

# **A REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Eanes Independent  
School District



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

Since the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1975, school districts have struggled to comply while providing quality supports and services to students within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The focus on educating students with disabilities has shifted from separate programs, content remediation with instruction provided below the student's enrolled grade level, and lower academic expectations to more rigorous requirements for meaningful outcomes on grade level content.

The emphasis for districts must be ongoing progress and academic success for students with disabilities with a majority of instruction occurring in an appropriately supported general education classroom. Collaboration among parents, teachers, teacher leaders, campus and central office administrators, and the community, is viewed as a critical necessity in an area previously characterized by a separate and segregated system. The requirements of the IDEA, and the ever-increasing accountability standards for districts have caused schools to critically examine the delivery and quality of instruction and supports for ALL students, including those receiving special education services.

### **History and Purpose**

Stetson and Associates, Inc. was commissioned to conduct a comprehensive review of the special education services and supports in Eanes ISD in the spring of 2019. This special education program review was developed with the active participation of the Eanes ISD Executive Director of Special Education and other district personnel, school administrators, teachers, and parents of students with disabilities. The decision to evaluate the special education program is an impressive step toward excellence and continuous improvement for all students, and Eanes ISD is to be commended for taking this positive step to ensure effective and equitable practices in programs and schools.

Quality services for students with disabilities requires a strong belief in shared ownership and responsibility for all learners, a high level of collaboration among all stakeholders, and respectful on-going communication between all parties, resulting in increasing levels of trust. In addition, equity in service delivery for **ALL** students is a necessary precondition for excellence within a school district. This report is based on a review of services for students with disabilities within the context of highly effective research-based practices.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### Evaluation Methods

This review of services provided to students with disabilities in Eanes ISD required an examination of quantitative and qualitative data from a variety of sources. The following is a brief description of the methodologies Stetson and Associates, Inc. selected for the Eanes ISD evaluation of services for students with disabilities.

1. **Initial Planning with the Executive Director of Special Education.** Evaluators met with the Executive Director of Special Education, Ms. Molly May, the Assistant Director of Special Education, Mr. Matthew Zemo, and members of the Board of Education to develop the purpose and scope of the evaluation. As a result of several discussions and revisions, a final proposal for conducting the program evaluation was submitted and approved in January 2019.
2. **Meeting with a Committee of Key Stakeholders.** Prior to beginning evaluation activities, evaluators met with a committee of key stakeholders which included the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum Instruction and Assessment, Executive Director and Assistant Director of Special Education, Director of Humanities, an Elementary Assistant Principal, and two parents of students with disabilities. This discussion determined the quality standards which are a component of the framework for this evaluation. Additionally, Stetson and Associates, Inc. developed a set of guiding questions for each quality standard. A complete list of the Eanes ISD Quality Standards for Students with Disabilities, and the guiding questions, are included in **Appendix A** of this report.

The Eanes ISD quality standards approved by the district are:

- An aligned vision among all stakeholders that support a commitment to ongoing improvement, consistency and fidelity implementing best practices, equity across all age groups and in all aspects of the school community, and extracurricular activities.
- An authentic inclusive culture that reflects a philosophy of high expectations, shared ownership, responsibility and accountability by all stakeholders, and accessibility and opportunity for students with disabilities in all facets of the educational environment including the state curriculum standards, social settings, and extracurricular activities.
- High quality, research-based, student-centered instructional delivery and progress monitoring by trained/skilled and experienced personnel reflecting high expectations, a positive growth mindset, absence of dangerous assumptions, and a focus on the whole child resulting in improved student outcomes.
- An understanding and use of high-yield practices that address student-centered learning skills, and promote student self-responsibility, resiliency, wellness, empathy, and compassion for all learners, including students with disabilities.

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- Strong and genuine partnerships with parents and families of students with disabilities that include opportunities for training, a high level of collaboration, and transparent communication regarding all aspects of information pertaining to the student. Parents and staff are highly satisfied with services and are valued for their efforts.
- Efficient, effective, and appropriate use of human and capital resources that reflect student-centered decisions in determining the need for all resources including staffing, materials, and services for students with disabilities.
- Full compliance with local, state and federal mandates relative to Child Find, referral, identification, and the provision of services for students with disabilities. This includes a process system to monitor, address, and correct any compliance discrepancies, as well as a system to inform stakeholders.
- A highly effective and efficient process for identification of students with disabilities in an early and timely manner with child find efforts that include informing stakeholders of the process, use of student support teams, and conducting comprehensive evaluations that lead to quality goals and objectives and a process for monitoring the progress of each student.
- A robust process for transition planning that considers grade-to-grade, level-to-level, and high school to post-secondary success, characterized by early attention to the needs of students, student self-advocacy and involvement, and the use of meaningful progress monitoring results to inform decisions.

These nine standards provide the framework for this evaluation report. A chapter is devoted to an assessment of the status of each quality standard.

3. **A Five-Year Longitudinal Review of District Statistics.** A five-year trend review was conducted based on three data sources from Texas Education Agency, including the Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS), The State Performance Plan (SPP) and the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR). Trends related to enrollment, staffing, performance, and compliance status for students with disabilities are reflected in this chart. A chart and summary of this review is included in **Appendix B**.
4. **A Study of Nine Comparable Districts.** As part of the evaluation of services provided to students with disabilities in Eanes ISD, the district requested a review of comparable data relative to enrollment, staffing, student performance, budget and financial resources, and compliance with state and federal mandates for special education students. Eanes ISD selected five Texas school districts, and four school districts out of state that have comparable student enrollment. Texas districts included in the comparison study are Allen ISD, Carroll ISD, Coppell ISD, Highland Park ISD, and Lake Travis ISD. The four districts outside of Texas included two from California, (Manhattan Beach Unified School District and Palo Alto Unified School District); one from Massachusetts, (Groton-Dunstable Regional School District), and one from Nebraska, (Westside Community Schools). The district information provided is based on



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data available from their respective state departments of education. Note: The evaluators made efforts to use published data that could be compared, however, data should be viewed with caution as the states outside of Texas may not report information in the same format, use the same parameters to disaggregate data, or use the same definitions for categories or cut points (targets) for compliance. The full comparison study is located in **Appendix C**.

5. **A Review of Eanes ISD District Documents and Website Information.** This review included website information related to Child Find, Transition, Board Approved Policies and Procedures; Operating Guidelines, and Guidance Documents. These documents may be found at the following websites:
  - <https://www.eanesisd.net/dept/sped>
  - <https://www.eanesisd.net/district/reports>
6. **Interviews with District Leaders.** Obtaining information and perceptions from leadership is critical to any evaluation of a district's services and supports for students with disabilities. Interviews were conducted with the Eanes ISD Superintendent, Executive Director of Human Resources, Executive Director of Business Services, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, and Executive Director of Special Education. The following questions were discussed:
  - What is your role in the district? How does this role interface with the responsibility to provide services to students with disabilities? In what ways do you directly collaborate with and/or support the Department of Special Education?
  - As you consider services provided to Eanes ISD students with disabilities, what aspects of these services are successful?
  - What aspects of these services do you believe need to be improved?
7. **Structured Observations of Classroom Practices at Schools.** Thirty-six (36) classrooms were visited across five Eanes ISD schools and one specialized program. Fifteen (15) special education and 21 general education classrooms were designated as providing collaborative teaching. Three elementary, one middle school, one high school and one specialized program, the Adult Transition Services (ATS), were visited. During each visit, brief interviews with campus principals and key teaching personnel were conducted. These interviews were followed by structured classroom observations that documented instructional practices, student numbers, staffing ratios and the ways in which staff are utilized to provide instructional and support services. Both special education classrooms and inclusive general education classrooms were visited.

The classroom observation tool developed by Stetson and Associates, Inc. for use in Eanes ISD and numerous other client districts has been recognized in presentations at state and national levels. A copy of the observation tool and the results are found in **Appendix D**.

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The following schools in Eanes ISD were visited:

- Barton Creek Elementary
- Eanes Elementary
- Valley View Elementary
- Hill Country Middle School
- Westlake High School
- Adult Transition Services Center

8. **Special Education Eligibility Folder Review.** A member of the evaluation team reviewed 25 special education eligibility folders that were randomly selected using criteria provided by Stetson and Associates, Inc. Specifically, the evaluator reviewed six folders for ninth through twelfth grade, five folders for sixth through eighth grade, ten folders kindergarten through fifth grade, and three folders for three to five year-olds, not attending Pre-K or Kindergarten.

The purpose of the folder review was to evaluate specific elements of compliance relative to timelines for assessment, current annual Individual Educational Program (IEPs), documentation of progress, participation of appropriate and required members at ARD meetings, and other key items. The evaluator also reviewed students' IEP goals and objectives based on best practices identified in the TEA/ESC 20, *Progress in Grade Level Curriculum*, guidance document which requires the following four specific components:

- **Timeframe** identifies the amount of time in the goal period and is usually specified in the number of weeks, or a specific date for completion or anticipated achievement of the goal.
- **Conditions** specify the manner in which progress toward the goal occurs. Conditions describe the specific resources that must be present for a student to reach the goal. The conditions should outline or explain what facilitates learning for the student and should relate to the behavior being measured. For example, a goal relating to reading comprehension may require the use of a graphic organizer. The graphic organizer is the condition.
- **Behavior** clearly identifies the performance that is being monitored. It represents an action that can be directly observed and measured.
- **Criterion** identifies how much, how often, or to what standard the behavior must occur in order to demonstrate the goal has been achieved. The goal criterion specifies the amount of growth expected.

A summary of the folder review is available in **Appendix E**.

9. **A Compliance Review of Student Services and Supports as Identified in the IEP.** A compliance review was conducted for eight student folders to determine the degree to which student supports and services were being provided at the campus or location as documented in the IEP, and to view the manner in which documentation of implementation of accommodations, modifications, and IEP goals and objectives was gathered and maintained. This was achieved by visiting the student's campus/classroom, observing the student,

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interviewing key staff available at the time of the visit, and reviewing student schedules and teacher documentation. The summary of this review is available in **Appendix F**.

10. **Focus Group Sessions**. Ninety-minute focus group sessions were conducted with 6-14 randomly selected representatives from each of the following groups:

- Principals
- General education teachers
- Special education teachers
- LSSPs/Assessment staff
- Parents of students receiving special education services
- Paraprofessionals
- Special Education Itinerant Staff

Approximately 85 individuals participated in these sessions. Focus groups addressed both the positive aspects of services for students with disabilities in the district, and areas in need of improvement. Focus group summaries are included in **Appendix G**.

11. **A Survey of Faculty Perceptions Disseminated to All District Faculty Regarding Services Provided to Students with Disabilities**. Two hundred and seventy-three (273) surveys were returned from early childhood through high school staff, which includes nine response groups. This represents an approximate return rate of 34% of all teachers surveyed: 84% of special education teachers, 40% of campus administrators, and includes responses by level (early childhood, elementary, middle, high school, ATS) and position (speech language pathologist, related service provider, psychologist/LSSP/diagnostician, paraprofessional, general education teacher, counselor, campus administrator, or other). Additionally, over 22 pages of written responses were received from the faculty survey in response to two open-ended questions relative to the positive aspects of services and suggestions for improving services for students with disabilities. Survey data was analyzed and is presented throughout this report. Data collection instruments relative to these activities can be found in **Appendix H**.

12. **A Survey of Parent Perceptions of Eanes ISD's Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities**. Two hundred and seven (207) parent surveys were returned for a statistically significant return rate of 31%, based on 677 students with disabilities (2018 TAPR data). Of the 207 parent surveys returned, 10 were from Early Childhood School parents, 92 from elementary school parents, 58 were from middle school parents and 47 from high school and ATS parents. Over 30 pages of written responses to the two open-ended questions relative to the positive aspects of services and suggestions for improving services for students with disabilities were provided. A copy of the parent survey is included in **Appendix I**.

These multiple sources of data and information provided a solid basis for the findings and recommendations that will follow in the next chapters.

#### **Appreciation for Eanes ISD Coordination of Evaluation Activities**

The twelve data collection sources and activities listed in this chapter illustrate the many hours of organization and preparation required of the Eanes ISD staff throughout the evaluation process. The evaluators from Stetson and Associates, Inc. offer our sincere appreciation for the active involvement of the Eanes ISD Board of Education, central office leadership, campus level leaders, instructional, and related service and ancillary staff who participated in meetings and interviews. The efforts of the district in organizing activities and providing necessary resources, time, talent and information are greatly appreciated. In every case, requests for data and access to the numerous individuals for interviews were readily granted. It is the hope of Stetson and Associates, Inc. that this report will provide data-based direction and recommendations that will support the district's efforts to improve outcomes for students receiving special education services, their families and the community.



## **CHAPTER 3**

# **An Overview of Special Education Supports and Services in Eanes ISD**

This chapter provides a bulleted set of facts that will provide a clear context of services provided by Eanes ISD.

- Eanes ISD is an “A” rated school district located in Travis County, serving students in six elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and an Adult Transition Services (ATS) facility. The most recent published TAPR report listed enrollment as 8,055 students.
- The ethnic distribution of the district is 69% White, 13% Hispanic, 12% Asian, 5% Two or More Races, and .2% American Indian.
- Eanes ISD serves 677 students with disabilities, which represents 8.4% of the student population. Total enrollment of students with disabilities is below the national, state, Region 13, and the percentages of six of nine comparable districts. Enrollment percentages for students with disabilities among the comparable districts range from 6%-16.7%, with an average enrollment of all nine districts at 11.1%.
- 2018 TEA PEIMS comparison data reveals the district has a high and growing percentage of students with Other Health Impairments, Emotional Disturbance, and Autism when compared to the state, Region 13, and all comparable Texas districts.
- There are 595.5 teachers who serve the students of Eanes ISD, with 89.7 teachers designated as special education teachers (2018 TAPR). According to the executive director of special education, Eanes ISD currently employs:
  - 115.5 special education teachers;
  - 90 teaching assistants;
  - 8.6 related services staff (occupational therapists, physical therapists, assistive technology specialists, and orientation and mobility instructors);
  - 12.4 Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSPs), who conduct assessments and provide the related service of counselling; and,
  - 1 APE Teacher, 8.6 SLPs, 1 VI teacher, 1 AI teacher, 2 behavior specialist, 1 instructional partner, .5 transition specialist, .5 ARD facilitator, 2 central office administrators, 3.5 campus coordinators, and 2.5 administrative assistants.
- The teacher turnover rate for Eanes ISD (13.2%) is lower than the state (16.6%), lower than the Region (19.0%), and lower than three comparable Texas districts.
- The average years of experience of Eanes ISD teachers is 12.8, which is greater than the state rate of 10.9, Region 13 ESC rate of 10.8, and four comparable Texas districts.
- In Eanes ISD, 40.2% of teachers hold a master’s degree. This exceeds the state rate of 23.8%, the Region 13 rate of 24%, and four of five comparable Texas districts.

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- Eanes ISD's teacher staffing data reflects a special education teacher to student with a disability ratio of 1:7.5 for the 89.7 teachers reported in the 2018 TAPR, and a 1:6.1 ratio for the current number of 115.5 teachers and 700 special education students, reported by the executive director of special education. Based on current TAPR data, the district's staffing ratio is lower than the state ratio (1:15.3), the region (1:13.2), and lower than all five comparable Texas districts. The Eanes ISD ratio is also lower than Groton-Dunstable RSD, which is the only out of state data available for this area of comparison.
- Eanes ISD's *Budgeted Percent for Special Education* and *Program Expenditure per Student with a Disability* are higher than the state, all five comparable Texas districts, and higher than two out of state districts reporting data.
- Performance of Eanes ISD students with disabilities on the STAAR 3-8, based on 2018 PBMAS, was above the state targets in math, reading, science, and social studies, but did not meet the target (70-100) in writing (56.5%). Eanes ISD students with disabilities scored higher than three of five Texas districts in math, reading, and writing, higher than four Texas districts in science, and higher than all five districts in social studies and exceeded the rate for the state and the region in all areas. (See score summaries Appendix C)
- Performance Level Indicator scores on the PBMAS range from 0-4; the higher the score, the lower the district performed in that particular area. Eanes ISD was above the Performance Level Indicator score of 0 in four areas on the 2018 PBMAS:
  - SpEd STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate for Writing, SPED STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Rate;
  - Percent of SpEd Students Served in general education class 80% or more of the day for 6-to 21-year-old students;
  - Disproportionality of the Percent of White SpEd Students, Served in A Separate Setting (report only indicator); and,
  - Significant Disproportionality for SpEd Representation in 3-to 21-year-old Asian Students Identified with The Disability of Autism.
- The State Performance Plan (SPP) is a federal reporting system with targets set for the state. Districts are evaluated based on the state targets. Eanes ISD met the State Compliance Targets on 23 of 28 items on the SPP for 2018 District Profile (School Year 2016-2017). Eanes ISD did not meet the targets on five indicators. They are: Graduation Rate, Statewide Proficiency Rate in Reading, Suspension and Expulsion, Educational Environment, Ages 6-21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day, and Educational Environment, Ages 6-21 in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements. The state of Texas did not meet the target in three of the five areas in which Eanes ISD did not meet the target.
- Eanes ISD graduation rate for students with disabilities (78.3%) is above the state rate (77.9%) but did not meet the SPP target rate of 88% or greater. The district's rate is lower than seven

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of the comparison districts.

- A review of Eanes ISD eligibility folders relative to 20 indicators of compliance revealed multiple clerical errors, and a few systemic issues that can be addressed with additional training. Of 25 student special education eligibility folders reviewed, zero folders were in 100% compliance, 20 folders were missing items such as signatures on evaluations, missing check marks in required areas, or other minor clerical errors.
- The evaluator also reviewed implementation and documentation of eight student specific supports and services on the IEP. Student schedules and data appeared to demonstrate that all services were being provided to the students as documented in the IEPs. However, there did appear to be a lack of formal documentation of implementation of modifications and accommodations especially those implemented in the general education classroom. Teachers interviewed could define and give examples of accommodations and/or modifications for students but there was not any written documentation to confirm implementation in a majority of the cases. There also appeared to be some confusion regarding grading for students with modified curriculum.
- The district's published vision and mission statements align with the quality standards that are the foundation of this report and reflect a sincere commitment to quality services for all students, support for all teachers, and responsiveness to all families and to the community.

## Five-Year Trend Data

Stetson and Associates, Inc reviewed current data and information published for the four prior school years to note trends in accountability status, enrollment, performance, staff turnover, and compliance. The following is a summary of the five-year trends (2013-14 through 2017-18) viewed through an analysis of the data. See Appendix B for a complete summary of the five-year trend data.

## Special Education Accountability Status

The district met the state accountability standards for years 2013-14 through 2017-18.

## Enrollment Trends

- The district's overall student enrollment has had minor fluctuations over the five-year period, with the lowest enrollment of 7,937 students in 2014-15 to a high of 8,116 students in 2016-17, with an overall growth of 118 students, which is a 2% growth in student population.
- The district enrollment of students with disabilities has steadily increased by 90 students over a five-year period, which represents an overall 15.3% increase. The district enrollment of students with disabilities is growing at a higher rate than the overall growth of the student population.
- The district has a high and growing percentage of students with Other Health Impairments, Emotional Disturbance, and Autism when compared to the state, region, and comparable

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districts. Eanes ISD was significantly lower in the identification of students with Intellectual Disabilities and Speech Impairments than the state, region, and four of five comparable Texas districts.

### Performance Trends

- Eanes ISD's State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) performance for students with disabilities in math and reading, grades 3 through 8, declined consistently every year until the 2017 and 2018 PBMAS scores began to show small improvements. Science scores have varied over the five-year period with the 2018 score being the lowest score reported. Writing scores have declined over the five-year period, while social studies scores have mostly improved.
- STAAR EOC performance for students with disabilities has shown variability within the five-year period but has consistently been above the state target in math, science, social studies, and ELA based on the PBMAS report for those periods.
- The district did not meet the 2018 state target for the percentage of students who were assessed on the STAAR Alternate four out of five years.
- Graduation of students with disabilities has increased over a five-year period from a low of 56.8% to the current rate of 83.7%, and is above the state target for compliance of 80-100% on the PBMAS, but did not meet the 88% or greater on the SPP.

### Staff Turnover and Experience

- Based on TAPR data, the teacher turnover rate for Eanes ISD increased from 9.4% to a high of 14.6% in 2017, then declined in 2018 with a reported rate of 13.2%.
- The percentage of teachers having five or fewer years of experience has had some variability over the five-year period, with the 2018 percentage of 21.6% the highest reported. The percentage of teachers with 11-20 years has increased every year over the five-year period from a low of 27.2% to a current high of 33%. Teachers with 20+ years has declined slightly from the highest percentage of 22.8% to the current percentage of 19.3%.

### Compliance with Federal and State Mandates

- The district special education services were designated as “meeting expectations” by the state for the past five years.
- Eanes ISD has been below the state target on the State Performance Plan (SPP) for LRE for students with disabilities spending more than or equal to 80% of their day in the general education setting for the last three years, is below all comparable districts, and has not met the indicator target on PBMAS in the last five years.
- Based on the SPP, the LRE rate for students with disabilities spending more than 40% of the day in regular education for ages 6 to 21 has decreased over the last three years, from 14.3%-9.3%, and is below the state target of 13%. The district did not meet the state target for this

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area on the PBMAS in four out of five years but is currently in compliance.

- The district has not met the state target on PBMAS for STAAR Alternate Participation Rate for four out of five years.
- The district has not met the target for disproportionality of special education representation on the PBMAS in the last five years. The first three years, the ethnicity group over-represented was the Hispanic population and the last two years it has been the Asian population.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the primary task of this program review was to seek out the answers to the most critical questions facing the district using the Eanes ISD Quality Standards that were developed by the key stakeholders as a foundation.

This evaluation provides findings and supportive data that note the strengths and areas of concern currently impacting the quality and effectiveness of supports and services for students with disabilities in Eanes ISD. The following chapters include specific recommendations that may be implemented to maintain and/or improve the quality of supports and services for students with disabilities. To more efficiently report the findings, the Quality Standards were clustered by the following common themes which emerged during the evaluation.

#### **Theme 1**

A Common Vision Across All Stakeholders with A Philosophy of Shared Responsibilities for All Learners That Fosters a Climate of Mutual Respect and Trust

#### **Theme 2**

Collaborative Instruction Focusing on Excellence with a Full Array of Consistently Delivered Services Including A Robust Process for Transition Planning

#### **Theme 3**

Strong and Genuine Partnerships with Parents that are Positive, Respectful and Collaborative

#### **Theme 4**

Effective and Efficient Use of Personnel and Capital Resources

#### **Theme 5**

Full Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Mandates

## Chapter 4

### Theme 1. A Common Vision Across All Stakeholders with a Philosophy of Shared Responsibilities for All Learners that Fosters a Climate of Mutual Respect and Trust

#### Eanes ISD Quality Standard #1

**An aligned vision among all stakeholders that supports a commitment to ongoing improvement, consistency, and fidelity of implementation of practices, equity across all age groups and in all aspects of the school and extracurricular activities.**

A common vision and vocabulary regarding services for students with disabilities is essential for achieving strong student outcomes, effective coordination, and efficient and effective use of resources. Without a clear and consistent vision for students with disabilities, the philosophies and practices guiding service delivery will vary widely from year-to-year and school-to-school. A common vision throughout the district and within the community will promote consistency and equity of services across schools, making transitions from school-to-school and level-to-level proceed smoothly and without interruption of services or disparity in quality and approach.

Strong administrative leadership is a prerequisite to successfully changing districtwide philosophies and practices relative to quality standards for serving students with disabilities. Eanes ISD district leadership is committed to sustaining and improving quality practices that allow for rigorous research-based instruction within inclusive schools and communities.

A summary of the strengths and areas of concerns related to Theme 1 is listed below. These areas will be addressed with supportive information based on the activities of the study.

Strengths
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Eanes ISD is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure students receive a rigorous and inclusive school experience.</li><li>2. The Eanes ISD special education webpage is robust and provides quality information regarding multiple areas relative to special education services, resources for parents, current topics of interest and efforts of the district.</li><li>3. The Eanes ISD district improvement plan specifically addresses services for students with disabilities.</li><li>4. The district provides multiple means and opportunities for parents to have a voice, and clearly values their views. The recent development of the <i>Inclusive Culture Committee</i> and the <i>Parent Working Group</i> are both ways in which parents are encouraged to provide input and feedback regarding district practices.</li><li>5. The Eanes ISD leadership team includes the executive director of special education as a full and equal member who has a significant voice in central office leadership discussions and decisions.</li><li>6. The district's development of the Universal Design for Instruction (UDL) team to research implementation of this practice for all learners is viewed as a positive indicator of a common vision and shared responsibility for all learners.</li></ol>



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Areas of Concern
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A concerning number of faculty members hold a belief that services for students are based on program names and disability labels rather than student need.</li><li>2. Special education services are not considered consistent across the district with a wide variability of perceptions among different providers.</li><li>3. Though the special education webpage for Eanes ISD offers rich information, it needs ongoing monitoring to delete items no longer relevant and to update and add items to support the effort of teachers and parents.</li><li>4. The district improvement plan specifically addresses issues as they relate to special education under only one goal (Goal #2), rather than in all areas of instruction such as CATE, GT, C&amp;I, Innovations and SEL.</li><li>5. Though inclusion of students with disabilities is pervasively viewed as a social benefit, 17.2% of faculty respondents do not view inclusion as academically beneficial, and approximately one in four view inclusion as harmful to students who do not have a disability condition.</li><li>6. There is an overall sense of collaboration among stakeholders regarding services for students, however there are additional concerns regarding how decisions are made by central office and communicated to campus administrators and other staff members.</li></ol>

### Strength 1

#### **Eanes ISD is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure students receive a rigorous and inclusive school experience.**

Personal interviews were conducted with the superintendent, executive director of human resources, executive director of business services, associate superintendent of curriculum, instruction and assessment, and the executive director of special education. In each interview, these district leaders expressed strong interest in supporting quality special education services, inclusive practices and supporting the executive director of special education and her team in any way possible in the continuous improvement and achievement of quality.

Eanes ISD district leaders were generally very complementary of the executive director of special education and the various supports and services provided to students with disabilities. They expressed:

- A sense that students with disabilities in Eanes ISD were getting a higher level of supports and services than most districts including better staffing ratios, highly qualified and well-trained teachers and support staff, and a higher commitment of financial resources.
- Acknowledgement of a positive and collaborative relationship with leaders at the central office level and the campuses.
- A need to address a higher level of training, support, and salary to retain quality teaching assistants and substitute teachers for special education.
- Positive comments regarding the district's level of commitment to inclusive practices and parental involvement.

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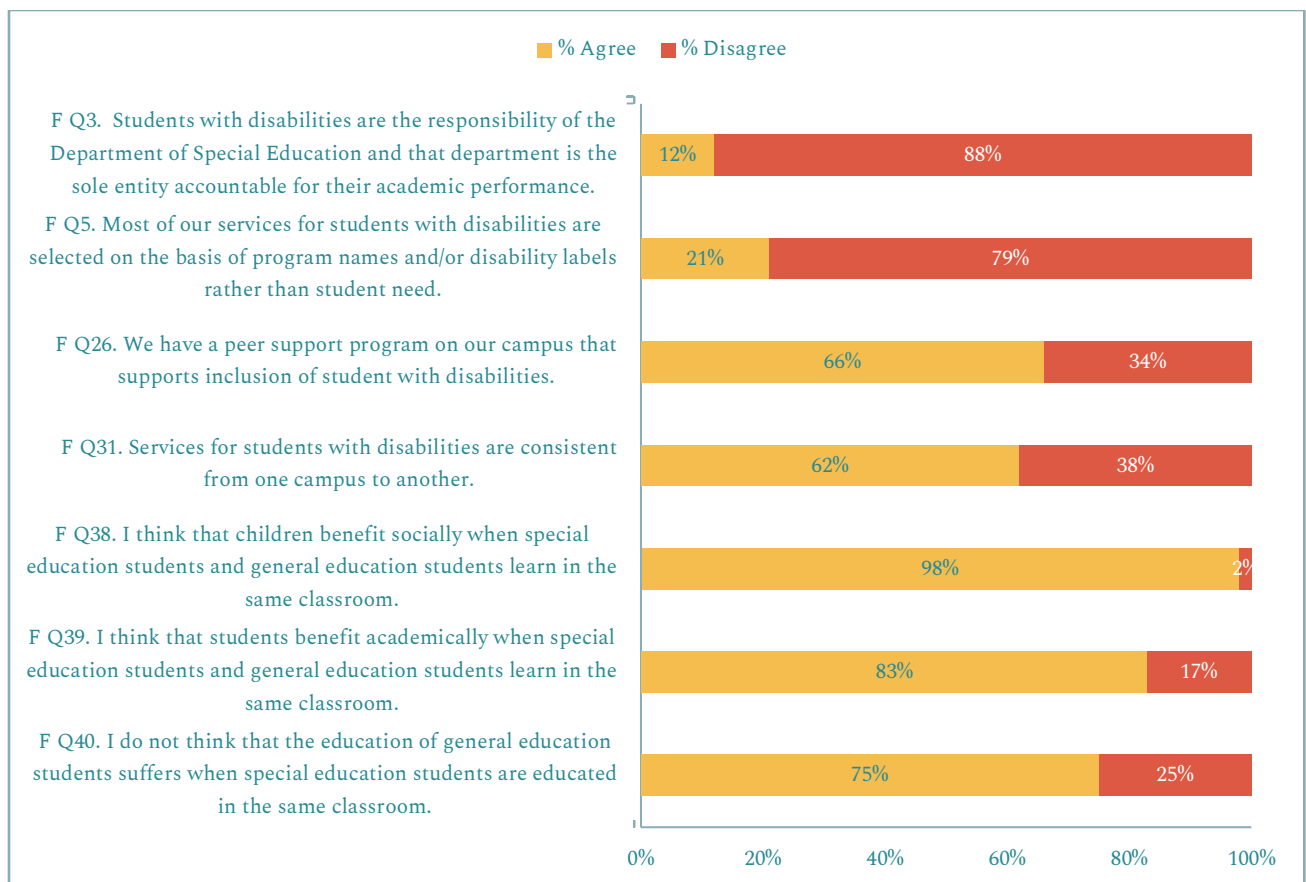
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- Overall support for rigorous instruction and best practices in developing and maintaining inclusive schools and communities.
- A desire for additional training in collaborative instructional practices and addressing the needs of all students through differentiated instruction and investigating more information and training in the area of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- A districtwide commitment to the social emotional learning (SEL) of all students.
- A commitment to the unique needs of all students in the district.
- An interest in supporting and encouraging students with disabilities to participate more in extracurricular and after school activities.
- A significant interest and commitment to continuous improvement.

Focus group comments echoed the views of leadership relative to the district's commitment to a rigorous and inclusive school experience. There is a "working" *Inclusive Culture Committee* appointed by the district. A *Special Education Parent Working Group* exists in Eanes ISD that provides support and advice regarding efforts to improve the quality of services for students with disabilities.

Almost 100% of faculty respondents agreed that all students benefit socially when special education students and general education students learn in the same classroom.

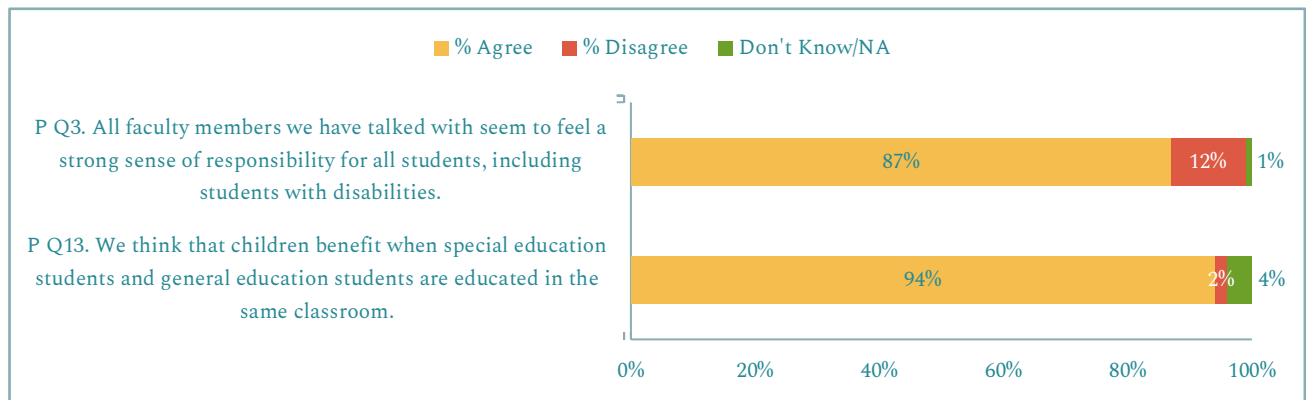
**CHART 1. SUMMARY OF TOTAL FACULTY SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO THEME 1**



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**CHART 2. SUMMARY OF TOTAL PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO THEME 1**



### Strength 2

**The Eanes ISD special education webpage is robust and provides a high degree of quality information regarding the multiple areas of interest relative to special education services, resources for parents, current topics of interest, and efforts of the district.**

Providing rich and pertinent information to parents, teachers, and the public relative to special education services is viewed as a positive aspect of services for students with disabilities in Eanes ISD. Evaluators noted the quality of the special education webpage as an indicator of commitment to providing quality services and information for students with disabilities.

The current special education webpage is viewed as offering a wealth of information that includes:

- Information regarding the district's *Child Find* efforts and how to access this information;
- Information regarding *Transition* for students with disabilities;
- Multiple resources for parents including links to resources and assistance;
- Postings regarding the many *Parent Symposiums* offered for parents; and,
- Information regarding the district's *Inclusive Culture Committee*.

### Strength 3

**The Eanes ISD district improvement plan specifically addresses services for students with disabilities.**

The district's improvement plan specifically addresses services for students with disabilities under Goal #2 of the document. In this section, the plan speaks to the following topic/areas:

- Enhancing and refining support systems for instructional delivery models PPCD-ATS.
- Providing curriculum resources, research-based instructional strategies and assessment tools to special education teachers to enable fidelity of implementation in the areas of math and ELA.
- Transition for students needing specially designed instruction in collaboration with CIA Department.

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- Reviewing, analyzing and implementing findings and recommendation from the Special Education Program Review and Inclusive Culture Committee.
- Supporting implementation of evidence-based practices that support access to curriculum, services and social emotional learning for all students.

#### **Strength 4**

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#### **The district provides multiple means and opportunities for parents to have a voice and clearly values the views provided by parents.**

The degree to which Eanes ISD values and involves parents was clearly evident throughout this evaluation and voiced by leaders, parents, and staff. Promoting a sense of shared ownership is a priority, and includes multiple means such as:

- Forming an *Inclusive Culture Committee* to address inclusive practices and establish a culture of inclusivity.
- Providing opportunity for parent feedback through a *Special Education Parent Working Group*
- Utilizing multiple information gathering sources such as surveys and questionnaires to determine parent issues, concerns, and celebrations.
- Involving parents of students with disabilities in the initial planning for this evaluation review.
- All parents of students with disabilities were provided an opportunity to respond to a parent survey regarding services for students with disabilities and approximately one-third of parents responded.
- A number of positive remarks were made in focus group sessions that support the efforts of the district to relay a common vision with a shared responsibility for all learners. Positive comments were made such as, “Our community and parent groups are knowledgeable, involved and supportive;” “In the school communities there is a culture of being a general ed kid first and then supports are built in;” and, “This year there are more attempts to bring stakeholders together, focusing on strengthening our community.”

#### **Strength 5**

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#### **The Eanes ISD leadership team includes the executive director of special education as a full and equal member who has a significant voice in central office leadership discussions and decisions.**

- This is viewed as a strong example of shared ownership, promoting a common vision and full participation in critical district decisions.
- The executive director is held in high esteem by members of the district leadership team and is valued for her knowledge, expertise and contributions to the needs of the district.
- District leadership team is also viewed as highly collaborative and the relationship among team members is viewed as responsive, productive and equitable.

### **Strength 6**

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**The district's development of the Universal Design for Instruction (UDL) team to research implementation of this practice for all learners is viewed as a positive indicator of a common vision and shared responsibility for all learners.**

- The district's attention to responding to the diverse needs of all learners by continuous attention to practices that will bring learning within the reach of all learners is viewed as a positive factor.
- The district committee on UDL will be a positive influence, as it will enable educators to identify any barriers to learning for ALL learners and promote instruction that will include multiple means of access and engagement.

### **Concern 1&2**

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**A concerning number faculty hold a belief that services for students are based on program names and disability labels rather than student need, and that services are not consistent.**

- When surveyed, 20.9% of faculty agree that services for students with disabilities are selected on the basis of program names and/or disability labels rather than individual student needs. By level, the largest group of respondents (34.3%) who reported that they agree with these statements were high school level faculty.
- Approximately 38% of faculty survey respondents reported that services for students with disabilities are inconsistent from campus to campus. There is a large variability in responses of faculty members across levels who agree that services for students with disabilities are consistent from one campus to another. Sixty percent (60%) of campus administrators agree, as well as 62.5% of counselors, 72% of special education teachers, 71.4% of SLPs and 90% of paraprofessionals. Conversely, 55% of general education teachers, 50% of related service providers and 20% of psychologist/LSSPS are in agreement.
- This data suggests a significant number of faculty view special education as a place rather than a service, which will influence the culture of inclusivity that the district desires.
- Voiced by focus group participants was a concern regarding consistency of implementation of special education services from campus to campus, specifically the collaborative teaching model.
- Viewed by observers were multiple areas of inconsistency such as documentation of accommodations and modifications in the classroom, use of flexible grouping strategies, and the use of strategies for differentiation.

#### **Concern 3**

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**Though the special education webpage for Eanes ISD offers rich information, it needs ongoing monitoring, and parents and teachers must be aware of how to access the information in order for it to be a source of consistent communication.**

The special education webpage addresses multiple supports for teachers relative to curriculum and instruction in addition to information regarding compliance and procedures, including:

- Links to the district's *Operating Guidelines* for processes and procedures;
- Teacher required checklists and logs;
- Information regarding *Accelerated Instruction Tools* with links to state available resources;
- Behavioral support information with tools for student's self-management, forms for restraint and timeout, and information regarding *Applied Behavior Analysis*;
- Progress Monitoring tools (Dibels, Obtaining Fluency Rates);
- Curriculum supports for a *Life Skills Curriculum*; and,
- Links to online training for autism.

Training, communication, and information surfaced frequently as a suggestion for improving the quality of services for students with disabilities in parent focus group and survey comments.

- Improvements in how parents may access the rich resources and information provided by the district is needed, including information available on the website.
- The type, level, and means in which parents are requesting additional information, training and knowledge of resources will be discussed further in Theme 3.

#### **Concern 4**

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**The district improvement plan specifically addresses issues as they relate to special education under only one goal (Goal #2) rather than in all areas of instruction, such as CATE, GT, C&I, Innovations and SEL.**

- Goals for special education are treated separately in the district improvement plan.
- Special education is a service to support all aspects of access for students with disabilities. Including the various aspects of special education throughout the improvement plan is viewed as a need.

#### **Concern 5**

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**Though inclusion of students with disabilities is pervasively viewed as a social benefit, 17.2% of faculty do not view inclusion as academically beneficial, and one in four view inclusion as harmful to students who do not have a disability condition.**

- Only 82.8% of faculty agree that students benefit academically with inclusion. When viewed by position, 100% of campus administrators agree with this statement, yet lower rates were reported by the general education teachers (79.1%). By level, 86.6% of elementary teachers,



## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

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79.1% of middle school teachers and 77.1% of high school teachers agreed.

- Approximately 25% (one in four) of faculty respondents indicated they believe the education of general education students suffers when special education students are educated in the same classroom.
- An overwhelming majority of parent respondents agree that children benefit when special education students and general education students are educated in the same classroom.
- Some faculty expressed a desire for the broader community to be trained in inclusive practices and not just the parents of students with disabilities.
- In addition, there were several comments that indicated a need for more training for general education teachers in overall diversity and how to teach and accept children who are different.

### Concern 6

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**There is an overall sense of collaboration among stakeholders regarding services for students, however there are additional concerns with how decisions are made by central office and communicated to campus administrators and other staff members.**

- Mentioned frequently in focus groups was the level of collaboration between teachers, team members such as SLP, appraisal staff, as well as the collaboration of the district and parents.
- Faculty survey results note that 86.1% of faculty view central office as supportive. However, comments from faculty and focus groups expressed concerns regarding the manner in which communications regarding decision made by central office are determined and communicated, specifically when communications with campus staff do not include campus administrators and when campus decisions regarding supports and services are modified by central office.
- Some adverse factors identified in focus group comments indicated a need for continuous, consistent conversations so parents, campus staff, and central office staff are on the same page. Sometimes decisions are made at one level, then overruled or not implemented by another.



### Recommendations for Theme 1

**A Common Vision Across All Stakeholders with A Philosophy of Shared Responsibilities for All Learners That Fosters a Climate of Mutual Respect and Trust.**

1. Review all current department orientation and language, and revise any that reinforces labels, places or program models and substitute with student-needs based approaches to service delivery. This does not eliminate the valuable information about research-based instruction for specific disability areas, instead it aligns instructional practices with the needs of students - not labels or programs.
2. Continue UDL training across the district. This is an excellent step towards working with all teachers on meeting the diverse needs of students.

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3. Identify and correct misunderstandings and confusion about special education services, supports, and inclusive practices. These revisions should appear in written communications, on school websites, in trainings and leadership meetings in order to ensure consistency of practices across the district.
4. Establish and provide professional development for “Quality Standards for Special Education Services” through online presentations, print resources, and links. An example of these *Quality Standards* is provided here: <https://inclusiveschools.org/inclusion-resources/self-assessment/>
5. Revise the district improvement plan format to be more inclusive by addressing the needs of “all” students in all areas of the plan, including but not limited to: CATE, GT, Curriculum and Instruction, Innovation, SEL, etc.
6. Review the special education webpage to update information that is no longer valid or relevant. The webpage is a strong communication tool and resource for staff as well as parents and is an effective way to communicate current information. However, they must be informed of how to access this information.
7. Include links on campus websites to the special education webpage.
8. Provide information to parents on how to access the district information already available to them.
9. Develop a handout that could be given to parents at ARD meetings or during student enrollment that would provide information where resources are located and how they can participate in some of the groups already established.
10. Utilize website information in trainings and provide links in handouts and emails encourage staff to make better use of this resource.

## Chapter Five

### Theme 2. Collaborative Instruction Focusing on Excellence with a Full Array of Consistently Delivered Supports and Services Including a Robust Process for Transition Planning.

Theme 2 incorporates the following Quality Standards:

- **Quality Standard #2:** An authentic, inclusive culture that reflects a philosophy of shared ownership, responsibility and accountability by all stakeholders, and ensures accessibility and opportunity for students with disabilities in all facets of the educational environment including state curriculum standards, social settings, and extracurricular activities.
- **Quality Standard #3:** High quality, research-based, student-centered instructional delivery and progress monitoring by skilled and experienced personnel reflecting high expectations, a positive growth mindset, absence of dangerous assumptions, and a focus on the whole child, resulting in improved student outcomes.
- **Quality Standard #4:** An understanding of high-yield practices that address student-centered learning skills, and promotes student self-responsibility, resiliency, wellness, empathy, and compassion for all learners, including students with disabilities.
- **Quality Standard #9:** A robust process for transition planning that consider grade-to-grade, level-to-level, and post-secondary transitions, characterized by early attention to the needs of students, student self-advocacy and involvement, and use of meaningful progress monitoring results to inform decisions.

Collaborative instruction that focuses on excellence is essential for school communities to achieve an inclusive culture that maintains high expectations for all students. Current best practices and legislative regulations continue to support a continuum of placements for students with disabilities with a strong expectation that every student must be viewed as a general education student first, as well as a member of his or her enrolled grade level. A “full array” of service options for students with disabilities refers to the type and level of service available, individually determined, and based on specific student need. This is often referred to as the *Continuum of Services*, described below.

#### 1. Advance Supports

Supports are provided to the student with a disability prior to instruction. This includes supports such as preparing accommodations, modifying content, providing a behavior checklist and other activities that will enable the student to access the general curriculum standards in the general education setting without another adult in the classroom.

#### 2. In-Class Supports

Services are provided within the general education setting. This includes the use of peers to assist a student with a disability, providing a paraprofessional or special education teacher within the general education setting 2-3 times per week (support facilitation), or formal co-teaching where two professionals jointly plan, prepare and deliver instruction daily for a specified segment of time.

### 3. Specialized Supports

Services are delivered in another location for a specific part of the day by a special education teacher or specially certified personnel. This option is considered when advanced support and/or in-class supports are insufficient to enable student success. It involves students pulled out of general education for targeted instruction services that cannot be delivered within the general setting.

These three primary options are general descriptors, yet reinforce that special education is a service and not a place. This new continuum also reinforces that students may need a variety of these services throughout the day from multiple providers.

For services to be of utmost quality, evidence to support each student's curricular and support needs throughout the school day must be carefully and systematically considered, using the enrolled grade level as a reference point. The full array of options would be equitably distributed across all schools, class sizes and caseloads. Lastly, there would be a high level of satisfaction from all teachers, administrators, and parents relative to the quality of services.

One crucial characteristic of schools that are successful with a broad range of diverse students is shared responsibility for all learners. In the past decade, this characteristic is one studied in every credible evaluation of quality services for students with disabilities. This is particularly important because our history in education is one of separation and segregation for students with disabilities.

An "exhaustive longitudinal studies of school success," Newman and Wehlage (1995) concluded that successful schools share three characteristics:

1. *A clear, shared purpose for all students' learning;*
2. *Teachers engage in collaboration to achieve this purpose; and,*
3. *Teachers take collective responsibility for student learning.*

As districts are held to increasing accountability for students, it is of utmost concern that all receive instruction that reflects research-based instructional strategies delivered by highly skilled teachers and effective classroom management. Quality instruction refers to classroom practices that include a positive classroom climate where students and learning are welcomed and valued, and a system of positive behavior supports. Lessons are designed and aligned with the curriculum, as well as routine implementation of rich, activity-based differentiated instructional strategies. High-yield instructional strategies are supported by access to rich materials, technology, and supplies to support learning. Accommodations and modifications are provided as needed to ensure students with disabilities have access to general curriculum standards. Simply moving students to the general education classroom will not change the outcomes for students if instruction and support for these students does not change as well.

The following is a summary of the strengths and areas of concerns related to Theme 2.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

#### Strengths

1. There is a strong district level focus on instructional excellence as well as inclusive quality services and supports for students with disabilities.
2. The special education department website provides rich guidance to staff regarding curriculum and instruction as well as areas of compliance.
3. A high degree of faculty indicate they believe their school provides quality services to students with disabilities and students with disabilities are considered full members of the student body.
4. Personnel are highly regarded for their skill and competence levels.
5. Faculty feel supported by their principal in their efforts to serve students with disabilities.
6. Campuses are richly staffed with teachers, assistants, and related services staff to serve students with disabilities.
7. The Adult Transition Services (ATS) program is exceptional and truly a shining star in the district reflecting the district's commitment to quality post-secondary school experiences.

#### Areas of Concern

1. Although Eanes ISD has an "A" rating with the Texas Accountability System, continuous monitoring for student progress should be addressed to determine and increase progress toward closing the achievement gaps.
2. Though teachers are described as having exceptional character traits, there are mixed perceptions regarding the skills and expertise relative to educating students with diverse learning needs. Training and supports are desired.
3. Paraprofessionals are viewed as a positive factor for services for students with disabilities, however there are issues of compensation, retention, and training needs for this group.
4. Eanes ISD has a clearly defined SST/RtI process in place to support students who may be struggling academically; however, nearly one in four faculty view the RtI/SST process as ineffective.
5. A sizable percentage of faculty do not view students with disabilities as accessing and participating in the general curriculum, despite the district's high degree of curriculum and instruction support to promote access to the curriculum.
6. Though inclusive practices are a stated priority and many resources are committed to this effort, the district has not met the state targets for participation in the general education setting the last five years on the PBMAS.
7. Access to extracurricular activities and school sponsored events for students with disabilities is a high priority for the district and highly desired by parents. The practice is not viewed as equitable across levels.
8. The collaborative classroom model is currently impacted by multiple inefficient and inconsistent factors that are impeding the quality of services delivered to students with disabilities.
9. There is a difference between perceptions of school personnel and parents regarding the quality of services and membership of students that warrants further investigation.

### Strengths 1,2,5, & 7

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#### Focus on Instructional Excellence, Curriculum Support, and Adult Transition

Stetson and Associates, Inc. visited five schools, viewed one transition program, interviewed principals and spoke with teachers. A Stetson consultant viewed instructional practices in approximately 36 classrooms, including 21 general education co-teach classes, 4 support facilitation classrooms, and 11 specialized support (self-contained special education settings) classrooms, including classes at the Adult Transition Services Center. The consultant utilized an observation instrument that focused on approximately 44 indicators of quality practices in seven key areas:



1. Instruction and academic learning time to optimize student success.
2. Lesson design and planning to maximize student engagement, participation, and the time and talents of educators providing support.
3. Lesson/instructional delivery practices including high-yield engagement strategies, flexible grouping, and technology supports.
4. Effective classroom and environmental management practices including high expectations, respect for diversity and systems of positive behavior supports.
5. General curriculum access for students with disabilities through use of accommodations, modifications, technology, appropriate materials, and an accelerated approach to learning.
6. In-class supports implemented with fidelity.
7. Specialized supports implemented within a quality standards framework.

The following were noted during classroom observations relative to instructional and classroom management practices:

- In a majority of the classes observed there were no significant interruptions to instructional time, classroom routines were evident, and students were engaged and successful in the assigned activities or tasks.
- There was evidence of pre-assessment in 15 of the classrooms observed.
- Instructional objectives were posted in 20 classrooms observed and lessons reflected an accelerated approach in 27 classrooms.



## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

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- There was evidence that accommodations were used in the general education classroom. However, there were no observations of modifications being implemented in the general education setting.
- Flexible grouping was employed in 24 classrooms.
- Differentiated instruction was only observed in fewer than ten classrooms.
- Instructional technology was utilized in the majority of classrooms observed.
- Classroom schedules and rules were posted in 16 classrooms.
- In a majority of the collaborative classrooms, the general education teacher was responsible for presenting the lesson and most utilized the one-teach one-assist approach to collaborative instruction.
- The teaching assistants observed were all interacting and assisting students.

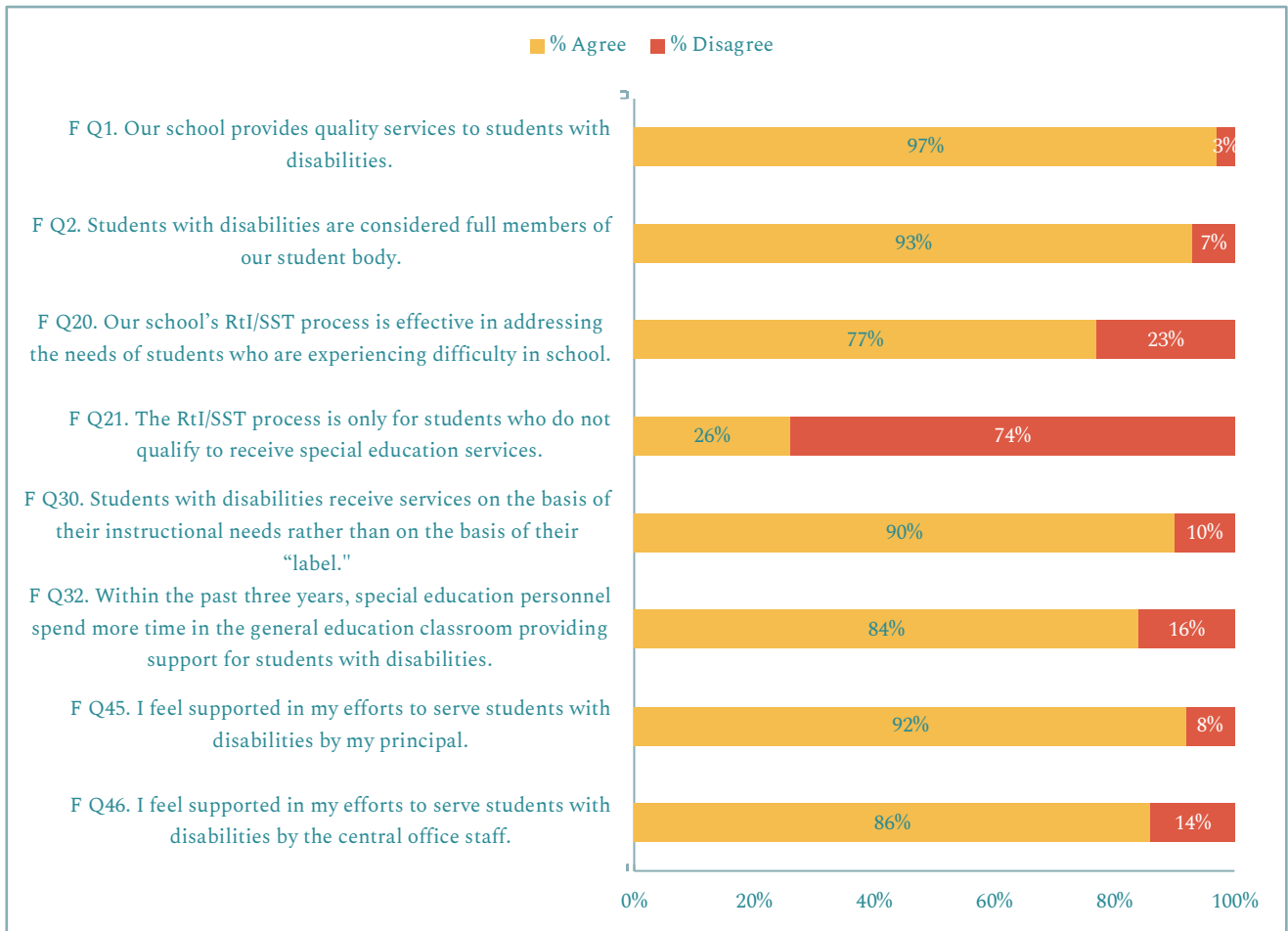
The Adult Transition Services (ATS) program offers quality post-secondary school experiences for students with disabilities who are 18 years of age or older.

- Transition from one grade to the next, from campus to campus and from school to adult life are major concerns for a student with a disability. These are high focus areas in the local district, as well as in the state and nationally.
- Eanes ISD has recently completed a self-study on current transition services and has been working on improving instruction and quality transition services for students, especially the 18+ students who attend the ATS program.
- A total of 18 students attend ATS with three teachers and five paraprofessionals assigned to assist in instruction, community integration, and job training. The goal of the ATS program is for the last day at ATS to look exactly like the next day of their adult life.
- The district has developed many partnerships with community organizations and work sites, but it is an ongoing effort to maintain and develop new sites to meet the individual needs of students.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

Eanes Independent School District

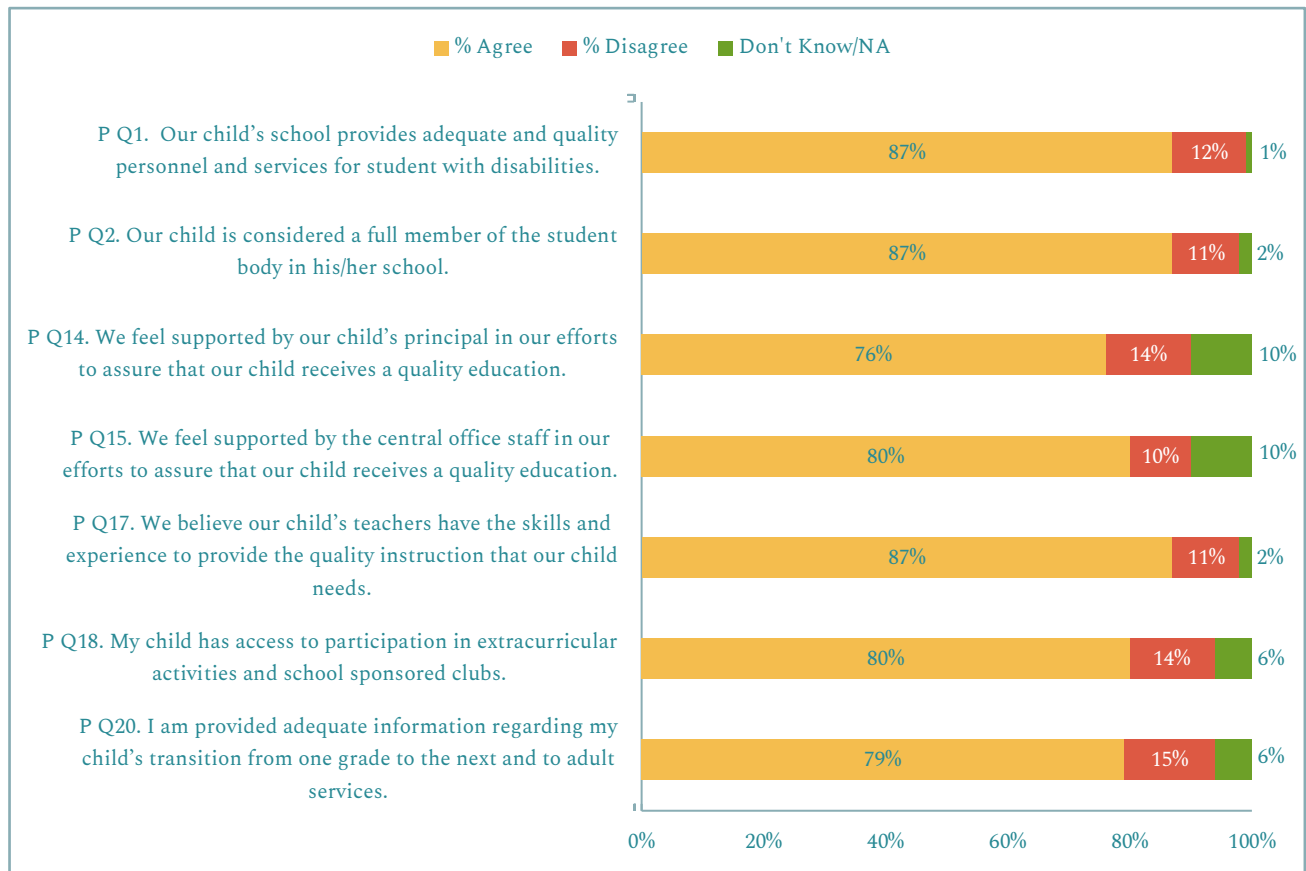
**CHART 3. SUMMARY OF TOTAL FACULTY SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO QUALITY SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORTS**



## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

**CHART 4. SUMMARY OF TOTAL PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED QUALITY SERVICES AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORTS**



### Strengths 3,4,6

#### Quality Services, Quality Personnel, Rich Staffing to Support Services

- A number of positive remarks were made in focus group sessions and individual interviews with key leaders that reinforced the notion that quality services for students with disabilities is a priority in the district.
- An overwhelming majority of faculty members (97.4%) reported their school provides quality services to students with disabilities. Fewer parents agreed (87%) that their school provides “adequate and quality personnel and services for students with disabilities.”
- Eanes ISD faculty feels a strong sense of responsibility for all students, including students with disabilities, as evidenced by the 93% of respondents who agreed that “students with disabilities are considered full members of the student body.” Eighty-seven percent (87%) of parents agree with this statement.
- Recognizing that all teachers are responsible for all students is essential to the academic success of students with disabilities. This is evident in Eanes ISD by the percentage of faculty respondents (87.9%) who agree that students with disabilities are not just the responsibility of the department of special education and that department is not the only entity accountable for their academic performance.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

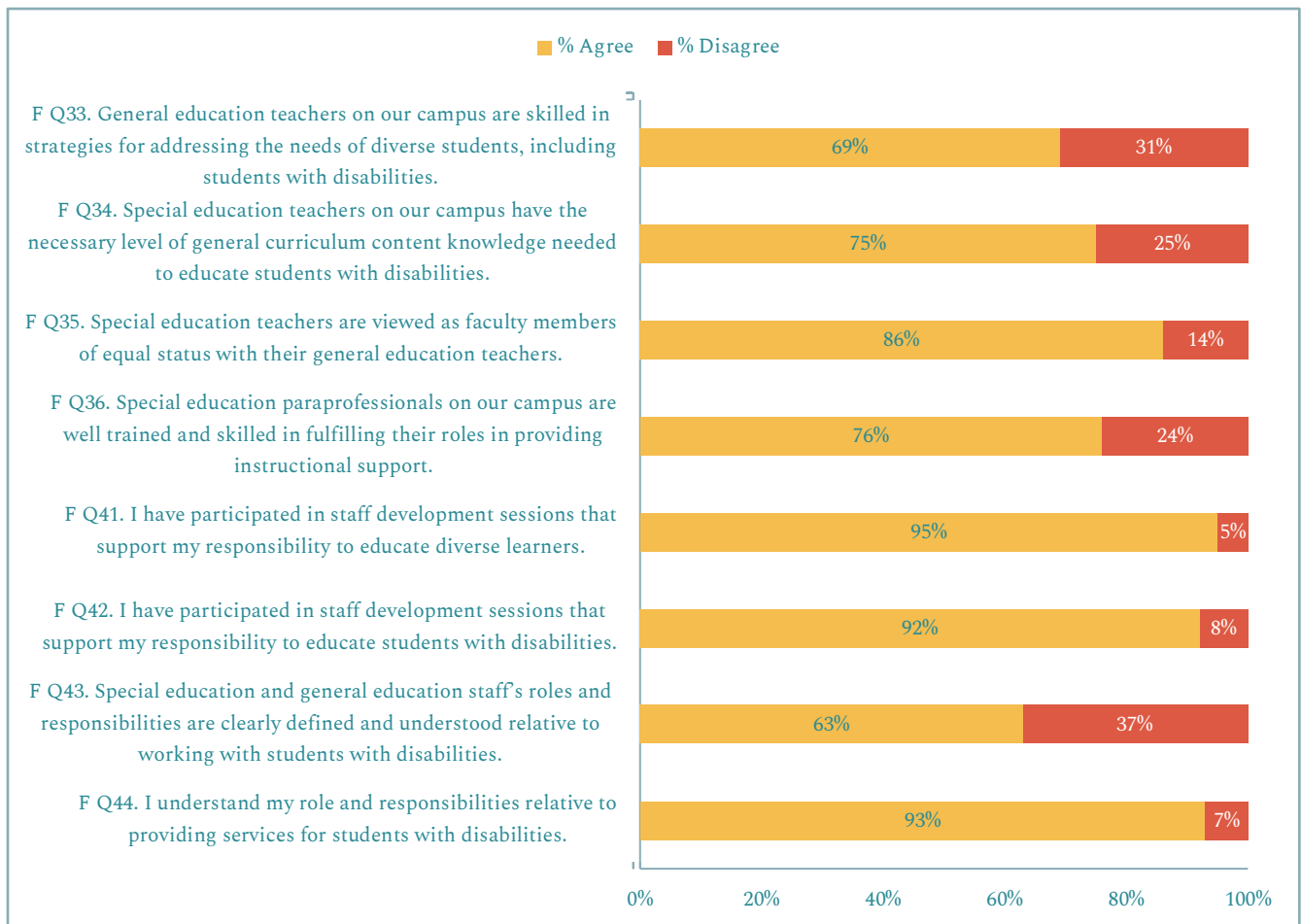
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- The district is considered richly staffed with teachers, paraprofessionals, and related services staff to provide services for students with disabilities. This staffing will be addressed in detail under Theme 4 in this report. Observers witnessed small staff to student ratios, and comparison studies revealed a small staff to student ratio for special education in the district when compared to the state, Region 13 and nine comparable district staffing ratios.
- In order to have quality supports and services in inclusive settings that maintains high expectations for students with disabilities there must be a high level of support provided by both central office and campus administration. Only 8% of faculty respondents reported a lack of principal support. However, 13.9% reported a lack of support from the central office staff. Responses by level ranged from 90.3%-100% of faculty reported they agree that they feel supported in their efforts to serve students with disabilities by the principal and 84.3%-100% that agree they feel supported by the central office staff.
- Successful parent school relationships need a high level of trust and collaboration between all stakeholders. It is critical for parents to perceive that they have a high level of support and communication in order to successfully collaborate and plan for needed services. Overall, only 76.3% of parents feel supported by their child's principal in efforts to assure that their child receives a quality education with a higher level of support (80.2%) reported by central office staff.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

**CHART 5. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS REGARDING TEACHER & TEACHER ASSISTANT STATUS & PROFICIENCY**



### Concern 1

#### Student Performance Gaps

A review of the district's most current Texas Academic Performance Record (2018 TAPR) revealed impressive results regarding the performance of Eanes ISD students and progress towards closing the achievement gaps. Not only did the district achieve an overall "A" rating on the state's accountability system, all campuses achieved a "Met Standard" designation, and all but two campuses received "Distinction Designations." In addition, the special education determination status is "Meets Requirements." The performance of Eanes ISD and the nine comparable districts (where data was available) are reported below. It is important to be mindful that different states have different graduation criteria, and they do not take the same state assessments. Comparing percentages should be done with a great deal of caution.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

**TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF 2018 PROFICIENCY RATES WITH COMPARABLE DISTRICTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN GRADES 3-8 AND EOC**

Districts	Reading Grades 3-8	Math Grades 3-8	High School ELA	High School Math
Eanes ISD	74.2%	76.9%	70.1%	78.7%
Manhattan Beach Unified District	54.2%	36.7%	-----	-----
Palo Alto Unified District	38.03%	38.03%%	-----	-----
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	77%	82%	54%	32%
Westside Community Schools	34.08%	72.76%	26.00%	14.00%
Allen ISD	65.8%	72.6%	47.1%	65.5%
Coppell ISD	61.4%	70.8%	35.8%	57.4%
Carroll ISD	80%	85.4%	68.2%	85%
Highland Park ISD	85.8%	85.9%	80.5%	92.3%
Lake Travis ISD	63.5%	63%	40.7%	67.3%

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2018 PBMAS, California Department of Education 2017-2018 Local Education Academic Report Card, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2017-2018 School and District Report Card, Westside Community Schools 2017-2018 District Special Education Performance Report (School Year 2016-2017)

- It should be noted that other states utilize Common Core Standards and target areas are different than the state of Texas. Any comparison of scores should be done with caution.
- Eanes ISD scored higher than three and lower than two of the five Texas comparison districts in reading for grades three through eight, and higher than three and lower than two in math.
- The district scored higher than four of the Texas comparison districts on high school ELA and higher than three in high school math.



## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

**TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF 2018 TEXAS ASSESSMENT READING/ELA PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES APPROACHES OR MEETS GRADE LEVEL GRADES 3-8**

District	3		4		5		6		7		8	
	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M
Eanes All Students	95%	71%	94%	78%	98%	86%	92%	73%	96%	80%	99%	85%
Texas Sped Studs	52%	28%	46%	29%	55%	30%	35%	22%	38%	23%	49%	23%
Region 13 Sped	49%	26%	47%	28%	56%	28%	36%	21%	38%	22%	54%	24%
Eanes	74%	39%	74%	45%	86%	52%	*	*	64%	40%	90%	50%
Allen	73%	40%	64%	35%	72%	41%	53%	25%	62%	34%	68%	27%
Carroll	92%	69%	83%	60%	73%	40%	75%	55%	*	*	83%	33%
Coppell	62%	34%	60%	40%	70%	44%	*	*	60%	26%	72%	30%
Highland Park	*	*	88%	71%	84%	64%	88%	54%	75%	50%	88%	49%
Lake Travis	61%	39%	55%	23%	81%	52%	51%	31%	63%	34%	70%	32%

**TABLE 3. COMPARISON OF 2018 TEXAS ASSESSMENT READING/ELA PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES... APPROACHES OR MEETS GRADE LEVEL FOR 9-12 END OF COURSE EXAMS**

District	Eng. I		Eng. II	
	A	M	A	M
Eanes All Students	95%	90%	96%	91%
Texas Sped Students	26%	14%	25%	15%
Region 13 Sped Students	28%	15%	28%	16%
Eanes	*	*	72%	49%
Allen	42%	23%	51%	35%
Carroll	*	*	*	*
Coppell	*	*	*	*
Highland Park	*	*	*	*
Lake Travis	*	*	38%	21%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018 TAPR

\*Results masked in the TAPR due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

- The percentage of third grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities approaching grade level standards in reading was higher than the state, region and three of four comparison districts. The percentage of students meeting grade level expectations was higher than the state, region, one comparison district, the same as another district, and lower than two (data not available for one district due to small numbers).
- The percentage of fourth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than the state, region, and three of five comparable districts for approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations in reading.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

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- The percentage of fifth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities approaching grade level standards in reading was higher than the state, region, and three comparable districts, and equal to or higher than four of five districts for meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of seventh grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than the state, region, and three of four comparable districts for approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations in reading (data not available for one district due to small numbers).
- The percentage of eighth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than the state, region, and all five comparable districts for approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations in reading.
- The percentage of Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than the state, region, and both districts reporting data for approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations in English II EOC.
- Numbers were too small to report data for Eanes ISD students in sixth grade reading and EOC for Eng. I.
- There is still a significant gap between the percentage of students with disabilities and the “all” students in Eanes ISD. Differences across third through eighth grade in reading for approaching grade level standards range from 9%-32%, and 24% difference in EOC English II scores. The differences across grade levels meeting grade level expectations in grades 3 through 8 is 32%-40%, with seventh grade reported as the largest difference in percentages in both score levels and a 42% difference in EOC Eng. II scores.

**TABLE 4. COMPARISON OF 2018 TEXAS ASSESSMENT MATH PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES APPROACHES OR MEETS GRADE LEVEL**

District	3		4		5		6		7		8		Alg. EOC	
	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M	A	M
Eanes All Students	95%	76%	96%	71%	98%	83%	92%	63%	97%	87%	98%	83%	98%	90%
Texas Sped Students	52%	31%	49%	29%	70%	35%	50%	23%	43%	21%	54%	26%	48%	19%
Region 13 Sped Students	47%	27%	47%	26%	71%	31%	48%	22%	41%	19%	55%	26%	49%	20%
Eanes	75%	53%	79%	45%	82%	53%	*	*	74%	53%	77%	44%	79%	52%
Allen	75%	48%	66%	42%	86%	54%	71%	39%	67%	39%	67%	36%	63%	28%
Carroll	92%	73%	87%	68%	*	*	79%	58%	80%	51%	75%	58%	85%	35%
Coppell	61%	40%	59%	41%	74%	40%	80%	38%	67%	35%	83%	46%	*	*
Highland Park	86%	67%	90%	73%	88%	66%	92%	70%	69%	48%	82%	58%	92%	54%
Lake Travis	56%	40%	56%	30%	77%	47%	59%	39%	63%	27%	69%	33%	68%	23%

Source: Texas Education Agency TAPR 2018

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

In mathematics:

- The percentage of third grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities approaching grade level standards in math was equal to or higher than three and below two comparable districts in meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of fourth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than three and lower than two of five comparable districts in approaching grade level standards and the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of fifth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities approaching grade level standards was higher and lower than two of the four districts who reported data, and higher than three and lower than one of the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of seventh grade students with disabilities approaching grade level standards was higher than four of five comparable districts, and higher than all five districts in the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of eighth grade students with disabilities approaching grade level standards was higher than three and lower than two of the comparable districts, and lower than three and higher than two in the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of Algebra I EOC students with disabilities approaching grade level standards was higher than two and lower than two of four districts reporting, higher than three, and lower than one of the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- Although the percentage of Eanes ISD students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 scored higher than the state and region in approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations in math as well as the Algebra EOC, significant gaps remain between the scores of students with disabilities and “all” students in Eanes ISD. Differences across the 3 through 8 grade levels in math for approaching grade level standards range from 11%-23%, and 19% for the EOC Algebra I scores. The differences range from 23%-39% in meeting grade level expectations in grades three through eight in math and 38% in EOC Algebra 1.

**TABLE 5. COMPARISON OF 2018 TEXAS ASSESSMENT WRITING PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES APPROACHES OR MEETS GRADE LEVEL**

District	4		7	
	A	M	A	M
Eanes All Students	*	*	95%	81%
Texas Sped. Students	33%	22%	29%	19%
Region 13 Sped. Students	30%	21%	28%	17%
Eanes	*	*	*	*
Allen	44%	26%	49%	27%
Carroll	71%	58%	*	*
Coppell	*	*	*	*
Highland Park	86%	67%	*	*
Lake Travis	36%	23%	49%	31%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018 TAPR

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

- The percentage of fourth grade students with disabilities approaching grade level standards ranged from 44% to 86%, and the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations ranged from 26% to 58%.
- Two comparable districts reported the percentage of seventh grade students with disabilities approaching and meeting grade levels.

Four of five comparable districts reported information regarding the writing assessment proficiency for fourth grade, and two of five reported performance for students in seventh grade.

**TABLE 6. COMPARISON OF 2018 TEXAS ASSESSMENT SCIENCE PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES APPROACHES OR MEETS GRADE LEVEL**

District	5		8		Biology	
	A	M	A	M	A	M
Eanes All Students	91%	66%	95%	82%	99%	95%
Texas Sped. Students	48%	25%	39%	23%	57%	22%
Region 13 Sped. Students	46%	23%	42%	24%	60%	25%
Eanes	64%	34%	75%	47%	89%	71%
Allen	64%	36%	62%	43%	77%	37%
Carroll	63%	29%	71%	48%	88%	48%
Coppell	62%	31%	58%	38%	*	*
Highland Park	80%	48%	78%	54%	*	*
Lake Travis	*	*	67%	36%	*	*

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018 TAPR

- The percentage of fifth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities approaching grade level standards was equal to or higher than three of four reporting districts, and the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations was higher than two and lower than two of four districts.
- The percentage of eighth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than three and lower than two of five comparable districts in approaching grade level standards, and the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of Eanes ISD students with disabilities on the Biology EOC was higher than the two districts reporting data in approaching grade level standards, and the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of Eanes ISD students with disabilities in grades five and eight scored higher than the state and region in approaching grade level standards, and meeting grade level expectations in science and on the Biology EOC. However, there are significant gaps between the scores of students with disabilities and “all” students in Eanes ISD. Differences range from 10%- 35% for Approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations.

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**TABLE 7. COMPARISON OF 2018 TEXAS ASSESSMENT SOCIAL STUDIES PROFICIENCY RATES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES APPROACHES OR MEETS GRADE LEVEL**

District	8		US History	
	A	M	A	M
Eanes All Students	96	83%	99%	97%
Texas Sped. Students	34%	20%	63%	33%
Region 13 Sped. Students	36%	20%	66%	35%
Eanes	78%	53%	91%	70%
Allen	64%	35%	87%	67%
Carroll	71%	38%	92%	71%
Coppell	60%	29%	63%	40%
Highland Park	71%	46%	100%	100%
Lake Travis	57%	30%	*	*

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018 TAPR

- The percentage of eighth grade Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than all five comparable districts in the percentage of students approaching grade level standards and in meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of Eanes ISD students with disabilities was higher than two and lower than two of the comparable districts, approaching grade level standards on the US History EOC and the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations.
- The percentage of Eanes ISD students with disabilities scored higher than the state and region on eighth grades social studies and U.S. History EOC in approaching grade level standards and meeting grade level expectations. The gaps in performance between the scores of students with disabilities and “all” students is 18% for eighth grade and only 8% in U.S. History EOC for approaching grade level standards, and 30% for eighth grade, and 27% for U.S History EOC in meeting grade level expectations.

The following data are scores as they are reported by the out of state districts. Because each state has different standards, cut scores and performance standard measurements, it is impossible to make a direct comparison of the performance of students with disabilities in these districts with the students in Eanes ISD.

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

## Groton Dunstable Data

**TABLE 8. 2018 DISTRICT PROFILES PERCENT AT EACH LEVEL (GRADES 3-5)**

Grade	3				4				5			
	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM
ELA SWD District	0	59	34	7	3	35	50	13	0	10	68	23
ELA SWD State	1	16	58	24	1	15	53	30	1	16	57	27
ELA District All Students	20	55	24	1	19	50	28	3	6	51	38	5
Math SWD District	3	38	48	10	5	51	36	8	0	18	53	30
Math State	2	17	44	37	1	14	44	40	1	13	52	34
Math District All Students	19	49	31	2	13	58	27	2	5	49	39	7

**TABLE 9. 2018 DISTRICT PROFILES PERCENT AT EACH LEVEL (GRADES 6-10)**

Grade	6				7				8				10			
	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM	A	P	N	W
ELA SWD District	3	20	63	15	0	14	50	36	0	13	45	42	32	54	7	7
ELA State	1	12	50	37	0	9	43	47	1	13	40	46	14	55	19	12
ELA District All Students	7	54	35	3	7	41	45	7	12	49	30	9	74	23	2	1
Math SWD District	3	30	55	13	4	14	61	21	3	18	66	13	46	32	4	18
Math State	1	12	50	37	1	11	47	42	1	11	47	40	14	27	31	29
Math District All Students	6	54	37	2	12	56	28	3	14	61	23	3	88	9	1	3

E=Exceeding Expectations, M=Meeting Expectation, PM=Partially Meeting Expectations, NM=Not Meeting Expectations

**TABLE 10. 2018 DISTRICT PROFILES PERCENT AT EACH LEVEL (GRADES 5, 8, 10)**

Grade	5				8				10			
	A	P	NI	W	A	P	NI	W	A	P	NI	W
Science & Technology English SWD District	3	15	65	18	3	8	58	32	11	61	18	11
Science & Technology English SWD State	4	13	44	38	1	9	38	53	7	32	42	19
Science & Technology English District All Students	31	34	31	4	9	49	35	7	52	42	4	2

A=Advanced, P=Proficient, NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; School and District Profiles

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### Westside Community Schools

**TABLE 11. PERFORMANCE ON NEBRASKA'S STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT (NSCAS)  
(GRADES 3-5)**

	3		4		5	
	% Below Prof.	% Prof.	% Below Prof.	% Prof.	% Below Prof.	% Prof.
ELA District SWD	81%	19%	74%	26%	81%	19%
ELA District All Students	41%	59%	41%	59%	39%	61%
Math District SWD	83%	17%	84%	17%	81%	19%
Math District All Students	45%	55%	45%	55%	44%	56%
Science District SWD					60%	40%
Science District All Students					23%	77%

**TABLE 12. PERFORMANCE ON NEBRASKA'S STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT (NSCAS)  
(GRADES 6-8, 11)**

	6		7		8		HS 11th	
	% Below Prof.	% Prof.	% Below Prof.	% Prof.	% Below Prof.	% Prof.	% Below Prof.	% Prof.
ELA District SWD	81%	19%	87	13	92%	8%	***	***
ELA District All Students.	49%	51%	47%	53%	47%	53%	****	*****
Math District SWD	72%	28%	78%	22%	86%	14%	****	***
Math District All Students	37%	63%	35%	65%	44%	56%	****	***
Science District SWD					****	****	***	***
Science District All Students					32%	68%	****	****

Source: Nebraska State Department of Education; Nebraska Education Profiles



## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

Eanes Independent School District

### Palo Alto Unified School District

**TABLE 13. SMART BALANCE ASSESSMENT TEST RESULTS (GRADE 3-5)**

	3				4				5			
	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1
ELA SWD District	23.19%	17.39%	10.14%	49.28%	20.48%	15.66%	24.10%	39.76%	20.43%	22.58%	22.58%	34.41%
ELA District All Studs	52.99%	23.81%	14.77%	8.42%	57.07%	20.45%	12.01%	10.46%	52.80%	28.75%	10.18%	8.28%
Math SWD District	27.94%	20.59%	17.65%	33.82%	21.43%	23.81%	26.19%	28.57%	27.66%	11.70%	22.34%	38.30%
Math District All Studs	60.62%	24.56%	7.59%	7.24%	57.80%	24.39%	13.18%	4.62%	60.95%	18.59%	11.44%	9.02%

**Table 14. Smart Balance Assessment Test Results (Grade 6-8)**

	6				7				8			
	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1
ELA SWD District	16.47%	22.35%	28.24%	32.94%	5.06%	22.78%	17.72%	54.43%	7.95%	25.0%	23.86%	43.18%
ELA District All Studs	50.71%	33.81%	9.38%	6.11%	51.01%	34.28%	8.22%	6.49%	48.56%	33.33%	9.47%	8.64%
Math SWD District	22.35%	23.53%	18.82%	35.29%	12.50%	17.50%	15%	55.0%	24.14%	10.34%	14.94%	50.57%
Math District All Studs	65.02%	20.02%	9.80%	5.17%	66.10%	18.05%	8.93%	6.92%	69.61%	11.70%	9.14%	9.55%

**Table 15. Smart Balance Assessment Test Results (Grade 11)**

	11th			
	Stand. Exceed Lvl 4	Stand. Met Lvl 3	Stand. Nearly Met Lvl 2	Stand. Not Met Lvl 1
ELA SWD District	33.33%	28.57%	19.05%	19.05%
ELA District All Studs	67.01%	20.97%	6.14%	5.88%
Math SWD District	13.33%	20.0%	20.0%	46.67%
Math District All Studs	69.79%	16.13%	7.62%	6.45%

Sources: California Department of Education; California School Dashboard

### Manhattan Beach Unified

#### All Scores for Students with Disabilities Listed as NA

##### ELA: 3-8 and 11<sup>th</sup>:

- All -74.7 Above Standard,
- Students with Disabilities- 11.9 Above Standard

##### Math 3-8 and 11<sup>th</sup>:

- All-46.1 Above the Standard,
- Students with Disabilities-5.7 Below the Standard

**Table 16. Comparison of 2018 Proficiency Rates with Comparable Districts for Students with Disabilities in Grades 3-8 and EOC**

Districts	Reading Grades 3-8	Math Grades 3-8	High School ELA	High School Math
Eanes ISD	74.2%	76.9%	70.1%	78.7%
Manhattan Beach Unified District	54.2%	36.7%	-----	-----
Palo Alto Unified District	38.03%	38.03%%	-----	-----
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	77%	82%	54%	32%
Westside Community School District	34.08%	72.76%	26.00%	14.00%
Allen ISD	65.8%	72.6%	47.1%	65.5%
Coppell ISD	61.4%	70.8%	35.8%	57.4%
Carroll ISD	80%	85.4%	68.2%	85%
Highland Park ISD	85.8%	85.9%	80.5%	92.3%
Lake Travis ISD	63.5%	63%	40.7%	67.3%

Sources: Texas Education Agency 2018 PBMAS, California Department of Education 2017-2018 Local Education Academic Report Card, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2017-2018 School and District Report Card, Westside Community School District 2017-2018 District Special Education Performance Report (School Year 2016-2017)

The gaps in achievement between students with disabilities and “all” students is a significant concern across the nation and across the state. Although the performance of students with disabilities on state mandated assessments is commendable, data indicates broad differences between the performance of Eanes ISD’s students with disabilities and the performance of all students in all academic areas that are tested. In order to address these gaps in achievement, there is a continued need to address the management and instructional practices for students with disabilities that include improvements needed in classroom and behavioral management, improved use of instructional strategies such as differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, accommodations, modifications, scaffolds, flexible grouping, technology, and a need to increase the participation of more students with disabilities in the general education settings with appropriate support.

#### Concerns 2 and 3

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##### Skill of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

- Information from the faculty survey reveals mixed levels of agreement regarding the skill and status of general education instructional staff. While only 68.5% of the total faculty believe general education teachers are skilled in strategies for diverse learners, when viewed by teacher groups, 75.2% of general education and 61.4% of special education teachers agree with the statement. Analyzed by grade level, only 62% of elementary, 71% of middle school, and 80% of high school faculty agree with the statement, and only one of six related service worker respondents agreed. Interestingly, 95.5% of all survey respondents agreed they participated in training to serve a diverse population of students.
- Only 75.1% of faculty survey respondents agreed that special education teachers have the necessary level of general curriculum content knowledge needed to educate students with disabilities. Although 81.3% of the special education teachers agree, only 66.6% of general education teachers responded with agreement.
- The overall results regarding the training and skill of paraprofessionals was also concerning with an overall agreement of 75.8% that paraprofessionals are well trained. Agreement with this statement revealed only 77.6% agreement from elementary teachers, 66.1% agreement from middle school teachers, and 82.8% agreement from high school teachers. Approximately 70% of campus administrators and general education teachers agree that paraprofessionals are well trained, yet 85.3% of special education teachers and 80% of paraprofessionals agree.
- Responses, interviews and focus group comments all indicated the district employs many wonderful paraprofessionals who have significant responsibilities with little pay, resulting in a high turnover rate of personnel in these positions.
- Survey and focus group comments revealed a need for more consistent training, especially for those hired mid-year, and a better pay scale.
- It is critical for teachers to receive training on how to utilize, manage, and supervise paraprofessionals assigned to their classroom since many do not have this skill and teachers frequently have fewer years of experience than the paraprofessional that may be working their classroom.
- Interviews with campus and central office leaders indicate the district does have trained personnel to provide paraprofessional training, which happens at the beginning of the year. However, paraprofessionals hired after the start of school rarely receive training.
- The training, retention, and compensation of paraprofessionals is a concern not only in Eanes ISD but also in many other districts in Texas and nationally.
- Although compensation is a concern, most paraprofessionals want to feel adequately trained, respected for their skills and expertise, and feel a sense of value and worth for their job performance; all critical to job satisfaction and retention.

#### **Concern 4**

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##### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Response to Intervention**

Eanes ISD has a very clearly defined SST program in place to support students who may be struggling academically which includes: high quality Tier 1 instruction, information provided to the parent regarding the concerns noted, the implementation of increasing intensities of instruction provided by a campus support specialist and a clearly defined process for a referral for evaluation to determine eligibility for special education supports and services.

Quality Tier I instruction was noted in the majority of the classroom observations and the 2018 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) indicates a high level of success for all students in Eanes ISD. Approximately one in four faculty (23.1%) view the RtI process as ineffective in addressing the needs of students who are experiencing difficulty in school. Of greater concern is the belief by over 26% of faculty that the RtI process is not for students with disabilities and is only for students who do not qualify for special education services. Information obtained from focus group and faculty comments indicate that more training is desired relative to the process as there are misunderstandings to who may access the interventions, the relationship between RtI and the SST process, and the responsibility of the interventionists.

#### **Concern 5**

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##### **General Curriculum Access**

Access to the general education curriculum is a fundamental right for students with disabilities outlined in IDEA. There is only one curriculum for students. IEPs are to be based on each student's enrolled grade level standards and Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance statements are to reflect the students' performance relative to the general curriculum. Only a small percentage of students should be evaluated on prerequisite skills due to significant cognitive disabilities. Students with cognitive disabilities can access the general curriculum through accommodations, modifications, and supplemental aids and services. Teachers can apply practices such as Multi-Level Instruction, Differentiated Instruction and Universal Design for Learning to ensure access.

- Only 80.2 % of faculty survey respondents agreed that each student with a disability participates in the general education curriculum, with 75.2% of general education teachers and 80% of special education teachers agreeing. This is surprising considering the amount of inclusion support that occurs in the district.
- The need for teacher training in differentiation, planning, and collaboration could possibly contribute to the perception that almost 20% of students with disabilities do not participate in the general education curriculum.
- Instructional accommodations and curricular modifications are the primary paths through which instruction in the general education curriculum are made accessible to students with

## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

### Eanes Independent School District

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disabilities. Instructional accommodations provide support for many learners with and without a disability. An overwhelmingly large number of Eanes ISD survey respondents (96.7%) indicated they are familiar with and knowledgeable about the IEP for each student they teach. They also report the use of instructional accommodations for any student who needs them at an exceptionally high rate of 93.4% and 97.4% accommodating students with disabilities.

- Approximately 97.4% of faculty responses indicate they modify instruction when specified in the IEP.
- Though faculty survey indicates a high level of agreement regarding the implementation of accommodations and modifications to promote curriculum access, evaluators noted minimal formal documentation of the implementation of accommodations and modifications when completing the compliance reviews. This could lead to parent perceptions that their child's accommodations are not being implemented.
- Survey and focus group comments noted concerns regarding lack of perceived fairness of students getting accommodations and modifications to access the curriculum.
- Observers in classrooms saw evidence of accommodations implemented but viewed no evidence of modifications (change in the what) implemented in the general education settings.
- Only 81.7% of parent survey respondents agreed their child's teachers accommodate and modify instruction as specified in the IEP/BIP.

### Concern 6

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#### Academic and Extra-Curricular Inclusive Practices

Frequently mentioned throughout this report is the commitment and efforts of the district to support inclusive practices and a desire to maintain a culture of inclusion for all learners in Eanes ISD. However, there is some evidence that the district is not as successful as it strives to be in this area.

- The district has not met the PBMAS Indicator that measures the percentage of special education students spending 80% or more of their day in general education classrooms for the last three years and has a lower percentage of students who spend 80% or more of the day in general education settings than eight of nine comparable districts. This does not appear to be congruent with the amount of resources the district reports to devoting to supporting inclusive practices.
- Classroom observation data noted that several students appeared to be receiving instruction and performing at an academic level that could be effectively supported in the general education classroom.
- While a high percentage of faculty note the social benefit of inclusion, a significant number of faculty view inclusion as not beneficial to students with disabilities and harmful to students who do not have a disability.

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- Stated in interviews and in focus groups were concerns regarding the competence (content knowledge of special education teachers) and skills (understanding and implementation of accommodations, modifications, and instructional practices for diverse learners) by general education teachers as factors impacting inclusion.
- Other factors related to training, efficient scheduling practices, common planning, and lack of trust among educators can lead to students being placed in more specialized settings to receive supports and services which could be delivered in a general education classroom.
- Also related is issues of beliefs regarding placement of students as noted that 20.9% of faculty agree that students with disabilities are placed by program or label rather than needs.
- Truly inclusive schools and communities should have a variety of contexts for students with disabilities to have social and academic interaction with non-disabled peers that provides for the opportunity for meaningful relationships and ongoing friendships. Access to extracurricular activities, school clubs and social groups is a concern for many parents. Although some parents agree their child has access to extracurricular activities and school sponsored clubs, parent comments indicate that they do not receive communication regarding activities, and they feel the district does not provide the support the students' needs to participate.
- Faculty interview and survey comments indicate that there are many efforts in the district to ensure access and availability to extracurricular activities and school clubs and events. Examples were provided which include; smaller sensory rooms available for campus movie night, making sure all activities are open to any student, and the development of "buddy" or "peer" programs at some campuses.
- The district recognizes that this is a priority for parents and is reviewing options related to this area.
- Access may not be the true issue; barriers instead may be related to the fact that parents do not receive information regarding extracurricular activities and school sponsored events, special education teachers may not feel that it is their responsibility to assist with providing that information or support in those areas because they are frequently after school, and/or the perception that the level of support required to participate is not available to the student.
- There are more elementary (86.7%) and middle school (87.9%) parents that agree that their child has access to extracurricular activities and school sponsored clubs than high school age parents (76.4%) and parents of students who attend ATS (50%).

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### Concern 7

#### Collaborative Teaching Practices Inefficiencies and Inconsistencies

Collaborative teaching is a very positive practice that supports students with disabilities access and progress in the general curriculum. It is defined as two certified teachers jointly planning, preparing

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and equitably delivering instruction. Collaborative teachers must address the personal, interpersonal and procedural factors associated with this practice as it is a true partnership. Effective collaborative teaching would ensure that both teachers have an understanding of the content to be taught, have opportunity to jointly plan and are capable of implementing multiple structures of co teaching practices. These include primarily using team teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching and parallel teaching and a minimal use of one teach-one-assist or one-teach-one-observe.

A well-defined instructional planning process is essential for effective delivery of academic information. This includes quality, well-written lesson plans that show evidence of the lesson cycle, alignment to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and, in the case of students with disabilities, consider any adjustments as specified in the students' IEPs. There must be indicators that written lesson plans are actually followed when implementing instruction in the classroom. Additionally, for students with disabilities who may receive services in a variety of ways collaboration and coordination with respect to lesson planning is critical to promoting access and progress in the general curriculum. Coordination between general and special educators is necessary when planning the delivery of instruction, with respect to following the general curriculum framework, and ensuring access and progress for students with disabilities. Coordination takes on another dimension when two individuals share in the instruction through in-class support and formal collaborative teaching. Both individuals must know what is being taught, how it will be taught, what adjustments in the form of accommodations or modifications need to be made, and who is going to create the accommodations or modifications and monitor student progress.

- The one-teach, one-assist approach was observed a majority of the time in the co-teach classroom, indicating that general education teachers may not have a level of trust to allow a more equitable collaborative instructional approach and special education teachers may not be allowed to demonstrate their content knowledge.
- Teacher focus group comments indicated that middle school special education teachers are placed on teams and required to teach all core content areas which makes it difficult to have a high level of content knowledgeable in any one area and sufficient time to plan effective lessons due to multiple preparations needed.
- Middle school respondents were also the lowest number of teacher groups (67.8%) who agreed that special education teachers have the necessary level of general curriculum content knowledge.
- There were multiple general education teacher focus group comments regarding the lack of integrity of implementation of the collaborative classrooms at various levels. In addition, 37% of survey respondents indicated that special education and general education staff's roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and understood relative to working with students with disabilities. However, 93.4% of faculty responded that they understood their responsibilities relative to providing services to students with disabilities.



## **A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities**

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- Common and effective planning was also revealed as a factor impacting collaborative teaching.
- Although campuses are staffed to support collaborative instruction and principals reported teachers are scheduled and given specific time to collaborate and plan together, only 72.5% of survey respondents agreed that general and special education teachers collaborate effectively to plan and deliver instruction. That number goes down even further when questioned if all teachers and paraprofessionals have an opportunity on a regular basis to plan to support quality instruction for students with disabilities.
- Only 82.6% of parents agreed that general and special education teachers work together to plan and deliver their child's educational program.

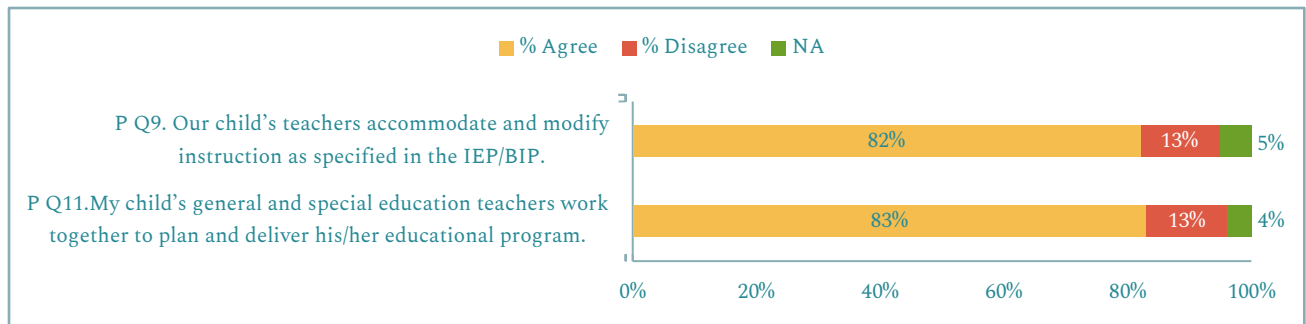
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**CHART 6. FACULTY SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE**



**CHART 7. PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE**



### Concern 8

#### Gap in Perception of Quality of Services

There is a high percentage of faculty who agreed with the statement that the district provides quality services for students with disabilities. There is approximately a 10-percentage point difference between the perceptions of faculty (97.4%) and the perceptions provided by parents of students with disabilities (87.8%). Reasons for this difference in perception is provided in Theme 3 of this report and includes such topics as communication, understanding and the need for information and training opportunities for parents.



### Recommendations for Theme 2

#### Instructional Excellence with a Full Continuum of Supports and Services that are Collaborative, Inclusive, and Foster a Climate of Mutual Respect and Trust.

1. Provide a consistent level of intervention and training for teachers to address the deficits identified with collaborative teaching teams and ensure that all teachers receive the same level of training. There are many resources available for this type of training. Pick one and ensure annually that teams are provided with this training.
2. Provide training for inclusive schools on an annual basis to new hires, to school action teams as members leave the system, and to school leaders with the necessary skills and competencies to successfully and consistently implement inclusive education.
3. Link inclusive practices to other key priorities of the district and the relationship between them are clear to stakeholders.
4. Ensure recruitment of leadership and instructional personnel includes an introduction to the district's commitment to inclusive practices, equity and excellence.
5. Principals and teachers are evaluated, in part, on the basis of their success in implementing inclusive practices and improving annual LRE data until state standards are met.
6. Require teachers to implement different approaches and strategies in collaborative teaching classes by aligning the teacher appraisal goals with teaching assignments.
7. Identify model sites in the district and provide for school personnel and parents to visit and learn from best practice mentors.

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8. Showcase excellence in inclusive practices as a point of pride across the district and community.
9. Adopt a student-centered decision-making approach to staffing and scheduling. With this approach, all students with disabilities are sorted by grade level, subject area, and a series of questions regarding the degree to which the student can participate in the general education curriculum and the type and level of support the student may need.
10. Ensure inclusion support options are available other than co-teach.
11. Develop a master schedule that will ensure planning time for general and special education staff and will address the appropriate ratios for students receiving in-class support or support/services in a specialized setting.
12. Structure collaborative planning time by requiring completion of an outline or checklist of how the time was utilized and weekly submission of lesson plans that demonstrate implementation of differentiated practices and quality collaborative instruction.
13. Provide training to teachers to provide targeted instruction with ongoing progress monitoring data for writing and other academic areas to realize smaller gaps in performance between typically developing peers and students with disabilities.
14. Align content area trainings with strategies for effective use of appropriate accommodations and modifications in the general education setting.
15. Explore the concerns regarding RTI/SST implementation by gathering more specific information including; investigating the integrity of implementation at every campus and surveying teachers to determine what specifically is not working.
16. Provide training to all teachers in best practices and strategies for struggling students with requirements that these strategies be implemented and integrated in classroom instruction, not just in intervention time.
17. Provide teachers training on how to manage and provide supervision to the teaching assistants assigned to their classrooms. Schedules and clearly defined job responsibilities should be outlined for paraprofessionals as well as opportunities for them to provide input into performance reports for student through checklist and data sheets.
18. Schedule annual activities that show appreciation for paraprofessionals and their job performance such as; participation in staff appreciation celebrations, notes of gratitude and praise for a job well done, and public acknowledgement for their work.
19. Gather more information from parents regarding actual participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities and school-based clubs and activities and specific parent needs related to their child's participation.

## Chapter Six

### Theme 3. Positive, Collaborative, and Respectful Relationships with Parents

#### Eanes ISD Quality Standard #5

**Strong and genuine partnerships with parents and families of students with disabilities that includes opportunities for training, a high level of collaboration and transparent communication regarding all aspects of information regarding the student. Parents are highly satisfied with services and are valued for their efforts.**

One hallmark of a successful school district is high stakeholder satisfaction, particularly parent satisfaction. It is important for districts to provide services parents value. A second factor is the extent to which parents are knowledgeable and involved in the educational process, including decision-making and partnership in the IEP. A third indicator is the extent to which parents feel valued and supported regarding efforts to ensure services for their child. Related to these areas of satisfaction, value, and support is the degree to which a district listens and responds to suggestions for improvement. Determining the degree to which Eanes ISD parents of students with disabilities feel valued and respected, as well as parent collaborative involvement in the process of educating their child, was accomplished through an analysis of faculty and parent surveys, comments from all focus group participants, and interviews with key central leaders and principals. A copy of the parent survey and the parent responses are in **Appendix I** of this report.

The following is a summary of the strengths and areas of concerns related to Theme 3. These areas will be addressed with supportive information based on the activities of the study.

Strengths
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Analysis of survey and focus group comments reveal Eanes ISD parents of students with disabilities report a high level of satisfaction with services, feel valued and included in the various processes regarding their child's services, and are involved with their child's school and program.</li><li>2. A high number of parents agree their child's school treats them as an equal partner in matters concerning their child's educational program.</li><li>3. Many focus group and survey comments related to the appreciation and quality of staff who serve students with disabilities in Eanes ISD.</li><li>4. District leadership is committed to communicating and partnering with parents.</li></ol>

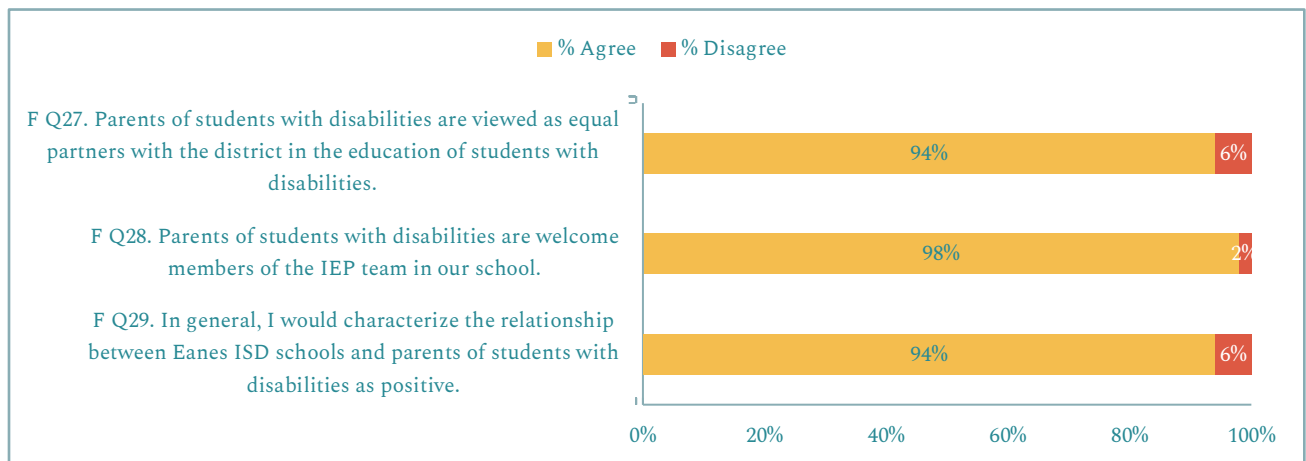
## A Review of Services for Students with Disabilities

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#### Areas of Concern

1. Parent survey results and comments indicated many parents do not feel their child receives appropriate accommodations and/or modifications in the classroom and only 82.1% of parents agree that they are aware of how their child is accessing and making progress in the general education curriculum. Only 79.2% of parents responded they understand how their student's grades are being determined.
2. Although parents reported a great deal of satisfaction with the supports and services provided to their child, approximately 20% of parent survey respondents did not agree that the district provided adequate training and parent education to them. Multiple survey comments related to a need for training, better and consistent communication, and more resources for specialized instruction materials and supports.
3. A high number of faculty respondents (94.5%) agreed they would characterize the relationship between Eanes ISD schools and parents of students with disabilities as positive. However, there were multiple focus group and survey comments regarding the intense time and resources given to some of the more challenging parents, which seems to have an impact on staff morale.

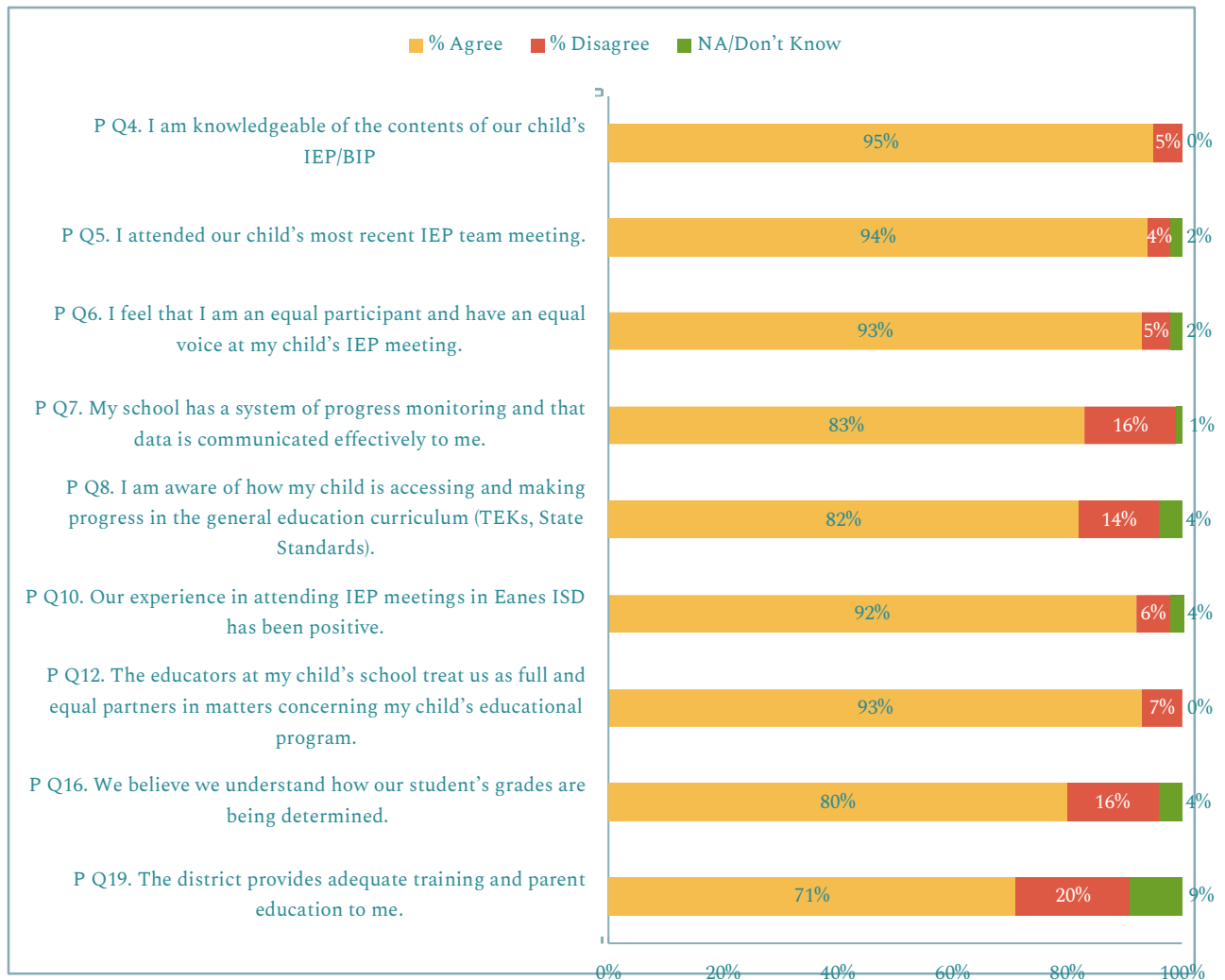
#### CHART 8. FACULTY SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING POSITIVE, COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS



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**CHART 9. PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES REGARDING POSITIVE, COLLABORATIVE AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS**



### Strengths 1, 2 and 3

Through examination of surveys, comments and focus groups it appears overall a high percentage of parents of students with disabilities in Eanes ISD are very satisfied with services, involved with their child's school and program, and feel valued and included in the various processes regarding their child's services.

- Approximately 94% of parent survey respondents agreed that they are knowledgeable regarding their child's IEP and have attended their child's IEP meeting. Parents reported the experience to be a positive one (92.3%) and that they are an equal participant and have an equal voice at the meeting (92.7%).
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of parents agree that their child's school treats them as an equal partner in matters concerning their child's educational program. Parent focus group comments supported this satisfaction with statements such as, "I felt that the staff listened to what the parent said and trusted the parent's knowledge and what they knew and what is



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best for my kid” and “like the willingness to accept input from parents in developing IEPs instead of the my way or the highway attitude.” Faculty survey respondents also overwhelmingly agreed (93.8%) that parents are equal partners with the district in the education of students with disabilities and that parents are welcome members of the IEP team at their school (98.2%).

There were over 30 pages of parent comments regarding the positive aspects of services and suggestions for improving the quality of services for students with disabilities. An analysis of the comments revealed several themes in which multiple positive comments were made. It is suggested that the district department review all the comments as they offer a level of insight relative to parent perceptions and strong and relevant suggestions for improving services.

#### **General Gratitude for The Program, Services and Support**

There were comments that addressed gratitude and appreciation to the district for its efforts to provide services for the child. Many were general in nature, offering thanks to the district, mentioning high quality of services, and stating superlatives regarding services. Several parents commented they moved to Eanes ISD specifically for the special education services.

#### **Focus on Inclusion**

There were multiple comments praising the inclusion services, peer programs at various levels, and collaborative classes. Comments from parents acknowledge the specific services and/or program placement relative to their child as a positive factor. Several parents commented, “love the inclusive atmosphere;” “love the teaming;” “they are good about including my child in every possible way;” and, “Our principal seems to have the right heart and leadership for inclusion.”

#### **Appreciation for Staff**

There were multiple comments that addressed personal appreciation for the quality and traits staff demonstrated towards parents and children. Staff were described using a variety of accolades such as caring, dedicated, responsive, deliberative, excellent, kind, supportive, etc. Parents expressed appreciation for specific staff members by position, including campus administrators, teachers, bus drivers, central office staff, case managers, related services individuals, and assessment personnel. Many comments included the names of individuals with words of appreciation or descriptions regarding the quality of service the individual provided. Comments such as, “There are qualified, dedicated, caring staff members to support each child on campus,” “Teaching staff are epic,” and, “Service providers are excellent and appear to work well with teachers.”

#### **Communication**

Communication was a major theme that emerged from an analysis of parent responses. Parents acknowledged the positive manner in which the school and the staff communicate regarding meetings, progress, the ARD and IEP, and how they are welcomed and viewed as partners in the process. One parent commented, “I am pleased with the communication from all aspects of my

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child's services." Another stated, "We appreciate the weekly updates my child's case manager provides," and others made comments regarding "ongoing communication, and work samples."

Conversely, parents offered many suggestions for improving the quality of services for students with disabilities in Eanes ISD that have merit. The district is encouraged to view the comments from the faculty survey for a detailed description. Some comments were very specific to a negative experience or incident and there were a few comments that parent's experiences changed year to year based on the quality and effectiveness of the staff who work with their child. However, an analysis of these comments revealed there were many comments from parents that requested better and improved communication between the school and the district, specifically regarding the needs/progress of the child. Many wanted more detail concerning the student's progress. Some offered specific suggestions such as daily/weekly progress reports, sending home unit calendars of activities, frequent updates regarding the child's progress, communication regarding homework needs and improved communication about their child between general and special education teachers. It seemed clear to the evaluation team that parents are earnest in their desire for closer, frequent communication.

#### **Strength 4**

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Eanes ISD 2018-19 district goals specifically identify a commitment to parents and community members. Goal six states the district will:

1. Ensure consistency, clarity and inclusivity.
2. Design information for unique audiences (alumni, residents without students).
3. Increase opportunities for authentic engagement of our parents, community members, and business partners.
4. Foster dynamic relationships and a common culture that enhances student learning experiences and strengthens our community.

Interviews with key leaders in the district as well as activities to provide parent communication and/or establish parent input, such as; the annual parent survey, the annual meet and greet for special education parents, and the establishment of committees such as *The Parent Working Group* and the *Community Building Group on Inclusive Cultures* reveal a commitment to communicating and partnering with parents in Eanes ISD.

#### **Areas of Concern 1-4**

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- Although parents reported a great deal of satisfaction with the supports and services provided to their child, 20.3% of parent survey respondents did not agree that the district provided adequate training and parent education to them.
- Parent survey responses indicated that 82.1% of parents agree they are aware of how their child is accessing and making progress in the general education curriculum. However, only

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79.2% of parents responded they understand how their student's grades are being determined.

- The establishment of the two committees which includes parents *The Parent Working Group* and the *Community Building Group on Inclusive Cultures* and the *Annual Parent Symposium*, are excellent ways to increase parent communication and participation. However, it appears that parents want more consistent communication from teachers, campuses and service providers.
- A high number of faculty respondents (94.5%) agreed they would characterize the relationship between Eanes ISD schools and parents of students with disabilities as positive. However, there were multiple focus group comments regarding the intense time and resources given to some of the more challenging parents, which seems to have an impact on the morale of staff.
- While teachers express a desire to have good communication with parents, they are concerned about the impact the communication is having on the workload and want sufficient time to communicate effectively with parents.
- Related to communication needs was a suggestion that parents be informed of the options and opportunities that are available on a long-range basis. For example, parents want to know the options for student participation with accommodations/adaptations on the SAT or ACT or other entry exams. Parents asked for more information regarding futures planning and the availability of other school and community resources. While it is believed that this information is available at the school and district website level, it appears that some parents of students with disabilities are not receiving information.
- Parents also reported a need for training to understand some of the general and special education acronyms and technical language, as well as how to provide better support for their child through specialized instructional techniques. Additionally, they are interested in receiving information regarding resources for summer relative to their child with a disability.
- Though the parent survey reflects that 87% of parents feel teachers have the skills and experience to provide quality instruction the child needs, parents want to ensure that all teachers know the child's needs and have the skills and information that will enable them to support their child.
- Teachers and providers often feel threatened by parents who question techniques or strategies, when in fact, parents often want more information and/or want to share what they have experienced that is helpful to their child.



### Recommendations for Theme 3

#### **Instructional Excellence with a Full Continuum of Supports and Services that are Collaborative, Inclusive, and Foster a Climate of Mutual Respect and Trust.**

1. Continue to promote a “customer friendly” atmosphere with parents of students with disabilities; this should be a priority at all levels, but especially at the campus level.
2. Provide communication from teachers and service providers to parents on a consistent basis. Time should be scheduled for face to face communication which is more likely to reduce the misunderstandings that can happen over email or by phone.
3. Train teachers and service providers in parent communication and conflict resolution. This can be done annually through PLCs, book studies, or vignettes modeling do’s and don’t’s. It is important for general education teachers working with students with disabilities to receive this same training and be a partner in communicating with parents of students with disabilities in collaborative classrooms.
4. Implement strategies to improve communication issues as addressed in Theme 1. Capture more information on how to improve communication and collaboration by having post-IEP meeting surveys and other parent information gathering systems to determine if significant discrepancies in perceptions still exist and to identify needed communication content, the most effective communication strategies to support collaborative and successful school parent partnerships, and access and participation in extracurricular activities and school sponsored clubs and events.

## Chapter Seven

### Theme 4. Effective and Efficient Use of Personnel and Capital Resources

#### Eanes ISD Quality Standard #6

**Efficient, effective and appropriate use of human and capital resources that reflect student-centered decisions in determining the need for all resources including staffing, materials, and services for students with disabilities.**

The level of human and capital resources necessary to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities is influenced by numerous variables. Beyond sufficiency, considerations regarding efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of special education staffing require careful attention.

Unlike general education, special education staffing is not formula-driven. Students with disabilities receive a variety of services in a variety of ways from a variety of staff-all determined by IEP committees on a student-by-student basis. Special education is a service rather than a place; decision-making regarding the type and number of staff requires a process based on each student's unique needs and the needs of the educators who teach them.

Effective, efficient and appropriate use of resources is also impacted by the degree to which educators implement instructional and management practices to support the success of every learner. Efficient scheduling ensures that all students receive the proper amount of service throughout each day. Educators must understand their responsibilities and be held accountable for serving students. Having the appropriate amount of resources, materials and supplies to carry out good instruction is of critical importance. Addressing the challenges of improving services for students with disabilities may not generally require additional staff, but it will require more efficient and effective use of this resource.

Guiding principles, best practices and state mandates regarding staffing for students with disabilities are described below.

- **Best Practice:** The correct ratio for a general education classroom with a support facilitation staff member is the average percentage of individuals state and nation wide with disabilities, typically 10-12%. If the ratio of students with disabilities in the general education classroom exceeds that percentage, a collaborative teacher (co-teacher) should likely be substituted. Reason: in classrooms where the ratio reaches 1/3 of the students with disabilities, two certified teachers are generally required. If the ratio exceeds 1/3, then the classroom resembles a special education classroom versus a general education class.
- **State Requirement:** The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines the appropriate ratio for students with Autism. However, the state of Texas has no class size limits for special education classes.

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- **Specialized Classrooms:** There are no ratios mandated for these classrooms, yet best practice recommends a small class size, a heterogeneous group, and addressing one subject/course/grade level rather than mixing ages, grades, and subjects. Specialized classrooms are for the purpose of delivering targeted support to IEP goals that cannot be addressed in the general education setting even with in class support facilitation or collaborative teaching.

Listed below are the strengths and areas of concerns related to Theme 4. These areas will be addressed with supportive information based on the activities of the study.

Strengths
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The district commits a large percentage of financial resources to special education.</li><li>2. Campuses are richly staffed with teachers, assistants and related services staff to serve students with disabilities.</li></ol>
Areas of Concern
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Scheduling, training, and personal organization and time management skills lead to the perception of some staff members that there is less than adequate staff available to meet the needs of students with disabilities.</li></ol>

### **Strengths 1 and 2**

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Based on a review of special education faculty survey comments, interviews, classroom observations, and data obtained from TEA, the following findings regarding the sufficient, effective, efficient, and appropriate use of human and capital resources are provided. The following table reflects a comparison of staffing ratios and turnover rates for Eanes ISD and nine comparison districts.

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**TABLE 17. STATE, REGION 13, EANES ISD AND COMPARABLE DISTRICT STAFFING RATIOS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

ENTITY	SWD	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS	STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY/TEACHER
Texas	488,463	31,950.9	15.3
Region 13	40,065	3,028.8	13.2
Eanes ISD	677	89.7	7.5
Allen ISD	2,175	116.4	18.7
Carroll ISD	557	49.1	11.8
Coppell ISD	749	62.2	12.0
Highland Park ISD	624	55	11.4
Lake Travis ISD	776	61.5	12.6
Manhattan Beach Unified District	849	--	--
Palo Alto Unified District	1,056	--	--
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	403	25	16.1
Westside Community Schools	816	--	--

Source: Texas Education Agency TAPR 2017-18 District Profiles, Massachusetts Department of Education 2017-2018 Teacher Profile by Program Area, California

- Eanes ISD's teacher staffing data reflects a special education teacher to student with a disability ratio of 1:7.5 for the 89.7 teachers reported in the 2018 TAPR and a 1:6.1 ratio for the current number of 115.5 teachers and 700 special education students reported by the executive director of special education. The Eanes ISD TAPR data has a lower staff to student ratio than the state ratio of 1:15.3, the Region 13 ratio of 1:13.2 and lower than all of the five comparable districts in Texas and lower than Groton-Dunstable Regional School District; the only out of state data available for this area of comparison.
- The teacher turnover rate for Eanes ISD (13.2%) is lower than the state (16.6%), lower than the region (19.0%), and lower than 3 of the comparable Texas districts.

Classroom observations were conducted not only to observe the effectiveness and quality of instruction but also to observe how staff were being utilized to meet the needs of the students, to gather on-site data regarding how many adults were providing services in any one classroom, and to obtain information on how many students with IEPs were in the classroom at the time of the observation. The Stetson evaluator visited classrooms that supported students with disabilities that were categorized as follows:



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- Support Facilitated Classrooms (support provided by a paraprofessional or teacher for less than the full class period);
- Co Teaching Classrooms;
- Self-contained Behavior;
- Resource;
- Self-contained Life Skills; and,
- Self-contained off campus Post-Secondary Program.

Classroom observations revealed:

- Students were highly engaged in a majority of classrooms;
- There were 24 of the 36 classrooms who utilized flexible grouping;
- Objectives were posted in 20 of the classrooms;
- Instructional technology was used in 26 of the classrooms observed;
- Specially designed instruction was provided in the co-teach and resource classes; and,
- Students receiving special education services in collaborative classrooms were not distinguishable based on which teacher worked with them.

The following table reflects a comparison of financial resources committed to special education by district.

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#### Budget and Financial Information

**TABLE 18. 2017-18 SPECIAL EDUCATION BUDGETED INFORMATION BY STATE AND DISTRICT**

State/District	Total Revenue	Instruction/All Students	%	Instruction Per Student	Special Education	%	Special Education/Student
Texas	\$63,158,400,197	\$29,573,638,802	55.8%	\$5,492	\$6,228,755,783	15.92%	\$1,157
<b>Eanes ISD</b>	<b>\$98,982,689</b>	<b>\$47,688,813</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>5,918</b>	<b>17,242,821</b>	<b>28.62%</b>	<b>\$2,141</b>
Allen ISD	\$258,068,650	\$109,505,750	57.19%	\$5,194	\$24,879,655	16.94%	\$1,180
Carroll ISD	\$117,660,863	\$47,024,349	57.24%	\$5,636	\$10,252,619	17.16%	\$1,229
Coppell ISD	\$147,961,701	\$67,730,177	59.34%	\$5,385	\$12,262,767	13.80%	\$975
Highland Park ISD	\$98,275,179	\$41,842,335	61.26%	\$6,002	\$10,312,385	19.05%	\$1,479
Lake Travis	\$126,598,098	\$47,824,996	56.05%	\$4,607	\$12,250,059	19.87%	\$1,180
Manhattan Beach Unified District	\$74,666,874	\$51,470,726	67%	\$7,545	\$2,199,727	NA	\$345
Palo Alto Unified District	\$240,737,069	\$161,174,593	52%	\$10,904	\$33,175,650	14%	\$2,826
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Westside Community Schools	68,449,943,00	42,164,638	61.6	NA	1,933,533	2.83%	NA

2017-2018 Texas Actual Financial Data, 2018-2019 California Department of Education-Annual Financial Data, Westside Community Schools 2016-2017 Financial Receipts and Financial Expenditures.

- Eanes ISD's total revenue is lower than five of the eight comparable districts reporting data. The total revenue for Eanes ISD is lower than four of five Texas districts. Eanes ISD is higher in total revenue than Manhattan Beach Unified School District and Westside Community Schools.
- The percentage of Eanes ISD's Operating Expenditure for Instruction for All Students is higher than four of the eight comparable districts with available data.
- Eanes ISD's Budgeted Percentage for Special Education is higher than the state and all of the seven comparable districts reporting data, and the program expenditure per student with a disability is higher than the state and six of the comparable districts reporting data.

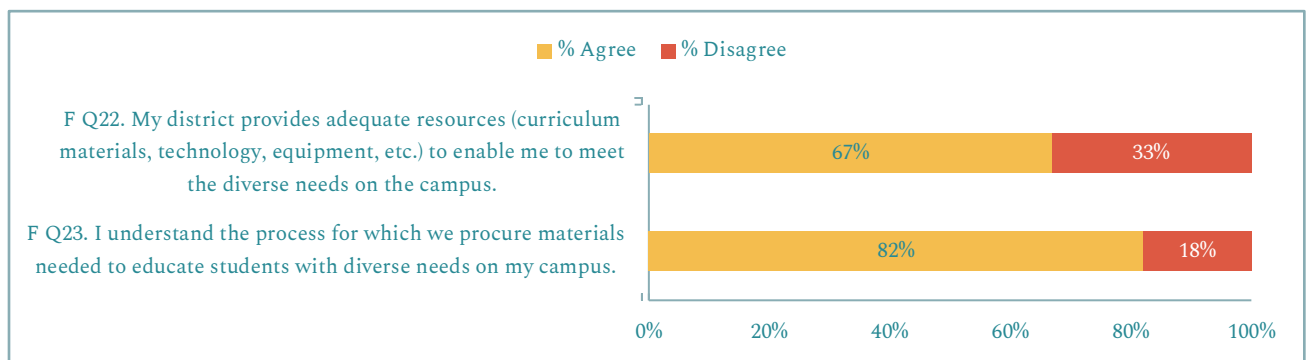
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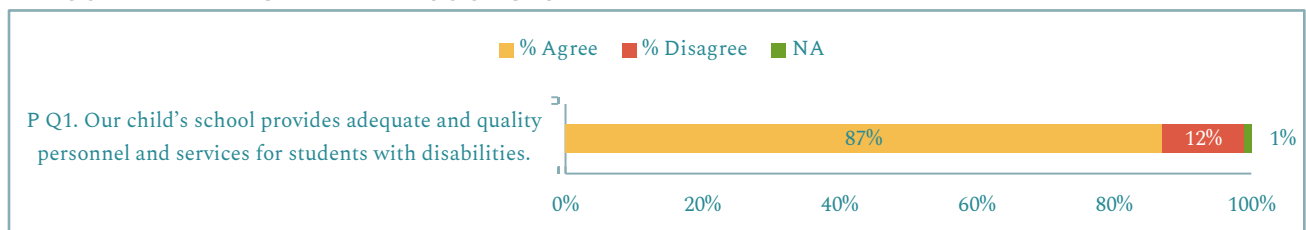
#### Areas of Concern

- Even though Eanes ISD is very richly staffed there were multiple faculty and parent survey and focus group comments regarding the lack of staff available to cover all the collaborative and specialized support classes and to provide services that students with disabilities need.
- Stetson consultant reported several classes where the ratios for collaborative classes exceeded the  $\frac{1}{3}$  ratio. There were four classrooms where the percentage of students with disabilities exceeded the best practice of 30%; in one case it was only by one student, in two classes the percentage of students with disabilities was 45% and for a high school 9th grade geography class it was 59%. Observations in Support Facilitation Classes identified one special education student supported in each of the three classes at one particular elementary and four students receiving support facilitation classroom in a classroom in another elementary school, which exceeded the 10-12%.
- These issues and perceptions regarding the lack of staff are most likely due to how decisions are made regarding services for students and the fact that supports for students are mostly collaborative teaching support or specialized support. It is likely that some students are automatically placed in collaborative classes for inclusion support and are receiving services at a higher intensity than they may actually need to be successful. Over serving students can many times limit their independence as well as lead to a learned helplessness and over dependence on adults.
- There were multiple survey and focus group comments regarding lack of planning time, overloaded collaborative classrooms, and not enough time to complete paperwork, communicate with parents, and attend meetings.

**CHART 10. FACULTY SURVEY RESULTS REGARDING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF PERSONNEL AND CAPTIAL RESOURCES**



**CHART 11. PARENT SURVEY RESULTS REGARDING EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF PERSONNEL AND CAPTIAL RESOURCES**



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Although there were many focus group and survey comments regarding the high level of resources, including the low caseload assignments for teachers, assessment personnel and related service providers, only 82.4% of faculty survey respondents agreed that the district provides adequate resources to meet the diverse needs on the campus. By position 90% of campus administrators, 75% of counselors, 74.4% of general education teachers, 90% of paraprofessionals, 100% of Psychologist/LSSPs, 83.3% of Related service providers, 90% of Special Education Teachers and 100% of Speech Language Pathologist agreed that the district provides adequate resources. This variability in agreement could be impacted by the fact that only 67.1% of faculty agreed that they understood the process for which to procure materials needed to educate students with diverse needs on their campus. Although 85% of special education teachers, and 100% of Psychologist/LSSPs reported they understood the process, only 49.6% of general education teachers and 66.7% of related service providers agreed.



## Recommendations for Theme 4

### Effective and Efficient Use of Personnel and Capital Resources

1. Obtain expert analysis of the evaluation process and criteria for disability identification to determine if the high percentage of students identified with Autism, Other Health Impairment, and Emotional Disturbance and lower percentage of students identified with Intellectual Disabilities and Speech Impairment are issues with assessment and establishment of primary and secondary disability identification or if this is simply the natural make-up of the community and the school district.
2. Ensure service providers are trained in research-based practices for serving high needs students such as those identified with Autism, Behavioral needs, and Social Emotional needs. Lack of training can often lead to a belief there are inadequate resources available to meet the needs of these students.
3. Implement the recommendations for the decision-making process for determining services for students with disabilities, staffing and communication in Theme 2 and re-survey staff to determine if perceptions of inadequate staffing changes. It appears that scheduling, training, and personal time management and organizational skills lead to the perception of some staff members that there is less than adequate staff available to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
4. Provide teachers training in organization and time management.
5. Continue to provide the rich level of resources in order to improve inclusive practices and the quality of supports and services to students with disabilities.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Theme 5. Compliance with Local, State, and Federal Mandates**

#### **Quality Standard #7**

Full compliance with local, state and federal mandates relative to the referral, identification and the provision of services for students with disabilities. This includes a process system to monitor, address and correct any compliance discrepancies, as well as a system to inform stakeholders.

#### **Quality Standard #8**

A highly effective and efficient process for identification students with disabilities in an early and timely manner with child find efforts that includes informing stakeholders of the process, use of student support teams, and conducting comprehensive evaluations that lead to quality goals and objectives and a process for monitoring the progress of each student.

Compliance with state and federal mandates for implementation of services and supports for students with disabilities is an ongoing challenge for many districts. In Texas, there are compliance requirements related to academic progress and proficiency on the state mandated assessment that contributes to an overall district accountability rating for all students. There is also a state compliance system, the Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) in which targets are set by the state for priority areas and lastly, the State Performance Plan (SPP) which is a federal compliance system utilized in every state to monitor special education compliance. Interestingly, many of the indicators on the state PBMAS system mirror the SPP yet the target performance and compliance is often measured in a different statistical calculation. Although compliance does not define the quality of services, staff or supports in a district, it is one measure that can contribute to the overall effectiveness of a quality special education program.

A summary of the strengths and areas of concerns related to Theme 5 is below. These areas will be addressed with supportive information based on the activities of the study.

<b>Strengths</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Schedules and documentation confirmed that all supports and services were being provided to all eight of the students that were selected for verification of implementation of IEP implementation with the exception of written documentation for accommodations.</li><li>2. The district has in place a effective and efficient process for child find.</li><li>3. The district has addressed the recent state compliance issues for child find and Dyslexia identification.</li></ol>
<b>Areas of Concern</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Eanes ISD did not meet the target indicators in five areas on the 2018 PBMAS (0 is the state standard with 1-4 considered to be below standard);</li><li>2. Out of the 25 student eligibility folders reviewed there were zero folders in total compliance.</li><li>3. There was not any written teacher documentation of implementation of accommodations for the eight students reviewed for compliance.</li></ol>

#### **Strength 1**

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##### **A Compliance Review of Student Services and Supports Identified in The IEP for Eight Students at Various Grade Levels.**

A compliance review was conducted for eight student eligibility folders to determine if a student's supports and services were being provided at the campus or location as documented in the IEP, and if documentation existed of implementation of accommodations, modifications, and IEP goals and objectives. This was achieved by visiting the student's campus/classroom, observing the student, interviewing key staff that were available at the time of the visit, reviewing student schedules, and teacher documentation. Student schedules and data appeared to demonstrate that all services were being provided to the students as documented in the IEPs. Teachers provided documentation of implementation IEP goals and objectives. However, there appeared to be a lack of documentation of implementation of accommodations. Teachers interviewed could define and give examples of accommodations for students but there was not any written documentation to confirm implementation in a majority of the eight student studies. This is easily corrected with training and examples of simple systems of documentation.

#### **Area of Concern #1**

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The performance of Eanes ISD on the State Performance Plan and the Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System is a strength and also a weakness in that the district met the state targets on a majority of the indicators in both systems. However, the district should be concerned in areas where the performance is consistently below the target for multiple years such as the LRE 80% indicator and the Alternate 2 Participation Rate. The percentage of students in separate schools, residential facilities of homebound/hospital placements is non-compliant and higher than all the comparable Texas districts and two of the out of state districts. Disproportionality of The Percent of SPED Students Served in A Separate Setting, and Significant Disproportionality for SPED Representation in 3-21 Year Old's for Asian Students Identified with The Disability of Autism are also a concern. It is also important to investigate performance scores which are getting lower such as the case in the Writing score for grades 3-8 on the PBMAS.

The following tables show how Eanes ISD performed in comparison with all nine comparison districts on specific indicators on the collected for the State Performance Plan, (SPP); a federal accountability system.

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#### Compliance with State and Federal Targets for Students With Disabilities Related to LRE

**TABLE 19. ENROLLMENT DATA BY PLACEMENT CATEGORY, AGE 6-21 AND PRESCHOOL (PERCENTAGES)**

District	Ages 6-21 Inside Regular Class >80% of the Day	Ages 6-21 Inside Regular Class <40% of the day	6-21 in separate Schools, Res. Facilities, or home/hospital placements	3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Program	3-5 Separate Early Childhood Class, School, or Res. Facility
Eanes ISD	67.0%	9.3%	3.9%	54.5%	11.4%
Allen ISD	72.3%	10.4%	0.3%	20.4%	15.9%
Carroll ISD	76.7%	10.1%	0.0%	58.6%	0%
Coppell ISD	65.2%	16.1%	0.2%	32.3%	23.7
Highland Park ISD	81.7%	9.6%	0.2%	55.1%	0%
Lake Travis ISD	65.9%	13.5%	1.8%	26.8%	11.0%
Manhattan Beach Unified School District	69.30%	8.3%	5.22%	39.77%	1.14%
Palo Alto Unified School District	71.24%	7.09%	2.97%	41.98%	55.5%
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	69.3%	8.1%	5.5%	78.4%	15.7%
Westside Community Schools	75.44%	1.58%	1.09%	85.36%	*

2018 Texas State Performance Plan Indicators (School Year 2016-2017), California Department of Education 2017-2018 Dashboard, Westside Community Schools 2017-2018 District Special Education Performance Report (School Year 2016-2017), and Massachusetts School and District Profile, Groton-Dunstable Special Education Data.

- Eanes ISD has a lower percentage of students spending more than or equal to 80% of their day in the regular classroom setting than seven of the nine comparable districts.
- There are five of the nine comparable districts who have a higher percentage of students spending less than 40% of their day in the regular classroom setting, which means four comparable districts have more students who spend less time in specialized classroom settings than Eanes ISD.
- Eanes ISD has a higher percentage than all the comparable Texas districts for students who are served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital settings and higher than two of the out of state districts
- For children ages 3-5, Eanes ISD has a higher percentage of students served in the regular early childhood program than three of the Texas comparable districts and two of the out of state districts.
- Eanes ISD has lower percentage of students ages 3-5 who are receiving services in a separate early childhood program than four of eight comparable districts reporting data.

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**TABLE 20. DATA COMPARISON FOR GRADUATION & DROPOUT RATE**

District	Graduation Rate	DROPOUT RATE
Eanes ISD	78.3%	0.0%
Allen ISD	86.8%	0.8%
Carroll ISD	90.5%	0.0%
Coppell ISD	83.3%	0.0%
Highland Park ISD	63.6%	1.2%
Lake Travis ISD	86.4%	1.2%
Manhattan Beach Unified	73.9%	0.0%
Palo Alto Unified	82.9%	1.6%
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	92.3%	0%
Westside Community Schools	90.0%	89%

Source: 2018 Texas District Profile (School Year 2016-2017) State Performance Plan Indicator Targets, California Department of Education Annual Performance 2017-2018 Annual Performance Report, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 2018 District and School Profile, Nebraska Department of Education 2017-2018 District Profile and Westside Community Schools 2017-2018 District Special Education Performance Report (School Year 2016-2017)

- The graduation percentage for students with disabilities in Eanes ISD is lower than seven of the nine comparable districts.
- The percentage of the students receiving special education services who drop out of school in Eanes ISD is the same as or lower than all nine of the comparable districts.

### Area of Concern 2

#### Student Eligibility Folder Reviews:

Documentation for special education services and supports has become quite onerous and documents are often 20-50 pages in length for each ARD/IEP committee meeting and each assessment report. Clerical errors are not unusual.

Eanes ISD uses a dual system of data management. The eligibility folder is maintained in hard copy form and all data should also be entered and archived into the electronic system. A majority of the required documentation was contained in the paper eligibility folder. However, there were several folders where the document was only located in the electronic archives. The folders provided were neat and mostly well-organized although there appeared to be confusion as to where to archive the *Consent for Placement, Notice and Consent for Evaluation and REED* Documentation. In some folders it was archived with the ARD Documentation and in others it was archived with consent documentation or parent documentation. Out of the 25 folders reviewed, zero folders were in total compliance, 20 folders were missing items such as signatures on evaluations, boxes not checked in required areas, or other minor clerical errors.

Other than minor clerical errors there was inconsistent documentation of several areas of the ARD document. ARD committee meetings are conducted for many reasons and are referred to by different names depending on the purpose of the ARD committee meeting. It is important to remember that any ARD whether it is a Brief ARD, a Transfer ARD, an ARD to conduct a REED, an



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Initial ARD/Annual ARD, must all meet the required components in the Legal Framework for an ARD/IEP meeting.

Documentation of times for services in the schedule of services portion of the document requires that the description of services must include the frequency of services, the amount of time in which services will be delivered and if services will be delivered in a general education setting or a special education setting. This information was not documented consistently and was often very confusing to the reviewer. For the areas of collaborative inclusion supports and self-contained services it was often unclear how many minutes a day/week the services were to be delivered and in what location. Most related services were documented correctly and included further explanation in the notes that clarified how many minutes per week or every two weeks that a student would receive services and how many total sessions would be provided per 9-week period. Any person, parent, or provider in any district should be able to look at a schedule of services and clearly have an understanding of what services will be provided a student on a weekly basis, who will be providing those services, (special education staff, related services personnel, or general education staff) and if those services will be provided in a special education environment or a general education environment.

In addition, there also appeared to be confusion as to how to document ARD participation signatures. Sometimes attendees actually signed on the signature page of the ARD documentation and other times names of attendees were only listed in the minutes with parent(s) and district representative being the only ones who provided original signatures on the signature page. Although it is not a legal requirement that all attendees sign the IEP document to verify attendance, it does add more integrity and accountability to the document as to who actually attended that particular ARD meeting.

Another concern consistently identified was that many of the goals and objectives did not meet the required criteria to include the four components of timeframe, conditions, behavior and criterion. Some would include these four components in the objectives but not in the goals, some would follow the criteria for some of the goals and objectives but not all, and others did not include the four components at all.

All the above items are predominantly issues of training and establishing an editing process to identify errors and accuracy prior to archiving and printing the document.

## 5

### Recommendations for Theme 5 Compliance with Local, State and Federal Mandates

1. Address all compliance issues by reviewing the indicators on the SPP and the PBMAS that do not meet the state target and disaggregating the data by campus if possible; specifically, the LRE data, and developing an action plan to address the desired changes.

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2. Produce a clearly written set of Special Education Policies and Procedures and use a dissemination plan that makes certain all district teaching staff, campus and central office administrators, assessment and related services personnel understand and feel confident in implementation of the necessary practices to be compliant and provide quality research based supports and services to students with disabilities.
3. Develop a system to audit folders on an annual basis to identify systemic issues in documentation and implementation of the local, state and federal guidelines for special education.
4. Provide annual and ongoing training and monitoring for all those who are responsible for ARD documentation.
5. Implement best practice procedures and preserve document integrity by requiring all attendees at an ARD meeting to sign the signature page.
6. Utilize a system of total electronic management. When staff are required to maintain an electronic system as well as a paper document, system errors in archiving can occur and requiring staff to maintain two data systems can add to the workload of those responsible. With appropriate training and safeguards for archival and storage in place, an electronic system can be more efficient.
7. Provide training for teachers in how to document implementation of accommodations in lesson plans, grade books, and/or by maintaining portfolios of work samples and communicating this to parents.

While important to have the correct signatures, dates, and data as part of the paper record of special education service delivery, by no means is this the most important indicator of compliance. The extent to which the meaning and the spirit of the law is understood and followed is of most importance. Are students with disabilities achieving academic and behavioral success? Are they afforded the procedural safeguards guaranteed to them and to their parents? Are they educated in the least restrictive environment? Are their teachers, facilities, materials, and other tangibles equitable to those provided their non-disabled peers? Are they welcome on their home campus or are they shuffled to other, more willing schools through a decision that represents principal pressure? Are their teachers providing the same curricular materials and training as their non-special education peers? These are the questions that reflect the true nature of a free and appropriate public education.

# Conclusion

During the evaluation process, numerous positive influences for improved services for students with disabilities in Eanes ISD were identified, including a long history of commitment to excellence and improvement, strong district leadership, a high degree of parent satisfaction, strong emphasis on instructional excellence and quality and the provision of human and capital resources to support the districts goals. The district possesses the leadership, skills, and resources to make significant and positive improvements for all students.

This evaluation of services for students with disabilities represents an inquiry into the status of present services and the perceptions of multiple stakeholder groups. This report was developed with the active participation and support of every educator within Eanes ISD that was called upon to provide data, perceptions, and recommendations. Stetson and Associates, Inc. greatly appreciates the assistance and candor of all involved in the process.

Throughout our work in the district, educators from all levels and departments commented on a commitment to students with disabilities evidenced by district leadership and teaching faculty. Eanes ISD is to be commended for taking positive steps to ensure effective and equitable practices for students with disabilities are in place across all of its schools.