

Dear _____

Welcome to JB Elementary and your student teaching placement! We are so happy to have the opportunity to work with you over the next several weeks. Thank you for the opportunity to share in your journey to becoming a teacher. I am looking forward to exchanging ideas and hearing your new perspectives and discoveries in the world of teaching. Here is your chance to apply the knowledge, skills, and abilities you have acquired during all of coursework. Enjoy the journey!

Allow me to introduce myself... I have been teaching for 10 years. This is my third year at JB. Prior to teaching here in Appleton I taught in Rocklin, California for three years and in Sycamore, Illinois for five years. In these teaching positions I worked as a cross-categorical teacher working with students with autism, emotional & behavioral difficulties, vision impairments, and hearing impairments. My bachelor's degree and certification areas are in elementary education grades 1-8 and special education (learning disabilities) grades k-12. I earned a master's degree in curriculum and supervision from Northern Illinois University in 2001. I've known I wanted to be a teacher ever since I was 4 years old. I just cannot see myself doing anything else...

Beyond my role as a teacher I also have a wonderful family at home. I have been married to my husband, K, for 5 years. We have two beautiful daughters: A who is 17 and E who is just a toddler. We enjoy fishing, camping, hiking, playing volleyball in our backyard, and visiting family in Colorado and California.

As teachers we give so much of ourselves to our students, but the rewards are abundant. I hope you will find your student teaching placement to be one of the most satisfying and fulfilling experiences you have in your preparation to becoming a teacher. Please remember that I am here to assist you and answer any questions that you may have. I look forward to our collegial partnership as we step up to the challenges of another school year!

JS
Learning Disabilities Teacher
JB Elementary

Educational Philosophy

“Learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us to go further more easily.”

Jerome Bruner

I believe that education should develop the skills necessary to produce life long learners who are honest, respectful, responsible, resourceful, caring, cooperative, and courageous. A classroom based on human values, rooted in mutual respect and built on people's strengths develops students that have a strong sense of self-worth, and pride in a job well done. I feel this is one of the most basic principles for success in life.

Teachers must build and maintain positive parent-teacher relationships. Parents and caregivers know more about their children than anyone else. Without a positive and safe working relationship, barriers can have detrimental effects on a child's education. Teachers must work to keep lines of communication open.

Each child learns and experiences life in a way that is truly unique to them. I believe it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all students learn. This can be achieved by helping students identify how they learn best. Teachers accomplish this by presenting lessons in a variety of ways to allow each student to experience which method works best for them. Continuous modeling of reflective behaviors is key to building reflective life-long learners. I believe that when teachers set high expectations, teach them the skills necessary to achieve, provide encouragement through positive learning experiences, and take time for purposeful reflection that all students will achieve success.

I believe our children must be equipped to meet the challenges that extend beyond the classroom. In order to meet these challenges, students must have an education that teaches them to think critically and independently in order to become a contributing, productive member of our society. We must allow our students the opportunities to learn through taking risks and making mistakes in a safe and nurturing environment. Our jobs as educators is to give each child “wings” so that they may go further than they ever dreamed possible.

STUDENT TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNICATION

- Maintain professional relationships and communication with all staff.
- Make time to conference with your cooperating teacher everyday. This is the time to discuss upcoming lessons and reflect on your experiences.
- Communicate to cooperating teacher any concerns or problems immediately.
- Ensure the confidentiality of students at all times.
- Communicate with parents in an effective, constructive, positive way on an ongoing basis, either written or verbally.
- Communicate & demonstrate collaborative problem solving with staff on an ongoing basis
- Communicate any changes in schedules to appropriate staff
- Communicate suggestions, comments, and problems on an ongoing basis
- Monitor and use the student communication books to keep staff and self informed of the student's educational needs/program.
- Call me anytime you need! Home: 920-757-0790 Cell: 920-475-8514

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Continue, maintain or develop small group instructional groups within special education classroom
- Use assessment to drive instruction
- Integrate direct services into the regular classroom as much as possible
- Teach certain classes to entire classroom while adapting activities for children as required by need. Example: opening activities, language arts, art etc.
- When working in the classroom assist other children whenever possible. Don't glue yourself to specific children
- When student requires assistance, do things with them instead of for them.
- Provide and or develop procedures for paraprofessionals
 - Modification for classroom assignments/tests
 - Behavior Programs, as needed
 - Instructional Materials as needed
- Fully participate in any IEP processes that occur during your student teaching placement

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Utilize a variety of behavior management techniques with students in order to assist in the development of age appropriate skills.
- Give positive verbal reinforcement when student displays appropriate behavior.
- Whenever possible use natural consequences (i.e. loss of privileges) for inappropriate behavior.
- Be consistent in expectations.
- Develop Individual Behavior Plans as needed.

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

- Read and become familiar with IEP long and short term objectives, assist with updating when necessary.
- Use formal and informal assessment procedures as needed
- Written lesson plans to be reviewed by cooperating teacher prior to teaching
- Prepare weekly schedule for self and staff to be completed and handed in on Thursday for the following week

Most of all ask lots of questions, soak in all you can, enjoy the children, treasure the accomplishments of yourself and the children and have fun!

COOPERATING TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNICATION

- Meet with student teacher and build rapport
- Inform student teacher of procedures and rules of the building.
- Make time to conference with student teacher everyday.
- Introduce the student teacher to all staff and give a tour of the school
- Provide guidance and encouragement, but allow the student teacher to experience the realities of teaching.
- Communicate any changes in schedules as soon as possible
- Communicate suggestions, comments, and problems on an ongoing basis
- Monitor amount of communication with student teacher and ensure that it is meeting the needs of both the student teacher and cooperating teacher

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Encourage and assist in arranging for the student teacher to visit a variety of classrooms for observations and interviews.
- Identify unit topics & develop and calendar early so the student teacher can start planning early
- Assist student teacher in establishing procedures for paraprofessionals
- Fully involve student teacher in any IEP processes

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Share classroom management strategies so consistency can be maintained
- Provide monetary support for reinforcements and rewards
- Allow for new ideas and strategies to be implemented
- Assist student teacher in developing Individual Behavior Plans as needed.

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

- Model professionalism and effective teaching.
- Demonstrate a variety of instructional strategies.
- Allow the student teacher to observe teaching and discuss it afterwards.
- Review IEP documents with student teacher
- Allow student teacher to begin some teaching as soon as they are ready.
- Review written lesson plans and give feedback in a timely manner
- Review weekly schedules and give feedback in a timely manner.

I will listen to & answer (or find an answer) all of your questions, give you as much information as I can, enjoy your presence, treasure your accomplishments and have fun!

Timeline of Placement

Week	Activities	Goals
1	Observe students, routines, classroom procedures & structure of our classroom and the general education classrooms you will be working in. Jump in and help out with students as you become comfortable. You can assist individual students, participate in opening/extension activities, answer questions and interact as much as you would like. Schedule daily and weekly times to meet with me. Spend time learning how to use the Read Naturally program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn classroom discipline procedures in each classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Review IEPs & behavior plans <input type="checkbox"/> Review your handbook with cooperating teacher
2	This week you will continue to observe, but will begin directly helping students in both the special education classroom and general education classrooms. You will teach an activity of your choice each day: problem solving warm-up, in-class physical activity, handwriting lesson, spelling practice, Daily Oral Language, Read Naturally group or social skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify on-site technology resources to integrate into your lessons <input type="checkbox"/> Practice using Read Naturally program <input type="checkbox"/> Select one IEP to use as a practice for writing an annual IEP
3	Continue leading activity from previous week. Take over one small instructional group of your choice. Plan and teach this group for the week. Lesson plans will need to be completed and reviewed prior to teaching in the beginning of the week. You may select ways to individualize or integrate other activities if you select a Direct Instruction group. Take over at least one student's weekly email home to family.	<input type="checkbox"/> Assess at least one student with the fluency benchmark progress monitor <input type="checkbox"/> Review files/work samples for student you have selected for the practice IEP
4	Continue activity and instructional group from previous weeks. Select a student for "resource planning time." You will now be in charge of that student's weekly individual time block for remedial work/assessment/re-teaching of skills. This includes contacting teacher prior to that time block to check for missing assignments, difficulties with concepts, etc. Lesson plans will need to be completed and reviewed prior to teaching in the beginning of the week. I will continue reviewing the IEP process by showing you how to plan for an IEP meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fill out IEP Meeting Invite paperwork <input type="checkbox"/> Assess at least one student with the fluency benchmark progress monitor
5	Continue activity and instructional group from previous weeks. Another instructional group will be added to your responsibilities. Lesson plans will need to be completed and reviewed prior to teaching in the beginning of the week. Take over weekly/daily communication with general education teachers to discuss classroom modifications. We will continue to review IEP process together	<input type="checkbox"/> Modify one classroom assignment or test <input type="checkbox"/> Write a Present Level of Performance for practice IEP
6	Continue activity and instructional group from previous weeks. Another instructional group will be added to your responsibilities. Lesson plans will need to be completed and reviewed prior to teaching in the beginning of the week. Take over weekly email communication for at least half of the caseload. We will continue to review the IEP process together.	<input type="checkbox"/> Write at least one Present Level of Performance statement and a goal for an identified area for the practice IEP.
7	Plan and teach full-time. I will shadow you and give you as much or little assistance and needed. Lesson plans will need to be completed and reviewed prior to teaching in the beginning of the week. We will continue to review the IEP process together.	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete accommodations and placement pages of the IEP document <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on lessons
8	Plan and teach full-time. If you are comfortable, I can arrange to be out of the room for portions of time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the rest of the IEP document <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on lessons
9	Finish any unfinished lessons or activities from previous week and wrap it up. Observe other classrooms or programs within the school. Meet with other special education teachers, classroom teachers, Principal, and Special Education Cluster Coordinator if you would like.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on your experience and relax!

PROCESS FOR DETERMINING DEGREE OF MODIFICATIONS

- If NOT...** 1. Can the student do the same activity at the same levels as peers? e.g. spelling
- If NOT...** 2. Can the student do the same activity but with adapted expectations? e.g. less words
- If NOT...** 3. Can the student do the same activity but with adapted expectations and materials? e.g. matching the words to pictures
- If NOT...** 4. Can the student do a similar activity by with adapted expectations? e.g. words that are functional and in the student's daily environment
- If NOT...** 5. Can the student do a similar activity by with adapted materials? e.g. computer program
- If NOT...** 6. Can the student do a different, parallel activity? e.g. learn a computer typing program, learn to use a spell checker, write or put pictures in a journal
- If NOT...** 7. Can the student do a different activity in a different section of the room? e.g. perform classroom jobs

Location of Pertinent Information

Assessment Tools are located in the brown cabinet on the bottom shelf in the room.

Berry Information, including student handbook, policies, is in the bottom right drawer of my desk

Communication Tools are in the bottom right drawer of my desk

Cumulative Records are in the conference room inside the main office

Current Event Information is located on the counter inside the main office (latest edition of the Berry Patch, handouts, after school activity information, reports from PTA, etc.)

Curriculum supports, worksheets, activities are all located in the filing cabinet. Please help yourself to making copies of anything you would like!

Curriculum Guides are located in the big gray cabinet in the room.

Emergency Procedures are posted on the wall next to the door.

IEP Assessments are located in the top drawer of the filing cabinet behind the IEPs.

IEP Files are located in the top drawer of the filing cabinet

Lesson Plans are in the white binder on top of my desk (this includes sub plans, emergency plans and explanation of each instructional group)

Phone Information is above the teacher's desk on the bulletin board

Student Health Information is located in the top drawer of the filing cabinet

Student Information Sheet, including classrooms numbers, teacher names, and grade is above the teacher's desk on the bulletin board

Supplies are located in the staff workroom (paper, pencils, pens, glue, chart paper, etc.)

Textbooks (extra copies) are located in the LMC office. They can be checked out by library staff.

Daily Procedures & Policies

Special Education Room –

Current Behavior Incentive Overview: Star Sticker Charts. At the end of their instructional time, if the students have shown appropriate behavior and completed their given work, they may put one star (from the stickers near the assignment book page on wall) on their charts which are inside their binders. If a student shows exceptional behavior I may give them a bonus star. If there are behavioral issues I give a verbal warning with a stated consequence i.e. “Daniel, when you make noises I have a difficult time hearing what your classmates are sharing. If you continue to interrupt, you will lose your star for today (be separated from the group, etc.).” If a student completes an entire chart, they can choose one prize from the prize box (inside the large metal cabinet). For the younger students, I also give a large sticker when they complete a row on their chart. New charts & stickers are on blackboard or in the top drawer of my desk.

***certain students may have individualized behavior plans that will also have to be reviewed and filled out**

School-Wide Behavior Incentive: “Caught Doing Something Good Charts” Students going above and beyond with school work, behavior, being helpful, etc. can also be acknowledged through one of these forms. They are also on the board. Fill one out and have the student take it to the office and place it in the box (they make a big deal every time a student delivers one!

- Students are usually very good about coming down during their scheduled time on their own. If they are not here within 5 minutes of their scheduled time, call their classroom extension which is located on the contact sheet above the phone.
- As soon as they enter the room, the students should get or have their binders with them.
- Students should read the opening activity on the board and immediately start working.
- All students should follow the 3 classroom rules posted at all times.
- Students are allowed to take a break to stand, get a drink, or take a walk during non-instruction times; any work they fall behind on will be made up as homework or during recess.
- Students may use any writing tool (in silver pail) for writing assignments. Math assignments must be done in pencil or erasable pen.
- Occasionally a classroom teacher will call and ask us to finish an assignment or test during a student’s small group instructional time; make a note of all changes on the daily lesson plans explaining why something was not completed. Flexibility is important in our position!
- Be sure to save time at the end of each lesson fill out behavior plans, distribute stars or rewards, conference with students about their behavior
- Follow the schedule closely and get students back to class on time. If the students arrive back to class late, they may miss a transition and not know where their class is!

Working with Students in Classrooms –

- Be on time! Let the classroom teacher know ahead of time, or call if you are going to be late
- Always bring the red clipboard with you – this is filled with: copies of student goals/objectives/extension activities for each student, pencils, post-its, highlighters, reading guides, writing aids, etc.
- Support classroom teacher instruction if you are not teaching, walk the room, support wherever needed (do not sit at the back of the room doing nothing).
- Assist target students and other students as needed in the classroom, giving indirect cues and prompting to follow along with class activities.
- If a student has difficulty with a concept being taught, take her to a back table and re-teach or review the skill.
- On days the students are given free time, use activities & objectives listed in the red clipboard or check in with the classroom teacher about skills the student is struggling with