



Special Education in Texas

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON
ARLINGTON, TEXAS
SEPTEMBER, 2018



Strategic Plan for Special Education

Strategic Plan & Corrective Action Response

A copy of the plan is publicly available on
the TEA website: <https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED>



State Monitoring



Identification,
Evaluation and
Placement



Training, Support
and Development



Student, Family and
Community
Engagement



Networks and
Structures

Strategic Plan: Monitoring

- **Review & Support Team** – expand team by roughly 40 FTEs, paid for by IDEA-B Discretionary
 - Includes desk reviews, on-site visits, and escalated engagements.
 - Allows for on-site reviews of up to 20% of LEAs per year.
 - All reviews will include published reports, easily searchable.
 - The Review process will be defined by conducting a detailed planning process, to include significant stakeholder engagement, so that reviews result in a focus on improved outcomes, not just compliance.
 - All review materials will be accessible to LEAs.

Strategic Plan: Monitoring

- **Data Collections Improvements** – additional data reporting elements will be added to PEIMS/TSDS to ensure adequate information for monitoring, while maintaining strong controls on data privacy (**note: this may require legislative authorization**).

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

- **Targeted Outreach** – TEA will require every school system to notify parents about potential eligibility for special education evaluation, targeted at those most likely to benefit.
- **Outreach Campaign** – TEA will conduct an outreach campaign on a targeted basis to help reach parents more broadly.
- **Improved Guidance & Training** – TEA will update guidance and provide training on best practices. This will explicitly include clarifying the interplay between Response To Intervention (RtI), Section 504, dyslexia, and special education.
- **Complaints & Dispute Resolution** – TEA will provide improved training, clarified resources on the dispute resolution process, and internal capacity to hear complaints is both sufficient and the process is clear to all parties, especially parents.

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

- **Compensatory Services**— TEA has provided an infusion of \$65M to school systems to support any need for compensatory services.
- While IDEA requirements for the provision of compensatory services apply in this current situation as they have all along, some LEAs may see an increase in the need to provide these services to students who may not have been identified appropriately.
- Additionally, a grant opportunity has been released to provide LEAs with resources and guidance specific to the provision of compensatory services in accordance with the requirements of IDEA.

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

- **TEA Evaluation Capacity Support** – TEA may supplement existing district evaluation personnel by providing short term contracting support.
 - \$10 Million is set aside to assist LEAs across the state with any surge in the number of FIEs requested by ARD committees.
 - Currently, a grant opportunity to facilitate this support is posted to www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED - details about this grant and others can be found there.

Strategic Plan: Training, Support and Development

- **Evaluation Capacity** – TEA will attempt to address long term shortages in the supply of evaluation personnel for districts throughout the state by facilitating more cross-district resource sharing and working to recruit new professionals to the field.
- **Professional Development** – TEA will launch training for teachers and other educators on special education best practices, including both inclusive teaching practices and broader identification and Child Find practices.

Strategic Plan: Training, Support and Development

- **Resource Development** – TEA will release a suite of resources intended to help educators and parents better understand the differences between RTI, the state Dyslexia program, Section 504, and IDEA.
- **Dyslexia** – With approval from the SBOE, the *Texas Dyslexia Handbook* will be updated, and additional training resources for teachers on proper dyslexia practices will be provided. Additionally, TEA will contract to perform an evaluation of dyslexia practices in the state to inform improvements in training.

Strategic Plan: Training, Support and Development

- **Certification** – TEA is examining improvements in teacher certification practices related to special education and dyslexia, and will work with the State Board for Educator Certification to make improvements.
- **Governance** – TEA will explore the development of training resources for school boards on special education, with a focus on monitoring outcomes and program implementation fidelity.
- **Statewide Partnership** – TEA will continue working with the Texas Workforce Commission (among others) 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 to help parents understand educational issues they may face at various stages of their child’s development throughout the PK-12 experience relating to special education. This will include:
 - Paper and web-based products (in multiple languages)
 - Clear definition of eligibility and Child Find process and intersects with 504, Dyslexia, and Rtl
 - Expansion of existing call center operations for more personalized help for parents

Strategic Plan: Student, Family & Community Engagement

- **Stakeholder Engagement** – TEA will invest, on an ongoing basis, in stakeholder engagement, to continue gathering meaningful feedback from students, parents, and educators across the broad swath of Texas, to build on the over 110 focus groups conducted in February 2018.
 - TEA has published a Plan for Stakeholder Engagement which can be downloaded from www.tea.Texas.gov/TexasSPED
 - The plan outlines more than 130 stakeholder meetings to take place in the 2018-2019 school year.
 - Additionally, broader based opportunities for stakeholder engagement will occur such as, webinar-based virtual town halls, surveys, interviews, Public Engagement Volunteers

Strategic Plan: Technical Assistance Networks

- TEA has overseen state grants using federal dollars that have largely remain unchanged for about 15 years, supporting various special education technical assistance networks. As part of this plan, these networks will be redesigned, around the following areas of focus:
 - Child Find, Evaluation, and ARD Supports
 - School, Family, and Community Engagement
 - Inclusive Services and Practices for Improved Student Outcomes
 - Support for Students Identified with Autism
 - Intervention Best Practices
 - Support for Students with Intensive Needs
 - Support for Students with Sensory Impairments
 - Support for Students in Small and Rural LEAs
 - Child-centered Transitions
 - Support for Students with Multiple Exceptionalities and Multiple Needs

Strategic Plan: Technical Assistance Networks

- Currently, grant opportunities for these networks are posted to www.tea.Texas.gov/TexasSPED - details about this grant and others can be found there.



Required LEA Actions Associated with the Corrective Action Response (CAR)

TAA Dated July 17, 2018

LEA Required Actions for the CAR

- **Corrective Action 1.b.** – This corrective action requires TEA to ensure that LEAs annually confirm that their local special education policies and practices are in compliance with federal and state requirements.
 - LEAs will be required to submit assurances as part of the process for obtaining their IDEA formula and discretionary funds. These assurances will clearly convey that the LEA's special education policies, procedures, and programs are consistent with state and federal special education requirements.

LEA Required Actions for the CAR

- **Corrective Action 1.b. – (Continued)**
 - [*The Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process*](#) produced by ESC Region 18, through a grant from TEA, has multiple resources available to assist LEAs that would like to review their local special education policies before submitting these assurances. LEAs may find the [Timeline Decision Tree](#) particularly useful when reviewing their child find and evaluation processes.
 - To be completed summer 2018 through eGrants

LEA Required Actions for the CAR

- **Corrective Action 2.a.** - This corrective action requires TEA to ensure that LEAs annually distribute information to every enrolled student's family regarding the following:
 - child find and FAPE requirements under IDEA
 - parent and students' rights under IDEA
 - contact information necessary to request an initial evaluation for a student they suspect of having a disability

LEAs must review the revised [Student Handbook Statement](#) and assure that they have provided this revised information to the families of each student in the LEA by including the information in the student handbook or by another means as required in the Texas Education Code. This is to be completed by November 1, 2018

LEA Required Actions for the CAR

- **Corrective Action 2.c.** - This corrective action requires LEAs to collect and retain requests for evaluation data that includes the reason for the request and whether additional services are needed including the timeline for implementation.

Data required to be collected include the:

- total number of requests for evaluation made during the 2018-2019 school year by either a parent or a public agency beginning on July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019;
- total number of requests made in which the reason for request indicates a claim that the child should have been referred for an initial evaluation prior to the 2018-2019 school year

LEA Required Actions for the CAR

Corrective Action 2.c. (Continued)

Data required to be collected include the:

- total number of children found eligible and the Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines additional services are needed, taking into consideration supports and services previously provided
 - subtotal number for types of services to include four (4) categories for reporting; related services, supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and supports for personnel (students may count in multiple categories if identified in the IEP)
- subtotal number for timelines for implementation to include two (2) categories for reporting; up to six (6) months, or more than six (6) months up to one (1) year (students may count in multiple categories if counted in multiple types of services described here.)

LEA Required Actions for the CAR

Corrective Action 3.c. - This corrective action requires TEA to ensure that all LEAs share resources with the parents of children suspected of having a disability that describe the differences between response to intervention (RtI), the state dyslexia program (for dyslexia or dyslexia-related needs), Section 504, and special education.

- TEA will provide LEAs with the resources described in this corrective action in September, 2018. LEAs will be required to assure that they have shared the resources with the families of all children in the LEA suspected of having a disability.

TEA Special Education Contact Information:

sped@tea.Texas.gov

512-463-9414