

2019-20

Evaluation of Special Education

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

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Superintendent of Schools



2019-20

Evaluation of Special Education

Approved Report of the Department of Evaluation and Assessment

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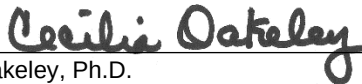
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Alternative Certification
Afr Am	African American
AP	Assistant Principal
Approaches+/Aprpr+	Approaches grade level or above performance standard
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal
E&A	Evaluation and Assessment
EC	Early Childhood
Eco Dis	Economically Disadvantaged
EL	English learner
EOC	<i>End-of-Course</i>
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
Gen Ed	General Education
GL	Grade Level
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ISD	Independent School District
KN	Kindergarten
LEA	Local Education Agency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
LSSP	Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
PL	Performance Level
Meets+	Meets grade level or above performance standard
MRE	More Restrictive Environment
MTSS	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
N/A	Not Applicable
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NP	Not Provided
OSS	Out-of-School Suspensions
PBMAS	Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System
PD	Professional development
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
PK	Prekindergarten
PL	Performance Level
PPCD	Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities
RO	Report Only
RDA	Results-Driven Accountability
RDSPD	Regional Day School Program for the Deaf
SD	Significant Disproportionality
SPED	Special Education
SPP	State Performance Plan
SRA	Science Research Associates
STAAR	<i>State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness.</i>
TA	Teacher Assistant
TACCAM	Texas Administrative Code Campus
TACDIST	Texas Administrative Code District
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TxCHSE	Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency
ULS	Unique Learning System
US	United States
WISC	<i>Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children</i>

Evaluation of Special Education

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provides specialized services and accommodations to students with disabilities. Federal laws and State of Texas accountability systems provide a framework that helps shape and guide special education (SPED) programming within the district. The total budget for 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED services was \$61,597,547, an increase from \$60,210,915 in 2018-19. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning beginning after spring break on March 23, 2020. As a result, district operations and support functions were modified accordingly, and most state and district assessments were cancelled for the year.

The purpose of this report was to describe the SPED program, to summarize trends in the characteristics and academic performance of students served by SPED with a focus on indicators related to state and federal accountability systems, and to summarize feedback from SPED teachers, principals, and evaluators to identify SPED program-related challenges, successes, and areas for improvement. In particular, this evaluation aimed to achieve the following objectives for 2019-20: 1) report funding and budget information; 2) summarize district performance on the Texas Education Agency Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) report; 3) summarize the characteristics of SPED students; 4) summarize the characteristics of SPED teachers and the SPED professional development they were offered; 5) report trends in academic achievement for SPED students; 6) report trends in the dropout rates and attendance rates of SPED students; and 7) summarize stakeholder perceptions of program-related components.

Changes to SPED Evaluations and Supports During At-Home Learning

Because of the COVID-19-related transition to districtwide at-home learning on March 23, 2020 and the nature of the SPED evaluation process, which necessitates in-person interaction with students, SPED student evaluations were suspended in spring 2020 once districtwide at-home learning began. However, annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings and three-year re-evaluations were required to continue virtually during this time. In addition, completion of Individual Education Program (IEP)

amendments was required for each SPED student outlining the SPED services the district could continue to provide to students during at-home learning.

SPED service modifications for at-home learning varied and depended on the nature of each student's disability, the level of student and parent engagement during this period, appropriate technological device availability and provision, and the limits of the nature of technology inherent to distance-learning. The SPED department also provided resources for parents of SPED students during this time, including through the Dallas ISD SPED department website,¹ which listed (in both English and Spanish) organizations and contact information for additional parent and community support.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How did the SPED program perform on the 2019 RDA Report?

Table E1 provides a summary of Dallas ISD SPED-related performance levels (PLs) for the past three years, as indicated in the respective PBMAS²/RDA reports. In summary, three areas on the 2017 Dallas ISD SPED program PBMAS report were assigned a PL indicator of zero, and seven program areas were assigned a PL indicator of three or above.³ By 2019, more program areas were assigned a PL of zero ($N=5$), and fewer were assigned a PL of three or above ($N=5$) than in previous years. These results indicated some improvement. However, in both 2018 and 2019, eight areas were assigned PLs of two, and the number of PLs three or greater⁴ remained steady.

¹ See: <https://www.dallasisd.org/sped>. Link retrieved 07/07/2020.

² PBMAS=Performance-Based Monitoring Accountability System (of the Texas Education Agency). PBMAS was replaced by RDA in 2019.

³ A PL of zero indicates that the state standard was met; the higher the PL number, the greater the concern regarding the program area.

⁴ "Or greater" includes the SD (significant disproportionality) PL assignment. Additional detail on SD including its definition, background, and use can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2019%20SD%20Information.pdf>.

Table E1: 2017-2019 Dallas ISD Special Education Related PBMAS/RDA Performance Level Assignments

PL Assignment	2017	2018	2019
0	3	2	5
1	5	5	4
2	5	8	8
3 or SD Year 3	7	5	5

Source: Texas Education Agency 2017, 2018, and 2019 Dallas ISD PBMAS/RDA reports.

Note: Details about calculation and assignment of PLs can be found in the 2019 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website.

The RDA system identified three SPED areas as 2019 areas of concern: 1) the SPED African American student representation rate (ages 3-21) in the primary disability category of Emotional Disturbance, 2) the SPED African American student Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS) ≤ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21), and 3) the SPED African American student OSS ≥ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21). As required by law, in 2019-20 the district planned how to address these issues in upcoming years.

What were the characteristics of students served by SPED?

The SPED population in the Dallas ISD totaled 14,478 students (9.4% of district enrollment). The number and percentage of students served in the Dallas ISD SPED program has increased each year since 2014-15, when SPED student enrollment totaled 11,722 (7.3% of district enrollment). This rise has persisted despite a downward trend in overall districtwide enrollment since 2014-15.

Similar to 2018-19, a higher percentage of African Americans received SPED services (28.4%, Table E2) relative to their representation in general education enrollment (20.5%). Although males and females were equally represented in the general education population, two-thirds of special education students were male (67.3%). While more than a third (38.0%) of special education students were English learners (EL), this rate was lower than the rate of ELs in the general education population (46.5%).

Table E2: 2019-20 Characteristics of SPED Students

Group	Special Education (N=14,478)		General Education (N=139,016)	
	n	%	n	%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	9,233	63.8	98,830	71.1
African American	4,110	28.4	28,517	20.5
White	717	5.0	7,109	5.1
Other	418	2.9	4,560	3.3
Sex				
Female	4,730	32.7	70,246	50.5
Male	9,748	67.3	68,770	49.5
Student Groups				
Econ Dis	12,558	86.7	116,885	84.1
English Learner	5,498	38.0	64,673	46.5
Homeless	223	1.5	2,300	1.7

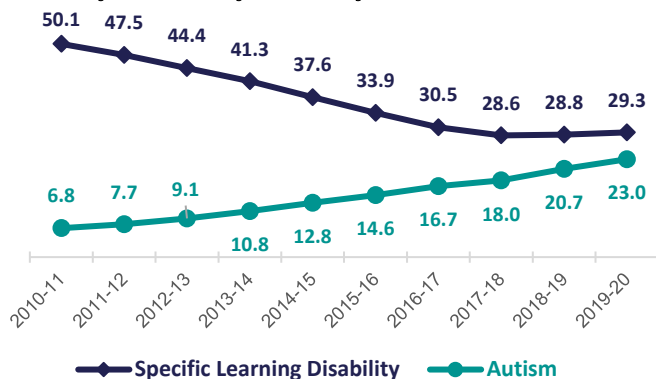
Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Econ Dis=Economically Disadvantaged, PEIMS=Public Education Information Management System.

Specific learning disability and autism were the two most common primary disabilities of SPED students overall in 2019-20. As shown in Figure E1, the overall percentage of SPED students identified with a specific learning disability as a primary disability declined since 2010-11, while the rate of those identified with autism steadily rose, more than tripling between 2010-11 and 2019-20, from 6.8 percent to 23.0 percent. Several studies and government entities have reported similar increases in autism spectrum disorder cases (Blumberg et al., 2013), relating increases to changes in the diagnostic criteria of behaviors constituting the disorder (Wazana, Bresnahan, and Kline, 2007) and better monitoring and diagnosis of the disorder, rather than to a “de facto” rise in the number of children who fall on the autism spectrum.⁵ However, the topic of factors contributing to the marked rise in autism spectrum disorders over the past few decades is one of intense debate at the national and international level, and more research is needed to better understand both the causes and effective treatments of those identified on the autism spectrum.

⁵ See <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html> for more information.

Figure E1: 2010-11 to 2019-20 Percentage of Dallas ISD SPED Students with Autism and Specific Learning Disability as Primary Disability



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20) and Mejan, 2019 (2010-11 to 2018-19).

What were the characteristics of SPED teachers?

A total of 1,129 SPED teachers served the district in 2019-20. Over four years the rate of district SPED teachers increased by 2.3 percentage points; the number of general education teachers decreased by 2.3 percentage points.

More than 77 percent of 2019-20 district SPED teachers were female. A smaller percentage of SPED teachers were Hispanic (11.2%) compared to general education teachers (31.3%), while a higher percentage of SPED teachers were African American (53.6%) compared to general education teachers (31.9%). A higher percentage of SPED teachers held a master's degree (31.2%) compared to general education teachers (20.9%). The average length of teaching experience of district SPED teachers was 8.7 years.

What professional development opportunities did the SPED department offer in 2019-20?

From data provided by program leadership listing 2019-20 SPED professional development and other training provided to campus staff members, the evaluator identified 69 unique 2019-20 session topics. Examples of training themes included policy and procedures, skills acquisition, classroom organization, technology, and supporting students with various disabilities, for example. During spring 2020 at-home learning, professional learning committee (PLC) meetings were held online weekly to address a variety of concerns related to at-home learning.

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding the SPED department?

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership in 2019-20 to design and administer an online survey titled the SPED Customer Service Survey to solicit feedback from district SPED teachers, SPED teacher assistants,

principals, and assistant principals. The survey addressed a range of issues that included the customer service experience with the SPED department and understanding of SPED policy, procedures, and resource access, both before and during at-home learning. The response rate was 60 percent (teachers: 65%, $N=1,243$; administrators: 45%, $N=289$).

Perceptions About Student Support Teams (SSTs)

The campus Student Support Team (SST) is integral to the effective functioning of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and the SPED student evaluation processes. A higher percentage of campus administrators than SPED teachers agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that campus SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns (teachers: 57%; administrators: 85%), and that SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (teachers: 55%; administrators: 85%). Survey findings also indicated a low rate of SPED teacher awareness of the presence and activities of campus SSTs, possibly indicating some under-engagement of SPED staff members at the campus level.

Core 4

Ratings of the SPED department prior to at-home learning on all Core 4 domains (Focused, Fast, Flexible, and Friendly) were generally positive (range: 75% to 91%), an improvement from 2018-19. During at-home learning, SPED customer service ratings were comparable and often higher than before the transition.

Technology and Online Platforms: Levels of Need During At-Home Learning

A high percentage of SPED teacher (61%) and administrator (74%) respondents indicated a need for more effective online teaching resources for at-home learning. More than half of both groups reported a need for more training on Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms.

In addition, the highest percentage of administrators and SPED teachers indicated that students needed more reliable internet connectivity (teachers: 71%; administrators: 81%), and technology (hardware) resources (teachers: 64%; administrators: 73%). Higher rates of SPED teachers (49%) than administrators (34%) needed more reliable technology (hardware) and internet connectivity (teachers: 39%, administrators: 32%) for themselves.

Finally, both SPED teachers (66%) and administrators (82%) expressed a need for more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning.

What were the activities and perceptions of SPED evaluators?

The evaluator also collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey to solicit feedback on the activities and perceptions of 2019-20 SPED evaluators (diagnosticians and LSSPs), including during spring 2020 districtwide at-home learning. Of the 119 SPED evaluators invited to participate in this SPED Evaluator Survey, 111 at least partially completed the survey (93%).

Parent Referrals for SPED Evaluations

Similar to 2018-19, 2019-20 SPED evaluators reported high rates of parent requests for initial evaluations, but the rate of respondents indicating all evaluations were parent requests decreased from 24 percent in 2018-19 to 14 percent in 2019-20.

Workspace on Campus

Many SPED evaluators reported they had space on campus to conduct student evaluations with fidelity (68%) and to conduct job-related duties (60%), but these numbers mean 32 to 40 percent lacked adequate workspace on campus.

Supplies on Campus

SPED evaluators reported that their printer- and copy-related needs were met on campuses (90%) and they had reasonable access to needed assessment kits (83%), but fewer (57%) reported they had reasonable access to the protocols needed [e.g. *Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children (WISC)*] to complete their work duties.

Professional Support and Collaboration Before and During At-Home Learning

Ratings of professional support and collaboration prior to at-home learning improved in all areas compared to the previous year, with notable increases in ratings for regularity and usefulness of collaboration meetings.

Ratings of professional support and collaboration during at-home learning were also very high, and many evaluators remarked that virtual meetings during this time were more time and energy efficient compared to in-person meetings.

What was the academic performance of students served in special education?

Because of the 2019-20 statewide COVID-19-related STAAR cancellation, 2019-20 STAAR outcomes could not be reported.

What were the dropout and attendance rates of special education students?

Dropout, graduation, continuation, and Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE) information is calculated and published by the TEA. These data (lagged one year for 2018-19) were not provided by the TEA in summer 2020, so outcomes were not reported.

The overall attendance rate among SPED students as of the fourth six-week period was 93.1 percent, a lower rate than the districtwide rate of 94.4 percent. Among SPED students, rates were highest in the middle and elementary grades, with the highest attendance rate in grade four (94.9%) and the lowest attendance rate in grade nine (88.2%). Attendance rates among high school SPED students were higher in each consecutive grade level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to stress to all campuses the importance of regular SST meetings for the identification of students needing services.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have the workspace they need on campuses.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have needed supplies.

Review and enhance the technological resources of teachers and students to ensure uninterrupted SPED services during possible future periods of at-home learning.

Consider virtual meetings as a year-round option to improve efficiency.

Evaluation of Special Education

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION⁶

Legal Requirements and Accountability Systems Guiding Special Education Programming in the Dallas Independent School District

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provides specialized services and accommodations to students with disabilities. Federal laws and State of Texas accountability systems provide a framework that helps shape and guide special education (SPED) programming within the district.

Federal Laws

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) is the federal law designed to ensure that students with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, SPED, and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth to age 2) receive SPED and related services under IDEA Part C, and youth (ages 3-21 years) receive SPED and related services under IDEA Part B.⁷ Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), schools were held accountable for the education results of every child, including children with disabilities. State assessments were used to determine whether schools had been successful in teaching students the grade-level knowledge and skills as defined by the state content standards. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) replaced NCLB and granted states greater flexibility to set performance standards and determine goals and milestones.

Accountability Systems

Assessment results for students receiving SPED services are collected for state and federal accountability systems. Students in grades three to eight are given *State of Texas Assessments for Academic Readiness (STAAR)* in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in high school are given *STAAR End of Course (EOC)* assessments in Algebra I, Biology, English I, English II, and United States History.⁸

In addition to the state and federal accountability systems that provide ratings for districts and campuses, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed an ancillary accountability system, the Results Driven Accountability system (RDA).⁹ RDA reports annually on the performance of school districts

⁶ Portions of this report were adapted from Mejan, 2019b.

⁷ Additional resources regarding IDEA can be found at the US Department of Education IDEA website, <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>. Link retrieved 1/16/20.

⁸ TEA canceled STAAR and STAAR EOC in spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁹ Prior to 2019-20, this system was called the Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS).

in four program areas: bilingual education/English as a second language, career and technical education, certain federal Title programs, and SPED. The Division of Review and Support within the TEA monitors and supports intervention activities within this data-driven, performance-based system using a continuous improvement model. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to participate in intervention activities when data suggest such a need, and LEAs may be subject to additional, elevated interventions, such as on-site reviews by TEA staff members.^{10,11} Additional summative information about the TEA RDA system including outcomes for the Dallas ISD SPED program (with state-level comparisons) are provided later in this report; more detailed information about this system can be obtained through the Dallas ISD Federal and State Accountability department¹² and on the TEA website.

Dallas ISD Special Education Program

Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Processes

Identification

Child Find, a component of IDEA, requires that schools “find all children who have disabilities and who may be entitled to special education services.” Child Find further mandates that schools evaluate any child from birth to age two who is known or suspected to have a disability.¹³ In accordance with Child Find, the Dallas ISD SPED department communicates through a variety of means (e.g., flyers, email and website communications, presence at family and community events) with existing and potentially eligible families regarding Dallas ISD SPED services.

When parents or instructional staff members suspect a student might have a disability, depending on the nature of the problem, the student may first be provided support through the Dallas ISD Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS – previously called the Response to Intervention system, or RTI). The MTSS framework encompasses “[evidence-based] structures and procedures that campuses offer to help each child achieve success.” MTSS supports encompass three domains: academics, language, and engagement, and interventions from any or all of these domains may be utilized when campus staff members are working within this framework to support a struggling student.¹⁴ MTSS intervention efforts increase in intensity and duration for students who fail to respond appropriately to the core academic program.^{15,16}

¹⁰ Source: <https://tea.texas.gov/student-testing-and-accountability/monitoring-and-interventions/performance-based-monitoring-analysis-system-pbmas/results-driven-accountability-rda-overview>. Retrieved 01/16/20.

¹¹ For detailed information about State and Federal Accountability systems, please contact the Dallas ISD Office of State and Federal Accountability. Contact information can be found at <https://www.dallasisd.org/domain/98#>. Link retrieved 01/16/20.

¹² Contact information and other resources can be found online at: <https://www.dallasisd.org/federalandstate>.

¹³ Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/child-find-what-it-is-and-how-it-works>. Retrieved 01/21/20.

¹⁴ Source: <https://sites.google.com/dallasisd.org/disdmtss/home>. Link retrieved 3/12/2019.

¹⁵ Of the three tiers in the MTSS framework, Tier One is considered the core academic program. SPED services are applied beyond the MTSS framework (beyond MTSS Tier Three).

¹⁶ Additional information on MTSS can be found in recent MTSS evaluation reports (Mejan, 2019a; Springer and Kim, 2020).

Student Evaluation for SPED

When warranted MTSS interventions have been provided and have not produced the desired outcome(s) – or in cases where student struggle is more evident and severe than the MTSS framework can adequately address – the student may be referred for an initial SPED evaluation. Parents also may request at any time that their students be provided an initial evaluation for SPED.¹⁷ Regardless of the originator of the referral (i.e., parent or school staff member), IDEA requires the school to provide prior written notice to the parent or guardian regarding a range of activities in which the school anticipates engaging pertaining to the SPED process, including conducting an initial evaluation.

The Dallas ISD SPED program employs SPED evaluators, also referred to as diagnosticians or licensed specialists in school psychology (LSSPs), on campuses throughout the district. SPED evaluators review student records, including academic, hearing, vision, and related test results, and any other records related to the suspected disability.

Determination of Eligibility and Placement

After an initial evaluation report is completed, an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee including parents, teachers, school administrators, and evaluation personnel must be formed to review the evaluation report and determine whether the student is eligible for SPED and related services.¹⁸ Once a student is determined eligible, the ARD committee develops an individualized education program (IEP).¹⁹ An IEP articulates the annual goals, services, accommodations and modifications, and progress measurements that are required to meet the needs resulting from the student disability. ARD committees also determine instructional placements suitable for educating SPED students while also – to the maximum extent appropriate – placing SPED students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with nonSPED peers.²⁰ A visual representation of this process is provided in Appendix A.

State assessment (i.e., the version of the STAAR assessment most appropriate for the student) and graduation requirements also are determined by the ARD committee. An ARD committee must meet

¹⁷ For detailed information about processes and duties related to the SPED evaluation processes, particularly the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) process, please refer to the TEA ARD Parent Guide found at https://framework.esc18.net/Documents/ARD_Guide_ENG.pdf. Retrieved 01/14/2020.

¹⁸ Related services is defined by the United States Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997 as “transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education [...] and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training” [IDEA section 300.24(a)].

¹⁹ IEP plans under IDEA cover students who qualify for SPED. Section 504 (of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a civil rights law) covers students who do not meet the criteria for SPED but who require some accommodations. Both IEPs and Section 504 plans ensure that students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education. See <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans> for more information on the differences between an IEP and Section 504 provisions.

²⁰ As the State of Texas IDEA Manual (2016, page 6) highlights: “In 2004, Congress [...] amended IDEA, and [...] raised the bar for expectations of students with disabilities [...]. The education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom to the maximum extent possible in order to meet developmental goals and to the maximum extent possible the challenging expectations that have been established for all children and be prepared to lead productive and independent lives.”

at least annually to review the progress of each SPED student and make recommendations regarding student educational programs.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this report was to summarize trends in the characteristics and academic performance of students served in SPED, focusing on indicators related to state and federal accountability systems. In addition, this evaluation report summarizes feedback from SPED teachers, principals, and evaluators identifying SPED program-related challenges, successes, and areas for improvement.

The last day of in-class instruction in the Dallas ISD during 2019-20 was March 13, 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning beginning after spring break on March 23, 2020. As a result, district operations and support functions were modified accordingly, and most state and district assessments were cancelled for the year. For topics included in this evaluation report that were affected by the transition to at-home learning, resulting changes to operations, supports, and outcomes will be outlined and summarized within each section of the report, as appropriate.

This evaluation aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Report 2019-20 funding and budget information for SPED;
2. Summarize changes to the SPED program in 2019-20, including implementation summaries of the resources and activities that the SPED department initiated and/or prioritized in 2019-20 to support student achievement;
3. Summarize the characteristics of students served by SPED;
4. Summarize the characteristics of SPED teachers and the SPED professional development they were offered in 2019-20;
5. Report trends in academic achievement for students served by SPED.
6. Report trends in the dropout rates, graduation rates, and attendance rates of students served by SPED and comparison groups, as appropriate; and
7. Summarize stakeholder perceptions of program-related components, successes, challenges, and support from the SPED department, including follow-up on issues related to recommendations included in the 2018-19 program evaluation report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

How was Special Education in the Dallas ISD funded in 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluator summarized program budget data obtained from SPED staff members.

Results

The total budget for 2019-20 SPED services in the Dallas ISD was \$61,597,547, an increase from \$60,210,915 in 2018-19. As shown in Table 1, for 2019-20 and the previous year, payroll costs were the largest expense, followed by professional/contracted services.

Table 1: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Dallas ISD Special Education Department Budget

Budget Category	2018-19 \$	2019-20 \$	1 Yr Change \$
Payroll Costs	48,865,022	50,667,593	1,802,571
Professional/Contracted Services	6,547,645	6,821,770	274,125
Supplies/Materials	4,335,636	3,557,305	(778,331)
Other Operational Costs	434,282	529,767	95,485
Capital Outlay: Land/Building/Equipment	28,330	21,112	(7,218)
Grand Total	60,210,915	61,597,547	1,386,632

Source: Dallas ISD SPED department staff members, June 2020.

Note: Numbers rounded to nearest dollar.

How did the SPED program perform on the 2019 RDA Report?

The RDA (termed PBMAS prior to 2019-20) is an automated data system developed by the TEA that reports annually on the performance of school districts and charter schools throughout the State of Texas. School improvement staff members at each Local Education Agency (LEA) monitor and support intervention activities related to this system.²¹ The TEA assigns performance level (PL) indicators for a variety of LEA programming areas, including SPED. If the system identifies areas of concern with noncompliance, student performance, or program effectiveness, the LEA is required to participate in intervention activities and may be subjected to additional sanctions and interventions, including on-site reviews by TEA staff members.

PL assignments range from zero to three and “significant disproportionality” (SD). A performance level of zero indicates that the state standard was met. Areas not meeting the standard are assigned PLs of one to three, with higher numbers or assignments indicating areas of greater concern. Significant disproportionality may be assigned when racial or ethnic group representation in a given program area is significantly greater than one might expect given that group’s representation in the larger district population. The threshold for an assignment of SD is a risk ratio of >2.5 .²² An *SD Year 3* assignment carries actionable requirements if the district fails to show reasonable progress for three years. The State of Texas also will notify in writing each district identified as *SD Year 3* in any of the required SD categories of resulting actionable requirements and timelines associated for completion and assurance of those requirements.²³

Likewise, LEAs with one or more PL assignments of three or higher or high numbers of PLs of two and higher are required to submit reports to the TEA addressing areas of concern. These reports include 1) a focused data analysis (districts must review data related to indicators of concern and identify causal factors, patterns, and trends contributing to low performance, program deficiencies, and/or poor data quality) and 2) a targeted improvement plan (used to guide district and campus planning for improved student performance or program effectiveness).

²¹ In the Dallas ISD, these staff members can be found in the department of Federal and State Accountability.

²² The TEA defines a risk ratio as, “A calculation performed by dividing the risk of a particular outcome for children in one racial or ethnic group within an LEA by the risk for children in all other racial and ethnic groups within the LEA.” Definition retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/programs-and-services/significant-disproportionality> on 3/16/20.

²³ Source: <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2019%20SD%20Information.pdf>. Link retrieved 04/03/20.

Methodology

2017-18 to 2019-20 Dallas ISD Performance

The evaluator retrieved from the TEA website the 2019 RDA (district-level) Report for the Dallas ISD on January 13, 2020 and examined findings related to district SPED program performance. PBMAS and RDA data and other findings from previous two school years were taken from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 SPED evaluation reports (Grimberg, 2018; Mejan, 2019). The evaluator then reviewed SPED-related PL data for the three years to examine patterns over time.

2019-20 District to State Comparisons

The evaluator retrieved from the TEA website the 2019 RDA (state-level) Report on January 13, 2020 and examined findings related to Dallas ISD and state-level SPED program performance. The evaluator then compared 2019-20 SPED-related PL data for the district to state-level data.

Results

2017-18 to 2019-20 Dallas ISD Performance

Three-year district performance on PBMAS/RDA SPED program area indicators are provided in Appendix B for informational purposes. Table 2 provides a summary of Dallas ISD SPED-related PLs for the past three years, as indicated in the respective PBMAS/RDA reports. In summary, three areas on the 2017 Dallas ISD SPED program PBMAS report were assigned a PL indicator of zero, and seven program areas were assigned a PL indicator of three or above. By 2019, more program areas were assigned a PL of zero ($N=5$), and fewer were assigned PLs of three or above ($N=5$). These results indicated some improvement; however, in both 2018 and 2019, eight areas were assigned a PL indicator of two, and the number of PLs two or greater remained virtually unchanged.

Table 2: 2017-19 Dallas ISD Special Education Related PBMAS/RDA Performance Level Assignments

PL Assignment	2017	2018	2019
0	3	2	5
1	5	5	4
2	5	8	8
3 or SD Year 3	7	5	5

Source: Texas Education Agency 2017, 2018, and 2019 Dallas ISD PBMAS/RDA reports.

Note: Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2019 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website. PLs by area are provided in Appendix B.

Three SPED program areas were identified in the RDA system as areas of concern in 2019 because of an *SD Year 3* assignment, and thus were targeted for interventions: 1) the SPED African American student representation rate (ages 3-21) in the primary disability category of Emotional Disturbance, 2) the SPED African American student Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS) ≤ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21), and 3) the SPED African American student OSS ≥ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21).

All three areas identified for interventions exceeded the TEA SD risk ratio threshold of 2.5 in 2019. First, 7.7 percent ($N = 310$) of African American SPED students were identified with a primary disability of

Emotional Disturbance (risk ratio: 3.2). Second, the African American SPED student OSS ≤ 10 Days rate was 14.2 percent (risk ratio: 3.0). Finally, the overall SPED African American student OSS ≥ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21) was not indicated in the 2019 RDA report, but the risk ratio for this student group was 3.5.

In response to these performance level assignments, the Dallas ISD worked in 2019-20 to prepare documents for the TEA (including a Strategic Support Plan) articulating the problems, root cause analysis efforts, and plans for resolution efforts in upcoming school years.²⁴

2019-20 District to State Comparisons

Comparisons of district performance to the state on PBMAS/RDA SPED program area indicators are provided in Appendix C for informational purposes. To summarize, SPED program area PLs for the district were better (numerically lower) than for the state [SPED STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate in Social Studies, SPED STAAR EOC Passing Rate in Mathematics, SPED Program Settings: SPED Regular Class $\geq 80\%$ Rate (Ages 6-21)]. PLs for three Dallas ISD SPED program areas were worse (numerically higher) than for the state [SPED Year-After-Exit STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate in Social Studies and Writing, and SPED Program Settings: SPED Regular Early Childhood Program Rate (Ages 3-5)]. PLs for other SPED program areas were comparable to state PLs.

What changes were made to the SPED program in 2019-20, and what resources and activities were implemented to support student achievement?

This section provides information about 2019-20 changes the SPED program related to 1) audiology services, 2) child find services, 3) speech services, and 4) spring 2020 at-home learning-related changes to evaluation and related services.

Methodology

To obtain information about changes in the Dallas ISD SPED program for 2019-20, the evaluator conducted interviews with SPED central staff members. Information was then content-analyzed and summarized by topic.

Results

Audiology Services Moved In-House

According to communications with Dallas ISD SPED department staff members, for more than three decades the Dallas ISD utilized contracted external audiology services for Dallas ISD Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD) students. In 2019-20, the district served more than 600 students identified with some form of an auditory impairment determined to be severe enough to place them at risk for adverse academic outcomes.²⁵ The Dallas ISD has the largest RDSPD in the state of Texas and the second largest RDSPD in the nation.

²⁴ For more detail please contact the Dallas ISD Federal and State Accountability Office.

²⁵ Source: Dallas ISD SPED website, <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/22380>. Retrieved February 2020.

Prior to 2019-20, district SPED program administration staff members developed a three-year plan to provide audiology services within the district rather than contracting externally for provision of these services. This plan included “the sustainability and control over services provided to all stakeholders by improving processes and procedures, converting positions and hiring an Audiologist Coordinator and an additional audiologist, decreasing budget, increasing parent engagement, and using additional funds to improve assistive hearing technology for students.”²⁶

Child Find Services Decentralized

According to SPED leadership, the district Child Find process was decentralized beginning in 2019-20. Previously, a designated and centralized Child Find team completed tasks related to the Child Find process (e.g., evaluations, ARDs). The goal of decentralization was to better serve families in the geographical bounds of the district by establishing a presence at neighborhood campuses closer to families with potential needs for early childhood SPED services, including evaluations for students in private schools. This decentralization of evaluations and ARDs was designed to align with the district initiative of early childhood education.

Teletherapy Added to Speech Services

The Dallas ISD SPED department was awarded district priority dollars to address a districtwide shortage (reflecting a nationwide trend) of speech language pathologists. Prior to 2019-20, SPED administrative staff members researched and developed a plan to supplement existing SPED speech services with teletherapy-based speech services. According to SPED program leadership, “this teletherapy service delivery model, which is now “Medicaid billable in Texas, [entails] an online certified speech language pathologist that provides the same services as an on-the-ground therapist. These services include direct/indirect/integrated therapy services, evaluations, parent conferences, ARD meetings, and MTSS consultation.”²⁷ SPED leadership members began implementing this teletherapy service in January 2020 at 25 campuses and to 500 students across the district.

At-Home Learning Adaptations: Teletherapy Services to Further Expand. SPED program administration staff members also confirmed with the evaluator that in order to address the need for additional speech teletherapy service – a need that rose during the 2019-20 districtwide transition to at-home learning – the district would begin supplementing in-house speech teletherapy services with those provided through AmplioSpeech, a company the TEA identified in May 2020 as “a leading provider of speech technology.”²⁸ SPED staff members indicated that more than 320 licenses for provision of this additional service in the Dallas ISD had been obtained as of June 2020, and services through AmplioSpeech would begin in the 2020-21 school year.

²⁶ Source: email communications with SPED central staff member, December 2019 and January 2020.

²⁷ Source: email communications with SPED central staff member, January and June 2020.

²⁸ Source: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/news-releases/news-2020/tea-helps-solve-a-critical-covid-19-special-education-distance-learning-challenge>, retrieved 06/22/20.

Changes to SPED Evaluations and Supports During At-Home Learning

Because of the COVID-19-initiated transition to districtwide at-home learning and the nature of the SPED evaluation process, which necessitates in-person interaction with students, SPED student evaluations were suspended in spring 2020 once districtwide at-home learning began. However, annual ARD meetings and three-year re-evaluations were required to continue virtually during this time. In addition, completion of IEP amendments was required for each SPED student that outlined the SPED services the district could continue to provide to students during at-home learning.

SPED service modifications for at-home learning varied and depended on the nature of each student's disability, the level of student and parent engagement during this period, appropriate technological device availability and provision, and the limits of the nature of technology inherent to distance-learning. The SPED department also provided resources for parents of SPED students during this time, including through the Dallas ISD SPED department website,²⁹ which listed in both English and Spanish organizations and contact information for additional parenting and community support.

What were the characteristics of students served by Special Education?

Methodology

SPED student data for 2019-20 were extracted from the district PEIMS snapshot student demographic data file for October 28, 2019. Frequency and crosstabs analyses were conducted to identify districtwide SPED enrollment rates and trends, grouped by feeder pattern, sex, race/ethnicity, grade level, special student groups, primary disability, and instructional setting. Data for the previous two years were taken from the 2017-18 (Grimberg, 2018) and 2018-19 (Mejan, 2019) evaluation reports.

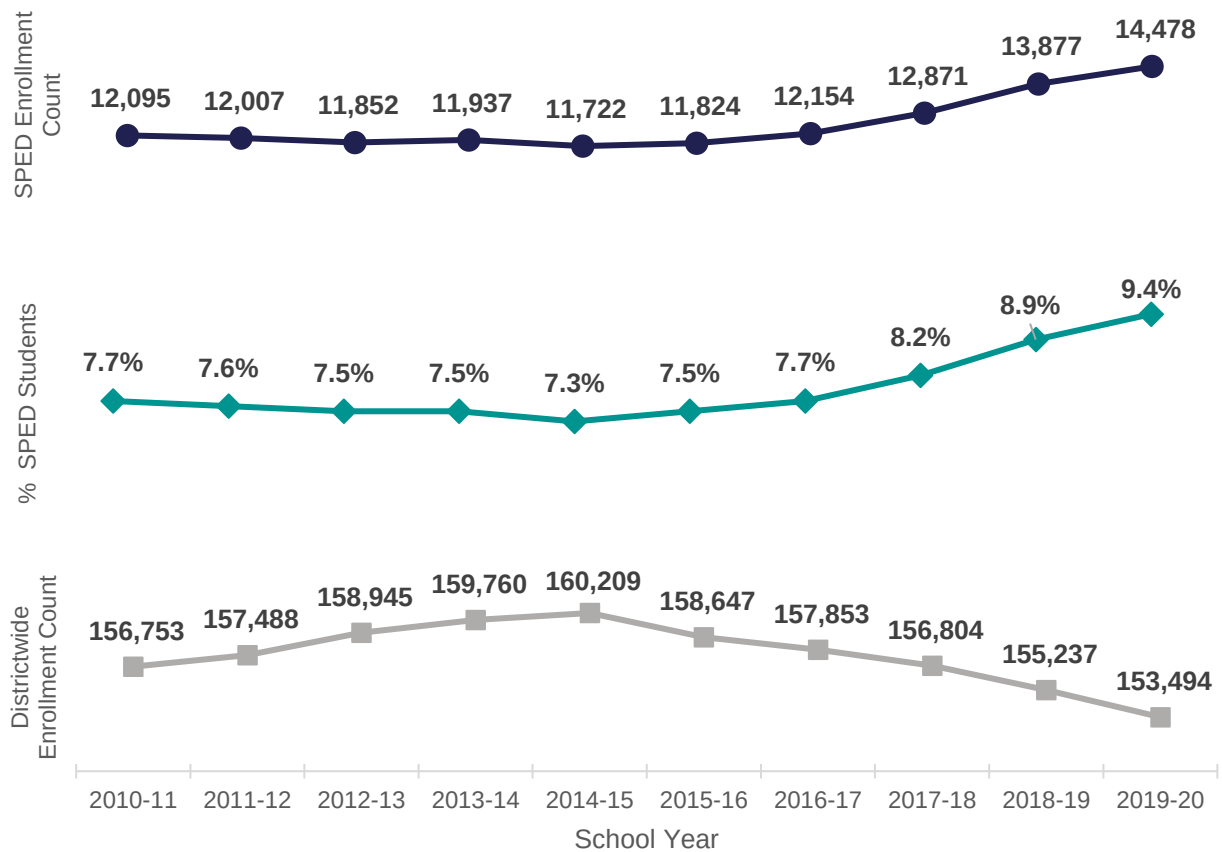
Results

SPED Enrollment

Longitudinal Enrollment Trends. The SPED population in the Dallas ISD in 2019-20 totaled 14,478 students (9.4% of district enrollment). As shown in Figure 1, the number and percentage of students served in the Dallas ISD SPED program has increased each year since 2014-15, when SPED student enrollment totaled 11,722 (7.3% of district enrollment). This rise has persisted despite a downward trend in overall districtwide enrollment since 2014-15 (Figure 1).

²⁹ See: <https://www.dallasisd.org/sped>. Link retrieved 07/07/2020.

Figure 1: 2010-11 to 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20) and Mejan, 2019 (2010-11 through 2018-19).

SPED Enrollment by Feeder Pattern. As shown in Table 3, the level of SPED representation by feeder pattern varied, ranging from 8.4 to 12.7 percent. The Lincoln (12.7%) and Madison (12.4%) feeder patterns reported the largest proportions of students served in SPED. Conversely, the Sunset (8.4%) and Jefferson (8.7%) feeder patterns enrolled the smallest proportions of SPED students in 2019-20. SPED enrollment rates on these campuses did not change notably over the past two years.

Table 3: 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment by Feeder Pattern

Feeder Pattern	SPED (N=14,463)		General Education (N=137,827)		Total (N=153,494)
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Lincoln	154	12.7	1,063	87.3	1,217
Madison	227	12.4	1,609	87.6	1,836
Student Services Schools	28	11.8	209	88.2	237
Carter	506	11.5	3,903	88.5	4,409
Pinkston	699	11.3	5,514	88.7	6,213
Seagoville	742	11.2	5,888	88.8	6,630
Kimball	754	10.9	6,186	89.1	6,940
Samuell	940	10.6	7,937	89.4	8,877
North Dallas	443	10.5	3,796	89.5	4,239
Wilmer-Hutchins HS	340	10.4	2,920	89.6	3,260
South Oak Cliff	616	10.4	5,311	89.6	5,927
Hillcrest	606	10.2	5,309	89.8	5,915
Spruce	960	10.0	8,622	90.0	9,582
Wilson	651	10.0	5,878	90.0	6,529
White	867	9.9	7,867	90.1	8,734
ACE	406	9.9	3,698	90.1	4,104
Transformation & Innovation	349	9.7	3,260	90.3	3,609
Roosevelt	335	9.5	3,186	90.5	3,521
Molina	630	9.5	6,002	90.5	6,632
Adamson	399	9.4	3,826	90.6	4,225
Conrad	430	9.3	4,188	90.7	4,618
Adams	878	9.1	8,741	90.9	9,619
Skyline	1,016	8.8	10,468	91.2	11,484
Jefferson	641	8.7	6,753	91.3	7,394
Sunset	667	8.4	7,302	91.6	7,969
Other	1	8.3	11	91.7	12
Hospital Sec	7	7.3	89	92.7	96
Magnet Schools	171	2.0	8,291	98.0	8,462
Missing Feeder Pattern Data	*	*	*	*	1,204

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19.

Note: Districtwide SPED enrollment was 9.4 percent.

SPED Enrollment by Student Group. As shown in Table 4, the proportion of Black or African American SPED students in 2019-20 (28.4%) was larger than the general education rate (20.5%). Conversely, a smaller proportion of Hispanic students were enrolled in SPED (63.8%) compared to the general education district rate (71.1%). In addition, although males and females were equally represented in the 2019-20 general education student population, more than two-thirds of SPED students were male (67.3%). Finally, English learners (ELs) constituted 38.0 percent of SPED students, a rate lower than the general education percentage of ELs (46.5%).

Table 4: 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED and General Education Enrollment by Student Group

	SPED (N=14,478)		General Education (N=139,016)		Total (N=153,494)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex						
Female	4,730	32.7	70,246	50.5	74,976	48.8
Male	9,748	67.3	68,770	49.5	78,518	51.2
Ethnicity						
Hispanic/Latino	9,233	63.8	98,830	71.1	108,063	70.4
Black or African American	4,110	28.4	28,517	20.5	32,627	21.3
White	717	5.0	7,109	5.1	7,826	5.1
Other	418	2.9	4,560	3.3	4,978	3.2
Student Groups						
Economically Disadvantaged	12,558	86.7	116,885	84.1	129,443	84.3
English Learner	5,498	38.0	64,673	46.5	70,171	45.7
Homeless	223	1.5	2,300	1.7	2,523	1.6

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19.

Note: Other includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table 5 shows longitudinal data of SPED student groups across the past three years. Little changed in the composition of these student groups, except for ELs, where the percentage of ELs in SPED increased 2.5 percentage points since 2017-18.

Table 5: 2017-18 to 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment by Student Group

	2017-18 (N=12,871)		2018-19 (N=13,877)		2019-20 (N=14,478)		One Yr Change %pts	Two Yr Change %pts
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Sex								
Female	4,183	32.5	4,524	32.6	4,730	32.7	0.1	0.2
Male	8,688	67.5	9,353	67.4	9,748	67.3	-0.1	-0.2
Race/Ethnicity								
Hispanic/Latino	8,032	62.4	8,784	63.3	9,233	63.8	0.5	1.4
Black or African American	3,913	30.4	4,010	28.9	4,110	28.4	-0.5	-2.0
White	656	5.1	694	5.0	717	5.0	0.0	-0.1
Other	257	2.0	375	2.7	418	2.9	0.2	0.9
Student Groups								
Economically Disadvantaged	10,902	84.7	12,226	88.1	12,558	86.7	-1.4	2.0
English Learner	4,569	35.5	5,148	37.1	5,498	38.0	0.9	2.5
Homeless	206	1.6	139	1.0	223	1.5	0.5	-0.1

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data files for 10/27/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Other includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. In the district PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 2017-18, 13 SPED students were missing race/ethnicity data. In the district PEIMS snapshot demographic file for 2018-19; 14 SPED students were missing race/ethnicity data. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

SPED Enrollment by Grade Level and Race/Ethnicity. As shown in Table 6, the highest percentages of SPED students overall were in grades four (9.5%) and five (9.9%). The lowest percentage of SPED students was for students enrolled in prekindergarten (PK; 1.6%). Many students are not evaluated for SPED services until higher grade levels, when certain disabilities may become more evident.

Table 6: 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Grade Level

Grade Level	Hispanic (N=9,233)		African American (N=4,110)		White (N=717)		Other (N=418)		Total (N=14,478)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
EC	309	3.3	139	3.4	36	5.0	28	6.7	512	3.5
PK	166	1.8	38	0.9	22	3.1	11	2.6	237	1.6
KN	441	4.8	120	2.9	45	6.3	27	6.5	633	4.4
1	601	6.5	203	4.9	55	7.7	32	7.7	891	6.2
2	734	7.9	264	6.4	74	10.3	32	7.7	1,104	7.6
3	797	8.6	303	7.4	68	9.5	51	12.2	1,219	8.4
4	893	9.7	371	9.0	75	10.5	43	10.3	1,382	9.5
5	924	10.0	417	10.1	65	9.1	29	6.9	1,435	9.9
6	817	8.8	392	9.5	52	7.3	35	8.4	1,296	9.0
7	768	8.3	353	8.6	60	8.4	28	6.7	1,209	8.4
8	643	7.0	342	8.3	40	5.6	27	6.5	1,052	7.3
9	656	7.1	376	9.1	45	6.3	20	4.8	1,097	7.6
10	530	5.7	298	7.3	24	3.3	18	4.3	870	6.0
11	477	5.2	231	5.6	23	3.2	19	4.5	750	5.2
12	477	5.2	263	6.4	33	4.6	18	4.3	791	5.5

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 10/28/19.

Note: Other race/ethnicity includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students

Primary Disabilities by Campus Level. The most commonly reported SPED student primary disabilities districtwide in 2019-20 were specific learning disability (29.3%, Table 7), autism (23.0%), and other health impairment³⁰ (15.6%). Among elementary school students, the most common primary disabilities were autism (30.1%), speech impairment (20.2%), and specific learning disability (21.6%). At the middle and high school levels, specific learning disability was the most common primary disability (34.8% and 40.4%, respectively).

³⁰ "Other Health Impairment" is a disability category under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004. It is characterized by a student having a chronic or acute health problem that limits the student's strength, vitality, or alertness that adversely affects educational performance. The health problem may include but is not limited to: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, lead poisoning, leukemia, rheumatic fever, and Tourette's Syndrome.

Table 7: 2019-20 Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Campus Level

Primary Disability	Elementary (N=7,298)		Middle (N=3,328)		High (N=3,388)		All Levels (N=14,478)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Specific Learning Disability	1,574	21.6	1,157	34.8	1,370	40.4	4,244	29.3
Autism	2,197	30.1	559	16.8	492	14.5	3,336	23.0
Other Health Impairment	980	13.4	689	20.7	528	15.6	2,265	15.6
Speech Impairment	1,474	20.2	115	3.5	32	0.9	1,711	11.8
Intellectual Disability	576	7.9	459	13.8	610	18.0	1,673	11.6
Emotional Disturbance	217	3.0	182	5.5	140	4.1	562	3.9
Auditory Impairment	146	2.0	89	2.7	130	3.8	374	2.6
Orthopedic Impairment	78	1.1	50	1.5	45	1.3	181	1.3
Visual Impairment	21	0.3	21	0.6	22	0.6	69	0.5
Traumatic Brain Injury	11	0.2	6	0.2	17	0.5	35	0.2
No Disability	12	0.2	*	*	*	*	15	0.1
Developmental Delay	6	0.1	-	-	-	-	6	0.0
Noncategorical Early Childhood	6	0.1	-	-	-	-	6	0.0
Deaf/Blindness	-	-	-	-	*	*	*	*

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19.

Note: Sum for campus levels is less than totals for all grades because some campuses are designated as multilevel campuses. Percentages among all SPED students in these multilevel schools equaled 1.0 percent (n=288) for the "Elementary/Middle" level and 1.0 percent (n=176) for the "Middle/High" level. Percentages within columns may not add to 100 because of rounding. Nondisrupt disability subcategories were removed (n<5 for each); column total Ns account for these subcategories. * = fewer than five in this category. - = no students in this category.

As shown in Table 8, the proportion of SPED students whose primary disability was identified as autism increased 4.6 percentage points between 2017-18 and 2019-20, while the proportion of SPED students whose primary disability was identified as speech impairment decreased 2.8 percentage points during that same time period.

Table 8: 2017-18 to 2019-20 Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students

	2017-18 (N=12,508)		2018-19 (N=13,877)		2019-20 (N=14,478)		One-Year Change %pts	Two-Year Change %pts
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Specific Learning Disability	3,361	26.9	3,992	28.8	4,244	29.3	0.5	2.4
Autism	2,301	18.4	2,870	20.7	3,336	23.0	2.3	4.6
Other Health Impairment	2,087	16.7	2,244	16.2	2,265	15.6	-0.6	-1.1
Speech Impairment	1,829	14.6	1,800	13.0	1,711	11.8	-1.2	-2.8
Intellectual Disability	1,724	13.8	1,697	12.2	1,673	11.6	-0.6	-2.2
Emotional Disturbance	485	3.9	555	4.0	562	3.9	-0.1	0.0
Auditory Impairment	400	3.2	403	2.9	374	2.6	-0.3	-0.6
Orthopedic Impairment	184	1.5	195	1.4	181	1.3	-0.1	-0.2
Visual Impairment	98	0.8	85	0.6	69	0.5	-0.1	-0.3
Traumatic Brain Injury	30	0.2	32	0.2	35	0.2	0.0	0.0
No Disability	*	*	*	*	15	0.1	n/a	n/a
Developmental Delay	*	*	*	*	6	0.0	n/a	n/a
Noncategorical Early Childhood	*	*	*	*	6	0.0	n/a	n/a
Deaf/Blindness	*	*	*	*	*	*	n/a	n/a

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data files for 10/27/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Percentages within columns may not add to 100 because of rounding. Nondisrupt disability subcategories were removed (n<5 for each); column total Ns account for these subcategories. * = fewer than five in this category.

Primary Disabilities by Race/Ethnicity. The most common primary disabilities in 2019-20 varied by race/ethnicity (Table 9). Among Hispanic SPED students, the most common primary disabilities were specific learning disability (32.2%), autism (24.2%), speech impairment (13.4%), and other health impairment (13.2%). Among African American SPED students, most common were specific learning disability (26.3%), other health impairment (21.3%), autism (17.7%), and intellectual disability (16.1%). Among white SPED students, autism (32.8%), specific learning disability (16.7%), speech impairment (15.9%), and other health impairment (13.8%) were most common. These findings were comparable to 2018-19 rates (within three percentage points)

Table 9: 2019-20 Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Race/Ethnicity

Primary Disability	Hispanic (n=9,233)		African American (n=4,110)		White (n=717)		Other (n=418)		Total (N=14,478)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Specific Learning Disability	2,972	32.2	1,082	26.3	120	16.7	70	16.7	4,244	29.3
Autism	2,238	24.2	728	17.7	235	32.8	135	32.3	3,336	23.0
Speech Impairment	1,235	13.4	296	7.2	114	15.9	66	15.8	1,711	11.8
Other Health Impairment	1,220	13.2	876	21.3	99	13.8	70	16.7	2,265	15.6
Intellectual Disability	907	9.8	663	16.1	66	9.2	37	8.9	1,673	11.6
Auditory Impairment	268	2.9	75	1.8	17	2.4	14	3.3	374	2.6
Emotional Disturbance	183	2.0	322	7.8	39	5.4	18	4.3	562	3.9
Orthopedic Impairment	139	1.5	25	0.6	13	1.8	*	*	181	1.3
Visual Impairment	46	0.5	16	0.4	5	0.7	*	*	69	0.5
Traumatic Brain Injury	14	0.2	15	0.4	5	0.7	*	*	35	0.2
No Disability	9	0.1	6	0.1	-	-	-	-	15	0.1
Developmental Delay	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	6	0.0
Noncategorical Early Childhood	-	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	6	0.0
Deaf/Blindness	-	-	-	-	*	*	-	-	*	*

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic file for 10/28/19.

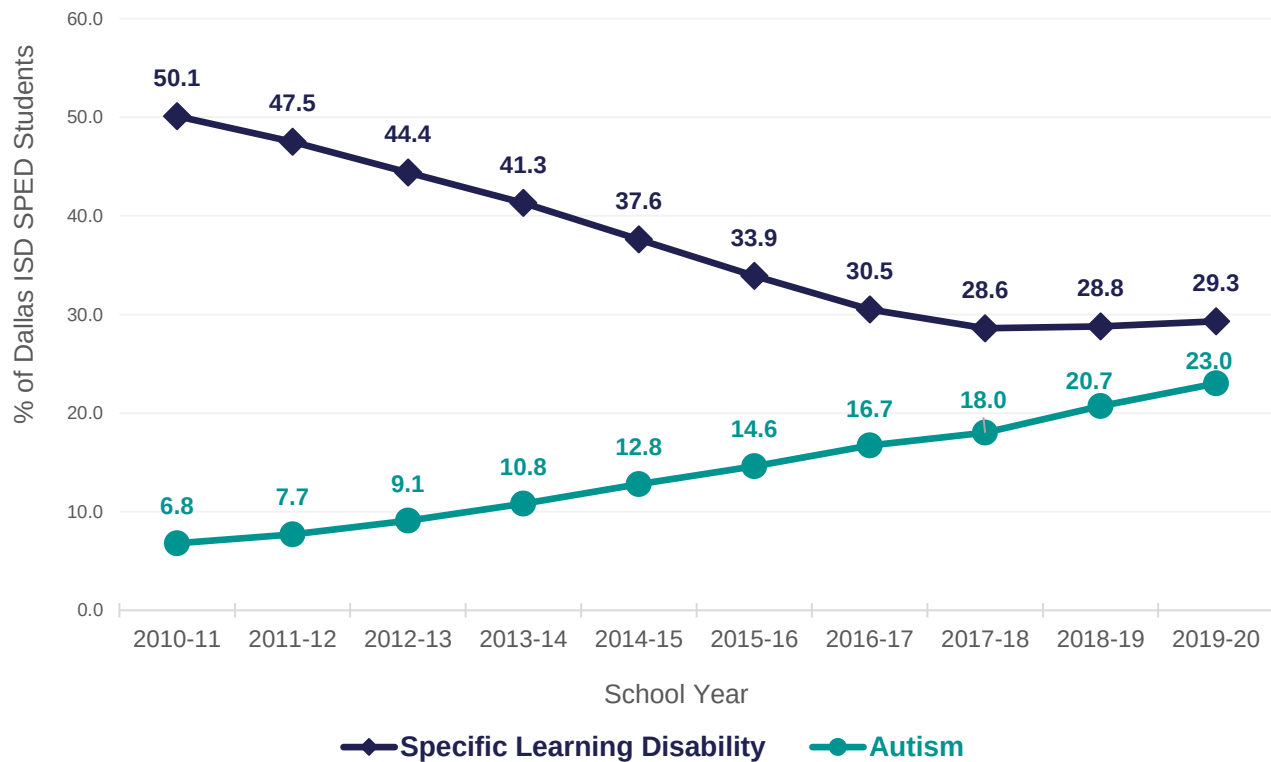
Note: Other includes students classified as Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding. * = fewer than five students in a category. - = no students in a category.

Primary Disabilities: Longer-Term Trends. A report by Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) found that since 2006 the number of students nationwide who have been identified as having a learning disability has declined in almost every state. Several possible explanations were offered for this decline, including increased attention and support for struggling students in early childhood education and changes in the criteria and means of identifying learning disabled students.

In contrast, the percentage of Dallas ISD SPED students reported to have some form of autism more than tripled between 2010-11 and 2019-20, from 6.8 percent to 23.0 percent (Figure 2). A similar increase in autism spectrum disorder cases was reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for school-aged children nationwide between 2007 and 2012 (Blumberg, Bramlett, Kogan, Schieve, Jones, & Lu, 2013). A study by Wazana, Bresnahan, and Kline (2007) found that increases in the diagnosis of autism across the United States were related to changes in the diagnostic criteria of behaviors constituting autism spectrum disorder. In addition, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) placed the estimate of autism prevalence at one in 59 children in 2014, up from one in 68 in 2010 and up from one in 150 in 2000. The CDC also attributes this increase in diagnoses to better

monitoring and diagnosis of the disorder, rather than to a “de facto” rise in the number of children who fall on the autism spectrum.³¹ However, this topic of factors contributing to the marked rise in autism spectrum disorders, particularly over the past few decades, is one of intense debate at the national and international level, and it appears that more research is needed to better understand both the causes and effective treatments of those identified on the autism spectrum.

Figure 2: 2010-11 to 2019-20 Percentage of Dallas ISD SPED Students Identified with Autism and Specific Learning Disability as Primary Disability



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20) and Mejan, 2019 (2010-11 to 2018-19).

Instructional Settings for Dallas ISD SPED Students

Instructional Settings by Campus Level. Across all campus levels, the largest percentage of SPED students (44.4%, Table 10) were placed into a mainstream educational setting. There, they received SPED and related services in a general classroom for 100 percent of the school day, in accordance with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). By campus level, the highest percentage of mainstreamed SPED students were at the high school level (66.4%), followed by the middle school level (57.2%). In contrast, 28.2 percent of elementary level SPED students were mainstreamed, a rate that remained relatively stable compared to 2018-19 (28.7%) but increased over 13 percentage points since 2017-18.

SPED students with greater needs or disabilities may be placed in different settings depending on their needs. The most common instructional setting after mainstreaming was a Resource Room – typically

³¹ See <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html> for more information.

a separate classroom or smaller space designated for individual and/or small-group SPED student instruction. A Resource Room placement was the second most common placement for SPED students overall (16.0%), with the highest percentage of students in this setting at the elementary level (22.6%) and tapering off with higher campus levels. A Speech-Only setting was more common among elementary level students (17.1%) than among those in middle or high school. At the high school level, after mainstreaming, the most common placements for SPED students were in Functional Living Skills³² (16.9%) or Total Communication (4.2%) settings.³³

Table 10: 2019-20 Instructional Settings of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Campus Level

Primary Disability	Elementary (N=7,298)		Middle (N=3,328)		High (N=3,388)		All Grades (N=14,478)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mainstream	2,055	28.2	1,903	57.2	2,249	66.4	6,431	44.4
Resource Room	1,647	22.6	493	14.8	88	2.6	2,318	16.0
Functional Living Skills	767	10.5	504	15.1	572	16.9	1,862	12.9
Speech Only	1,250	17.1	81	2.4	25	0.7	1,445	10.0
Total Communication	388	5.3	137	4.1	141	4.2	667	4.6
PPCD-4/5	466	6.4	-	-	-	-	479	3.3
Behavior Program	124	1.7	79	2.4	41	1.2	244	1.7
Regional Day School for the Deaf Class	102	1.4	58	1.7	57	1.7	218	1.5
PPCD-3	206	2.8	*	*	-	-	207	1.4
Activities of Daily Living	49	0.7	38	1.1	61	1.8	159	1.1
No Setting Information Provided	54	0.7	16	0.5	32	0.9	108	0.7
Vocational Adjustment Class	-	-	-	-	81	2.4	81	0.6
PPCD-KN	73	1.0	-	-	-	-	73	0.5
PPCD-PK	52	0.7	-	-	-	-	53	0.4
Homebound Class	22	0.3	10	0.3	16	0.5	48	0.3
PPCD-PK3	29	0.4	-	-	-	-	29	0.2
Wrap around intervention network	9	0.1	6	0.2	-	-	23	0.2
TACCAM	-	-	-	-	20	0.6	21	0.1
Hospital Class	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Preschool Programs-Children with Disabilities	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	*
Transition Academy	-	-	-	-	*	*	*	*
General education	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*
General / SPED	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	*
TACDIST	-	-	-	-	*	*	*	*

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19.

Note: * = fewer than five in a category. - = no students in a category. Multi-level campus data not included; percentages among all special education students in these multilevel campuses equaled 2.0 percent (n=288) for the "Elementary/Middle" level and 1.0 percent (n=176) for the "Middle/High level. Additional information on SPED instructional settings can be found on the Dallas ISD SPED program web pages through <https://www.dallasisd.org/domain/153>. (Link retrieved 03/16/20.)

Instructional Setting by Race/Ethnicity. SPED student instructional settings also were examined by race/ethnicity. Similar to the finding from analysis of instructional setting by campus level, the largest percentages of SPED students within each major race/ethnicity were mainstreamed, though this percentage was somewhat lower than the rate for white SPED students and those of "other" race/ethnicity (Table 11). White SPED students (14.2%) were slightly more commonly placed in a Speech Only setting compared to African American (5.7%) and Hispanic (11.5%) SPED.

³² For more information on the Functional Living Skills setting in the Dallas ISD, please refer to <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/20299>. Link retrieved 03/16/20.

³³ For more information on the Speech Only setting in the Dallas ISD, please refer to <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/1343>. Link retrieved 03/16/20.

Table 11: 2019-20 Instructional Settings of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Race/Ethnicity

Instruction Setting	Hispanic (N=9,233)		African American (N=4,110)		White (N=717)		Other (N=418)		All SPED Students (N=14,478)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mainstream	4,062	44.0	1,926	46.9	289	40.3	154	36.8	6,431	44.4
Resource Room	1,596	17.3	549	13.4	105	14.6	68	16.3	2,318	16.0
Functional Living Skills	1,094	11.8	658	16.0	71	9.9	39	9.3	1,862	12.9
Speech Only	1,058	11.5	234	5.7	102	14.2	51	12.2	1,445	10.0
Total Communication	420	4.5	178	4.3	42	5.9	27	6.5	667	4.6
PPCD-4/5	308	3.3	122	3.0	27	3.8	22	5.3	479	3.3
Behavior Program	54	0.6	165	4.0	18	2.5	7	1.7	244	1.7
Regional Day School for the Deaf Class	153	1.7	47	1.1	8	1.1	10	2.4	218	1.5
PPCD-3	123	1.3	60	1.5	17	2.4	7	1.7	207	1.4
Activities of Daily Living	113	1.2	31	0.8	9	1.3	6	1.4	159	1.1
No Setting Information Provided	58	0.6	37	0.9	10	1.4	*	*	108	0.7
Vocational Adjustment Class	43	0.5	31	0.8	6	0.8	*	*	81	0.6
PPCD-KN	44	0.5	19	0.5	*	*	6	1.4	73	0.5
PPCD-PK	30	0.3	12	0.3	5	0.7	6	1.4	53	0.4
Homebound Class	37	0.4	7	0.2	-	-	*	*	48	0.3
PPCD-PK3	17	0.2	7	0.2	*	*	*	*	29	0.2
Wrap around intervention network	9	0.1	12	0.3	*	*	*	*	23	0.2
TACCAM	9	0.1	9	0.2	-	-	*	*	21	0.1
Hospital Class	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	*
Preschool Programs-Children with Disabilities	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	*
Transition Academy	-	-	*	*	-	-	-	-	*	*
TACDIST	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	*

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19.

Note: * = fewer than five students in a category. - = no students in a category. Other includes Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding. Additional information on SPED instructional settings can be found on the Dallas ISD SPED program web pages through <https://www.dallasisd.org/domain/153>. (Link retrieved 03/16/20.)

What were the characteristics of Special Education teachers?

Methodology

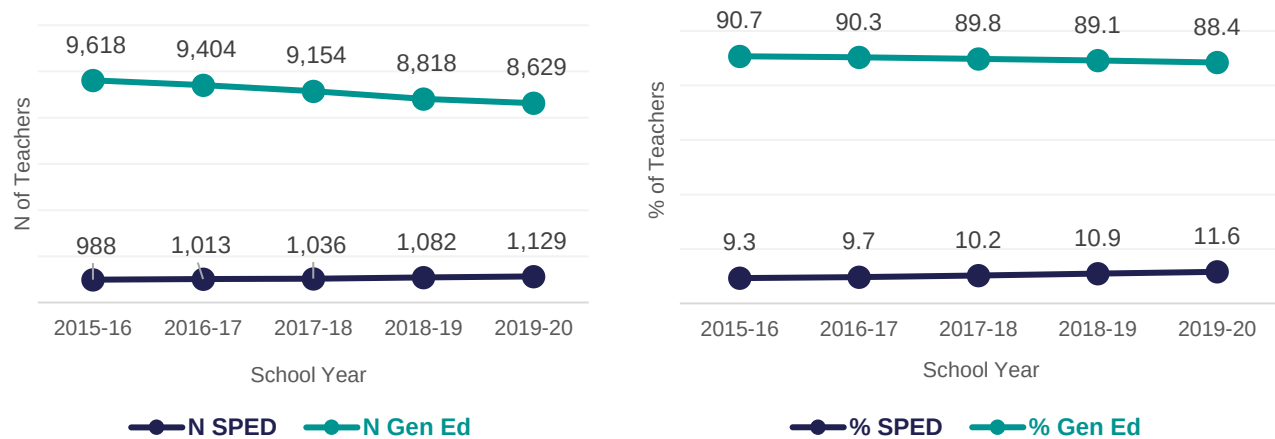
The evaluator extracted demographic and credential data for 2019-20 SPED teachers from the district personnel file dated September 17, 2019. District job codes were used to identify full-time, active, professional SPED teachers. The evaluator conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine numbers and percentages of SPED teachers by sex, race/ethnicity, highest degree completed, and number of years teaching experience in the Dallas ISD. Longitudinal data were extracted from the 2018-19 evaluation report (Mejan, 2019).

Results

2019-20 SPED Teachers Employed and Trends

A total of 1,129 SPED teachers were employed in the Dallas ISD during 2019-20 (Figure 3). Over the past five years the rate of district SPED teachers has increased by 2.3 percentage points. In the same time, the number of general education teachers has decreased by 2.3 percentage points. Despite the increase in the number and percentage of SPED teachers, SPED program administrators noted that the district continues to experience a shortage of SPED teachers.³⁴

³⁴ Source: Program evaluator communications with SPED leadership, May 2020.

Figure 3: 2015-16 to 2019-20 Number and Percentage of SPED and General Education Teachers

Source: District personnel data file dated 09/17/19 (2019-20) and 2018-19 evaluation report (2015-16 to 2018-19; Mejan, 2019).

Characteristics of 2019-20 SPED Teachers

More than three-quarters (77.4%) of SPED teachers in the district in 2019-20 were female (Table 12). A smaller percentage of SPED teachers were Hispanic (11.2%) compared to general education teachers (31.3%), while a higher percentage of SPED teachers were African American (53.6%) compared to general education teachers (31.9%). A higher percentage of SPED teachers held a master's degree (31.2%) compared to general education teachers (20.9%). Approximately four percent (3.9%) of SPED teachers participated in an alternative certification (AC) program; this rate was lower than the rate of general education teachers in an AC program (5.7%). The average length of teaching experience in the Dallas ISD for SPED teachers was 8.7 years, which was slightly higher than for general education teachers (8.0 years).

Table 12: 2019-20 Characteristics of SPED Teachers

	Special Education (N = 1,129)		General Education (N = 8,629)		All Teachers (N = 9,758)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender						
Female	874	77.4	5,982	69.3	6,856	70.3
Male	255	22.6	2,647	30.7	2,902	29.7
Ethnicity						
Black or African American	605	53.6	2,755	31.9	3,360	34.4
White	346	30.6	2,784	32.3	3,130	32.1
Hispanic or Latino	126	11.2	2,704	31.3	2,830	29.0
Asian	44	3.9	296	3.4	340	3.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	0.6	76	0.9	83	0.9
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1	0.1	14	0.2	15	0.2
Highest Degree Obtained						
Associate or Unspecified	74	6.6	766	8.9	840	8.6
Bachelor	698	61.8	5,959	69.1	6,657	68.2
Master	352	31.2	1,807	20.9	2,159	22.1
Ph.D.	5	0.4	97	1.1	102	1.0
Alternative Certification						
In AC Program	44	3.9	488	5.7	532	5.5
DISD Experience						
Newly hired	119	10.5	984	11.4	1,103	11.3
1-2 years	199	17.6	1,663	19.3	1,862	19.1
3-5 years	230	20.4	2,101	24.3	2,331	23.9
6-10 years	207	18.3	1,309	15.2	1,516	15.5
More than 10 years	374	33.1	2,572	29.8	2,946	30.2
Average Number of Years	8.7		8.0		8.0	

Source: Dallas ISD Personnel data file dated 09/17/19.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding. - = no teachers in a category.

What professional development opportunities did the SPED department offer to program staff members in 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluator obtained from SPED program administrative staff members data on professional development and other training provided by the SPED department to campus staff members in 2019-20. The evaluator reviewed professional development documents and summarized contents by topic.

Results

In total, the evaluator identified 69 unique topics covered in SPED professional development sessions provided during 2019-20. An exhaustive list of these topics is provided in Appendix C of this report. SPED professional development session themes in 2019-20 included 1) SPED policy and compliance issues, 2) prekindergarten SPED needs, 3) functional living skills, 4) classroom organization for specialized SPED programs, 5) English learner/SPED technology rollout, 6) math and writing strategies for students

with disabilities, 7) Review 360, 8) supporting students identified with autism, 9) supporting dually-identified students, 10) the importance of socioemotional learning (SEL), and 11) documenting restraint incidents.

In addition, during at-home learning, professional learning committee (PLC) meetings were held weekly by video. These meetings addressed a variety of concerns regarding at-home learning.

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding the SPED department?

Methodology

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey titled the SPED Customer Service Survey to solicit feedback from Dallas ISD SPED teachers, SPED teacher assistants, campus principals, and assistant principals. The survey addressed a range of issues that included the customer service experience with the SPED department as well as understanding of SPED policy, procedures, and resource access, both before and during districtwide at-home learning.

The evaluator obtained SPED teacher and SPED teacher assistant email addresses from SPED central staff members and obtained campus principal and assistant principal email addresses from the district personnel data files. These staff members received an invitation to participate in the survey on May 6, 2020; periodic reminders were sent to those who had yet to respond. The survey closed on June 3, 2020.

The evaluator conducted frequency analyses on responses to closed-ended survey items, grouping results, as appropriate, by respondent role. For reporting of results by respondent role, SPED teachers and teacher assistants were combined into the teacher role, and principals and assistant principals were combined into the administration role. The evaluator content-analyzed and summarized responses to open-ended survey items into themes, also grouping by respondent role, as appropriate. When possible, results to the 2019-20 survey were compared to those for the previous year.

Results

Detailed survey item response rates are provided in Appendix D.

Response Rates and Respondent Years of Experience in Dallas ISD

Of the 2,542 individuals invited to complete the SPED Customer Service Survey, 1,541 (1,243 teachers, 289 principals, and nine who identified as “other” – mostly as central staff members) at least partially completed the survey. Overall response rates were 60 percent (65% of teachers; 45% of principals). Responses from those identifying as “other” (neither teacher nor administrator) were excluded from analysis on closed-ended items due to low counts on individual items but were included in analysis of responses to open-ended items. The highest percentage of both SPED administrators (66%) and teachers (37%) most commonly reported 11 or more years of experience in the district as of the end of 2019-20.

SPED Student Caseloads

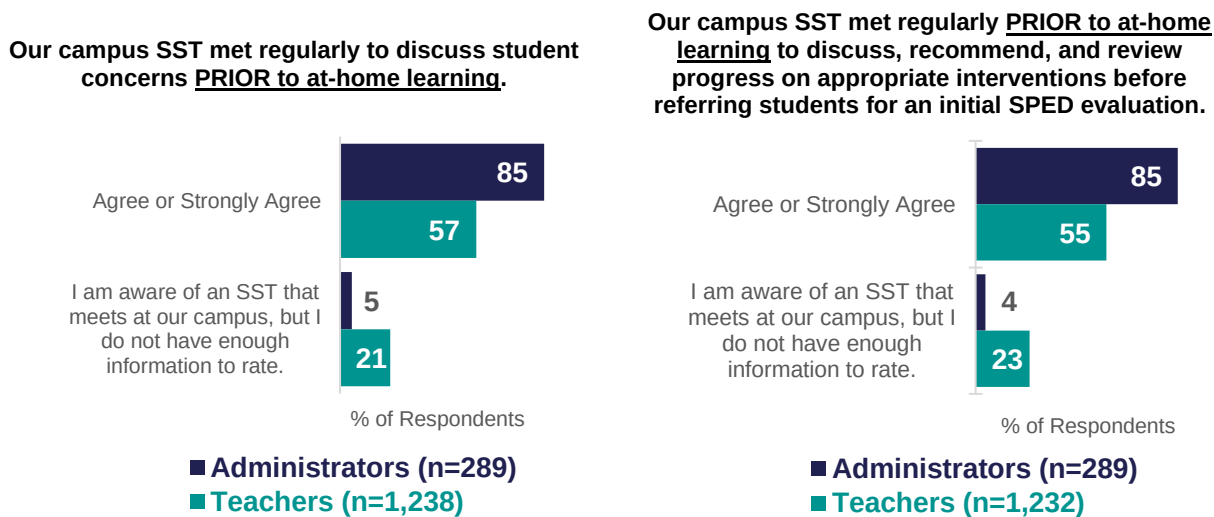
Respondents most frequently indicated working a 2019-20 caseload of 21 or more students with IEPs (overall: 37%; teachers: 29%; administrators: 70%).

Perceptions About Campus Student Support Teams (SSTs)

The campus Student Support Team (SST) is integral to the effective functioning of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and the SPED student evaluation processes. SPED administrators and other SPED staff members informally indicated to the evaluator that students and families all would benefit from regular reinforcement at the campus level (with campus staff members) regarding the crucial function of the SST within the MTSS framework and the importance of SSTs meeting regularly to discuss student concerns before referring students for a SPED evaluation.

Of note, campus administrators and SPED teachers differed with respect to perceptions of campus SST activities in 2019-20. A high percentage of campus administrators (85%) agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that their campus SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns, and they also agreed at high rates (85%) that SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (Figure 4). In contrast, a smaller percentage of SPED teachers (57%) agreed that SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns, and also agreed at lower rates (55%) that campus SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation. Interestingly, 21 percent and 23 percent of SPED teachers indicated that they were aware of an SST on their campuses but did not have enough information on the SST to rate them. This finding may provide evidence of possible under-engagement of SPED staff members in SST activities at the campus level.

Figure 4: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey - Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions of Student Support Teams Prior to At-Home Learning



Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix D.

SPED Core 4: Ratings Prior to and During At-Home Learning

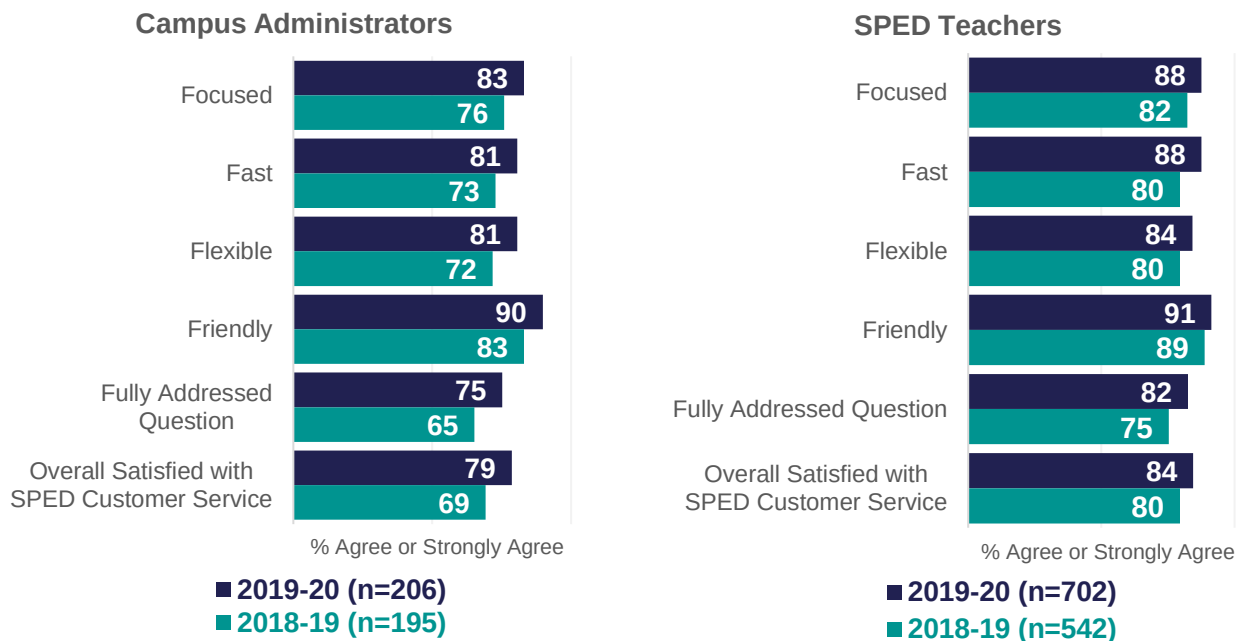
Administrators and SPED teacher respondents also addressed experiences with customer service from SPED central staff members during 2019-20 both before and after the districtwide transition to at-home

learning. Questions included ratings of the Dallas ISD Core 4 domains (Focused, Fast, Flexible, and Friendly).

Ratings for all Core 4 domains for the SPED department were generally positive in 2019-20 (range: 75% to 91% agree or strongly agree) and improved from 2018-19 (Figure 5). Most favorably, over 90 percent of respondents from both participant groups agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that staff members at the SPED central office were friendly in 2019-20. The strongest ratings improvements from 2018-19 to 2019-20 were found for administrators who agreed that questions they posed to SPED central staff members were addressed fully, and that they were satisfied overall with the quality of customer service they received from the SPED department (both 10 percentage point increases).

Figure 5: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – Core 4 – Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions Prior to At-Home Learning

Reflecting on your experience with the Special Education Department in 2019-20 PRIOR to at-home learning, please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements*.



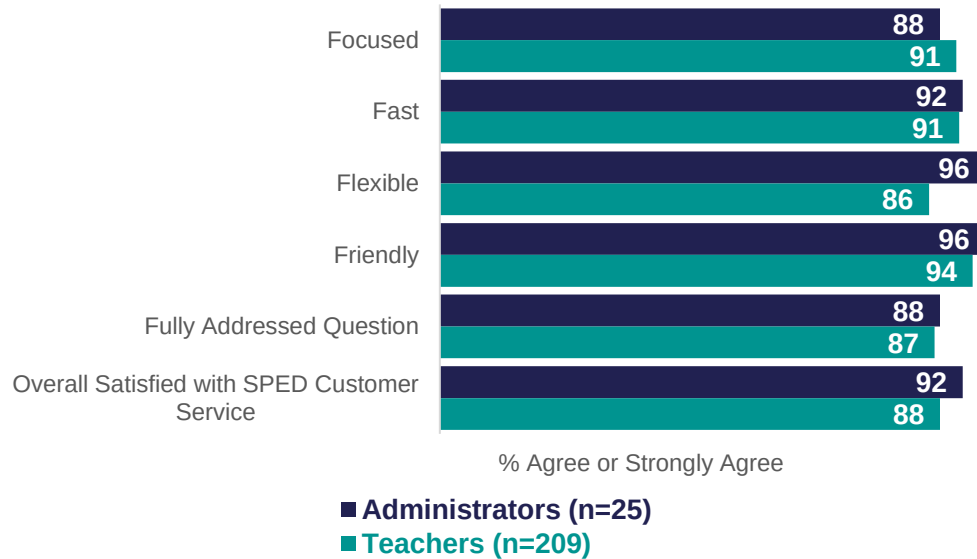
Source: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Surveys.

Note: Question labels were abbreviated for clarity. Focused = "The Special Education department was focused in their response(s) to my request(s)." Fast = "The Special Education department responded to me in a timely manner." Flexible = "The Special Education department was flexible in their response(s) to my request(s)." Friendly = "The Special Education department was friendly in their response(s) to my request(s)." Fully Addressed Question = "The Special Education Department fully addressed my question(s) and/or concern(s)." Overall Satisfied with SPED Customer Service = "Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of customer service I received from the Special Education Department." Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix D.

During at-home learning, SPED customer service ratings were similar to and often higher than before at-home learning. As shown in Figure 6, the highest percentage of respondents, especially campus administrators (96%), agreed that SPED staff members were friendly and flexible in response to questions or concerns posed during at-home learning.

Figure 6: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – Core 4 – Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions During At-Home Learning

Reflecting on your experience with the Special Education Department DURING at-home learning, please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.



Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Question labels were abbreviated for clarity. Focused = "The Special Education department was focused in their response(s) to my request(s)." Fast = "The Special Education department responded to me in a timely manner." Flexible = "The Special Education department was flexible in their response(s) to my request(s)." Friendly = "The Special Education department was friendly in their response(s) to my request(s)." Fully Addressed Question = "The Special Education Department fully addressed my question(s) and/or concern(s)." Overall Satisfied with SPED Customer Service = "Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of customer service I received from the Special Education Department." Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix D.

Technology and Online Platforms: Levels of Need During At-Home Learning

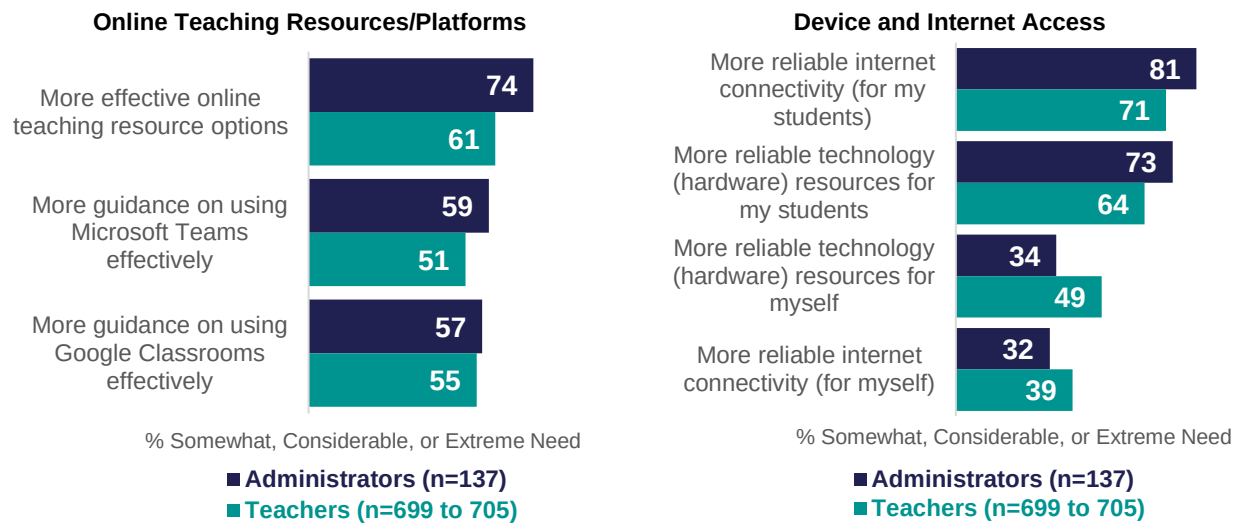
With respect to technology and online platforms, a high percentage (74%) of campus administrator and SPED teacher (61%) respondents felt that more effective online teaching resource options for at-home learning were at least somewhat needed (Figure 7). Slightly more than half of both campus administrators and SPED teachers also reported that more guidance on effectively using Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms was at least somewhat needed during at-home learning.

In addition, the highest percentage of administrators and SPED teachers indicated that they needed at least somewhat more support with respect to devices and internet connectivity during at-home learning, especially with respect to more reliable internet connectivity for students (administrators: 81%; SPED teachers: 71%), and more reliable technology (hardware) resources for students (administrators: 73%; SPED teachers: 64%; Figure 7).

Finally, with respect to their personal needs, as shown in Figure 7, higher rates of SPED teachers than administrators indicated a need for more reliable technology (hardware) and internet connectivity for themselves during at-home learning. Taken together, these findings indicate that stakeholders should examine the technological resources provided to teachers and students to ensure they possess what they need to ensure uninterrupted SPED service provision during possible future periods of at-home learning.

Figure 7: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey - Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions - Technology and Online Platform Needs During At-Home Learning

Please identify the extent to which you perceived a need for the following DURING at-home learning.



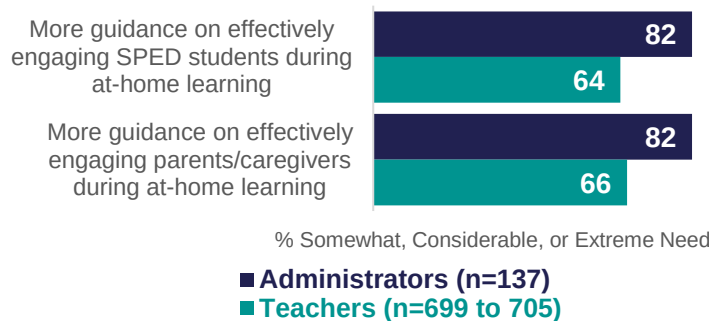
Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Teacher response rates per question varied. Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix D.

Administrators and SPED teachers expressed a need for more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning. This need was particularly evident for administrators, with high percentages of respondents (82%, Figure 8) reporting they at least somewhat desired more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning. Rates of teachers indicating a need for more guidance in these areas were slightly lower than for administrators, but were also notable, ranging from 64 percent (student engagement) to 66 percent (parent engagement).

Figure 8: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey - Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions of Student and Parent Engagement Needs During At-Home Learning

Please identify the extent to which you perceived a need for the following DURING at-home learning.



Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix D.

Final 2019-20 Reflections from SPED Teachers and Campus Administrators

SPED Customer Service survey participants were invited to provide open-ended reflections about ways to improve SPED programming and related processes and conditions as they considered their

experiences during 2019-20. The most common themes identified by respondents are provided in Tables 13 (SPED teachers) and 14 (administrators).

As shown in Table 13, four improvement themes were offered by at least 10 percent of the 161 SPED teachers who provided suggestions, including 1) more effective professional development on how to effectively engage parents and students during at-home learning (19%; $n=31$); 2) more effective professional development on how to use the various platforms and technology interfaces (Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and others suitable for use with SPED students and parents) during at-home learning (19%; $n=30$); 3) adequate and timely provision of technological devices for students during at-home learning (14%; $n=23$); and 4) more SPED department parent training on the use of technology devices and applications used by students to allow better facilitation of student progress during at-home learning (12%; $n=19$).

Most of these suggestions corroborate responses to previous survey questions, and some provided additional information that may be useful to stakeholders. For example, suggesting more adequate and timely provision of technological devices during at-home learning, teachers elaborated on this need by suggesting that tablets may be less complicated and therefore more developmentally appropriate than laptops for younger students, while older students should be provided with laptops/Chromebooks.

Table 13: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey - SPED Teacher Suggestions for Improvement (N=161)

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Do you have any suggestions that would significantly improve the staff experience and/or SPED student experience, including anything related to SPED program processes, SPED professional development offerings, and/or SPED-related resources?		
Provide more effective PD on increasing student and parent engagement during at-home learning	31	19.3
Provide more effective PD to SPED teachers and TAs on online teaching and learning options for at-home learning	30	18.6
Students need adequate and timely provision of age-appropriate technology devices and internet connectivity for at-home learning	23	14.3
Parents need training from SPED, particularly on technology use, to help teachers effectively engage their children during at-home learning	19	11.8
Paperwork/documentation for SPED is a great burden and poses costs on the quality of instruction SPED teachers are able to provide their students	12	7.5
More alternative instruction options are needed for SPED students that require less SPED student computer use	9	5.6
Continue PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), including webinars	7	4.3
New SPED Teachers and TAs need mentoring and cohesive, effective onboarding	7	4.3
Greater coherence is needed between central office communications about SPED and campus-level communications about SPED.	5	3.1
TAs were not provided work computers/laptops (namely for use during at-home learning)	5	3.1

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Respondents could provide multiple themes. For a full list of themes offered, see Appendix D.

As shown in Table 14, four improvement themes were offered by at least 10 percent of the 30 administrators who provided suggestions, including 1) more professional development on how to effectively

engage students and parents during at-home learning (27%; $n=8$); 2) more SPED staff members at the campus level (10%; $n=3$); 3) adequate and timely provision of technology for students during at-home learning (10%; $n=3$); and 4) more SPED parent training on the use of technology devices and applications used by students to allow better facilitation of student progress during at-home learning (10%; $n=3$).

Table 14: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey - Administrator Suggestions for Improvement (N=30)

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Do you have any suggestions that would significantly improve the staff experience and/or SPED student experience, including anything related to SPED program processes, SPED professional development offerings, and/or SPED-related resources?		
More PD is needed to more effectively engage students and parents during at-home learning	8	26.7
My campus is understaffed with SPED Teachers/TAs	3	10.0
Students are inadequately supplied with the technology needed for at-home learning	3	10.0
Provide SPED parents with training early on to help their child utilize technology and online resources optimally during at-home learning	3	10.0
Paperwork/documentation for SPED is a great burden and poses costs on the quality of instruction SPED teachers are able to provide their students	2	6.7

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Respondents could offer multiple themes. For a full list of themes offered, see Appendix D.

What were the activities and perceptions of SPED evaluators?

Methodology

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey to solicit feedback on the activities and perceptions of 2019-20 SPED evaluators (diagnosticians and LSSPs), including perceptions and activities occurring during spring 2020 districtwide at-home learning.

The evaluator obtained SPED evaluator email addresses from SPED central staff members in March 2020. SPED evaluators received an invitation to participate in the survey on May 6, 2020; periodic reminders were sent to those who had yet to respond. The survey closed on May 22, 2020. The evaluator conducted frequency analyses on responses to closed-ended survey items and content-analyzed and summarized open-ended survey item responses into themes.

Results

Detailed survey item response rates are provided in Appendix E.

Survey Response Rate and Respondent Characteristics

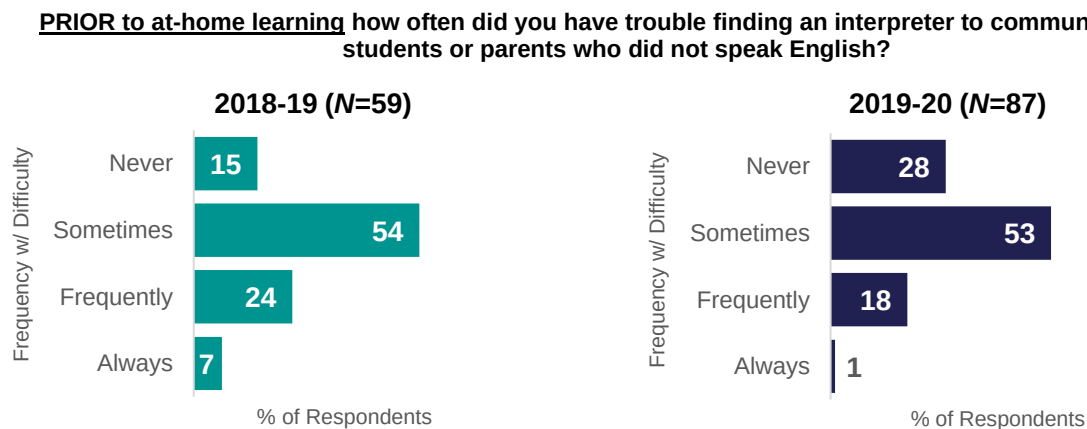
Of the 119 SPED evaluators invited to participate in the SPED Evaluator Survey, 111 at least partially completed the survey (93%). Of the 111 respondents, about 79 percent were diagnosticians and about 20 percent were LSSPs.

Monolingual Evaluators and Finding Interpreters

Most respondents were monolingual evaluators in 2019-20 ($n=87$, 78%). Of these, 72 percent reported at least sometimes having difficulty finding an interpreter to communicate with students or parents

who did not speak English, with 19 percent indicating they frequently or always experienced difficulty. Encouragingly, however, the ability for monolingual evaluators to find interpreters appeared to have improved from the previous year. As shown in Figure 9, compared to 2018-19,³⁵ the percentage of respondents was higher in 2019-20; thus, results should be viewed with caution. The rate of respondents who indicated never having a problem increased 13 percentage points in 2019-20 from 15 to 28 percent, and the rate of respondents who frequently or always experienced difficulty finding an interpreter decreased 12 percentage points from 31 to 19 percent.

Figure 9: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Surveys - Difficulty Finding an Interpreter Prior to At-Home Learning



Source: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Surveys.

Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

Referrals through Parent Requests and Adequacy of MTSS Interventions

Similar to 2018-19, SPED evaluators reported high rates of parent requests for initial evaluations in 2019-20. As shown in Figure 10, the percentage of evaluators reporting that at least half of the referrals for an initial individual evaluation they received were made through parent requests in 2019-20 rose slightly to 70 percent in 2019-20 from 66 percent in 2018-19. Notably, however, the rate of respondents who indicated that all of their evaluations came through parent requests decreased by 10 percentage points over one year – from 24 percent in 2018-19 to 14 percent in 2019-20 – perhaps indicating some early effects of MTSS efforts with respect to identification and provision of student needs and support.

³⁵ Note that the 2018-19 SPED Evaluator survey response rate was 73.4 percent, whereas the 2019-20 SPED Evaluator survey response rate was 93.3%. Thus, year-to-year differences in item responses may to some degree be attributable to differences in response rates, and findings should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 10: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Surveys - Percentage of Initial Referrals Through Parent Requests

Approximately what percentage of your initial evaluations this year were referred through parent requests?



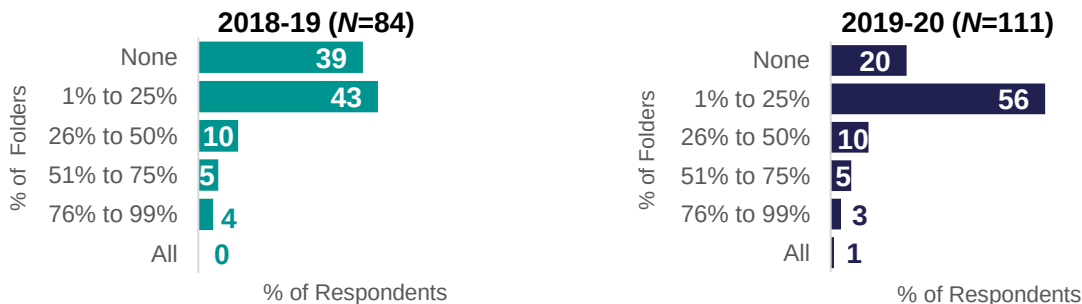
Source: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Surveys.

Note: 2018-19 percentages do not sum to 100 because of rounding. "I'm not sure" was added as a response option to this item in 2019-20, and three percent of respondents selected "I'm not sure" on this item; percentages shown exclude this three percent and sum to 97 percent instead of 100 percent. Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

In addition, similarly to 2018-19 survey findings, a high rate of respondents reported that few (25% or fewer) referral folders for 2019-20 initial individual evaluations included adequate MTSS interventions. (2018-19: 82%; 2019-20: 76%; Figure 11). However, some improvement in this area was evident by lower rates of respondents indicating that none of the referral folders included adequate MTSS interventions (2018-19: 39%; 2019-20: 20%). This encouraging drop of 19 percentage points may be a result of increased awareness and training in districtwide MTSS processes in the second year of implementation.

Figure 11: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Surveys - Percentage of Referral Folders Showing Adequate MTSS Interventions

Approximately what percentage of your initial referral folders this school year showed adequate MTSS interventions?



Source: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Surveys.

Note: 2018-19 percentages do not sum to 100 because of rounding. "I'm not sure" was added as a response option to this item in 2019-20; five percent selected "I'm not sure" to this item in 2019-20; percentages shown exclude this five percent and sum to 95 percent instead of 100 percent. Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

Access to Resources and Workspace Prior to At-Home Learning

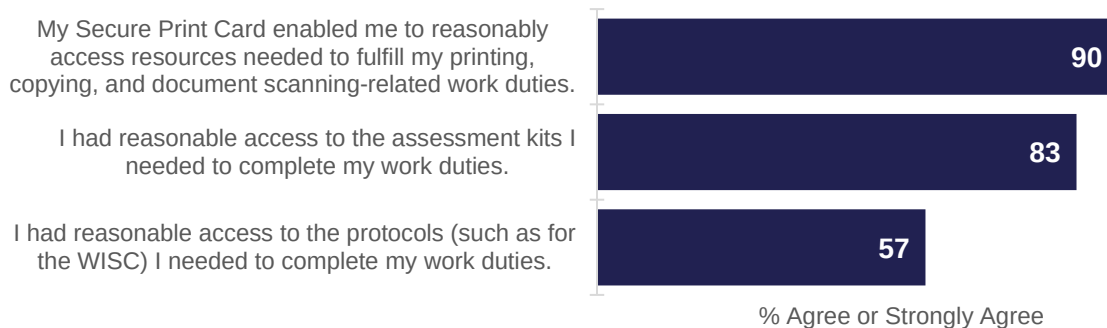
In 2017-18, SPED evaluators transitioned from working in a central office to working in campus-based spaces. Thus, some survey items solicited feedback about experiences working on campuses, such as ease of access to workspaces and job-related resources. Because 2019-20 questions

on these topics were not the same as those asked in 2018-19, year-over-year comparisons of results were not included in this report.

As shown in Figure 12, most respondents reported they could reasonably fulfill their printer- and copy-related needs on campus with their Secure Print Cards (90%) and they had reasonable access to the assessment kits needed to complete their work duties (83%). However, a smaller percentage of respondents (57%) reported that they had reasonable access to the protocols needed (such as the *WISC*³⁶) to complete their work duties.

Figure 12: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - Access to Resources Prior to At-Home Learning (N=111)

Please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following three statements as they apply to your experience in 2019-20 PRIOR to at-home learning.



Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

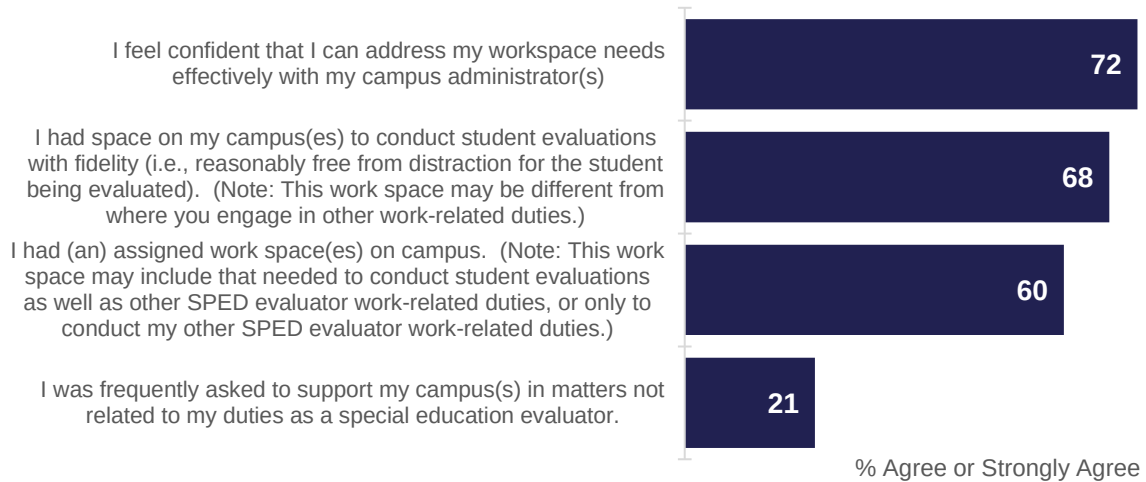
Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

In addition, as shown in Figure 13, the majority of evaluators reported that they 1) were confident they could address workspace needs effectively with their campus administrators (72%), 2) had space on campus to conduct student evaluations with fidelity (68%), and 3) had assigned workspace on campus to conduct job-related duties (60%). However, some respondents indicated that they were frequently asked to perform duties on campus that were not related to SPED (21%), indicating a potential distraction from services expected to be provided by these evaluators on campuses.

³⁶ WISC stands for *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children*

Figure 13: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - Workspace on Campus Prior to At-Home Learning (N=111)

Please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your experience PRIOR to at-home learning.



Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

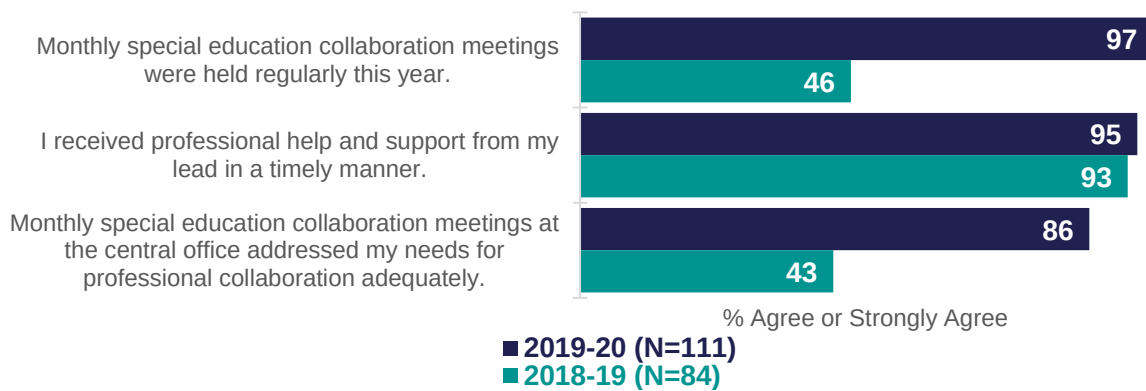
Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

Professional Support and Collaboration Prior to At-Home Learning

Ratings of aspects professional support and collaboration prior to at-home learning improved across the board in 2019-20 over the previous year, with particularly remarkable increases in ratings for collaboration meeting regularity and usefulness. As shown in Figure 14, most respondents reported that monthly SPED collaboration meetings were held regularly in 2019-20 (97%), that professional support from leads was received in a timely manner (95%), and that meetings addressed their needs for collaboration adequately (86%). These ratings may reflect efforts to improve support and collaboration for SPED evaluators in 2019-20.

Figure 14: 2018-19 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluators Survey - Professional Support and Collaboration Prior to At-Home-Learning

Please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your experience working as a special education evaluator PRIOR to at-home learning.



Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

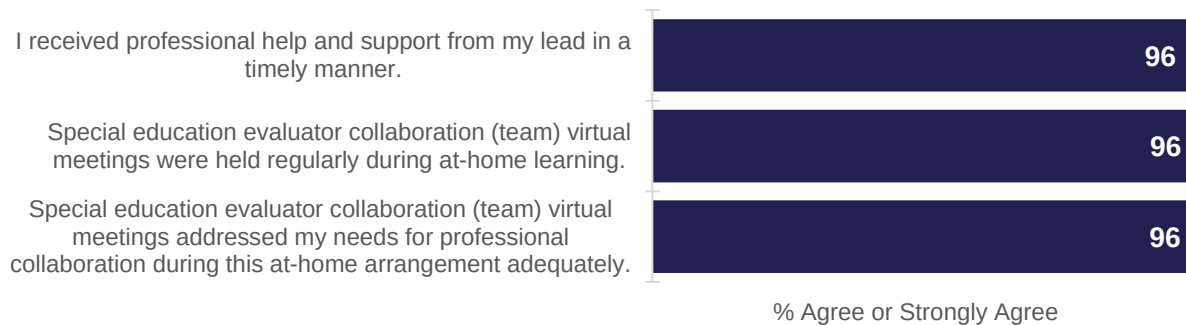
SPED Evaluator Experiences During At Home-Learning

The SPED Evaluator survey included items to collect feedback about SPED evaluator experiences during at-home learning. Topics included professional collaboration and support and experiences with the provision of virtual counseling provided by these staff members to students and families during this time.

Professional Collaboration and Support During At-Home Learning. High percentages of SPED evaluators agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that collaboration and support went well during at-home learning, and these rates were nearly as high or higher than ratings prior to at-home learning. As shown in Figure 15, almost all SPED evaluator respondents (96%) agreed that they received support from leads in a timely manner and that virtual collaboration meetings were held regularly and met their needs adequately.

Figure 15: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - Professional Collaboration and Support During At-Home Learning (N=110)

Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your experience working as a special education evaluator in 2019-20 **DURING at-home learning.**



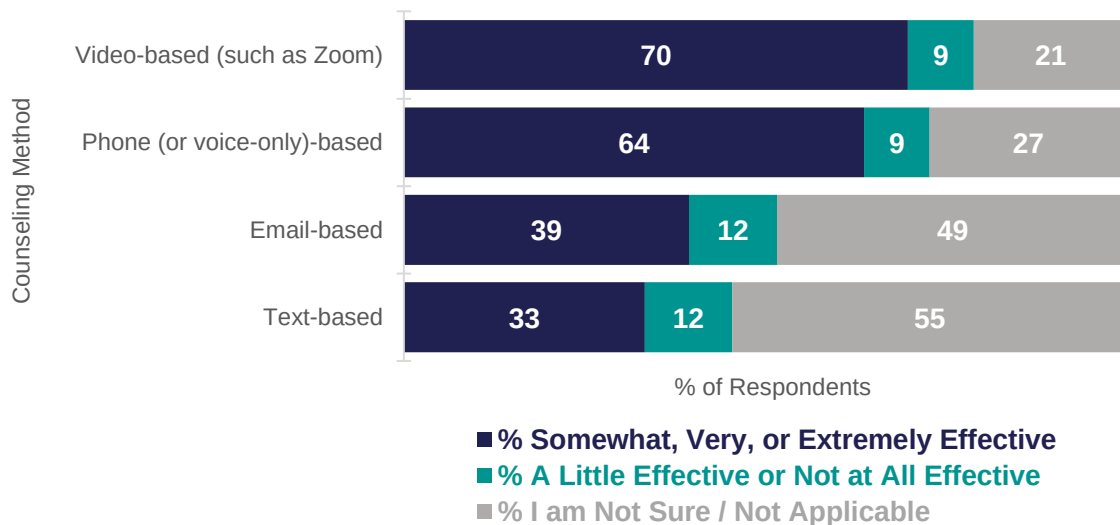
Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

Virtual Counseling: Efficacy by Method. Approximately one-third of respondents (30%) reported providing some form of virtual counseling to students and staff members during at-home learning. Among the media used to provide virtual counseling (video, phone, email, or text), the highest rate of respondents rated video-based communication to be at least somewhat effective (70%; Figure 16). The grey-colored bars in Figure 16 are included to highlight the possible level of uncertainty these staff members felt about the effectiveness of the respective technology-mediated method of counseling provided.

Figure 16: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - Virtual Counseling: Efficacy by Method During At-Home Learning (N=33)

Please indicate the effectiveness of the following remote counseling methods you used **DURING at-home learning.**



Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding. Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E.

Virtual Counseling: Overall Efficacy, Privacy, and Training Needs. SPED evaluators were also asked questions about virtual counseling privacy, virtual counseling efficacy, and training that might help improve the virtual counseling experience for future at-home learning scenarios. Because a sizable rate of respondents indicated uncertainty or irrelevance when answering these survey questions by selecting that they were not sure or that the question was not applicable, Figure 17 shows rates of agreement (agree or strongly agree) and uncertainty (I am not sure/Not Applicable) for these questions for informational purposes.³⁷

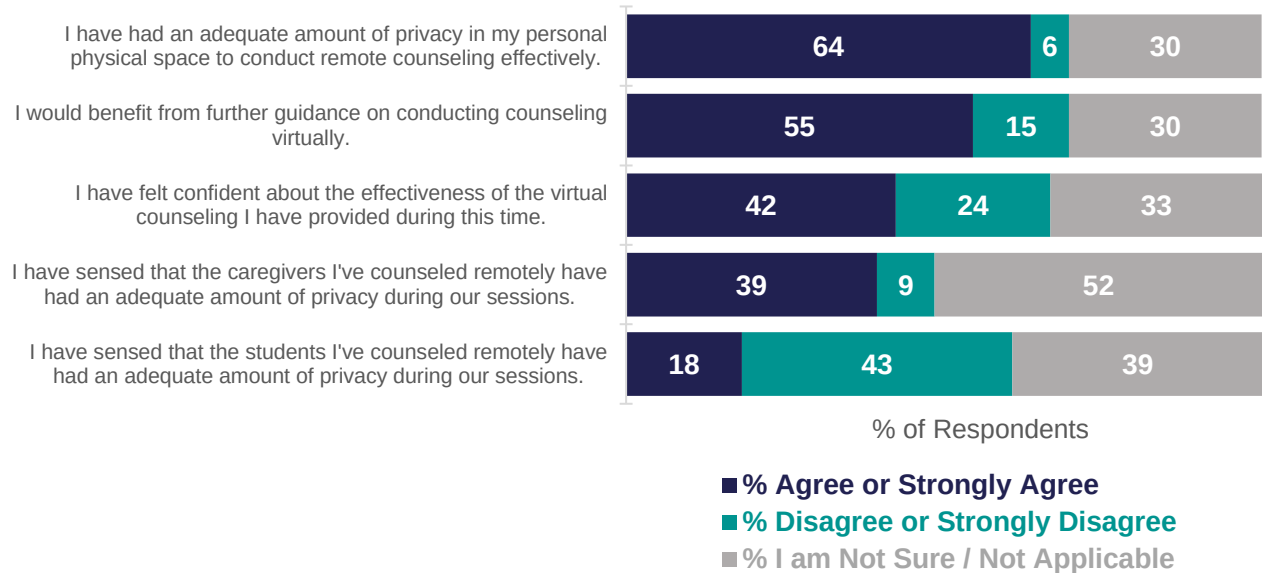
Survey findings indicate a need for more extensive training for SPED evaluators on conducting virtual conferences with efficacy and enhanced privacy for all participants. As shown in Figure 17, 42 percent of respondents indicated that they felt confident about the effectiveness of provided virtual counseling sessions, and more than half of respondents (55%) reported that they would benefit from further guidance on conducting counseling virtually. With respect to privacy, many respondents agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that when providing counseling to students or families during at-home learning, evaluators themselves had an adequate amount of privacy (64%), but they were less likely to agree that caregivers (39%) and, particularly, students (18%) possessed adequate levels of privacy during virtual counseling; 52 percent and 39 percent, respectively, chose “I don’t know / N/A” for these two items. Training should address these issues to prepare counselors for virtual counseling in the event of future at-home learning scenarios. Grey-colored bars representing the rate of respondents who selected “I am not sure or Not

³⁷ The high rate of respondents who selected “I’m not sure / Not Applicable” could be because of uncertainty, but it also may reflect the possibility that virtual counseling to caregivers was not as common as virtual counseling provided to students.

Applicable” are shown also in Figure 17 to highlight the possible level of uncertainty these staff members felt about the efficacy of the technology-mediated counseling experience.

Figure 17: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - Virtual Counseling Efficacy, Privacy, and Training During At-Home Learning (N=33)

Please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.



Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding. Detailed rates by response and Ns are provided in Appendix E. Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

SPED Evaluator Survey General Comments

Finally, respondents were asked to share any additional reflections about 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED services. A total of 41 evaluators provided responses. The six most common themes among those responses are provided in Table 15.

The three most common suggestions (15%; $n=6$ each) provided by respondents were 1) help ensure SPED evaluators have reliable workspaces at assigned campuses; 2) utilize virtual meetings more commonly (in lieu of in-person meetings as appropriate; many reported virtual meetings to be both effective and more efficient than in-person meetings); and 3) help ensure a more equitable workload among SPED evaluators. Elaborating on the third theme, several respondents noted that the 2019-20 change to decentralize the Child Find process created a formidable work burden for SPED evaluators, and they recommended additional staff members be tasked with Child Find duties in the future.

Table 15: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - General Comments (N=41)

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding special education services in the district? For all comments, please specify whether you are commenting about the context of on-campus or at-home learning (or both).		
Help ensure reliable campus workspace for evaluators	6	14.6
Utilize virtual meetings more commonly; they are more efficient	6	14.6
Help ensure a more equitable workload among evaluators (decentralized Child Find processes have added a significant burden for many evaluators)	6	14.6
Help ensure a consistent stock of protocols for all evaluators	5	12.2
The remote work arrangement worked well	5	12.2
Evaluators need to be able to test students virtually (and validly)	3	7.3

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Respondents could provide multiple themes. See Appendix E for a full list of themes.

What were trends in special education student academic performance?

Methodology

Analyses of SPED student academic performance during 2019-20 along with trends across the past three years were planned for this report section. However, because of the cancellation of STAAR statewide testing resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent district transition to at-home learning, 2019-20 STAAR data analyses could not be included in this report. Select longitudinal data from the previous two years is provided in this section for informational purposes.

About STAAR

STAAR 3-8 and STAAR *End of Course (EOC)* assessments for 2017-18 and 2018-19 were available to SPED students in two versions: STAAR and STAAR *Alternate 2*. STAAR *Alternate 2* is an assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards and is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving SPED services. STAAR *Alternate 2* is available in the same grade levels and subject areas as the general STAAR assessments but is administered individually and includes embedded supports and accommodations available to SPED students.³⁸ As noted previously, STAAR accommodations and STAAR *Alternate 2* eligibility are determined by student ARD committees.

For both 2017-18 and 2018-19, the evaluator conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine the rate of SPED students performing at Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) and meeting each level of STAAR progress measures (Limited, Expected, Accelerated). Performance data were grouped by subject and grade level.

³⁸ Designated supports include basic transcribing, Braille, calculation aids, content and language supports, extra time, individualized structured reminders, large print, manipulating test materials, mathematics manipulatives, oral/signed administration, spelling assistance, supplemental aids, and extra day.

Results

STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOCs

Longitudinal performance outcomes of SPED students in 2017-18 and 2018-19 are provided below for informational purposes. Outcomes show the rate of SPED students achieving the Approaches+ performance standard. As noted previously, 2019-20 data were unavailable because of statewide testing cancellations.

Table 16: 2017-18 and 2018-19 Dallas ISD SPED Students at STAAR 3-8 Approaches Grade Level or Above by Grade Level

Grade Level	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		One-Year Change	Two-Year Change
	Tested N	Appr+ %	Tested N	Appr+ %	Tested N	Appr+ %		
Reading								
Grade 3	1,045	50.7	1,166	48.1	2019-20 STAAR data not available because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.			
Grade 4	1,083	43.2	1,262	42.3				
Grade 5	1,148	48.9	1,288	49.7				
Grade 6	1,003	31.9	1,137	34.1				
Grade 7	855	38.5	1,000	39.9				
Grade 8	902	32.7	865	41.7				
Mathematics								
Grade 3	1,044	53.6	1,163	53.7				
Grade 4	1,084	51.3	1,262	50.3				
Grade 5	1,148	60.4	1,288	59.2				
Grade 6	1,003	46.5	1,134	49.0				
Grade 7	836	45.0	1,001	47.4				
Grade 8	914	46.4	847	54.0				
Writing								
Grade 4	1,081	32.7	1,254	36.7				
Grade 7	865	32.5	998	32.5				
Science								
Grade 5	1,137	51.5	1,280	48.0				
Grade 8	884	37.9	828	49.0				
Social Studies								
Grade 8	871	35.2	849	41.4				

Source: District STAAR 3-8 data files dated 06/20/18 (2017-18) and 06/13/19 (2018-19).

Note: Includes data for all administrations of all versions of STAAR 3-8 subtests for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date. 2019-20 data were unavailable because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.

Table 17: 2017-18 and 2018-19 Dallas ISD SPED Students at STAAR EOC Approaches Grade Level or Above and One- and Two-Year Trends

Subject	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		One-Year Change	Two-Year Change
	Tested N	Appr+ %	Tested N	Appr+ %	Tested N	Appr+ %		
Algebra I	1,312	47.6	1,204	55.2	2019-20 STAAR data not available because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.			
English I	1,792	21.4	1,747	20.9				
English II	1,372	21.5	1,356	24.2				
Biology	1,239	51.8	1,129	53.2				
U.S. History	752	63.2	780	65.5				

Source: District STAAR EOC data files dated 06/20/18 (2017-18) and 06/04/19 (2018-19).

Note: Includes fall and spring administrations for all versions of STAAR EOC for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date. 2019-20 data were unavailable because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.

What were the trends in dropout and attendance rates for special education students?

Methodology

Dallas ISD-to-State Comparisons –Longitudinal Trends in Dropout Rates

The TEA uses the dropout definition provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Under this definition, a dropout is “a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not 1) graduate, 2) receive a Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE), 3) continue school outside the public school system, 4) begin college, or 5) [die].”³⁹

The calculation of drop-out rates first requires an understanding of graduation and completion rates. The four-year longitudinal graduation rate – used for federal accountability – is the percentage of students from a class of beginning grade nine students who graduated by their anticipated graduation dates or within four years of beginning grade nine. “Continuers” are high school students who were enrolled in high school longer than four years. The four-year longitudinal dropout rate is the percentage of students from the same class who drop out before completing a high school education.

$$\text{Longitudinal Graduation Rate} = 100 \times \frac{\text{Graduates}}{\text{Graduates} + \text{Continuers} + \text{TxCHSE Recipients} + \text{Dropouts}}$$

For state accountability, the graduation-related indicator is termed the “completion rate.” “Completers” are defined as students who graduate in four years or who continue in high school for a fifth year.

$$\text{Longitudinal Completion Rate} = 100 \times \frac{\text{Graduates} + \text{Continuers}}{\text{Graduates} + \text{Continuers} + \text{TxCHSE Recipients} + \text{Dropouts}}$$

³⁹ Source: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/support-risk-schools-and-students/risk-schools-and-students-dropout-prevention/dropout-2>.

Dropout, graduation, continuation, and Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE) information normally are calculated and published by the TEA during the summer of each year for the previous school year with a one-year lag. These data were not provided by the TEA in summer 2020 for 2018-19 because of the spring 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and resulting instructional transitions required by Texas school districts. For informational purposes, the evaluator extracted longitudinal trends in four-year dropout rates for both the district and the state through 2017-18 from the 2018-19 SPED evaluation report (Mejan, 2019).

Attendance Rate

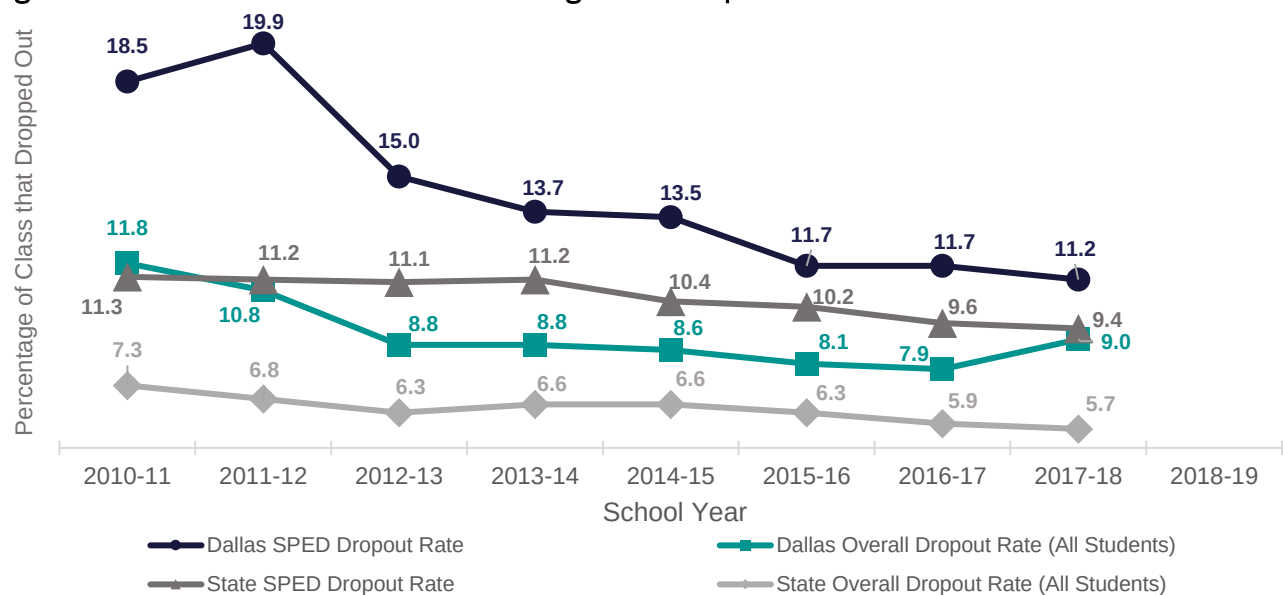
To examine 2019-20 attendance rates for SPED students, the evaluator used the district attendance data file dated May 5, 2020. This data file included attendance data through the fourth six-week period in 2019-20, reflecting the last attendance taken before the transition to districtwide at-home learning. This file was merged with the PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for October 28, 2019. Attendance rates were calculated by dividing the total days of attendance by the total days enrolled and grouped by grade level. These calculations and groupings were completed for both the district and for SPED students.

Results

Dallas ISD-to-State Comparisons –Longitudinal Trends in Dropout Rate

Four-year longitudinal dropout rates for the Dallas ISD and the state for 2010-11 through 2017-18 are shown in Figure 18 for informational purposes. Historically, district SPED dropout rates have been higher than for statewide SPED students, and they were also higher than districtwide and statewide dropout rates, but over time these gaps have narrowed somewhat.

Figure 18: 2010-11 to 2019-20 Four-Year Longitudinal Dropout Rates



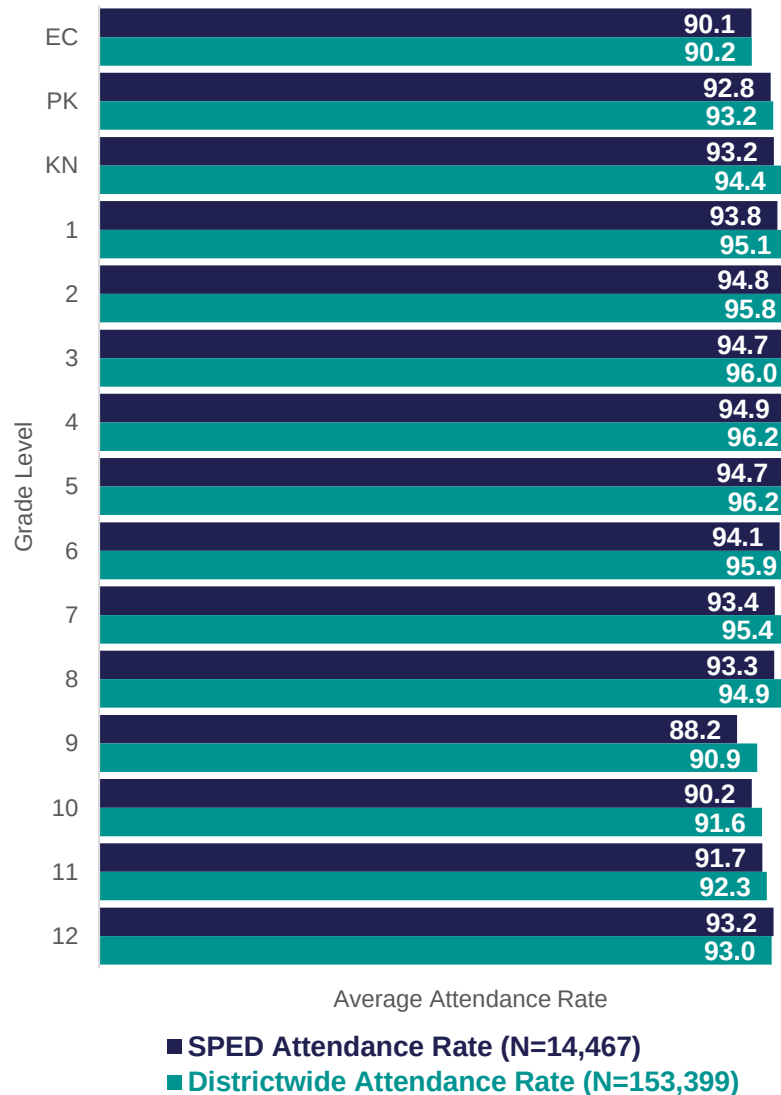
Source: 2018-19 evaluation report (Mejan, 2019).

Note: Four-year longitudinal data are lagged by one year. Data for 2018-19 were not provided by TEA in summer 2020, as expected.

Attendance

The overall attendance rate among SPED students as of the fourth six-week period was 93.1 percent. Districtwide, the rate as of the fourth six weeks was 94.4 percent. Among SPED students, rates were highest in the middle and elementary grades, with the highest in grade four (94.9%, Figure 19). The average attendance rate was lowest in grade nine (88.2%). Attendance rates among high school SPED students were slightly higher for each consecutive grade level in 2019-20 (Figure 19).

Figure 19: 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED and Districtwide Student Average Attendance Rates by Grade Level Prior to At-Home Learning



Source: Dallas ISD student attendance data file for the first through fourth six-week period dated 05/07/20.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

The 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED department employed 1,129 full-time SPED teachers who served 14,478 students (9.4% of district enrollment) and operated with a budget of \$61,597,547 (a \$1.3M increase from 2018-19). ChildFind services were decentralized in 2019-20, speech services for SPED students were expanded to include teletherapy, and the department adapted in a multitude of ways because of the COVID-19 pandemic and districtwide transition to at-home learning. While most academic assessments were cancelled in 2019-20, per state and federal guidelines, IEP amendments were drafted for each SPED student to address which SPED services could continue. Key findings for 2019-20 included the following.

- The districtwide SPED population increased each year since 2014-15, when SPED student enrollment totaled 11,722 (7.3% of district enrollment), a rise persisting despite decreased districtwide enrollment.
- Over five years, the percentage of district SPED teachers increased by 2.3 percentage points, but SPED administrators continue to experience a shortage of SPED teachers.
- The most common SPED student primary disabilities districtwide in 2019-20 were specific learning disability (29.3%), autism (23.0%), and other health impairment (15.6%). The rate of district SPED students with some form of autism more than tripled between 2010-11 (6.8%) and 2019-20 (23.0%).
- Survey findings indicated 43 percent SPED teachers were unaware of the presence and activities of campus SSTs, possibly indicating some under-engagement of SPED staff at the campus level.
- Although, as in 2018-19, SPED evaluators reported high rates of parent requests for initial evaluations, the rate of respondents who indicated that all evaluations were parent requests decreased from 24 percent in 2018-19 to 14 percent in 2019-20.
- SPED teacher and administrator ratings of SPED department customer service generally were positive (75% to 91%), improved from 2018-19, and were at least as high or higher during at-home learning as they were prior to at-home learning.
- Both SPED teachers (61%) and administrators (74%) felt they needed more effective online teaching resource options for at-home learning.
- Both SPED teachers (64%) and administrators (82%) expressed a need for more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning.
- Both SPED teachers (64%) and administrators (73%) expressed a need for more adequate and timely provision of technology for SPED students during at-home learning.
- Prior to at-home learning, many SPED evaluators reported that they had space on campus to conduct adequate student evaluations (68%) and to conduct job-related duties (60%); 32 to 40 percent did not.
- SPED evaluators reported that their printer- and copy-related needs were met on campus (90%) and they had reasonable access to needed assessment kits (83%), but fewer (57%) reported that they had reasonable access to the protocols needed (e.g., *WISC*) to complete their work duties.

- Evaluator ratings of professional support and collaboration prior to at-home learning improved in 2019-20 over the previous year, especially for regularity and usefulness of collaboration meetings.
- SPED evaluators highly rated professional support and collaboration during at-home learning.
- Many SPED evaluators remarked on the 2019-20 SPED Evaluator survey that virtual meetings during this time were more time and energy efficient compared to in-person meetings.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Continue to stress to all campuses the importance of regular SST meetings for the identification of students needing services. Although 55 percent of SPED teachers agreed that campus SSTs met regularly to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation, 43 percent of SPED teachers were aware of an SST on their campuses but did not have enough information to rate their SST, suggesting possible under-engagement of SPED staff members in SST campus activities. Stressing the crucial role that regular SST meetings play in the effective and efficient functioning of MTSS may also help to address the finding persisting over three years that a high percentage of referrals for initial evaluations came from parents.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have the workspace they need on campuses. While many SPED evaluators reported having adequate space on campus to conduct evaluations (68%) and to carry out work duties effectively (60%), these findings indicated that 32 to 40 percent would benefit from improved on-campus space allocation to serve students properly.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have needed supplies. Although 57 percent of SPED evaluators reported they had reasonable access to needed protocols (e.g., *WISC*), this finding indicates 43 percent of respondents need improved access to supplies.

Review and enhance the technological resources of teachers and students to ensure uninterrupted SPED services during possible future periods of at-home learning. Many SPED teachers (61%) and campus administrators (74%) reported needing more effective online teaching resource options for at-home learning and more guidance on effective use of Microsoft Teams (teachers: 51%; administrators: 59%) and Google Classrooms (teachers: 55%; administrators: 57%). Other needs mentioned included more reliable internet connectivity and more reliable, age-appropriate technology (hardware) resources for students. Attention to correcting these technological shortcomings will improve the ability to more seamlessly provide SPED services virtually, when necessary.

Consider virtual meetings as a year-round option to improve efficiency. Many SPED evaluators remarked that virtual meetings during this time were more time and energy efficient compared to in-person meetings. Stakeholders should consider whether virtual meetings would also improve communication and engagement with SPED students and their families, when appropriate.

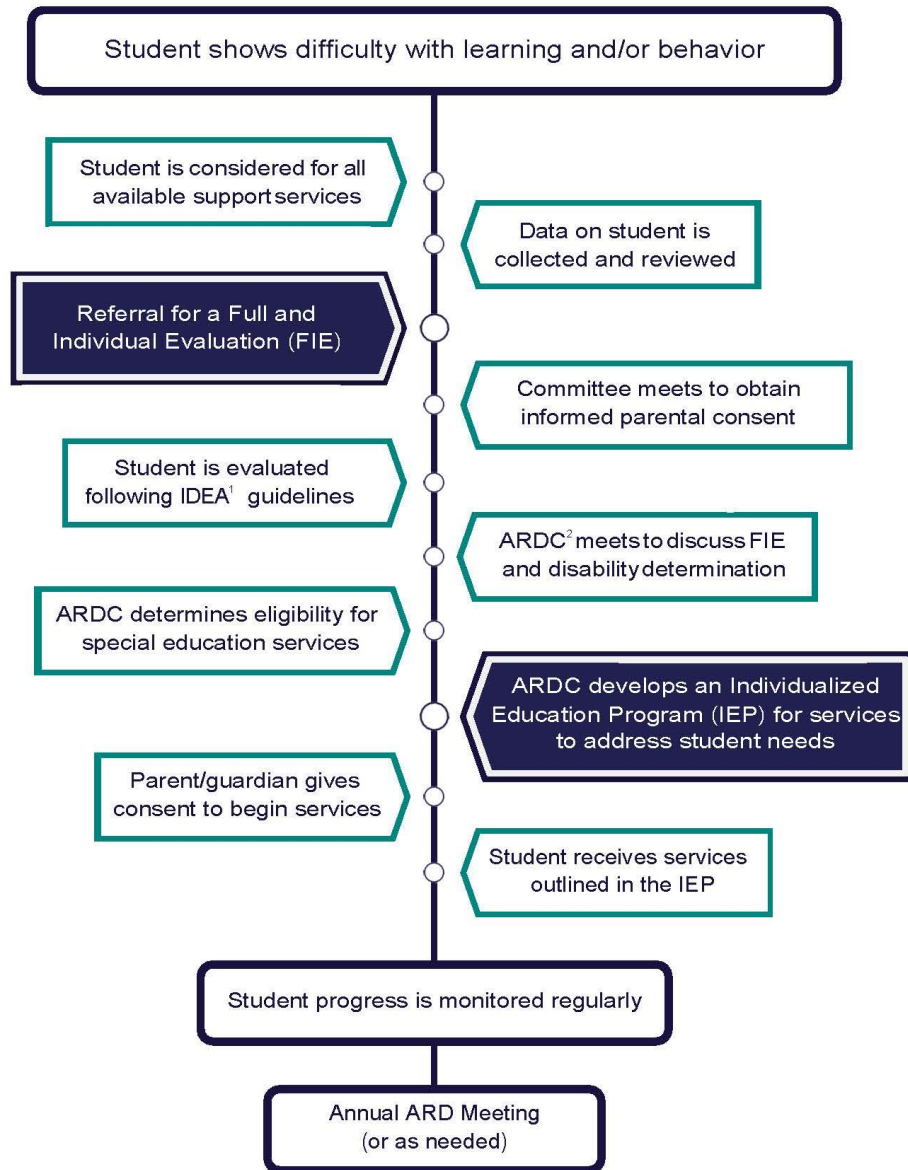
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

NAVIGATING THE IEP PROCESS



IDEA¹ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; a law that ensures appropriate education to eligible children with disabilities
 ARDC² Admission, Review and Dismissal Committee (ARDC); responsible for creating, implementing and maintaining the IEP.



Special Education

Source: Dallas ISD SPED department, February 2020.

Appendix B

Appendix B, Table 1: 2017 to 2019 Dallas ISD SPED Program Area Performance: PBMAS/RDA Report

Indicator	2017			2018			2019		
	N	%	PL	N	%	PL	N	%	PL
SPED STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate									
Mathematics	5,665	46.4	2	6,360	53.6	2	7,074	54.5	2
Reading	5,695	38.0	3	6,030	45.6	2	7,097	44.7	2
Science	1,916	42.3	2	2,140	44.6	2	2,246	48.4	2
Social Studies	857	32.3	3	871	35.2	3	863	41.3	2
Writing	1,925	29.2	3	2,014	33.3	3	2,379	33.5	3
SPED Year-After-Exit STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate									
Mathematics	323	65.6	1	219	76.7	0	268	82.5	0
Reading	332	60.8	1	219	58.0	2	270	73.7	0
Science	104	62.5	1	59	61.0	1	77	66.2	0
Social Studies	38	47.4	2	18	51.2	2	21	50.6	2
Writing	112	45.5	3	70	45.7	3	95	57.9	2
SPED STAAR EOC Passing Rate									
Mathematics	1,208	46.0	2	1,108	54.3	2	1,057	62.0	0
Science	1,018	48.8	3	1,092	57.0	2	1,026	58.1	2
Social Studies	760	57.8	2	769	63.1	1	778	65.3	1
English Language Arts	2,444	22.4	3	2,450	25.6	3	2,495	26.1	3
STAAR Test Version Participation									
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation	1,309	20.7	3	1,436	20.2	3	1,503	2.1	RO
SPED Program Settings									
SPED Regular Early Childhood Program Rate (Ages 3-5)	*	23.3	0	*	19.7	2	*	19.2	2
SPED Regular Class >=80% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	74.7	0	*	74.8	0	*	75.8	0
SPED Regular Class <40% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	16.7	1	*	16.4	1	*	16.1	1
SPED Dropout/Graduation									
SPED Annual Dropout Rate	5,833	2.2	0	5,760	2.5	1	5,852	3.0	1
SPED Graduation Rate	667	74.1	1	699	71.0	1	671	72.1	1
SPED Representation (Ages 3-21) and SPED Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS)									
SPED Representation: African American, Identified with Emotional Disturbance (as Primary Disability)		*	*	*	*	*	4,020	7.7	SD3
SPED OSS and Expulsion <=10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)		*	*	*	*	*	*	14.2	SD3
SPED OSS and Expulsion >10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	SD3

Source: Texas Education Agency 2019 RDA report for Dallas ISD and 2019 RDA State Report. Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2019 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website.

Note: * = TEA masked data to protect student confidentiality. Ns include students who tested on STAAR. RDA uses the term "passing rate" to indicate a STAAR score at Approaches+. RO = Report Only. SD3 = Significant Disproportionality, Year 3.

Appendix B, Table 2: 2019 Dallas ISD and State SPED Program Area Performance: PBMAS/RDA Report

Indicator	District			State		
	N	%	PL	N	%	PL
SPED STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate						
Mathematics	7,074	54.5	2	247,894	53.4	2
Reading	7,097	44.7	2	249,486	44.8	2
Science	2,246	48.4	2	81,375	46.0	2
Social Studies	863	41.3	2	37,235	36.9	3
Writing	2,379	33.5	3	83,587	32.3	3
SPED Year-After-Exit STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate						
Mathematics	268	82.5	0	18,565	83.1	0
Reading	270	73.7	0	19,012	77.2	0
Science	77	66.2	0	5,558	78.9	0
Social Studies	21	50.6	2	2,081	68.9	0
Writing	95	57.9	2	6,241	62.9	1
SPED STAAR EOC Passing Rate						
Mathematics	1,057	62.0	0	47,387	55.2	1
Science	1,026	58.1	2	43,737	62.3	2
Social Studies	778	65.3	1	33,386	66.3	1
English Language Arts	2,495	26.1	3	101,668	28.7	3
STAAR Test Version Participation						
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation	1,503	2.1	RO	2,557,978	1.4	RO
SPED Program Settings						
SPED Regular Early Childhood Program Rate (Ages 3-5)	*	19.2	2	53,731	29.7	1
SPED Regular Class >=80% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	75.8	0	477,638	69.7	1
SPED Regular Class <40% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	16.1	1	470,404	14.9	1
SPED Dropout/Graduation						
SPED Annual Dropout Rate	5,852	3.0	1	229,241	1.9	1
SPED Graduation Rate	671	72.1	1	29,582	77.9	1
SPED Representation (Ages 3-21) and SPED Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS)						
SPED Representation: African American, Identified with Emotional Disturbance (as Primary Disability)	4,020	7.7	SD3	NP	NP	NP
SPED OSS and Expulsion <=10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)	*	14.2	SD3	37,036	6.2	RO
SPED OSS and Expulsion >10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)	*	*	SD3	2,090	0.4	RO

Source: Texas Education Agency 2019 RDA report for Dallas ISD and 2019 RDA State Report. Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2019 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website.

Note: * = TEA masked data to protect student confidentiality. Ns include students who tested on STAAR. RDA uses the term "passing rate" to indicate a STAAR score at Approaches+. RO = Report Only (a TEA designation). SD3 = Significant Disproportionality, Year 3. NP = not provided in or not calculated for PBMAS/RDA report).

Appendix C

Appendix C: 2019-20 SPED Professional Development Session Topics

Topic

7 Steps to Separating Differences & Disability
 Accelerated Instruction for SSI /EOC
 Access for All: Adapting the Pre-K Guidelines to Meet the Needs of Students with Disabilities
 Alternative Routes for Adapting Mathematics Curriculum for Special Education
 An Overview of Adapted Physical Education Services
 ARD/LPAC Collaboration
 Are Those Skills Functional?
 Are you smarter than a Compliance Specialist?
 Are You Talking to Me?
 AT...What's That About?
 Autism in the General Education Classroom
 Beginning ULS for Teachers New to Specialized Programs
 Blended Learning in a Special Education Classroom
 Bookshare: Unlocking the power of reading
 Brigance IED III -Inventory of Early Development for PPCD
 Case Management 3.0
 Classroom Organization in the Specialized Programs Classroom
 Connect Three (PLAAFP, Goals, & Objectives)
 Co-Teaching in the PPCD Collaborative Classroom
 Dallas RDSPD Beginning of the Year Kick Off 2019-2020
 Documenting in EasyIEP
 ECSE Program Standards and Technical Assistance Q & A
 ECSE/ PPCD Boardmaker Online Refresher
 ECSE/ PPCD Review 360 Early Childhood Plan for New PPCD Staff
 English Learner/Special Education Technology Roll Out
 FBAs
 Foundations for Success: Components of Quality ECSE Services
 Gearing Up for a Winning Season (New Inclusion Teachers)
 Handling TEA Complaints and Mediation
 Helping Special Education Students Write Better, Right Now
 Inclusion in the General Education Classroom
 Inclusion in the Social Studies Classroom 2019-2020
 Intervention Gone Virtual
 Keys to Great Classroom Management
 Learning Centers in ECSE
 Linking Cognitive Abilities to Instruction
 Math Strategies for Students with Disabilities
 Multiple Uses of Materials
 New ELAR TEKS Overview for Special Education Teachers
 News-2-You for ADL, FLS, & TC Teachers & Tas
 Overview of LIPP Review 360 for new ADL, FLS, & TC Teachers
 Overview of Specialized Programs for New ADL, FLS, & TC Teachers & TAs
 Reading the FIE to Understand Disabilities
 Review 360 Low Incidence Population Program for Teachers New to Specialized Programs
 Sensory Make & Take
 Specialized Programs Overview for New Teachers & TAs
 Spicing Up Your Instruction with Technology
 SRA: Corrective Reading
 STAAR Testing Updates for Students with Disabilities
 STAAR Autism Support Workshop (Strategies for Teaching based on Autism Research)

table continues

Appendix C (continued)**Topic**

Strategies for Working with Students with Autism in the General Education Setting
 Strategies to Support Students with ASD
 Structured Teaching: The TEACCH Method for Specialized Programs Teachers with 0 - 5 years in the Program
 Success of Special Education Students in the Math Classroom
 Support a Classroom, Build a Future
 Supporting our Dually Identified Students: ARD/LPAC Collaboration
 Teaching Using Visuals in Specialized Classrooms
 The BIP Blueprint: How to Write an Effective Behavior Intervention Plan 2019-2020
 The Fast Lane to Compliance (Spring 2020)
 Trash to Treasures for Specialized Programs
 Using Evidence-Based Practices to Teach Reading to Students with Significant Challenges
 Using Stories, Interests & Visuals to Teach Social Skills
 Vocabulary Games
 Which Manipulative Would You Choose?
 Why We Need SEL
 Working with Words
 Write the Wrong: Documenting Restraint Incidents 2019-2020
 Writing Strategies for Students with Disabilities

Source: SPED administrative staff members, July 2020.

Appendix D

Appendix D, Table 1: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – Respondent Characteristics (N=1,541)^a

	Teachers (N=1,243)		Administrators (N=289)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Which of the following best describes your current position?				
SPED Teacher	742	59.7		
SPED Teacher Assistant	501	40.3		
Principal			98	33.9
Assistant Principal			191	66.1
How many years have you worked in the Dallas ISD (as of the end of 2019-20)?				
1	193	15.5	14	4.8
2-5	349	28.1	35	12.1
6-10	237	19.1	48	16.6
11 or more	464	37.3	192	66.4
Approximately how many students with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) have you worked with this school year?				
None	15	1.2	8	2.8
1-5	119	9.6	9	3.1
6-10	313	25.2	10	3.5
11-15	257	20.7	21	7.3
16-20	148	11.9	19	6.6
21 or more	365	29.4	202	69.9
I don't know / N/A	26	2.1	20	6.9

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: ^aTotal N includes nine respondents (0.6%) who did not identify as a teacher or an administrator (central staff members). Characteristics for these individuals were not included in this table, and their responses were not included in closed-ended survey responses, but their open-ended responses were included in qualitative results, as appropriate. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 2: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – Nature of Student Support Team (SST) on Campus

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure / N/A		I am aware of an SST that meets at our campus, but I do not have enough information to rate.	
	N	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Our campus Student Support Team (SST) met regularly to discuss student concerns.													
Teachers	1,238	71	5.7	50	4.0	435	35.1	271	21.9	151	12.2	260	21.0
Administrators	289	8	2.8	14	4.8	153	52.9	94	32.5	6	2.1	14	4.8
Our campus SST met regularly to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial Special Education evaluation.													
Teachers	1,232	66	5.4	59	4.8	422	34.3	254	20.6	152	12.3	279	22.6
Administrators	289	7	2.4	18	6.2	152	52.6	93	32.2	7	2.4	12	4.2

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Appendix D, Table 3: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – Understanding of SPED Policy and Access to SPED Resources

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure / N/A	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I understand the district's expectations in providing special education services.											
Teachers	1,243	48	3.9	35	2.8	591	47.5	551	44.3	18	1.4
Administrators	289	3	1.0	8	2.8	138	47.8	137	47.4	3	1.0
I understand the district's special education policies and procedures.											
Teachers	1,243	47	3.8	46	3.7	628	50.5	500	40.2	22	1.8
Administrators	289	3	1.0	12	4.2	145	50.2	126	43.6	3	1.0
I know how to get help with special education-related matters.											
Teachers	1,243	55	4.4	49	3.9	626	50.4	488	39.3	25	2.0
Administrators	289	5	1.7	18	6.2	132	45.7	132	45.7	2	0.7
I have adequate access to the central staff needed to provide special education services.											
Teachers	1,243	64	5.1	90	7.2	591	47.5	424	34.1	74	6.0
Administrators	289	16	5.5	29	10.0	132	45.7	106	36.7	6	2.1
I have adequate access to the classroom materials needed to provide special education services.											
Teachers	1,243	71	5.7	122	9.8	612	49.2	413	33.2	25	2.0
Administrators	289	11	3.8	27	9.3	135	46.7	89	30.8	27	9.3

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Appendix D, Table 4: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service Prior to At-Home Learning

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure / N/A	
	N	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The Special Education department was focused in their response(s) to my request(s).											
Teachers	702	21	3.0	44	6.3	383	54.6	232	33.0	22	3.1
Administrators	206	6	2.9	26	12.6	112	54.4	59	28.6	3	1.5
The Special Education department responded to me in a timely manner.											
Teachers	702	27	3.8	44	6.3	373	53.1	242	34.5	16	2.3
Administrators	206	10	4.9	29	14.1	107	51.9	59	28.6	1	0.5
The Special Education department was flexible in their responses to my requests.											
Teachers	702	21	3.0	51	7.3	364	51.9	227	32.3	39	5.6
Administrators	206	8	3.9	28	13.6	107	51.9	59	28.6	4	1.9
The Special Education department was friendly in their responses to my requests.											
Teachers	702	17	2.4	25	3.6	359	51.1	282	40.2	19	2.7
Administrators	206	3	1.5	16	7.8	106	51.5	79	38.3	2	1.0
The Special Education Department fully addressed my question(s) and/or concern(s).											
Teachers	702	24	3.4	76	10.8	336	47.9	243	34.6	23	3.3
Administrators	206	7	3.4	42	20.4	90	43.7	65	31.6	2	1.0
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of customer service I received from the Special Education Department.											
Teachers	702	26	3.7	56	8.0	336	47.9	257	36.6	27	3.8
Administrators	206	7	3.4	31	15.0	96	46.6	66	32.0	6	2.9

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 5: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service Prior to At-Home Learning

Request or Concern	Teachers	Administrators
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
If you answered "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to any item(s) in the previous question, please identify which request(s) or concern(s) related to your selection of "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." (Select all that apply)		
The special education evaluation process	25	23
Behavior interventions	42	28
A special education staffing request	45	0
A special education material (non-human) resource request	46	10
Other	79	25

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 6: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service During At-Home Learning

	<i>N</i>	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure / N/A	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Reflecting on your experience with the Special Education Department during at-home learning, please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.											
The Special Education department was focused in their response(s) to my request(s).											
Teachers	209	1	0.5	7	3.3	109	52.2	81	38.8	11	5.3
Administrators	25	1	4.0	0	0.0	12	48.0	10	40.0	2	8.0
The Special Education department responded to me in a timely manner.											
Teachers	209	1	0.5	9	4.3	111	53.1	80	38.3	8	3.8
Administrators	25	1	4.0	0	0.0	12	48.0	11	44.0	1	4.0
The Special Education department was flexible in their responses to my requests.											
Teachers	209	2	1.0	8	3.8	104	49.8	76	36.4	19	9.1
Administrators	25	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	56.0	10	40.0	1	4.0
The Special Education department was friendly in their responses to my requests.											
Teachers	209	3	1.4	3	1.4	110	52.6	86	41.1	7	3.3
Administrators	25	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	48.0	12	48.0	1	4.0
The Special Education Department fully addressed my question(s) and/or concern(s).											
Teachers	209	3	1.4	15	7.2	103	49.3	79	37.8	9	4.3
Administrators	25	0	0.0	1	4.0	10	40.0	12	48.0	2	8.0
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of customer service I received from the Special Education Department.											
Teachers	209	5	2.4	8	3.8	106	50.7	78	37.3	12	5.7
Administrators	25	0	0.0	2	8.0	11	44.0	12	48.0	0	0.0

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 7: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service During At-Home Learning

Request or Concern	Teachers	Administrators
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
If you answered "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to any item(s) in the previous question, please identify which request(s) or concern(s) related to your selection of "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." (Select all that apply)		
The IEP amendment process	22	0
Distance-learning resources	8	0
Technical difficulties	12	0
Accommodation resources	2	0
SPED policy compliance concern	14	0
Other	7	2

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Appendix D, Table 8: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – Technology Resource Needs During At-Home Learning

Group	N	No need		A little bit of a need		Somewhat of a need		A considerable need		An extreme need		I'm not sure / Not applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Please identify the extent to which you perceived a need for the following during at-home learning:													
More effective online teaching resource options													
Teachers	700	93	13.3	74	10.6	175	25.0	164	23.4	90	12.9	104	14.9
Administrators	137	12	8.8	15	10.9	33	24.1	41	29.9	27	19.7	9	6.6
More guidance on using Google Classrooms effectively													
Teachers	704	148	21.0	81	11.5	152	21.6	145	20.6	91	12.9	87	12.4
Administrators	137	26	19.0	26	19.0	20	14.6	33	24.1	25	18.2	7	5.1
More guidance on using Microsoft Teams effectively													
Teachers	700	155	22.1	88	12.6	138	19.7	139	19.9	83	11.9	97	13.9
Administrators	137	30	21.9	20	14.6	27	19.7	30	21.9	24	17.5	6	4.4
More guidance on effectively engaging SPED students during at-home learning													
Teachers	701	93	13.3	86	12.3	139	19.8	155	22.1	154	22.0	74	10.6
Administrators	137	11	8.0	6	4.4	28	20.4	43	31.4	42	30.7	7	5.1
More guidance on effectively engaging parents/caregivers during at-home learning													
Teachers	699	88	12.6	78	11.2	136	19.5	163	23.3	160	22.9	74	10.6
Administrators	137	8	5.8	8	5.8	24	17.5	35	25.5	54	39.4	8	5.8
More reliable technology (hardware) resources for myself													
Teachers	705	216	30.6	88	12.5	0	0.0	245	34.8	101	14.3	55	7.8
Administrators	136	69	50.7	16	11.8	0	0.0	28	20.6	18	13.2	5	3.7
More reliable technology (hardware) resources for my students													
Teachers	705	94	13.3	90	12.8	0	0.0	270	38.3	178	25.2	73	10.4
Administrators	137	18	13.1	12	8.8	0	0.0	59	43.1	41	29.9	7	5.1
More reliable internet connectivity (for myself)													
Teachers	703	298	42.4	83	11.8	0	0.0	178	25.3	98	13.9	46	6.5
Administrators	136	70	51.5	19	14.0	0	0.0	29	21.3	14	10.3	4	2.9
More reliable internet connectivity (for my students)													
Teachers	705	64	9.1	73	10.4	0	0.0	275	39.0	224	31.8	69	9.8
Administrators	137	7	5.1	13	9.5	0	0.0	56	40.9	55	40.1	6	4.4

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 9: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service (Open-Ended Reflections from SPED Teachers; N = 161)

Theme	n	%
Do you have any final suggestions that would significantly improve the staff experience and/or SPED student experience, including anything related to SPED program processes, SPED professional development offerings, and/or SPED-related resources?		
Provide more effective PD on increasing student and parent engagement during at-home learning	31	19.3
Provide more effective PD to SPED teachers and TAs on online teaching and learning options for at-home learning	30	18.6
Students need adequate and timely provision of age-appropriate technology devices and internet connectivity for at-home learning	23	14.3
Parents need training from SPED, particularly on technology use, to help teachers effectively engage their children during at home learning	19	11.8
Paperwork/documentation for SPED is a great burden and poses costs on the quality of instruction SPED teachers are able to provide their students	12	7.5
More alternative instruction options are needed for SPED students that require less SPED student computer use	9	5.6
Continue PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), including webinars	7	4.3
New SPED Teachers and TAs need mentoring and cohesive, effective onboarding	7	4.3
Greater coherence is needed between central office communications about SPED and campus-level communications about SPED.	5	3.1
TAs were not provided work computers/laptops (namely for use during at-home learning)	5	3.1
PD is needed on effectively engaging SPED students with severe disabilities	4	2.5
More/better guides are needed to fill out SPED forms	3	1.9
More SPED PD is needed generally	3	1.9
TAs need more training	3	1.9
TAs need clear expectations and consistent support	3	1.9
TAs were underutilized during at-home learning	3	1.9
Dedicate specific times each day for specific subjects during at-home learning	2	1.2
Easy IEP is not user-friendly	2	1.2
More translation services are needed for SPED students and parents	2	1.2
More SPED staff is needed	2	1.2
Require students to participate in online meetings such as Zoom during at-home learning	2	1.2
Weekly staff communications from SPED were helpful	2	1.2

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Respondents could provide more than one theme.

Appendix D, Table 10: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service (Open-Ended Reflections from Campus Administrators; N = 30)

Theme	<i>n</i>	%
Do you have any final suggestions that would significantly improve the staff experience and/or SPED student experience, including anything related to SPED program processes, SPED professional development offerings, and/or SPED-related resources?		
More PD is needed to more effectively engage students and parents during at-home learning	8	26.7
My campus is understaffed with SPED Teachers/TAs	3	10.0
Students are inadequately supplied with the technology needed for at-home learning	3	10.0
Provide SPED parents with training early on to help their child utilize technology and online resources optimally during at-home learning	3	10.0
Paperwork/documentation for SPED is a great burden and poses costs on the quality of instruction SPED teachers are able to provide their students	2	6.7
More efficient at-home contact docs are needed	2	6.7
Provide ADL teachers more autonomy with their students, based on student needs	2	6.7
SPED central communications were incongruent and confusing	2	6.7
Training from SPED central staff is needed to fill out SPED forms properly	1	3.3
Offer non-computer-based instruction alternatives for SPED students during at-home learning	1	3.3
PD is needed for instructing students during at-home learning who have severe disabilities	1	3.3
SPED staff meetings should be held regularly - monthly	1	3.3
Integrate SRA Reading and Saxon Math into SPED curriculum	1	3.3

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Respondents could provide more than one theme.

Appendix E

Appendix E, Table 1: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Position and Monolingual Staff Issues (N=111)

	<i>n</i>	%
Which of the following best describes your current position?		
Diagnostician	88	79.3
LSSP	22	19.8
Other	1	0.9
Are you a bilingual evaluator?		
Yes	24	21.6
No	87	78.4
Have you had any trouble finding an interpreter to communicate with non-English speaking students or parents this year?		
Never	24	27.6
Sometimes	46	52.9
Frequently	16	18.4
Always	1	1.1

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Appendix E, Table 2: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Parent Referrals and MTSS Interventions for Initial SPED Evaluations (N=111)

	<i>n</i>	%
Approximately what percentage of your initial evaluations this year were referred through parent requests?		
None	1	0.9
1% to 25%	7	6.3
26% to 50%	22	19.8
51% to 75%	27	24.3
76% to 99%	36	32.4
All	15	13.5
I'm not sure	3	2.7
Approximately what percentage of your initial referral folders this school year showed adequate MTSS interventions? (If you answered "No" to the previous question, please select "Not Applicable.")		
None	22	19.8
1% to 25%	62	55.9
26% to 50%	11	9.9
51% to 75%	6	5.4
76% to 99%	3	2.7
All	1	0.9
I'm not sure	6	5.4

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 3: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Access to Resources Prior to At-Home Learning

	<i>N</i>	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		I'm not sure/N/A	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your experience in 2019-20.											
My Secure Print Card has enabled me to reasonably access resources needed to fulfill my printing, copying, and document scanning related work duties.	111	3	2.7	7	6.3	34	30.6	66	59.5	1	0.9
I have reasonable access to the assessment kits I need to complete my work duties.	111	2	1.8	17	15.3	55	49.6	37	33.3	0	0.0
I have reasonable access to the protocols (such as for the WISC) I need to complete my work duties.	111	10	9.0	38	34.2	44	39.6	19	17.1	0	0.0
I have (an) assigned work space(s) on campus. (Note: This work space may include that needed to conduct student evaluations and other SPED evaluator work-related duties, or only other evaluator work-related duties.)	111	18	16.2	22	19.8	33	29.7	34	30.6	4	3.6
I have space on my campus(es) to conduct student evaluations with fidelity (i.e., reasonably free from distraction for the student being evaluated). (Note: This work space may be different from where you engage in other work-related duties.)	111	13	11.7	21	18.9	50	45.1	25	22.5	2	1.8
I am (frequently) asked to support my campus(es) in matters not related to my duties as a special education evaluator.	111	35	31.5	48	43.2	15	13.5	8	7.2	5	4.5
I feel confident that I can address my workspace needs effectively with my campus administrator(s)	111	14	12.6	11	9.9	53	47.8	27	24.3	6	5.4

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 4: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Professional Collaboration and Support Prior to At-Home Learning

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure / N/A	
	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your experience working as a special education evaluator in the Dallas ISD in 2019-20:											
I receive professional help and support from my lead in a timely manner.	111	1	0.9	5	4.5	21	18.9	84	75.7	0	0.0
Monthly Special Education collaboration meetings have been held regularly this year.	111	2	1.8	1	0.9	41	36.9	67	60.4	0	0.0
Monthly Special Education collaboration meetings at the central office have addressed my needs for professional collaboration adequately.	111	4	3.6	10	9.0	46	41.4	50	45.1	1	0.9

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 5: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Provision of Virtual Counseling During At-Home Learning (N=111)

	<i>n</i>	%
During at-home learning, have you provided counseling virtually (video, phone, or other tech-mediated arrangement) to students and/or families?		
Yes	34	30.6
No	77	69.4

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Appendix E, Table 6: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Virtual Counseling During At-Home Learning

	N	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure / N/A	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Please select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.											
I have sensed that the students I've counseled remotely have had an adequate amount of privacy during our sessions.	33	5	15.2	9	27.3	6	18.2	0	0.0	13	39.4
I have sensed that the caregivers I've counseled remotely have had an adequate amount of privacy during our sessions.	33	2	6.1	1	3.0	11	33.3	2	6.1	17	51.5
I have had an adequate amount of privacy in my personal physical space to conduct remote counseling effectively.	33	1	3.0	1	3.0	10	30.3	11	33.3	10	30.3
I have felt confident about the effectiveness of the virtual counseling I have provided during this time.	33	3	9.1	5	15.2	11	33.3	3	9.1	11	33.3
I would benefit from further guidance on conducting counseling virtually.	33	1	3.0	4	12.1	10	30.3	8	24.2	10	30.3

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 7: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Virtual Counseling: Efficacy of Methods During At-Home Learning

	N	Not at all effective		A little effective		Somewhat effective		Very effective		Extremely effective		I'm not sure/ N/A	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Please indicate the level of effectiveness you have perceived with regard to the following remote counseling methods you used during at-home learning.													
Video-based (such as Zoom)	33	1	3.0	2	6.1	9	27.3	7	21.2	7	21.2	7	21.2
Phone (or voice-only)-based	33	1	3.0	2	6.1	9	27.3	8	24.2	4	12.1	9	27.3
Email-based	33	2	6.1	2	6.1	4	12.1	4	12.1	5	15.2	16	48.5
Text-based	33	3	9.1	1	3.0	4	12.1	3	9.1	4	12.1	18	54.6
Other (please specify below)	33	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	30	90.9

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 8: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey – Professional Collaboration and Support During At-Home Learning

		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		I'm not sure/N/A	
	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your experience working as a special education evaluator in 2019-20 DURING at-home learning.											
I received professional help and support from my lead in a timely manner.	110	1	0.9	3	2.7	21	19.1	84	76.4	1	0.9
Special Education Evaluator collaboration (team) virtual meetings were held regularly during at-home learning.	110	2	1.8	2	1.8	31	28.2	75	68.2	0	0.0
Special Education Evaluator collaboration (team) virtual meetings addressed my needs for professional collaboration during this at-home arrangement adequately.	110	2	1.8	1	0.9	37	33.6	69	62.7	1	0.9

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 9: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey - Final Open-Ended Comments (N=41)

Theme	n	%
Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding special education services in the district? For all comments, please specify whether you are commenting about the context of in-school or at-home learning (or both).		
Help ensure reliable campus workspace for evaluators	6	14.6
Utilize virtual meetings more commonly; they are more efficient	6	14.6
Help ensure a more equitable workload among evaluators (ChildFind adds too great of a burden for many evaluators)	6	14.6
Help ensure a consistent stock of protocols	5	12.2
Remote work worked well	5	12.2
Ability to test virtually is needed	3	7.3
Require presence of evaluator at initial ARDs; parents come with questions only they can answer, especially for autism cases	2	4.9
Hold campus administrators accountable for ensuring MTSS protocols are followed before SPED referrals	2	4.9
Filling service logs is very time-consuming	2	4.9
Help ensure consistent stock of early childhood test kits	1	2.4
Help ensure ARD admins follow ARD script	1	2.4
Create an ARD facilitator position	1	2.4
Caseload is too high (general)	1	2.4
Ensure all evaluators invited to SPED PLC events	1	2.4
Families lack adequate tech resources to conduct virtual counseling effectively	1	2.4
Give evaluators opportunity to evaluate supervisors	1	2.4
Consider consulting campus psychologist on MTSS prior to SPED referral	1	2.4
Help ensure adequate printing access for all	1	2.4
Ensure consistent communication across individual evaluators and speech staff	1	2.4
Infighting among leadership leads to low morale	1	2.4
Ensure more test kits are available (grade level unspecific)	1	2.4
Provide training on ARD protocol and goal setting	1	2.4
Need support with achieving remote work/life balance	1	2.4
Provide training on SPED testing via Region 10	1	2.4
Solicit diagnosticians' input on ARDs	1	2.4
Streamline testing to align with state and federal requirements	1	2.4
Parent referrals for SPED are still too high	1	2.4

Source: 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Survey.

Note: Respondents could provide multiple themes.