



Office of Academics Bulletin

From Penny Schwinn, Chief Deputy Commissioner, Academics

Update on the Special Education Strategic Plan

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has made significant progress towards the requirements of the Texas Special Education Strategic Plan. The plan was originally posted on April 23, 2018. During that time, the Office of Academics has accomplished the following major deliverables:

- The Office of Academics has been engaged in a comprehensive and rigorous set of interview processes. To date, the Office of Academics has filled over 70% of the 55 vacancies listed in the Strategic Plan. This includes 100% of major vacancies in the Office of Academics.
 - Deputy Commissioner of Special Populations in the Office of Academics: Matt Montañó
 - Director of Special Education: Justin Porter
 - Director of Review and Support: Jennifer Alexander
 - Director of Escalation: Ed O'Neil
 - Director of Dispute Resolution and Strategic Supports: Dominick Robinson
- The Office of Academics posted 14 grants in support of the Strategic Plan. This is in addition to the regional grants awarded to ESCs to provide technical assistance support to LEAs. Five additional grants will be posted in the coming months. TEA has a goal of awarding successful respondents for all grants no later than October 2018. This allows for awardees to fully engage with stakeholders, effectively plan, and structure their programs in time for launch. Launch dates vary from January 2019 to July 2019 (pending service).
- The Office of Academics has drafted statements of work (SOWs) for 100% of identified contracts in the Strategic Plan (15 contracts identified). Those contracts are in varying stages of the contractual process. Contracts have begun to be sent to the Comptroller and will begin to be published between September 30, 2018 and December 31, 2018. Contracts require eight months to move through the full process, and TEA expects 100% of contracts to be executed no later than August 31, 2019.
- The Office of Academics has completed 60% of the required activities in the Corrective Action Response (CAR) and is on-track to complete 100% of required activities by January 10, 2019 (US Department of Education due date).

Upcoming Steps

- The Office of Academics will begin to post memos outlining progress towards the Strategic Plan deliverables. They will be published quarterly to allow for full transparency and accountability.
- The Office of Academics will continue to expand its regular community stakeholder engagement activities during the school year. TEA will award a grant for statewide public engagement.
- The Office of Academics' Review and Support team will begin to build positive working relationships with districts through regular, personal communication to build understanding of local contexts before the implementation of new monitoring activities begins.