to students? | * Create a class schedule and post in a format that most, if not all, students understand * Refer to the schedule frequently during the day so that students understand the schedule and can anticipate events |  |
| e) What will you provide for those students that need additional support beyond your class schedule? | * Create Individual schedules for students that benefit from additional structure in a format that each student understands (e.g., object, photo, picture, combination) * Teach and reinforce the individual schedule so that the student understands how to use, can anticipate activities and transitions, and the schedule becomes a natural part of the daily routine |  |
| f) Describe the process for developing behavior intervention plans [BIPs]? | * Identify the behavior that needs to be reduced or eliminated in measurable terms including frequency, intensity, and duration * Determine effectiveness of previous strategies * Collect data (i.e., antecedents, behavior, consequence (ABC) data) * Identify antecedents (what happens prior to the behavior occurring) through the data collected * Identify the function or why the behavior is happening * Identify preventative strategies, proactively provide positive behavior supports, and teach and reinforce desired behaviors * Provide a functionally equivalent replacement behavior (i.e., teach them another way to get needs met that is more appropriate than the behavior) |  |
| g) How would you teach appropriate behaviors? | * Modeling * Visual cues and supports * Positive reinforcement for desired behaviors * Narratives such as Social Stories and/or Power Cards |  |
| h) What are some strategies that could prevent challenging behaviors and teach more appropriate behaviors? | * Schedule * Transition marker * Checklists/mini-schedule * First/Then board * Choice board * Extra break cards * Narrative * T-chart * Keychain rules * Video modeling * Peer supports * Visual cue of a replacement behavior * Social autopsy |  |

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| **IV. Differentiated Instruction** | | |
| a) What are some examples of differentiated instruction for students with special needs, including those with significant cognitive disabilities? | * Lesson development incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) * Assistive technology supports, as needed * Small group instruction * Hands-on instruction * Pictorial cues * Graphic organizers * Tiered assignments * Scaffolding tasks * Chunking information * Centers/Stations |  |
| b) How would you develop lesson plans that reflect the diversity in your classroom? | * Incorporate student interests * Incorporate family cultures * Incorporate communication goals throughout instruction * Plan for specific student supports so that everyone has a way to participate * Focus on independence * Use materials, such as books and manipulatives, that represent or show different cultures |  |
| c) How can your staffing resources be maximized to support the effective implementation of differentiated instruction? | * Paraprofessionals assigned to facilitate interaction at centers/stations * Teaching assistants assigned to reinforce taught skills/concepts through small group and/or direct instruction |  |
| d) What are some tools that you have used to help integrate technology throughout instruction? | * Instructional software * SmartBoards * Assistive technology * Communication systems |  |
| e) How would you and your staff document student progress? | * IEP data collection forms * Communication data forms * Behavior data collection forms * Anecdotal records * Collection of student work |  |
| f) How do you use the data that is collected? | * Review data frequently and on a regular basis * Based on data, adjust instructional and behavioral strategies and supports, as appropriate * Communicate data findings with staff and families |  |

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| **V. Social Communication** | | |
| a) How would you ensure that each student has an effective means of communication? | * Honor all communication attempts * Support all modes of communication (e.g., pointing leading, eye gaze, increased vocalizations) * For students without a reliable mode or with an inconsistent mode, provide a variety of supports until the most appropriate system is identified * Consult with the family on how the student communicates at home * Collaborate with the speech therapist to determine the most appropriate communication system |  |
| b) What types of assistive technology in the area of communication have you had experience with in previous situations? | * Communication boards or books * Picture Exchange Communication System [PECS] * Voice output switches and devices, such as Dynavox or GoTalk * Apps for an iPad, such as Proloquo2Go |  |
| c) What are some strategies to develop social communication? | * Communication systems (such as those listed in previous question) are always available * Communication scripts * Topic cards/boards * Provide multiple opportunities for communication * Ask open-ended questions * Reinforce all communication attempts |  |
| d) How would you promote interaction with general education peers? | * Identify a “bridge builder,” or a peer who acts to introduce and connect peers * Plan for and support students to participate in inclusive general education classrooms * Combined general education/special education classroom lessons, projects, and activities * Provide inclusive extracurricular and other non-academic activities |  |
| **VI. General** | | |
| a) What are your personal goals for this year? | * To achieve success on individual student IEP goals * To provide an effective means of communication for every student * To create meaningful instruction for every student |  |
| b) What are your staff development needs? | * Based on student needs |  |
| c) What are the strengths that you would bring to this position? | * Dedication and commitment to the students * Knowledge of student needs * Instructional leadership * Positive attitude * Effective communication skills * Ability to focus on data and prevention * Flexibility * Knowledge of inclusionary practices |  |

This document was designed to accompany the [Fundamentals of Inclusive Education training](http://sped.support/scd_online_courses) from TX CAN.

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