



The Special Education (SPED) program in Dallas ISD aims to provide special services and accommodations to students with disabilities. Federal laws and regulations set forth by the State of Texas provide a framework that helps shape and guide special education programming within the district. The SPED department in Dallas ISD is guided by three primary goals: 1) improve outcomes of students who receive SPED services, 2) provide quality and timely services, and 3) enhance climate and culture.

Key Findings

Implementation

- The districtwide SPED population increased in 2023-24 ($N = 17,616$; 12.6%) compared to 2022-23 ($N = 16,803$; 12.1%).
- The most common primary disabilities of students receiving SPED services were specific learning disability, autism, speech impairment, and other health impairment.
- Among students with specific learning disabilities, a sizable proportion had speech impairment as a secondary disability. Similarly, among students with autism, a large proportion were also diagnosed with speech impairment as secondary disability.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Overall, SPED Customer Service survey results were positive, with staff rating the SPED department highest on the Core 4 Friendly domain.
- It is noteworthy that across all MTSS survey items, a significant proportion of SPED Staff, GenEd staff, and support staff reported that they did not have enough info to rate their campus SST or they were not aware of an SST on their campus.
- Overall, SPED and GenEd staff felt confident providing differentiated instruction to meet the individual needs of their students. However, they expressed less certainty when applying these strategies within the district's standardized curriculums (i.e., TeachTown, Eureka, & Amplify)
- Two-thirds of SPED staff agreed that they received regular, high-quality instructional support.
- There is a notable discrepancy between the perceptions of teaching staff and administrators regarding support. Administrators rate their provision of co-teaching and campus support more highly than their SPED and GenEd staff.

Student Outcomes

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

- On STAAR and EOC, students receiving SPED services in 2023-24 were within one percentage point or exceeded 2022-23 rates at the Approaches+ performance standard on 1) grades four, five, six, eight Reading, 2) English II, 3) grade eight Mathematics, and 4) Algebra I.
- On STAAR Alt 2 and EOC Alt 2, students receiving SPED services in 2023-24 were within one percentage point or exceeded 2022-23 rates at the Satisfactory+ performance standard on, 1) grades three and five Reading, 2) English I 3) grades five and eight Mathematics, and 4) Algebra I.
- Students receiving SPED services in Dallas ISD outperformed students statewide in grades six and eight Mathematics and Algebra. Dallas ISD students performed at the same level as students at the state level on grade eight Reading, Biology, and US History.
- On STAAR 3-8 Reading, at the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standard, Dallas ISD SPED students outperformed two of the five large, urban Texas ISDs (Fort Worth and San Antonio).
- On STAAR 3-8 Mathematics, at the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standard, Dallas ISD SPED student's scores were comparable to the state and outperformed three of the five large, urban Texas ISDs (El Paso, Fort Worth, and San Antonio).

Graduation and Dropout

- For the Class of 2023, graduation rate (70.1%) for students with disabilities receiving SPED services was similar to the Class of 2022 (70.0%) but was lower than the districtwide graduation rate (81.4%).
- For the Class of 2023, dropout rate (16.4%) for students with disabilities receiving SPED services was similar to the Class of 2022 (16.1%) and was higher than the districtwide rate (14.7%).

ESSER

- Overall, the SPED department met two SPED ESSER activity goals and made significant progress towards the other three ESSER activity goals.



Recommendations

- **Monitor and investigate the impact of House Bill 3928 on implementation of Special Education services to students with disabilities.**

During the spring of 2023, the 88th Texas legislature passed House Bill (HB) 3928, in an effort to clarify instructional needs, evaluation and reporting for students with dyslexia as well as mandate additional requirements for multidisciplinary and admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees. It is currently not known how these increased responsibilities mandated by HB 3928 will impact special education service provision to students with disabilities. Monitoring staff well-being and caseloads will allow the SPED department to identify and respond to SPED service disruptions so that SPED service provision to students is not negatively impacted.

- **Continue to foster collaboration at the campus-level and district-level.**

One of the key provisions of HB 3928 is aimed at fostering collaborations among special education service providers, general education teachers, and related service providers. However, a significant proportion of SPED Staff, GenEd staff, and support staff reported that they did not have enough information to rate their campus SST or they were not aware of an SST on their campus. Additionally, campus administrators rate their provision of co-teaching and campus support more highly than do their SPED and GenEd staff. Continuing to foster collaboration among staff not only will increase awareness of each others' roles, but also allows opportunities to learn from each other, share best practices, and develop new skills as well as improve teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction.