

Rubrics for Instructional Specialists

Instructional Specialists include Instructional Coaches, Curriculum Coordinators, and others whose focus is on supporting effective teaching and improved learning.

The following rubrics for Instructional Specialists are aligned with the four domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Instructional Specialists
Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
1a: Demonstrates understanding of the underlying research, theories, knowledge, and skills of the discipline	Specialist demonstrates little or no understanding of the critical concepts and content of the discipline.	Specialist demonstrates limited understanding of the critical concepts and content of the discipline and of the range of proven strategies to effectively provide the instructional support services.	Specialist demonstrates solid understanding of the critical concepts and content of the discipline and of a range of research-based practices to provide the instructional support services.	Specialist demonstrates extensive understanding of the critical concepts and content of the discipline and of an extensive range of research-based practices and strategies to provide the instructional support services.
	<p align="center">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist demonstrates understanding of the research-based theories of the discipline. • Specialist articulates the critical concepts of the discipline. • Specialist demonstrates knowledge of a range of research-based practices to inform the improvement efforts. • Specialist has a firm understanding of the knowledge base of the discipline. 			

Planning and Preparation (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
1b: Identifies the instructional improvement needs of the teachers served	Specialist has little to no knowledge of the instructional improvement needs of the teachers served.	Specialist has limited knowledge of the teachers' instructional improvement needs.	Specialist knows the instructional improvement needs of the teachers served.	Specialist proactively seeks additional knowledge about each teacher's instructional improvement needs to understand how to best support teachers in implementing the school's programs.
Sample Indicators of Proficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist has observed the instructional practices relative to a research-based framework. • Specialist has identified the levels of performance of the teachers relative to the framework. • Specialist collects and analyzes instructional data through walkthroughs. • Specialist assesses instructional improvement needs relative to the demands of the school programs. 				

Planning and Preparation (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
1c: Identifies clear, specific, and appropriate goals for the instructional support program	Specialist's goals are either inappropriate or unclear. The goals do not align with the teachers' needs.	Specialist's goals are partially defined and/or minimally aligned with teachers' needs for instructional support.	Specialist's goals are clear, specific, and appropriate for the needs of the teachers and the school program. Teachers accept and endorse the goals.	Specialist's goals have been designed in collaboration with teachers and school leaders, and are tightly aligned with both teachers' instructional needs and the school program.
	Sample Indicators of Proficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist's instructional goals are clearly defined. • Specialist's goals are aligned with the needs of the teachers. • Specialist's goals are appropriate for the school program. • Teachers indicate they understand the specialist's goals. 			

Planning and Preparation (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
1d: Identifies resources for the instructional support program that are available within and also outside the school/district	Specialist does not identify resources to support the instructional support program.	Specialist has limited knowledge of resources within the school and district that can be used to improve teachers' instructional skills.	Specialist can readily identify appropriate human and material resources within the school and district, or beyond, that can help teachers build their instructional capacity.	Specialist proactively seeks a wide range of resources from multiple sources to build the instructional capacity of the teachers. Teachers share their knowledge of external resources with the Specialist.
Sample Indicators of Proficiency				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist describes teachers' strengths and areas in need of instructional support. • Specialist identifies necessary human and material resources for the instructional support program. • Specialist identifies where these resources are located. • Teachers describe the resources they need to meet their instructional improvement goals. 				

Planning and Preparation (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>1e: Plans a coherent program of instructional support fully integrated with the school program</p>	<p>Specialist's instructional support program is either not planned or planned independently of the school program and the capacity of the faculty to implement the school program.</p> <p>The planned instructional support program is based on a series of disconnected professional learning "events" that lacks coherence.</p>	<p>The planned instructional support program is integrated with the school program in limited ways.</p> <p>The planned instructional support program reflects a limited degree of coherence.</p>	<p>The planned instructional support program is fully integrated with the school program.</p> <p>The planned instructional support program offers an organized and coherent approach to instructional improvement.</p>	<p>The planned instructional support program is fully integrated with the school program and designed to drive its goals.</p> <p>The planned instructional support program is coherent and helps bring additional coherence to the school program.</p>
<p>Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructional support program is designed to provide an aligned and coordinated approach to professional learning. • The instructional support program is focused on clearly defined goals and objectives. • Specialist aligns instructional support programs with the data-informed needs for improvement. • Specialist ensures the instructional support program builds on and enhances the capacity of faculty to deliver the school program. 				

Planning and Preparation (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>1f: Develops a plan and process for the ongoing assessment and improvement of the instructional support program</p>	<p>There is no evidence of a plan or process to assess the efficacy of the instructional support program to guide program improvements.</p>	<p>Specialist has developed a basic plan and process to assess the instructional support program, but has not indicated how the data will be used to inform improvements.</p>	<p>Specialist has developed a coherent plan and process to measure both the implementation of the instructional support program and its impact, relative to the stated goals. Evidence of success is clearly stated.</p> <p>Assessment data is used to guide program improvement.</p>	<p>Specialist has developed a sophisticated plan for assessing the implementation and impact of the instructional support program, relative to the stated goals. Multiple forms of evidence of success, including assessments by the teachers, are clearly defined.</p> <p>Assessment data is used to guide practice-focused discussions among stakeholders that will inform program improvement.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist has developed a clear plan to assess the implementation and impact of the instructional support program. • The planned assessment focuses on both the processes and the outcomes of the support program. • Assessment data is shared and discussed. • Assessment data is used to inform program revisions and improvement. 				

Domain 2: Environment

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>2a: Creates a respectful and emotionally safe culture that promotes collaboration</p>	<p>Specialist has not created an environment where teachers feel safe asking for assistance. There is no evidence of collaboration in addressing problems of practice.</p>	<p>Many teachers participate in professional learning initiated by the Specialist, but there is limited evidence of collaboration in designing the professional learning or in setting goals for improved instruction.</p> <p>Teachers indicate that they feel relatively safe participating in the professional learning developed by the Specialist.</p>	<p>Most teachers participate in professional learning initiated by the Specialist. Some teachers initiate contacts with the Specialist to seek support for collaborative efforts to improve instructional practices.</p> <p>Teachers indicate that the instructional improvement efforts are respectful and responsive.</p>	<p>Teachers work collaboratively with the Specialist to co-develop and participate in improvement-focused professional learning.</p> <p>Teachers indicate that their contributions are respected and valued, promoting a culture of collaboration.</p>
<p>Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional improvement efforts take the social and emotional needs of teachers into consideration. • Specialist ensures the planned work is flexible, to be able to respond to teachers' needs. • The program acknowledges and respects the existing knowledge and skills of the faculty. • Specialist ensures all teacher conversations are confidential. 				

Environment (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2b: Promotes a culture of continuous instructional improvement	Specialist does not communicate that instructional improvement is a continuous process, instead implying that it is a compliance-driven event.	Specialist's attempts to build a culture of continuous improvement are mixed. Some teachers acknowledge the importance of continuous improvement and accept support from the Specialist.	Specialist creates a culture in which continuous improvement is acknowledged as critical work for all staff. Teachers feel comfortable in reaching out for support in their instructional improvement efforts.	Teachers initiate instructional improvement efforts, working collaboratively with the Specialist to define the goals, processes, and methods to measure the implementation and impact of the initiatives.
	Sample Indicators of Proficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist helps to promote a "good to great" mentality in the school. • Specialist keeps the focus on continuous improvement to engage all staff in the work. • Specialist promotes a culture in which questions and requests for support are invited and valued. • Teachers seem comfortable requesting and receiving help. 			

Environment (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>2c: Develops processes and procedures for teachers to participate in support activities</p>	<p>No processes or procedures are in place. Teachers do not know how to access the services provided by the Specialist.</p>	<p>Teachers have a limited understanding of how to access services offered by the Specialist. Processes and procedures lack the specificity necessary to guide teachers.</p>	<p>Clear processes and procedures are in place to guide teachers in understanding how to access each of the services provided by the Specialist. Teachers understand the procedures and use them to access services.</p>	<p>Clear processes and procedures to access the range of services provided are in place and well communicated. The essential stakeholders participated in developing the procedures and promote their use among the teachers.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes and procedures are clearly defined. • Teachers can describe how to access instructional support services. • Teachers access desired services using the established procedures. • Specialist promotes understanding and use of the processes and procedures. 				

Environment (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2d: Establishes clearly defined norms for professional conduct	Norms for professional conduct have not been defined. Adult interactions can be described as unproductive and often disrespectful.	Specialist makes limited attempts to establish norms for adult interactions. Adult interactions are inconsistently productive and respectful.	Clear norms for guiding professional conduct have been established and promoted within the school. The norms frame productive and respectful interactions among the adults.	Teachers observe the established norms for professional conduct, holding themselves and each other accountable for honoring the norms.
Sample Indicators of Proficiency				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist has developed and communicated norms for professional conduct. • Norms for professional conduct contribute to the culture of respect and professionalism. • Specialist and teachers refer to the norms in discussing interactions. • Teachers observe the norms. 				

Environment (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>2e: Organizes physical space for professional learning</p>	<p>Spaces for group work are poorly organized, resulting in lost time, a sense of chaos, and lack of engagement. The physical environment and the activities designed to support professional learning are poorly aligned.</p> <p>Teachers do not feel comfortable in the space.</p>	<p>Spaces for group work are sufficiently organized so that they do not constrain the professional learning.</p> <p>Teachers generally feel comfortable in the workspace.</p>	<p>Professional learning spaces are well organized to minimize lost time, ensure the engagement of participants, and provide an "adult" environment that is free of distractions.</p> <p>Teachers are comfortable in the physical space.</p>	<p>Teachers and the Specialist collaborate to ensure the physical space is well organized and flexibly designed to support multiple approaches to professional learning.</p> <p>Teachers are comfortable in the physical space and often use it for their own meetings.</p>
<p>Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment and materials in the space are readily accessible. • The physical space is flexible to support various learning structures. • The physical space is "adult" in tone and comfortable for the teachers. • Minimal time is lost from professional learning due to a disorganized environment. 				

Domain 3: Delivery of Services

	Levels of Performance			
Component	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>3a: Collaborates with teachers to design rigorous, standards-based classroom instruction</p>	<p>Specialist does not collaborate with teachers in designing classroom instruction.</p>	<p>Specialist provides limited support to teachers in designing classroom instruction. The support is often more cooperative than collaborative.</p>	<p>Specialist promotes and engages in collaborative efforts to work with teachers to design standards-based classroom instruction.</p>	<p>Teachers take the initiative to work with Specialist to design classroom instruction that is standards-based, rigorous, and engaging.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are comfortable discussing their instructional plans with the Specialist. • Specialist collaborates with teachers to design lesson plans. • Specialist collaborates with teachers to develop unit plans that incorporate aspects of the Specialist's academic discipline. • Specialist collaborates with teachers to ensure rigorous instruction. 			

Delivery of Services (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3b: Addresses the instructional improvement needs of the teachers served	The instructional improvement support delivered by the Specialist is of poor quality and does not address the needs of the teachers served.	The instructional improvement support designed and delivered by the Specialist is of mixed quality, addressing the needs of a limited number of the teachers served.	The instructional improvement support designed and delivered by the Specialist is of high quality and appropriately addresses the needs of the teachers served.	The Specialist offers teachers an opportunity to inform the workshops and modeling services in order to ensure a tight alignment with their instructional improvement needs.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers state that the instructional improvement services are appropriate for their needs. • Instructional improvement support—workshops and modeling—are high quality. • Specialist uses observational data to inform the development of the instructional support offered. • Specialist ensures a tight fit between teachers' instructional improvement needs and the instructional support provided. 			

Delivery of Services (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3c: Engages teachers in learning new instructional strategies and practices	Specialist is not successful in promoting professional learning. Teachers do not take part in professional learning.	Specialist has limited success in promoting opportunities for professional learning. Some teachers engage in the professional learning provided.	Specialist successfully engages teachers in learning new instructional strategies and practices. Teachers participate in the professional learning.	Specialist and teachers collaborate on identifying topics for professional learning about instructional strategies and practices. Teachers are highly motivated participants in ongoing professional learning.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers welcome and engage in the professional learning opportunities. • Attendance/service records attest to the participation of teachers. • Walkthrough data focuses on changes in instructional practice over time. • Specialist schedules teachers for in-classroom support as they implement the new strategies and practices. 			

Delivery of Services (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3d: Provides relevant and timely feedback to teachers	<p>There is little or no feedback given to teachers regarding their professional growth. Teachers do not appear to be aware of their professional learning goals and do not engage in self-assessment.</p>	<p>Teachers are aware of their learning goals, but feedback to teachers is minimal and inconsistent.</p>	<p>Specialist provides timely and consistent feedback to teachers based on clearly communicated goals for professional growth.</p>	<p>Specialist integrates multiple types of evidence, including teacher's self-assessments, to provide timely and consistent feedback to teachers regarding their professional growth. Specialist works with teachers to use the feedback to update professional learning goals and/or develop new goals to support ongoing improvement.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are aware of their own professional learning goals. • Specialist provides written or oral feedback to teachers within a few days of interacting with the teacher. • Feedback is organized around clearly communicated goals for professional growth. • Feedback is based on evidence and data collected during the interaction. 			

Delivery of Services (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>3e: Provides responsive professional support</p>	<p>Specialist offers a rigid approach to professional support that is followed regardless of impact or appropriateness.</p>	<p>Specialist sometimes modifies plans/approaches in response to teacher requests or evident needs.</p>	<p>Specialist provides responsive services by adapting and adjusting plans for services as teacher needs and interests change.</p>	<p>Specialist solicits input from key stakeholders to ensure the professional support is appropriate and responsive to the existing and emerging interests and needs of teachers. Services are adapted as needed to ensure responsiveness.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist has evidence of the emerging needs of the teachers. • Specialist reviews progress and adjusts the program plan as needed. • Teachers have scheduled meetings to discuss their professional support interests and needs. • Teachers believe the services are responsive. 			

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>4a: Reviews and reflects on practice to inform improvement</p>	<p>Specialist either does not review the counseling practice or provides inaccurate recommendations for improvement.</p>	<p>Specialist's reflections are vague, informing recommendations for improvement that are too global to be actionable.</p>	<p>Specialist accurately reflects on the implementation and the impact of the instructional improvement services, providing concrete and specific examples of challenges and successes.</p> <p>Recommendations for improvement are specific and focused on program improvement.</p>	<p>Specialist's reflections are both specific and perceptive, framed by clear evidence for the recommendations provided. Specialist's professional judgment and expertise help shape specific recommendations for alternative approaches to meeting the instructional improvement goals.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist provides written recommendations for improving the instructional support program. • Challenges are fully defined and actionable recommendations are provided to address these. • Successes are shared with the broader community. • Teachers share their recommendations for improvement. 				

Professional Responsibilities (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>4b: Follows established procedures for developing and submitting accurate and timely records, budgets, and reports</p>	<p>Specialist does not follow procedures that have been established for developing and submitting required documents. Required documents are usually inaccurate and late.</p>	<p>Specialist has limited success in following established procedures to prepare accurate budgets, service records, and reports. Required documents are often submitted late.</p>	<p>Specialist follows established procedures to guide the development of budgets, service records, and reports. Required documents are accurate and submitted on time.</p>	<p>Specialist follows and informs the improvement of established procedures for developing and submitting required reports. Budgets are designed to support improvement by reflecting diagnosed needs. Required documents are accurate, submitted on time, and generally viewed as exemplars to guide the work of others.</p>
<p>Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist follows established procedures for developing required documents. • Specialist's reports are accurate. • Specialist's reports are developed in a timely manner. • Specialist's reports are submitted in a timely manner. 				

Professional Responsibilities (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4c: Coordinates improvement efforts with other Specialists	Specialist tends to work in isolation, not coordinating improvement efforts in any way with other Specialists at the school.	Specialist is inconsistent in coordinating improvement efforts with other Specialists at the school, inhibiting a common vision and aligned focus for the work.	Specialist consistently coordinates improvement efforts with other Specialists at the school, creating a single vision of effective instruction and a clear and aligned approach to leveraging this.	Specialist seeks opportunities to coordinate improvement efforts with other Specialists at the school and with other stakeholders, including external stakeholders, who can provide support for the improvement work.
	Sample Indicators of Proficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialists meet as a community of practitioners to share information about their work. • School-based Specialists schedule common time for joint planning and discussions. • Specialists align their individual work with the overarching school goals. • Specialists develop a common vision of effective instruction to guide their work. 			

Professional Responsibilities (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4d: Engages with the larger school community	Specialist does not participate in school committees, projects, and/or events. Professional relationships with peers are distant or negative.	Specialist selectively engages with school committees, projects, and/or events, typically when asked. Relationships with colleagues are professionally courteous.	Specialist actively participates in, supports, and contributes to school committees, projects, and/or events. Professional relationships are positive, cooperative, and productive.	Specialist seeks opportunities to engage in school events, projects, and/or committees and makes significant contributions to these, often taking a leadership role.
	Sample Indicators of Proficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist is an active participant on key committees in the school. • Teachers indicate they have positive professional relationships with the Specialist. • Specialist is often seen at school events—before, during, or after school hours. • Teachers feel their professional relationships with the Specialist are productive. 			

Professional Responsibilities (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>4e: Enhances professional capacity through ongoing professional learning</p>	<p>Specialist does not participate in professional learning.</p>	<p>Specialist participates only in professional learning required by the district or state.</p> <p>Specialist makes limited attempts to share the professional learning with school staff.</p>	<p>Specialist seeks professional learning opportunities, including coaching, to improve professional practice.</p> <p>Specialist schedules opportunities to share the professional learning with colleagues.</p>	<p>Specialist seeks out formal and informal professional learning, including feedback from colleagues and attendance at professional conferences.</p> <p>Specialist applies this learning to improve the counseling services and to increase the professional knowledge and skills of colleagues.</p>
<p>Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist participates in a range of professional learning to expand and enhance professional knowledge and skills. • Specialist creates opportunities for informal sharing of the new professional knowledge and skills. • Specialist attends local and national conferences to explore cutting-edge thinking. • Specialist visits other schools to learn new approaches to instructional improvement. 				

Professional Responsibilities (continued)

Component	Levels of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>4f: Demonstrates professionalism by adhering to the highest standards of integrity and confidentiality</p>	<p>Specialist violates teachers' confidentiality and acts with low levels of integrity.</p> <p>Teachers do not trust this Specialist.</p>	<p>Specialist is inconsistent in honoring both confidentiality and professional integrity.</p> <p>Teachers have low levels of trust in this Specialist.</p>	<p>Specialist frames all professional interactions with high standards of professional honesty, integrity, and confidentiality.</p> <p>Teachers trust this Specialist.</p>	<p>Specialist is well regarded as someone who consistently displays the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality, challenging negativity and promoting high standards of professionalism throughout the school.</p> <p>Teachers seek out and trust this Specialist.</p>
<p>Sample Indicators of Proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers voice their trust in the Specialist. • Specialist is known to operate with a high degree of integrity. • Teachers are comfortable that their discussions will be confidential. • Specialist demonstrates professionalism in all aspects of the work. 				