Special Education in Texas

TCASE – Great Ideas Conference
February 20th, 2019
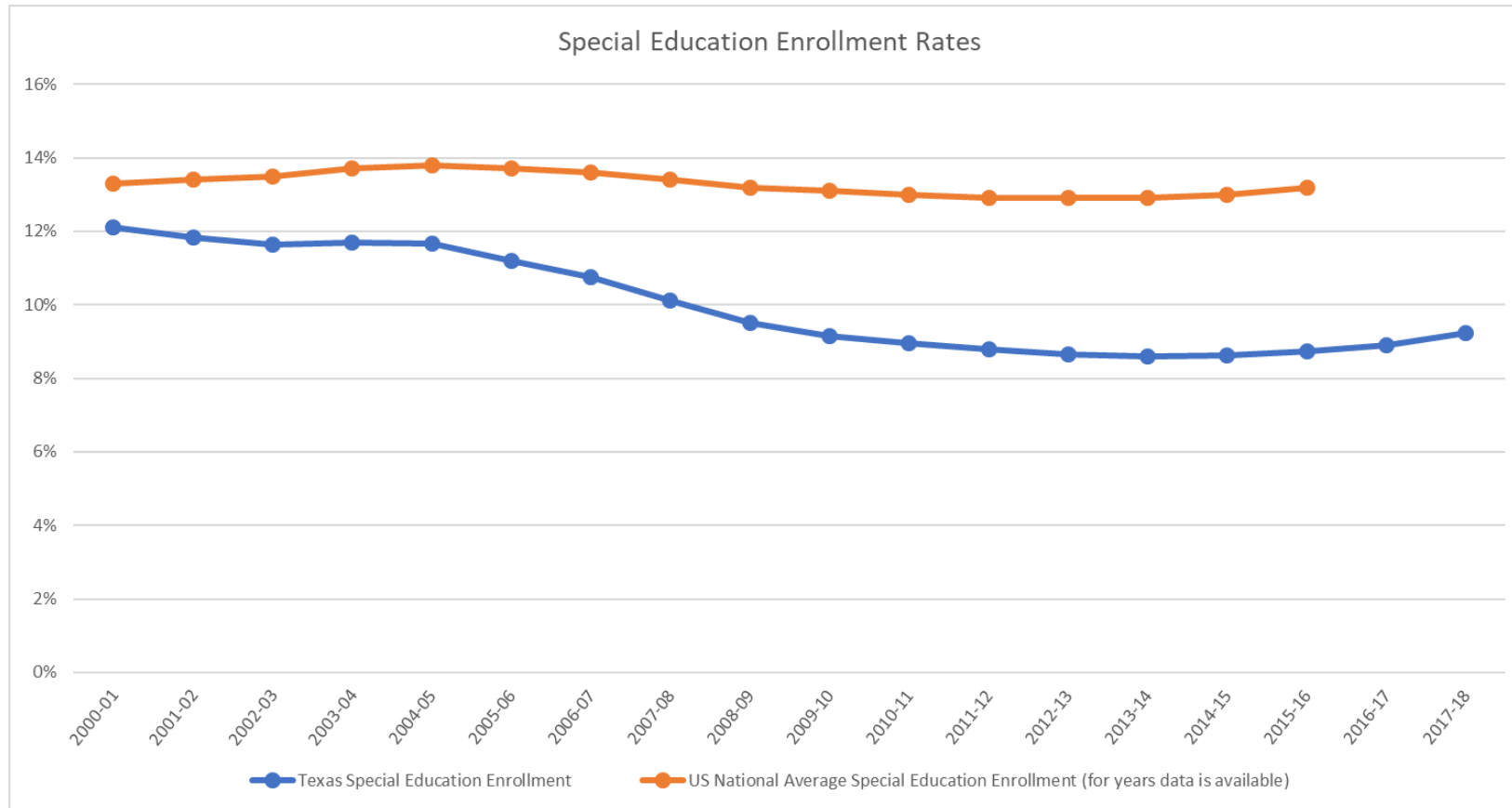
A Need for Change

Current Performance in Texas

Special Education Enrollment Trends

Special Education Enrollment Rates

- Texas Special Education Enrollment
- US National Average Special Education Enrollment (for years data is available)

- Historically, Texas has identified fewer students than the national average

- Gap in identifying students has widened since 2004

- Students may not be receiving necessary services to benefit their learning

Four-Year Graduation Rates

- Students with disabilities continue to lag behind their peers in graduation

- During the past 10 years, graduation rate gap between students with disabilities and non-disabled peers grew by 2 points, from ~10% to ~12%

4-Year Graduation Rates

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016

Legend: —— Special Education   —— Non Special Education
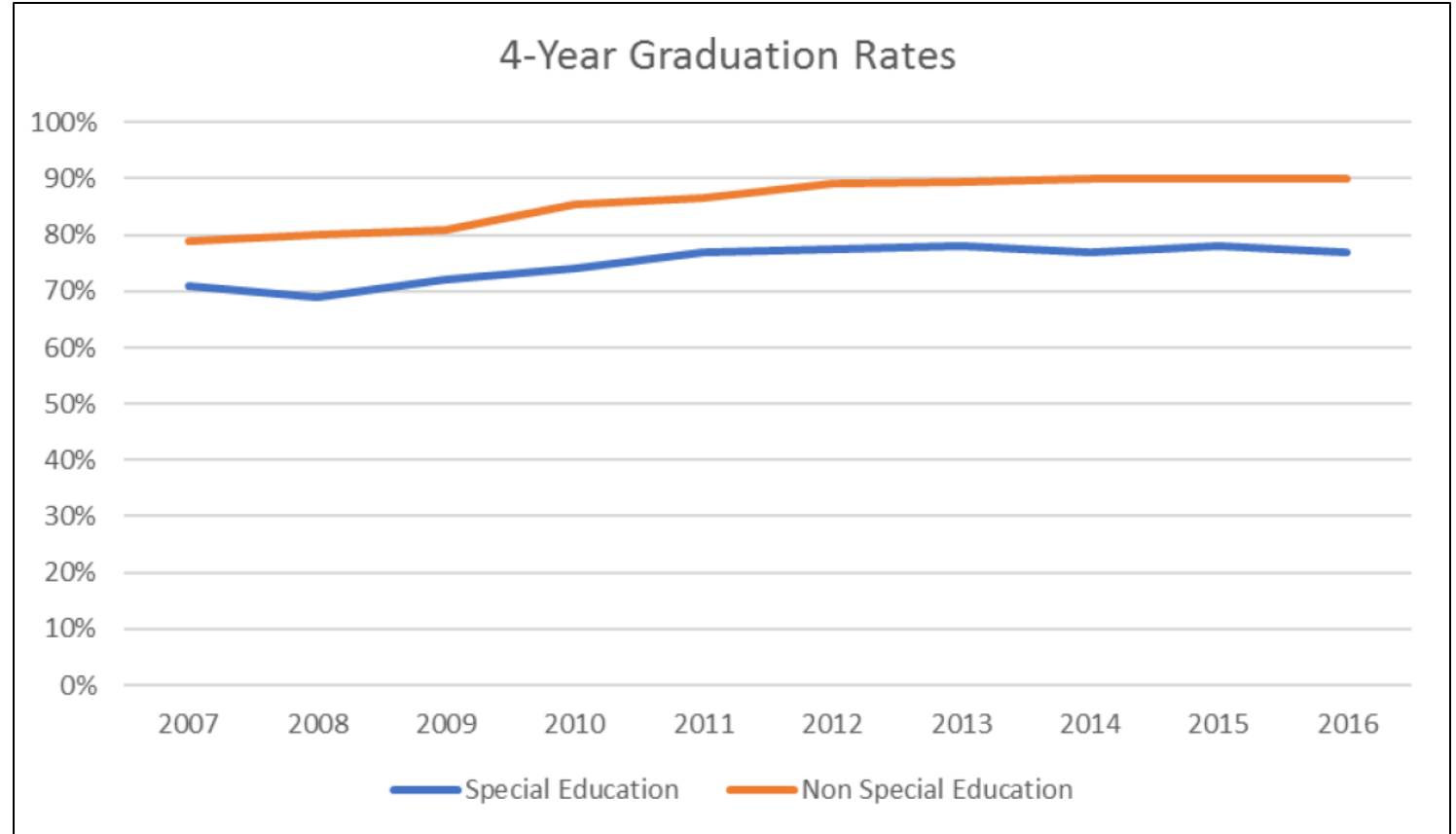
Achievement Gap for Students with Disabilities

- 2017 STAAR results show students with disabilities across all disability types have significantly lower achievement rates than peers

- Reading and Math achievement are the best indicators of 4-year graduation and postsecondary success

2017 STAAR Results - Approaching Grade Level

Math — Special Education: 49%, Non Special Education: 83%
Reading — Special Education: 35%, Non Special Education: 76%

Legend: ■ Special Education ■ Non Special Education
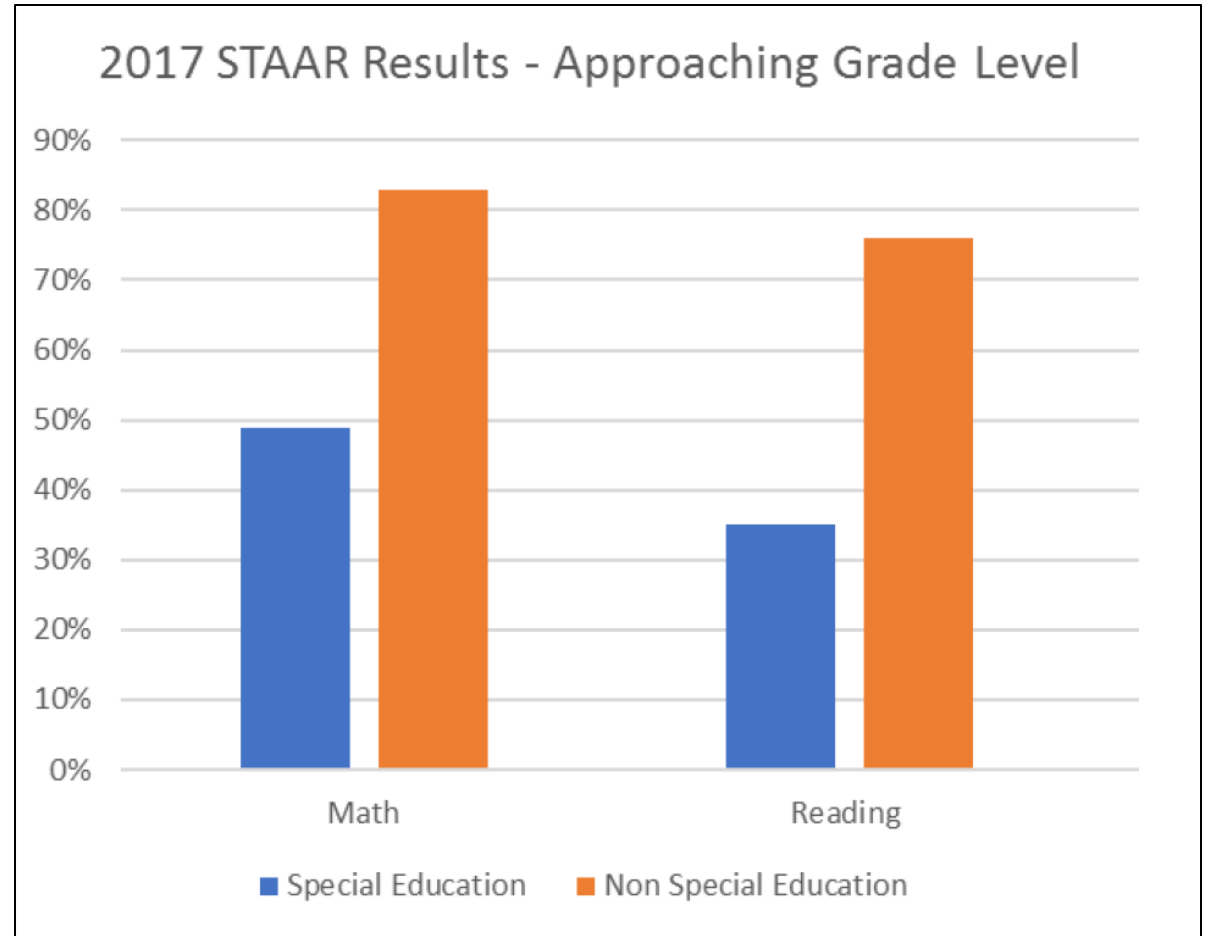
Opportunity Gap Persists

College Readiness (Class of 2016)

Special Education — Non Special Education
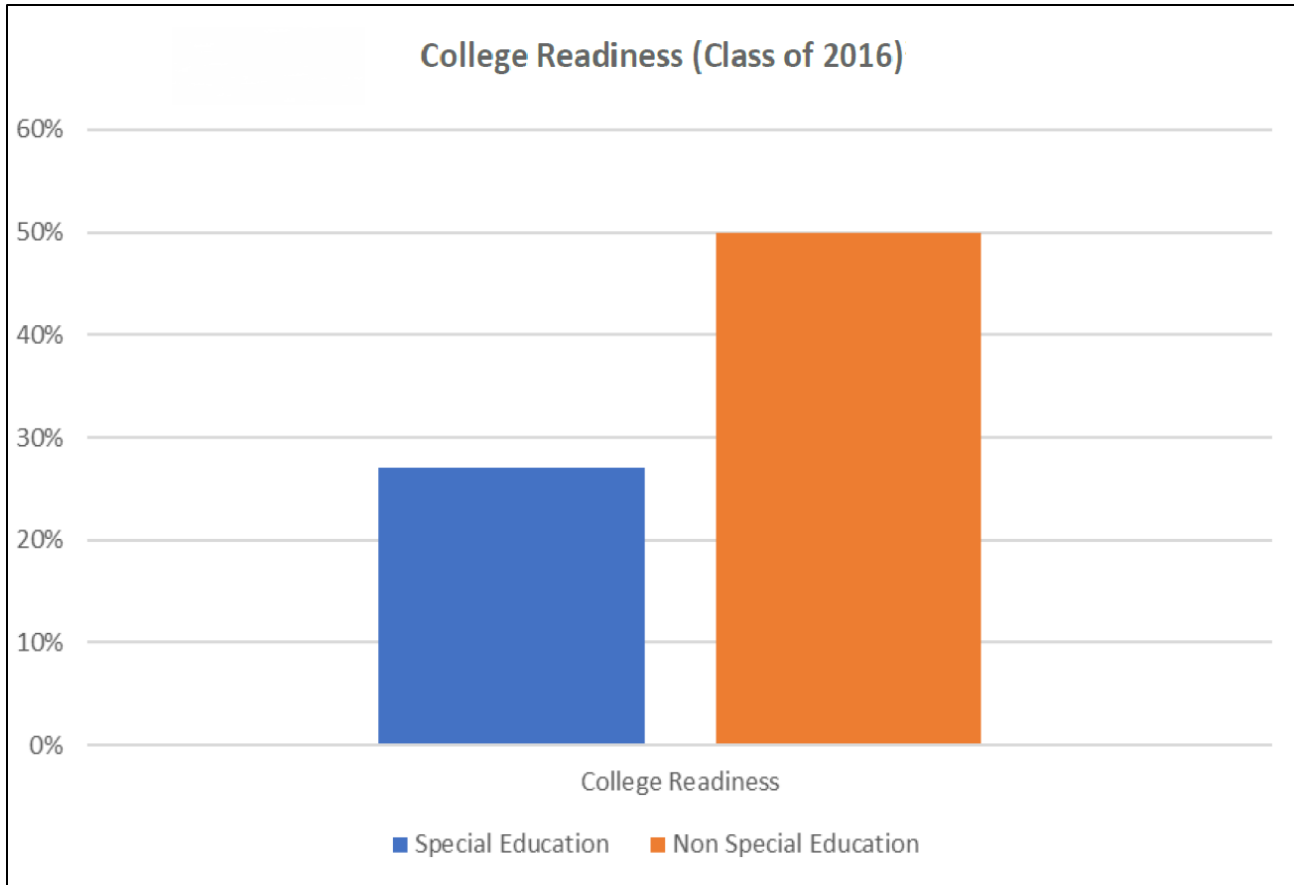
College- and Career-Readiness:
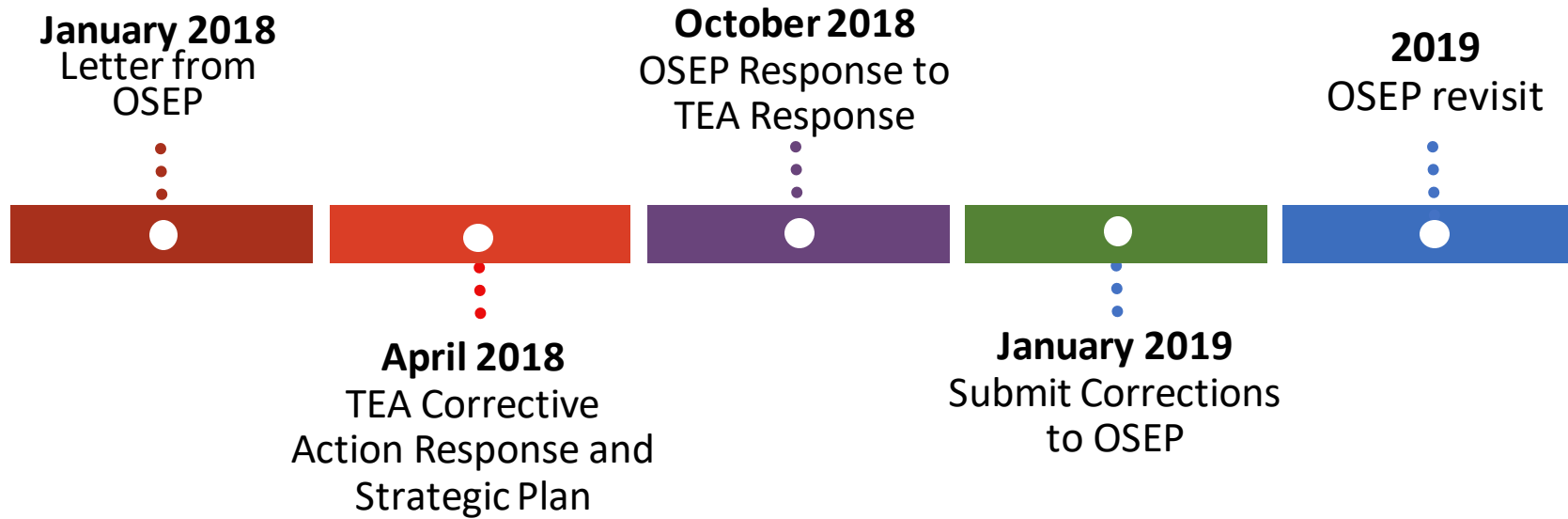*Every child prepared for success in college, a career, or the military.*

- Students with disabilities are significantly behind their peers in college readiness

- Represents gap in long- term opportunities for students with disabilities compared to non-disabled peers

OSEP Timeline of Events

January 2018
Letter from OSEP

April 2018
TEA Corrective Action Response and Strategic Plan

October 2018
OSEP Response to TEA Response

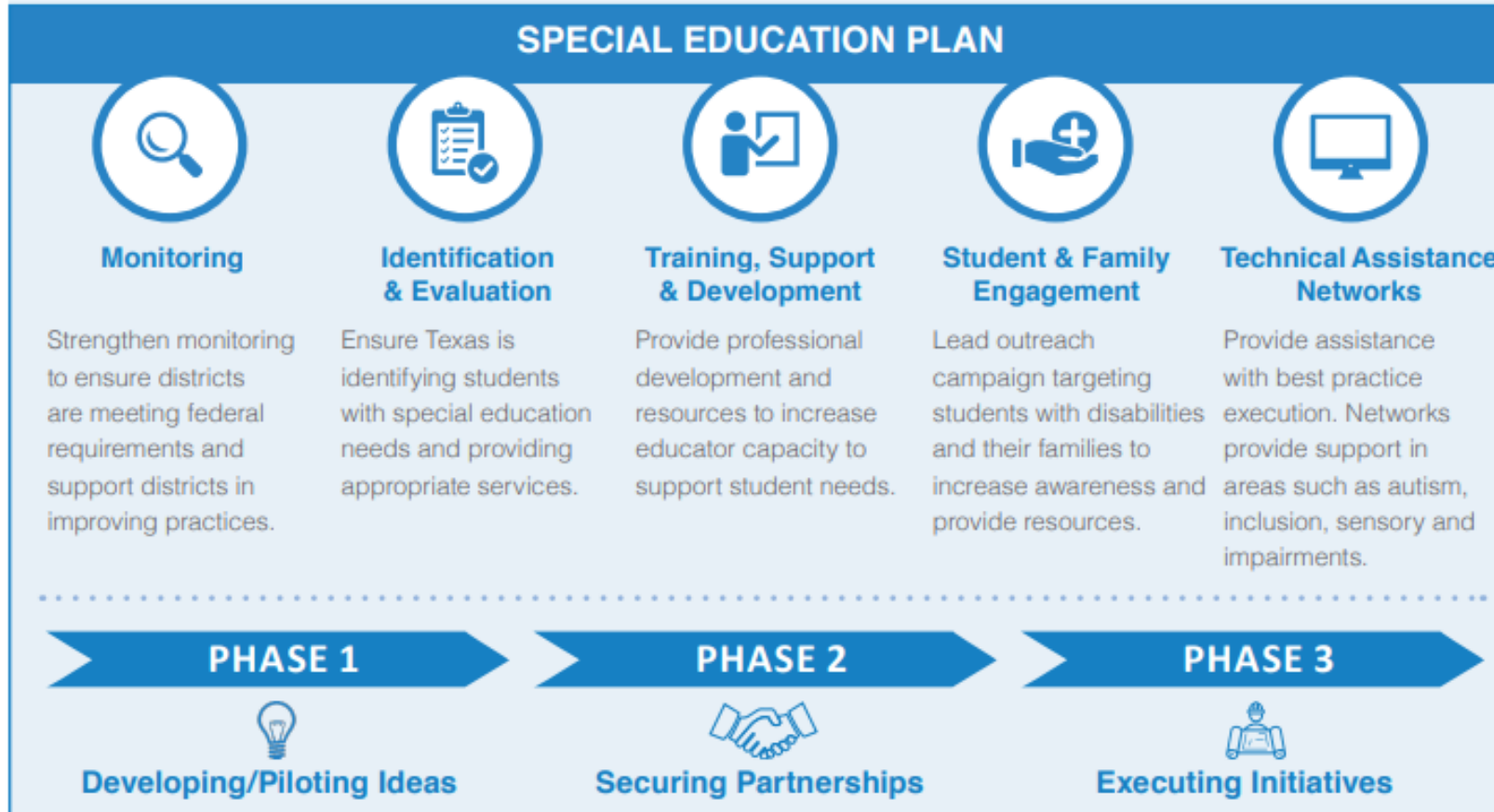**January 2019**
Submit Corrections to OSEP

2019
OSEP revisit

Improving Opportunities & Outcomes

TEA Strategic Plan for Improving Special Education

Moving the Needle to Improve Student Achievement

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

Monitoring
Strengthen monitoring to ensure districts are meeting federal requirements and support districts in improving practices.

Identification & Evaluation
Ensure Texas is identifying students with special education needs and providing appropriate services.

Training, Support & Development
Provide professional development and resources to increase educator capacity to support student needs.

Student & Family Engagement
Lead outreach campaign targeting students with disabilities and their families to increase awareness and provide resources.

Technical Assistance Networks
Provide assistance with best practice execution. Networks provide support in areas such as autism, inclusion, sensory and impairments.

PHASE 1
Developing/Piloting Ideas

PHASE 2
Securing Partnerships

PHASE 3
Executing Initiatives

Strategic Plan: Monitoring

Review & Support

The Review and Support team has been established to review programs and services provided to students with disabilities and enhance the guidance and support for districts and charters in improving these efforts.

Expand team by ~ 50 FTEs, paid for by IDEA-B Discretionary
- Desk reviews and on-site visits
- Include a detailed planning process with significant stakeholder engagement

Focus on improved outcomes, not just compliance
- Include easily searchable published reports
- All review materials will be accessible to LEAs
- Additional data elements added to PEIMS/TSDS for enhanced monitoring

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Child Find

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

TEA's use of the 8.5 percent indicator contributed to a statewide pattern of practices where some LEAs took actions specifically designed to decrease the percentage of children identified with disabilities.

TEA's Response:

- TEC 29.011 was amended to prohibit the use of an indicator that solely measures performance based on the percentage of children receiving special education

- IDEA does not limit or restrict the number of children who can be identified as meeting IDEA's definition of a "child with a disability"

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Section 504

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

Some students receiving Section 504 services were not referred for an initial evaluation under the IDEA, even when teachers suspected the students may have a disability and need for special education and related services.

TEA's Response:

The suspected need for special education requires referral to IDEA. Effective monitoring, periodic review, and re-evaluation of students and their Section 504 plans will inform those decisions. One way to satisfy requirements is to follow IDEA timelines for students being served under Section 504.

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

Inconsistent application of policies and procedures associated with referring a student with dyslexia for special education at the district and school levels demonstrates LEAs in the State are not properly implementing the IDEA child find requirements

TEA's Response:

When a child with dyslexia or any other condition included in the definition of "specific learning disability" is suspected to need special education and related services, the LEA must conduct an evaluation in accordance with IDEA.

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

A pattern of practices in ISDs in which evaluations were delayed or not conducted for children suspected of having a disability due to local policies and practices requiring completion of all tiers of RtI prior to a referral for special education.

TEA's Response:

- TEA will be developing an MTSS framework and guidance to clarify:
  - The goal of MTSS is to screen early and deliver targeted supports quickly to close achievement gaps.
  - Students **do not** have to go through an MTSS process before they are referred for a special education evaluation.

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

OSEP's January 10, 2018 Letter Indicated:

In different schools within the same ISD and across different ISDs, staff expressed a lack of clarity as to:

-Entry/exit criteria

-Length of intervention

-How and when children move from one tier to the next

TEA's Response:

- TEA will provide enhanced guidance to support LEAs in effective implementation of MTSS components:
  - Universal Screening
  - Evidence Based Intervention
 - Progress Monitoring
  - Data Based Decision Making

Strategic Plan: Identification, Evaluation, and Placement (Child Find & FAPE)

TEA Evaluation Capacity Support –

Due to under-identification of students eligible for special education services, TEA responded to potential LEA needs in evaluating students requiring service:

- $10 million is set aside to assist LEAs across the state with any unexpected increase in the number of Full Individual Evaluations (FIEs) requested by Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committees
- A grant has been awarded to ESC Region 20 to facilitate the distribution of these funds. More information can be found at this link:

  https://projects.esc20.net/page/eval.home

Strategic Plan: Training, Support, & Development
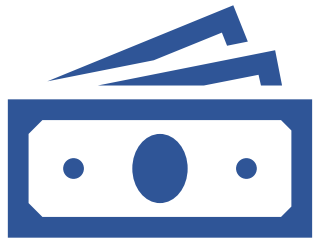
Special Education
- Developing Training and Resources
- Statewide Leadership Networks Redesign
- Expanded Stakeholder Engagement
- Outreach Campaign

Dyslexia
- Developing Training and Resources
- Handbook Revised November 2018
- Dedicated Program Specialist within Special Education Division

Section 504
- Developing Training and Resources
- Dedicated Program Specialist within Special Education Division

MTSS
- Developing Training and Resources
- National Center for Intensive Interventions Pilot Project
- Developing Statewide Framework

Strategic Plan: Training, Support, & Development

CERTIFICATION

Work with State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to improve teacher certification practices, specifically in relation to special education and dyslexia

GOVERNANCE

Enhance school board training to improve local monitoring and increase fidelity of implementation

STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS

Continue working with Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and other workforce stakeholders to improve supports for students with disabilities transitioning into the workforce

Strategic Plan: Student, Family, & Community Engagement

Family Support Call Center, Portal, and Resources –

TEA will develop resources that inform and educate parents about available and appropriate special education services using the following methods:

Paper- and web-based products in multiple languages

Clarification of Section 504, Dyslexia, and MTSS

Clear definition of eligibility and Child Find process

Enhanced call center and interactive online services

# Strategic Plan: Student, Family, & Community Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement –

TEA values the engagement of all stakeholders in implementation of the strategic plan. Having voices from diverse LEAs, regions, and backgrounds will inform the effectiveness of implementation and ensure that we are fully addressing the needs of all children in Texas.

- TEA will build on the 110 focus groups already convened since February 2018 by continued engagement of all stakeholders (over 7,000 comments submitted)
- Outlines more stakeholder meetings to take place in the 2018-2019 school year.
- Opportunities for stakeholder engagement will occur such as: webinar-based virtual town halls, surveys, interviews, public engagement volunteers

Strategic Plan: Technical Assistance Networks

TEA will redesign and provide grant opportunity to enhance technical assistance networks into the following areas:

1. Child Find, Evaluation, and ARD Supports
2. School, Family, and Community Engagement
3. Inclusive Services and Practices for Improved Student Outcomes
4. Support for Students Identified with Autism
5. Intervention Best Practices
6. Support for Students with Intensive Needs
7. Support for Students with Sensory Impairments
8. Support for Students in Small and Rural LEAs
9. Child-centered Transitions
10. Support for Students with Multiple Exceptionalities and Multiple Needs
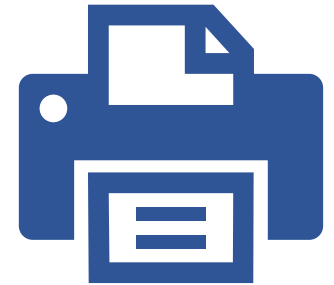
Questions and Answers will be posted at: https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd

Further questions or comments can be sent to us at: sped@tea.texas.gov

TEA Special Education

Email: SPED@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-9414

Thank you!

Appendix

Section 504 Resources

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights

- Protecting Students With Disabilities
  - https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html
- Parent and Educator Resource Guide to section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
  - https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf

MTSS Resources

- Center on Response to Intervention
  - https://www.rti4success.org/

- National Center on Intensive Intervention
  - https://intensiveintervention.org/

- Texas Center for Learning Disabilities- University of Houston and University of Texas
  - https://www.texasldcenter.org/

- Building RTI Capacity- Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at the University of Texas
  - http://buildingrti.utexas.org/

Using evidenced-based practices:

- What Works Clearinghouse (Institute of Education Sciences)
  - https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

- Best Evidence Encyclopedia (Johns Hopkins University)
  - www.bestevidence.org/

- National Center on RtI Instructional Intervention Tools Charts (American Institutes for Research)
  - https://rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts