Special Education in Texas

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 7, 2019

Special Education Enrollment Trends

Special Education Enrollment Rates

Texas Special Education Enrollment

US National Average Special Education Enrollment (for years data is available)
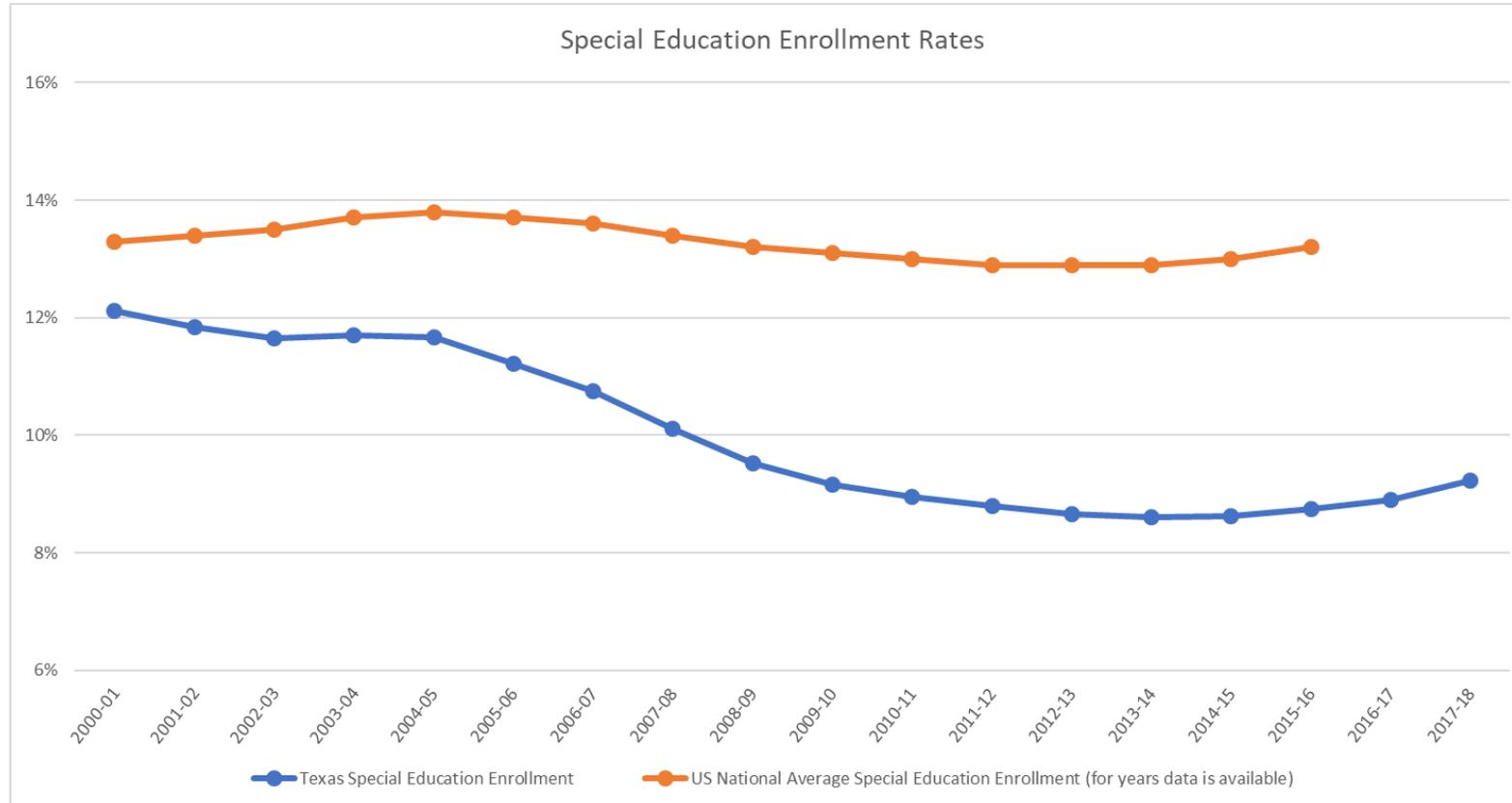
- Historically, Texas has identified fewer students than the national average

- 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, **gap in graduation widened from ~10% to ~12**

4-Year Graduation Rates

	2015	2016
Special Education		
Non Special Education		

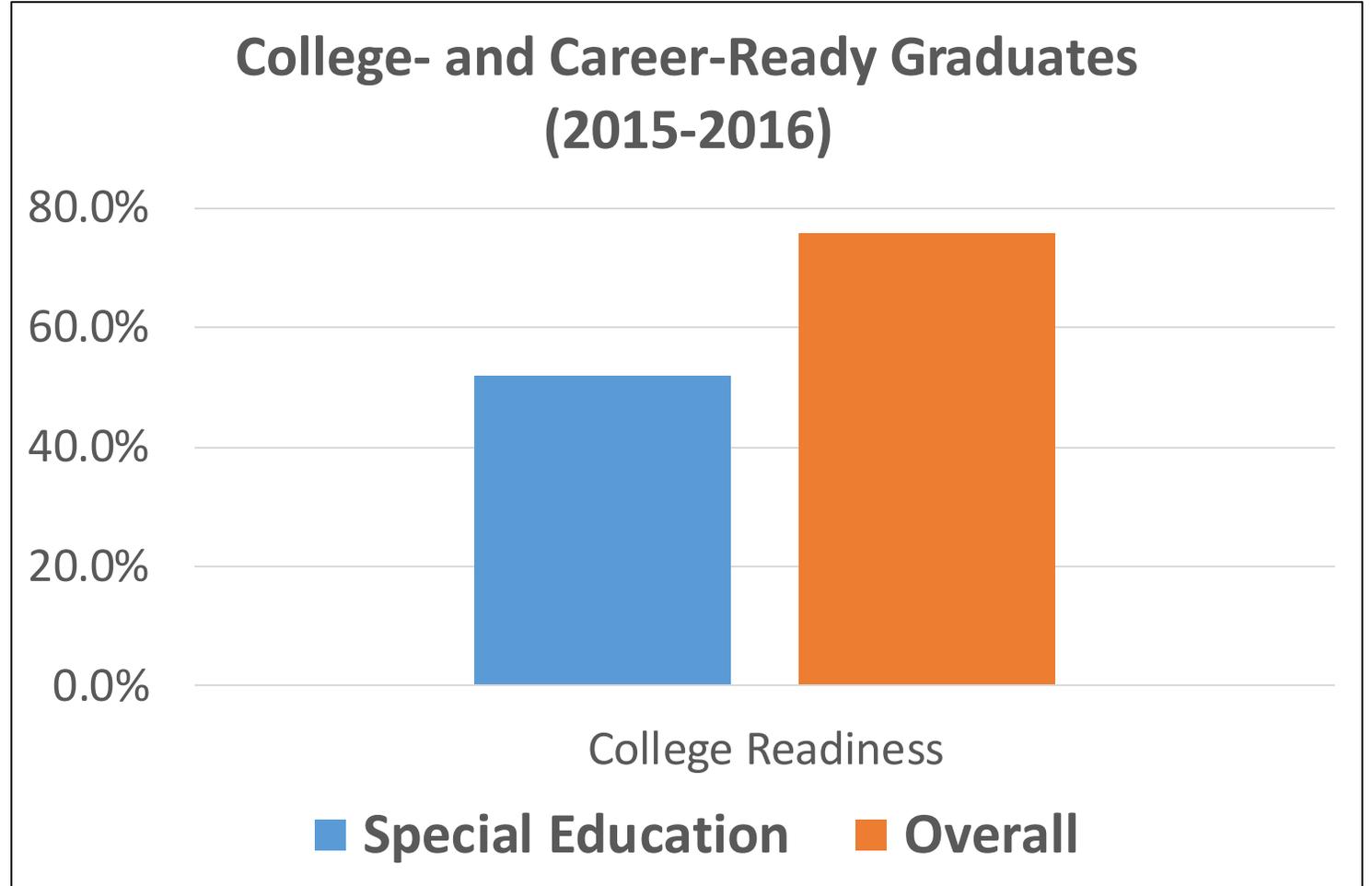■ Special Education   ■ Non Special Education
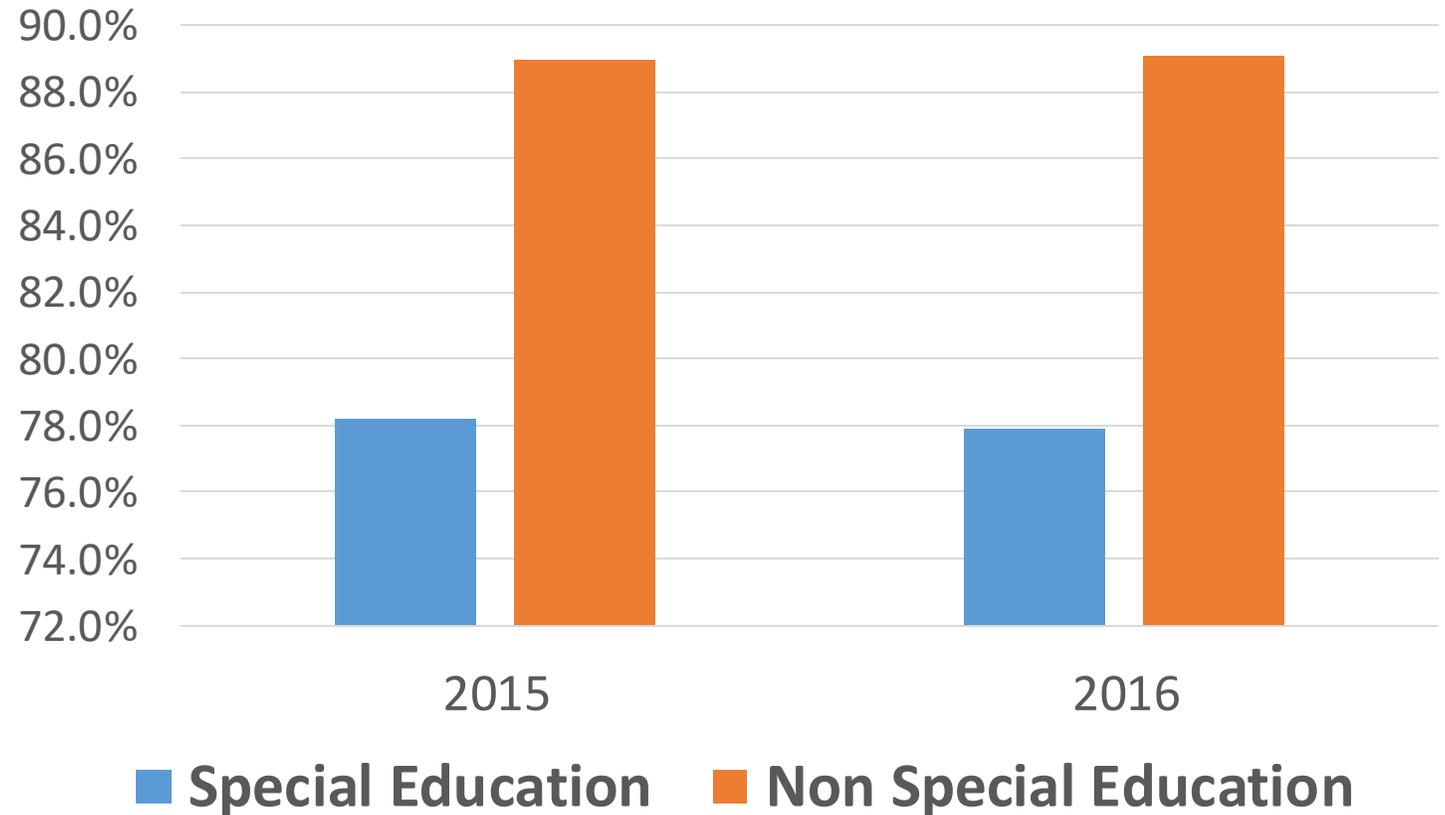
Achievement Gap for Students with Disabilities

- 2017 STAAR results show **students with disabilities achieve significantly lower** across all disability types than peers

- **Reading and Math achievement are the best indicators** of 4-year graduation and post-high school success

STAAR Results (2017) – Met Grade Level

Legend: ■ Special Education ■ Overall

Categories: Math, Reading
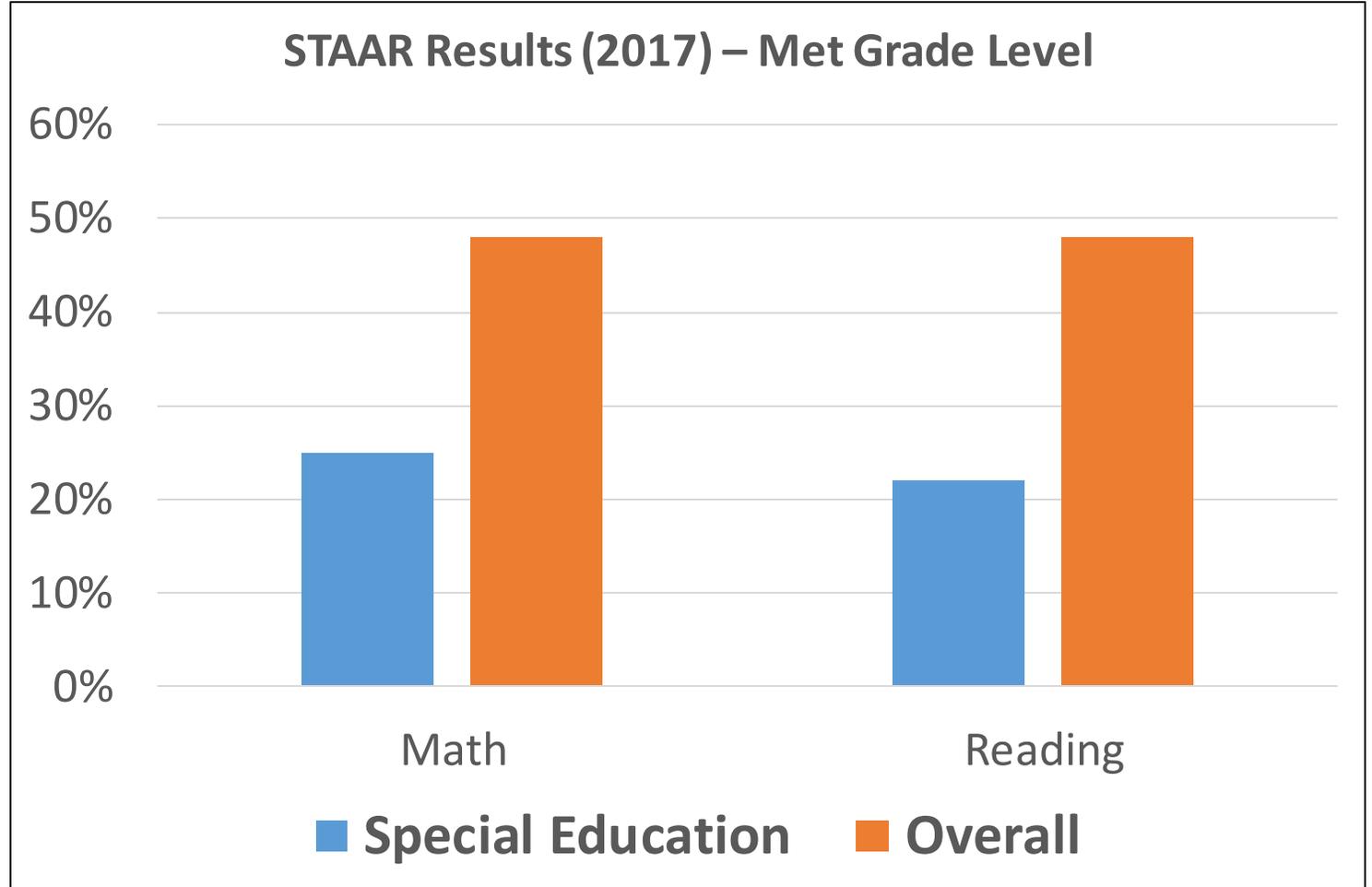
Opportunity Gap Persists

- 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

College- and Career-Ready Graduates (2015-2016)

College Readiness

■ **Special Education**   ■ **Overall**

Improving Opportunities & Outcomes:
TEA Strategic Plan for Improving Special Education

Strategic Plan & Corrective Action Response

Publicly available at
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

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

R&S Monitoring

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 & FAPE)

Individualized Parent Contact

- Require LEAs to notify parents of available programs
- Specific to parents of students most likely to benefit from special education

Improved Guidance & Training

- Update technical assistance and guidance for LEAs
- Clarity on general information regarding Response to Intervention (RTI), 504, Dyslexia

Outreach Campaign

- Increased general effort to reach out to parents of special needs children across Texas
- Increased knowledge of opportunities to serve students better

Complaints & Dispute Resolution

- Enhanced training for parents on complaints process, options, and rights
- Streamlined resources for parents with questions or who need support

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

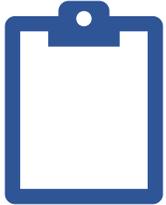**TEA Evaluation Capacity Support:**

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** ($8M for 2018-19 and $2M for 2019-20 school years) to assist LEAs across the state with any unexpected increase in the number of Full Initial 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
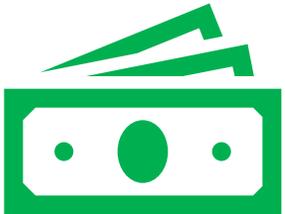
Evaluation Capacity

TEA is facilitating **more cross-district resource sharing** and working to recruit new professionals.

Assists LEAs in having enough resources to **identify students eligible for special education services**

Enhances access of students to interventions that will aid in their learning

Professional Development

TEA will launch special education training for **best practices in identifying, providing services to, and instructing students with disabilities**.

Enhances the ability of LEAs to serve students with disabilities in a more effective manner

Strategic Plan: Training, Support, & Development

Resource Development – TEA will **release a suite of resources intended to help educators and parents** better understand the differences between RTI, Dyslexia, Section 504, and IDEA.

> ➢ Aids educators in following correct guidelines and providing appropriate services for students
> ➢ Allows parents to be more aware of their rights and options

Dyslexia – The State Board of Education (SBOE), has revised and updated the *Texas Dyslexia Handbook* and **additional training resources for teachers on proper dyslexia practices** will be provided.

> ➢ Provides more in-school support to students with dyslexia

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

TEA Texas Education Agency

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

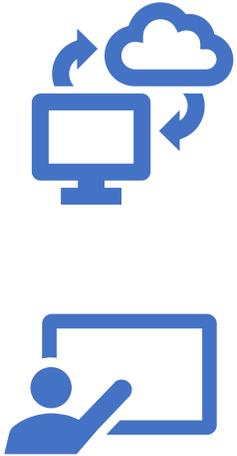**Clarification of Section 504, Dyslexia, and RTI**

Clear definition of eligibility and Child Find process

Enhanced call center and interactive online services

Strategic Plan: Technical Assistance Networks

TEA is redesigning and providing grant opportunities 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