HTPD Level Indicators for Special Area Teachers

A Practical Guide for Identifying and Supporting Special Area Teacher Growth

Positive Student Relationships and High Expectations

- Greets every class with warmth and enthusiasm—even when rotating between hundreds of students each week.
- Builds rapport with students quickly, earning trust across diverse grade levels and abilities.
- Sets clear expectations for effort, participation, and respectful peer interaction, no matter the setting.

Effective Routines and Procedures

- Teaches and models expectations for equipment use, movement, transitions, and cleanup.
- Anticipates logistical challenges and plans proactively for time, materials, and safety.
- Maintains consistency across classes—even when schedules shift or students are pulled for services.

Content and Performance Standards: Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

- Designs lessons aligned to national or state content standards specific to their discipline.
- Identifies clear learning targets for each lesson—not just activity goals.
- Uses performance-based assessments that reflect real skill growth (e.g., movement rubrics, portfolios, performances).

Authentic Student Engagement

- Creates lessons that spark curiosity and invite participation—through rhythm, movement, creativity, or challenge.
- Reads energy in the room and adjusts pacing or structure in real time.
- Gives students meaningful roles or choices that increase investment without sacrificing structure.

Differentiated Instruction and Decisions Based on Data

- Modifies or scaffolds tasks for students with different readiness levels, abilities, or IEP needs.
- Uses performance data (observation, checklists, reflection) to plan instruction that meets diverse student needs.
- Adjusts grouping, pacing, or expectations without watering down content.

Rigor and Relevance

- Designs experiences that push students to problem solve, collaborate, or create with purpose.
- Connects instruction to students' lives, identities, and communities.
- Provides opportunities for students to reflect on their progress or refine their skills.

Student-Directed Learning

- Provides opportunities for students to lead warmups, choreograph routines, compose music, or co-plan projects.
- Supports goal setting and personal growth through student reflection and self-assessment.
- Shifts the teacher's role from director to facilitator, giving students space to take ownership.