

# Lumberton ISD

## Special Education Full Program Review

### TASB Student Solutions Board Report

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Student Solutions

# Goals of the Review

- Review status related to providing quality services for students with disabilities that reflect consistent decision making and service delivery in alignment with the students' Individualized Education Plans and the district's instructional guidance that support student learning and progress.
- Review status related to compliant and consistent implementation aligned to federal, state, and local requirements relative to services for students with disabilities.
- Review status related to staffing for special populations that is reasonable and within case load and workload expectations to meet the needs of students.



# Approach to the Review

Included in the review is a deep dive into the numerous records that outline and support the special education program. Information reviewed included, but was not limited to:

- Demographic information
- Special Education staff overview
- General and Special Education student rosters
- Instructional arrangement/setting overview information
- District and Special Education organizational charts
- Lumberton ISD Special Education Operating Procedures
- Lumberton ISD Professional Development documentation
- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process
- Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data
- Reports from Lumberton ISD's Frontline Special Education Management System
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) reports
- State Performance Plan 11 and 12 reports
- Student IEP/ARD documents
- Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR)
- TEA 2020-2021 Special Education Reports
- Texas Education Code
- Code of Federal Regulations

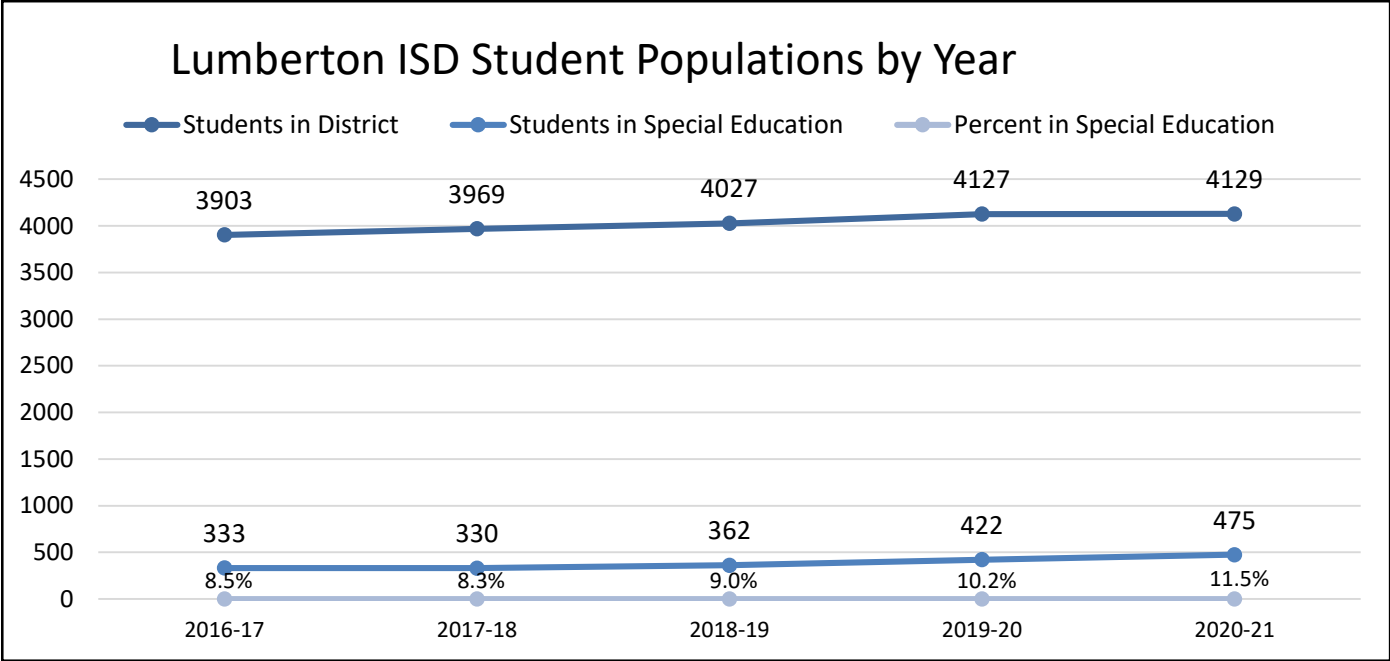


# Overview of Findings

- The district clearly works to support students in Special Education and provide for their needs in alignment with state and federal requirements.
- Staff, documentation and processes clearly indicate the care and concern that align with those they serve.
- There are some areas that could use fine tuning through additional training, ongoing internal reviews and staffing alignment with growth.



# Profile of Lumberton ISD



Between October 2020 and December 2021, the overall district population increased by 59 students. This increase included 56 students eligible for special education.



# Profile of Lumberton ISD

## Special Education Population by Campus

Campus	Total Number of Students	Percent of District at Campus	Number of Students in SPED	Percent of SPED at Campus	Percent of District SPED
Lumberton High School (9-12)	1211	28.9%	120	9.9%	22.6%
Lumberton Middle School (7-8)	661	15.8%	75	11.3%	14.1%
Lumberton Intermediate School (4-6)	938	22.4%	150	16.0%	28.2%
Lumberton Primary School (1-3)	955	22.8%	127	13.3%	23.9%
Lumberton Early Childhood School (EE-KG)	423	10.1%	59	13.9%	11.1%
<b>District</b>	<b>4,188</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>100%</b>

- District's current special education percentage = 12.7%
- Approximately 63% of students in special education are in elementary grades.



# Profile of Lumberton ISD

## Special Education Population by Disability

Disability	Percent of SPED	Percent of State
Learning Disability	<b>33.71%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>
Speech Impairment	<b>22.98%</b>	<b>19.81%</b>
Autism	<b>12.62%</b>	<b>13.95%</b>
Other Health Impairment	<b>12.05%</b>	<b>14.16%</b>
Intellectual Disability	<b>8.47%</b>	<b>10.18%</b>
Emotional Disturbance	6.59%	6.19%
Auditory Impairment	Less than 2%	1.15%
Noncategorical Early Childhood	Less than 2%	1.53%
Traumatic Brain Injury	Less than 1%	0.20%
Orthopedic Impairment	Less than 1%	0.54%
Deaf-Blind	0.00%	0.07%
Visual Impairment	0.00%	0.63%



# Profile of Lumberton ISD - Findings

- The district provides a full continuum of services at each campus.
- Service models/classroom types across all campuses are not standardized.
- The instructional arrangement 41 – Resource Room, less than 21% is the most common placement in the district. (44.6%)



# Profile of Lumberton ISD - Recommendations

- Provide training on each service model to all staff involved in implementation of special education services and supports.
- Review special education services and supports provided in the general education classrooms to determine current models being used. If the desire is to move forward with a co-teach model as one of the continuum of services options, determine which classrooms the model will be used in (based on schedules, staff availability and experience, etc.) and extensively train those staff who will implement the program initially. Build upon this model as student need requires and staff training and availability can support.



# Evaluations

<b>SPP 11 (ages 3-21)</b>	<b>Consent to Evaluate Received</b>	<b>Number Eligible for Special Education</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>98</b>



# Staff: Special Education Instruction

Position	Early Childhood School	Primary School	Intermediate School	Middle School	High School	Adaptive Behavior Center	Total
<b>Teacher</b>	3	5	7	5	12	2	<b>34</b>
<b>Paraprofessional</b>	11	9	10	9	10	3	<b>52</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>86</b>

Includes staff providing 1:1 support

# Evaluation and Staff - Findings

- The district reported 442 initial referrals of students ages 3-21 over the past three years, with 303 of these students (68.6%) determined eligible for special education.
- District special education staff includes 34 teachers and 52 paraprofessionals.
- Campus special education teachers serve as case managers.
- Variance is noted in caseload numbers at the campus and district levels, as well as differences in amount of planning time assigned.



# Evaluation and Staff - Findings

- Written processes/expectations are in place for special education teachers but not paraprofessionals or general education staff.
- Evaluation staff includes 5 Educational Diagnosticians, 5 Speech and Language Pathologists, and 1 Speech and Language Pathologist-Assistant.
- The Director of Special Programs and Services oversees Special Education, Section 504, Multi-tiered Systems of Support, Response to Intervention, Dyslexia, and At-Risk staff, services, and/or supports.
- The Special Programs' Specialist engages in multiple administrator level activities.
  - Position requires a master's degree
  - Assists director with management and supervision of all programs
  - Ensure compliance
  - Oversee and manage special programs software
  - Make staffing recommendations to director
  - Develop and manage Extended School Year program
  - Assist with all audits
  - Monitor Results Driven Accountability
  - Create strategic support plan
  - Oversee required intervention planning
  - Serve as Transition Employment Designee
  - Supervise SHARS Medicaid program
  - Supervise in home/parent training program
  - Schedule trainings based on specific needs
  - Support collaboration between special and general education
  - Attend ARD meetings as appropriate
  - Assist in special programs department needs including professional development
  - Provide legal and technical assistance
  - Organize quarterly community trainings



# Evaluation and Staff - Recommendations

- Continue to monitor initial referrals and use this information when considering staffing needs. Include a review of historic dyslexia evaluations completed through Section 504.
- Consider having special and general education staff write down their roles and responsibilities regarding students with disabilities. Use this information to establish expectations for all staff working with these students.
  - Provide written expectations and training regarding individual position roles and responsibilities for serving students with disabilities.
- Review processes for assigning special education caseloads.
- Review processes for assigning teacher planning time.
- Consider reviewing the job description of the Director of Special Programs and Services to determine whether additional support is needed to monitor each program overseen.
- Consider reviewing the job description and practical responsibilities/activities of the Special Programs' Specialist to determine if moving the position to an administrative pay scale is appropriate.



# Classroom Observations

Inclusion Classrooms	Resource Classrooms	Self-Contained Classrooms
25	7	5
	<b>Total Classrooms Observed</b>	<b>37</b>



# Classroom Observations - Findings

- The overall impression of the district, school, and classroom environments is positive.
- Classroom staff displayed respect to students and each other.
- Staff ratios in special education settings varied.
- In general education classes observed (5), the percent of students in special education ranged between 21.1% and 52.4%.
- Overall areas of focus were observed more frequently in elementary classrooms.
  - Strengths: environments conducive to learning; respectful interactions; availability of technology; active engagement; grade appropriate materials in special education settings; engaging lessons
  - Areas for Improvement: instructional and material differentiation; use of individual schedules; modifications in response modes; systematic use of cues and prompts during instruction





# Classroom Observations - Recommendations

- Review processes for determining placement of students with disabilities and staff in general education classrooms. Consider the impact of students with special needs on the overall classroom ratios.
- Identify activities to allow general and special education staff opportunities to collaborate.
- Provide professional development to all staff regarding differentiated instruction strategies.
- Provide professional development regarding the education of students with disabilities to all general education staff.



# Focus Groups - Questions

- What is working well regarding services for students with disabilities?
- What concerns, if any, do you have regarding students with disabilities?
- In regard to serving students with disabilities, what do you need to be successful?
- Is there a specific area that we should pay close attention to as we complete this Program Review for your district?
- Is there anything else that you want to share with us?



# Focus Groups - Findings

- Staff at each campus care greatly about students, colleagues, and the community.
- Any frustrations were voiced indicating a desire to provide support and impact improvement.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals spoke highly of the support and encouragement received from campus administrators.
- Concern was expressed by several groups related to support for paraprofessionals.



# Focus Groups - Recommendations

- Provide training on best practices in areas of need identified through out review.
- Consider additional support for addressing behavioral concerns, including for students not yet in special education.
- Continue to monitor growth overall and in special education specifically to monitor staffing needs.
- Monitor use of special education staff as substitutes for absent staff. This may impact compliance with required student services.

# Folder Review - Findings

- The majority of folders reviewed contained a current evaluation.
- Of the reviewed folders, 89% contained evaluations completed within timelines.
- IEPs reviewed were completed within required timelines 93% of the time.
- Documentation of parent communication was found in 93% of IEPs reviewed.
- General concerns noted for specific students was shared with staff.

# Folder Review - Recommendations

- Provide training specific to each recommended area.
- Review the process used to track initial evaluation requests and re-evaluations. This information is valuable to assist with staffing determinations and review intervention success or needs.
- Establish an ongoing folder review system.

# Workload Staffing Analysis (WSA)

- Review
  - District and campus schedules
  - District staff assignments and schedules
  - District staff to student ratio
- Analysis of district Special Education student data
  - Service time (based on minutes of direct support)
  - Instructional support
  - Behavior

# Workload Staffing Analysis (WSA)

## Caseload Analysis

Looks solely at the number of students needing services and relies on predetermined student to staff ratios.

## Workload Analysis

Looks at how the individual staff member's time is spent versus the number of students with IEPs served.





# Instructional Support Analysis

The results of any needs assessment for staffing of Special Education programs should:

- be based on the severity of student needs
- promote data-driven decision making
- be aware of increasing legal requirements
- include the time required to meet IEP services during the instructional day
- apply to a wide range of service delivery models
- account for increased communication needs between general and special education staffs, and all service providers
- be based on student benefit and ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- be grounded in political and financial realities
- be supportive of special educators



# Caseload Analysis Comparison

- The state's current average of special education staff to student ratio is 1:7
- Lumberton ISD's current special education staff to student ratio is 1:6.62
- The district is exceeding the state average and emphasizes the needs of their students and staff when determining staffing.

# WSA Instructional Analysis

Grade	Count of Students	Recommended FTEs	Current Teachers	Current Paras	Current Total Staffing	Difference in Staffing
Lumberton Early Childhood (EE-KG)	56	7.50	3	11	14.00	+6.50
Lumberton Primary (1-3)	128	14.00	5	8	13.00	-1.00
Lumberton Intermediate (4-6)	152	18.50	7	9	16.00	-2.50
Lumberton Middle (7-8)	77	13.50	4	9	13.00	-0.50
Lumberton High (9-12)	123	23.50	12	8	20.00	-3.50
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>77.00</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>76.00</b>	<b>-1.00</b>

Grade	Count of Students	Recommended FTEs	Current Teachers	Current Paras	Current Total Staffing	Difference in Staffing
Adaptive Behavior Center (1-8)	0	0.00	2	3	5.00	+/- 0.00



# WSA Instructional Analysis - Findings

- For purposes of this report, less than ten students were identified as having one-to-one support. This should be taken into consideration as it relates to staffing if there is in fact a student(s) with such need.
- The district operates a behavior unit (Adaptive Behavior Center) that currently staffs 2 teachers and 3 paraprofessionals. There are less than 10 students currently assigned to the ABC. These students were included in their home campus analysis. This should be taken into consideration related to staffing.
- The disaggregation of data indicates that students in Lumberton ISD need approximately 5,282.48 hours of services per week.
- The workload staffing analysis shows that campus and grade assignments are in alignment.
- The district employs one ARD Facilitator who assists with ARD/IEP meetings and documentation at Lumberton Primary and Intermediate Schools. This model assists with compliance of documentation and streamlined communication when the district can support it.



# WSA Instructional Analysis - Recommendations

- Current staffing of 81.00 FTEs is slightly higher than the workload analysis recommends by 4.00 FTEs. As increases in special enrollment occurs consideration of additional staff may need to occur. It is recommended that information used for this analysis are compared to updated reports and a comparison of campus/program location of new students is done to determine where increased needs may have arisen.
- Staffing may include a combination of teachers and paraprofessionals to meet the district's needs. With increased or decreased student enrollment, this number may quickly shift upwards or downwards and should be monitored on a regular basis.
- Staffing allocations for the Adaptive Behavior Center (ABC) were not included in the final overall recommendation as the number of students can change based on individual student needs and impact staffing needs in the program.
- The need for a centralized person to oversee paperwork is well established in the role of ARD Facilitators and can be of assistance to districts who are able to provide this additional FTE to maintain alignment and compliance in documentation and federal, state, and local requirements. The district may want to consider expanding the current ARD Facilitator model to Lumberton Early Childhood, Middle, and High Schools to relieve staff of some case management tasks and establish consistency in paperwork.



# Related Services Analysis

Services	FTE/Weights	Recommended FTEs	Current Staffing	Difference in Staffing
Speech	4.93	5.00	4.00	-1.00
Occupational Therapy	1.71	1.50	0.00	- 1.50
Adapted P.E.	0.01	Contract	0.00	+/- 0.00
Audiology	0.25	Contract	0.00	+/- 0.00
Counseling	0.25	Contract	1.00	+ 0.75
Physical Therapy	0.71	Contract	0.00	+/- 0.00
VI Support	0.01	Contract	0.00	+/- 0.00



# Related Services Analysis - Findings

- Speech minutes indicate that 5.00 FTEs are required to meet the needs of students in Lumberton ISD. Services are currently covered by four direct hires (2 SLPs and 2 SLP-As) and a contracted SLP-A.
- Occupational therapy minutes indicate that 1.50 FTEs are required to meet the needs of students in Lumberton ISD. Services are currently covered by three contracted Occupational Therapists.
- Although only two areas require a full FTE, the district works to locate and contract with providers across a continuum of related services rather than shying away from service needs of their students.



# Related Services Analysis - Recommendations

- Continue to monitor student needs in the areas of speech and occupational therapy. Additional student enrollment could make a big impact in these areas and result in additional need.
- Currently all related service needs are covered by a combination of a direct hire and contractors. If this works for the district and the needs of students, it makes sense to continue. However, the district may want to consider seeking additional direct hires in the areas of speech and occupational therapy to ensure there is availability to meet all student needs.



# Assessment Analysis

	Number of Students	Assessment Percent	Estimated Number of Assessments	Estimated Hours to Evaluate	Gross Estimation of FTEs
Special Education	536	33.33%	179	1790	2.10
General Education	3652	3 – 5%	110 – 182	1100 – 1820	1.29 – 2.14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4188</b>		<b>289 – 361</b>	<b>2890 – 3610</b>	<b>3.40 – 4.25</b>

	Recommended FTEs	Current Staffing	Difference in Staffing
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>-0.75</b>



# Assessment Analysis - Findings

- It continues to be anticipated that there will be an increase in assessment load that results from the state's Corrective Action Plan. This could result in additional assessment needs for the district.
- Additional assessment associated with students in Section 504 could also result in an increased load in assessment.
- Dyslexia identification now occurs through a referral to IDEA. This may also result in an increase of assessments.
- One educational diagnostician employed by the district completes bilingual evaluations and provides interpreting assistance.
- The district contracts 1 LSSP to complete psychological evaluations.
- The need for a centralized person to oversee paperwork is well established in the role of ARD Facilitators and can be of assistance to districts who are able to provide this additional FTE to maintain alignment and compliance in documentation and federal, state, and local requirements. The district may want to consider expanding the current ARD Facilitator model to Lumberton Early Childhood, Middle, and High Schools to relieve staff of some case management tasks.



# Assessment Analysis - Recommendations

- The FTE recommendation for assessment is lower than the district's current FTE; however, the amount of time for IEP documentation and meetings should be considered as these are additional responsibilities for the Educational Diagnostician role.
- Consider the needs of psychological evaluations that must be completed by an LSSP or psychologist.
- Given the statewide Corrective Action Plan for special education, the new requirements for identification of students with dyslexia, and as students return from being gone for assorted reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, assessments over the next few years will likely continue to increase. The district should anticipate this increase and be prepared to meet the growing need of evaluations.
- To allow assessment personnel to focus on the anticipated increase of assessments, the District may consider alternative case management models such as ARD Facilitators or additional clerical support.



# Overview of Findings

- The district clearly works to support students in Special Education and provide for their needs in alignment with state and federal requirements.
- Staff, documentation and processes clearly indicate the care and concern that align with those they serve.
- There are some areas that could use fine tuning through additional training, ongoing internal reviews and staffing alignment with growth.



Thank you for the opportunity to work with  
your school district and staff.



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# Questions



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We are ready to work with you to identify your most pressing needs and tailor solutions to address them!

Thank you!

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