

2020-21

Evaluation of Special Education

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

*Michael Hinojosa, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools*



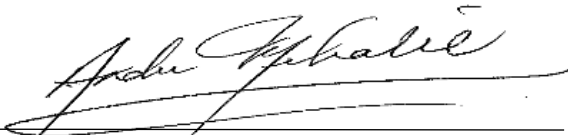
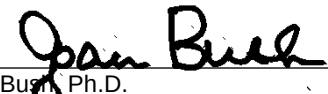
2020-21

Evaluation of Special Education

Approved Report of the Department of Evaluation and Assessment

EA21-519-2
August 2021

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This report (as well as the executive summary) is available for download at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Alternative Certification
Afr Am	African American
AP	Assistant Principal
Approaches+/Appr+	Approaches grade level or above performance standard
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal
CGP	Conditional Growth Percentile
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
MAP	<i>Measures of Academic Progress</i>
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
PLC	Professional Learning Community
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. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning beginning after spring break on March 23, 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would offer in-person and virtual learning (both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities) throughout the rest of the school year. The total budget for 2020-21 SPED services in the Dallas ISD was \$65,877,857, an increase from \$61,597,547 in 2019-20 and from \$60,210,915 in 2018-19.

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, and to summarize feedback from stakeholders. In particular, this evaluation aimed to: 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.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How did the SPED program perform on the 2020 RDA Report?

Table E1 provides a summary of Dallas ISD SPED-related performance levels (PLs) for the past three years¹. In summary, two areas on the 2018 Dallas ISD SPED program PBMA² report were assigned a PL indicator of zero, and five program areas were assigned a PL indicator of three or above (Significant Disproportionality, or SD is considered

more severe than numeric PL assignments). In the 2019 RDA report, more program areas were assigned a PL of zero ($N=5$), while five were again assigned PLs of three or above. In the 2020 RDA report, Dallas ISD SPED program areas addressing SPED student STAAR performance received no PL assignment because of the suspension of the administration of the STAAR in 2019-20.

The 2020 RDA report showed one SPED program area assigned a PL of zero (SPED Regular Class $\geq 80\%$ Rate Among Ages 6 to 21), while three SPED program areas received a PL indicator of three or higher: 1) SPED Representation: African American, Identified with Emotional Disturbance as a Primary Disability; 2) SPED Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions ≤ 10 Days Rate Among Ages 3 to 21; and 3) SPED Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions >10 Days Rate Among Ages 3 to 21.

Table E1: 2018-2020 Dallas ISD Special Education Related PBMA/RDA Performance Level Assignments

PL Assignment	2018	2019	2020
0	2	5	1
1	5	4	2
2	8	8	2
3 or SD Year 3	5	5	3

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018, 2019 and 2020 Dallas ISD PBMA/RDA reports.

Note: SD = Significant Disproportionality. Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2020 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website.

What were the characteristics of students served by SPED?

The SPED population in the Dallas ISD totaled 14,095 in 2020-21 (9.7% of district enrollment). The number and percentage of students served in the program increased each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20 (from 7.3% to 9.4%). Although both districtwide and SPED enrollment counts dipped in 2020-21, the percentage of students enrolled in SPED continued to increase in 2020-21.

Similar to 2019-20, a higher percentage of African Americans received SPED services (27.5%, Table E2) relative to their representation in general education enrollment (20.2%). Although males and females were equally represented in the general education population,

¹ 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 indicating areas of greater concern.

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

two-thirds of special education students were male (67.0%). While more than a third (38.0%) of special education students were English learners (EL), this rate was lower compared to ELs in the general education population (46.9%).

Table E2: 2020-21 Characteristics of SPED Students

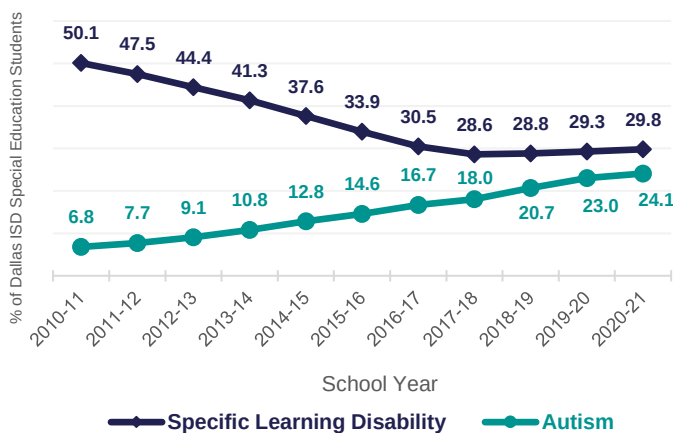
Group	Special Education (N=14,095)		General Education (N=131,625)	
	n	%	N	%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	9143	64.9	93,678	71.2
African American	3873	27.5	26,595	20.2
White	624	4.4	6,598	5.0
Other	455	3.2	4,754	3.6
Sex				
Female	4,656	33.0	66,831	50.8
Male	9,439	67.0	64,794	49.2
Student Groups				
Econ Dis	12,193	86.5	111,103	84.4
English Learner	5,551	39.4	61,771	46.9
Homeless	286	2.0	2,713	2.1

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21).

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

In 2020-21, specific learning disability and autism were the two most common primary disabilities of SPED students. 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 between 2010-11 and 2020-21, from 6.8 percent to 24.1 percent (Figure E1).

Figure E1: 2010-11 to 2020-21 Percentage of Dallas ISD SPED Students with Autism and Specific Learning Disability as Primary Disability



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21) and Mejia, 2020 (2010-11- to 2019-20).

What were the characteristics of SPED teachers?

A total of 1,208 SPED teachers served the district in 2020-21. Over four years, the rate of district SPED teachers increased by 2.2 percentage points; the number of general education teachers decreased by 2.2 percentage points.

Seventy-seven percent of 2020-21 district SPED teachers were female. A smaller percentage of SPED teachers were Hispanic (11.3%) compared to general education teachers (35.4%), while a higher percentage of SPED teachers were African American (53.9%) compared to general education teachers (32.7%). A higher percentage of SPED teachers held a master's degree (30.6%) compared to general education teachers (21.1%). The average length of teaching experience of district SPED teachers was 8.5 years.

What professional development opportunities did the SPED department offer in 2020-21?

From data provided by program leadership, the evaluator identified 68 unique topics covered in SPED professional development sessions provided during 2020-21. Themes included 1) SPED policy and compliance issues, 2) early childhood/prekindergarten SPED needs, 3) classroom organization for specialized SPED programs, 4) SPED technology rollout, 5) new SPED teacher orientation, 6) Review 360, 7) assistive technology, 8) accommodations, 9) behavior issues, 10) virtual teaching and learning, 11) academic assessments, and 12) data entry and analysis (across multiple SPED-related platforms).

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding the SPED department?

An online survey was administered in 2020-21 to solicit feedback from district SPED teachers, SPED teacher assistants, principals, and assistant principals on issues including the customer service experience with the SPED department and understanding of SPED policy, procedures, and resource access, both before and during at-home learning. Of the 2,674 individuals invited to complete the SPED Customer Service Survey, 1,363 (1,087 teachers or teacher assistants, 274 principals or assistant principals, and two who identified as "other – unspecified") at least partially completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 51 percent.

Perceptions About Student Support Teams (SSTs)

A higher percentage of campus administrators than SPED teachers agreed or strongly agreed that campus SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns (teachers: 45%;

administrators: 76%), and that SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (teachers: 44%; administrators: 74%). 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 on all Core 4 domains (Focused, Fast, Flexible, and Friendly) were generally positive (range: 78% to 89%). Approximately 90 percent of respondents from both participant groups agreed or strongly agreed both in 2020-21 and in 2019-20 that staff members at the SPED central office were friendly.

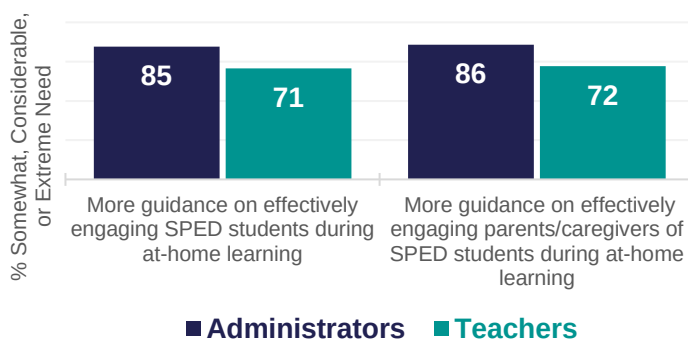
Technology and Online Platforms: Levels of Need

Seventy percent of SPED teacher and 85 percent of administrators 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. These rates were similar to those found for spring of 2020.

In addition, administrators and SPED teachers indicated that students needed more reliable internet connectivity (teachers: 71%; administrators: 75%), and technology (hardware) resources (teachers: 64%; administrators: 69%). Higher rates of SPED teachers (60%) than administrators (53%) needed more reliable technology (hardware) and internet connectivity (teachers: 51%, administrators: 43%) for themselves.

Both SPED teachers and campus administrators expressed a need for more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning (71% to 86%, Figure E2).

Figure E2: 2020-21 SPED Student and Parent Engagement Needs



Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

What were the activities and perceptions of SPED evaluators?

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey to solicit feedback on the activities and perceptions of 2020-21 SPED evaluators (diagnosticians and LSSPs). Of the 114 invited to participate in this Survey, 71 completed the survey at least partially (63%).

Parent Referrals for SPED Evaluations and MTSS Interventions in Referrals

The percentage of SPED evaluators reporting that at least half of the referrals they received for initial individual evaluations were made through parent requests in 2020-21 remained at a rate of around two out of every three referrals, though there was some improvement from 2019-20, at 64 percent in 2020-21, down from 70 percent in 2019-20. Also, and similar to 2018-19 and 2019-20 survey findings, a high rate of respondents (82%) reported that few (25% or fewer) referral folders for 2020-21 initial individual evaluations showed adequate MTSS interventions (2019-20: 76%; 2018-19: 82%).

Workspace on Campus

The proportions of evaluators who agreed or strongly agreed that they had space on campus to conduct student evaluations with fidelity was comparable to 2019-20 (62% in 2020-21, down from 68% in 2019-20). Fewer evaluators in 2020-21 also reported having an assigned workspace on campus compared to 2019-20 (44% in 2020-21 versus 60% in 2019-20). In 2020-21, 32 percent indicated that they were frequently asked to support their campus in matters unrelated to their job as an evaluator (21% in 2019-20).

Supplies on Campus

Most SPED survey respondents indicated that they could reasonably fulfill their printer- and copy-related needs on campus with their Secure Print Cards (83%) and that they had reasonable access to the assessment kits needed to complete their work duties (76%). These rates were slightly lower in 2019-20 (a 7-percentage-point decrease for each). A notably smaller rate of respondents (41%) shared that they had reasonable access to the protocols (such as the

WISC³) needed to complete their job duties. This rate was also a decrease from the rate (57%) reporting adequate access to protocols in 2019-20.

Professional Support and Collaboration

In 2019-20, 86 percent of SPED evaluators indicated that monthly SPED collaboration meetings addressed their need for professional collaboration adequately; this percentage declined in 2020-21 (69%).

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

STAAR

For STAAR 3-8 Reading, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, all grade levels except grade eight showed declines in the percentages of SPED students achieving the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Appr+) performance standard (grade 8 students showed a 1.0 percentage point increase). The largest decline was seen for grade four students in Reading, where in 2018-19, 42.3 percent of SPED students achieved the Appr+ performance standard while 35.5 percent did so in 2020-21.

The percentage of SPED students achieving the Appr+ performance standard in Mathematics in 2020-21 showed larger declines from 2018-19 compared to the declines for Reading. In Mathematics, grade eight SPED students showed the largest decline from 2018-19 in the percentage achieving at the Appr+ level (54.0% in 2018-19 down to 37.9% in 2020-21). Declines in the percentage of SPED students in Writing, Science, and Social Science in 2020-21 ranged from 6.6 percentage points from 2018-19 (grade 7 Writing) to 11.7 percentage points (grade 5 Science).

Compared to SPED students statewide, Dallas ISD SPED students did better in 2020-21 in terms of percentages achieving at the Appr+ level in all STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC subjects except US History.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth

SPED student performance on MAP Reading and Mathematics assessments showed patterns similar to performances on STAAR in these subject areas: average CGPs were higher in Mathematics for all grade levels compared to Reading, with the exception of grade two, where students showed better performance in Reading (average CGP for Reading in grade two was 48.1, compared to 44.5 for Mathematics).

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

The SPED annual dropout rate for the Class of 2019 was 15.4 compared to districtwide rate of 10.6. The dropout rate for the class of 2018 was 11.2 percent. The overall attendance rate among SPED students (early childhood through grade 12 for 2020-21 was 92.0 (93.1% for 2019-20). General education students showed an overall attendance rate of 92.3 in 2020-21 (94.4% in 2019-20).

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 workspaces they need on campuses.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have needed supplies.

Work to ensure more opportunities for professional collaboration for SPED evaluators.

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

³ WISC stands for Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children

Evaluation of Special Education

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION⁴

Legal Frameworks 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.⁵ 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 of 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.⁶

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

⁴ Portions of this report were adapted from Mejan, 2020.

⁵ 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.

⁶ TEA canceled STAAR and STAAR EOC in spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, data for that school year is unavailable.

Results Driven Accountability system (RDA).⁷ RDA reports annually on the performance of school districts 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.^{8,9} 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 department¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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. Interventions for any or all of these domains may be utilized when campus staff members are working within this framework to support a struggling student.¹² MTSS intervention efforts increase in intensity and duration for students who fail to respond appropriately to the core academic program.^{13,14}

⁷ Prior to 2019-20, this system was called the Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS).

⁸Source: <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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Contact information and other resources can be found online at: <https://www.dallasisd.org/federalandstate>.

¹¹ 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.

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

¹³ 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).

¹⁴ Additional information on MTSS can be found in recent MTSS evaluation reports (Mejan, 2019a; Springer and Kim, 2020, and Barton and Springer, 2021).

The Student Support Team (SST)

The campus Student Support Team (SST) is integral to the effective functioning of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and to the SPED student evaluation processes. Feedback on SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys from previous years indicates that a high rate of student referrals for initial SPED evaluations show inadequate MTSS interventions prior to referral. In addition, rates of parent requests for SPED initial evaluations remain very high, which may be another indication that many campuses are not following MTSS and SST processes as designed. SPED administrative staff have helpfully conceptualized the SST as the core human resource element in helping determine the needs of a struggling student prior to any possible SPED student referral, while MTSS functions as the knowledge bank from which campus staff can pull to utilize proven prevention and intervention measures for assisting struggling students – also before referring the child for a SPED evaluation. When campus SSTs meet regularly to discuss prevention and intervention measures for struggling students, students are more likely to receive appropriate assistance, whether or not that leads to a referral for a SPED evaluation. When campus SSTs do not meet regularly, struggling students are more likely to fall between the “cracks” and default to an often premature or otherwise inappropriate referral for SPED evaluation.

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 may also request at any time that their student be provided an initial evaluation for SPED.¹⁵ 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 a SPED evaluator completes an initial evaluation and report, an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee including parents, teachers, school administrators, and evaluation personnel is formed to review the evaluation report and determine whether the student is eligible for SPED and related services.¹⁶ Once a student is determined eligible, the ARD committee develops an individualized education

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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,

program (IEP).¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ 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 at least annually to review the progress of each SPED student and make recommendations regarding student educational programming.

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.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020.

In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local COVID safety protocols.

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)].

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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."

This evaluation aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Report funding and budget information for special education for 2020-21,
2. Summarize changes to the special education program in 2020-21, including implementation of the resources and activities that the special education department initiated and/or prioritized in 2020-21 to support student achievement,
3. Summarize the characteristics of students served by special education,
4. Summarize the characteristics of special education teachers,
5. Summarize professional development offered to campus staff in 2020-21,
6. Report trends in academic achievement for students served by the special education program and applicable comparison groups, including the state and other large urban districts, as appropriate and as available,
7. Report trends in the discipline rates, dropout rates, graduation rates, and attendance rates of students served by the special education program and comparison groups, as appropriate and as available,
8. Summarize stakeholder perceptions of program-related components, successes, challenges, and support from the special education department, with some additional focus on following up on recommendations from the 2019-20 evaluation report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

How was Special Education in the Dallas ISD funded in 2020-21?

Methodology

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

Results

The total budget for 2020-21 SPED services in the Dallas ISD was \$65,877,857, an increase from \$61,597,547 in 2019-20 and from \$60,210,915 in 2018-19. As shown in Table 1, for 2020-21 and the two prior years, payroll costs were the largest expense, followed by professional/contracted services. Other operational costs (line 4) decreased by more than \$300,000 during 2020-21 compared to the prior year due in part to more staff members working remotely.

Table 1: 2018-19 to 2020-21 Dallas ISD Special Education Department Budget

Budget Category	2018-19 \$	2019-20 \$	2020-21 \$	1-Yr Change \$	2-Yr Change \$
Payroll Costs	48,865,022	50,667,593	54,236,313	3,568,720	5,371,291
Professional/Contracted Services	6,547,645	6,821,770	7,655,477	833,707	1,107,832
Supplies/Materials	4,335,636	3,557,305	3,691,757	134,452	(643,879)
Other Operational Costs	434,282	529,767	237,550	(292,217)	(196,732)
Capital Outlay: Land/Building/Equipment	28,330	21,112	56,760	35,648	28,430
Grand Total	60,210,915	61,597,547	65,877,857	4,280,310	5,666,942

Source: Dallas ISD SPED department staff members, June 2020 (2018-19 and 2019-20) and March 2021 (2020-21).

Note: Numbers rounded to nearest dollar. 1-Yr Change indicates change between 2020-21 and 2019-20; 2-Yr Change indicates change between 2020-21 and 2018-19.

How did the SPED program perform on the 2020-21 RDA Report?

The RDA (termed PBMAS¹⁹ 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.²⁰ 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 .²¹ An *SD Year 3* assignment carries actionable requirements if the district fails to show reasonable progress for three consecutive 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.²²

Likewise, LEAs with one or more PL assignments of three or higher or with 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).

Methodology

2018-19 to 2020-21 Dallas ISD Performance

The evaluator retrieved from the TEA website the 2020 RDA (district-level) Report for the Dallas ISD on January 4, 2021 and examined findings related to district SPED program performance. PBMAS and RDA data and other findings from two previous school years were taken from the 2018-19 and 2019-20

¹⁹ PBMAS = Performance Based Monitoring and Accountability System, as noted previously in the Program Description section of this report.

²⁰ In the Dallas ISD, these staff members can be found in the department of Federal and State Accountability.

²¹ 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 3/1/20.

²² Source: <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2019%20SD%20Information.pdf>.

SPED evaluation reports (Mejan, 2019; Mejan, 2020). 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 2020 RDA (state-level) Report on January 4, 2021 and examined findings related to Dallas ISD and state-level SPED program performance. The evaluator then compared 2020-21 SPED-related PL data for the district to state-level data.

Results

2018-19 to 2020-21 Dallas ISD Performance

Overall, two areas on the 2018 Dallas ISD SPED program PBMAS report were assigned a PL indicator of zero, and five program areas were assigned a PL indicator of three or above. In the 2019 RDA report, more program areas were assigned a PL of zero ($N=5$), while five were again assigned PLs of three or above. In the 2020 RDA report, Dallas ISD SPED program areas addressing SPED student STAAR performance received no PL assignment because of the suspension of the administration of the STAAR in 2019-20. This makes previous-year comparisons with 2020 RDA findings less meaningful. In the 2020 RDA report for the Dallas ISD, one SPED program area assigned a PL of zero (SPED Regular Class $\geq 80\%$ Rate Among Ages 6 to 21), while three SPED program areas received a PL indicator of three or above. The three areas with a PL indicator of three or above were 1) SPED Representation: African American, Identified with Emotional Disturbance as a Primary Disability; 2) SPED Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions ≤ 10 Days Rate Among Ages 3 to 21; and 3) SPED Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions > 10 Days Rate Among Ages 3 to 21. 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.

Table 2: 2018-2020 Dallas ISD Special Education Related PBMAS/RDA Performance Level Assignments

PL Assignment	2018	2019	2020
0	2	5	1
1	5	4	2
2	8	8	2
3 or SD Year 3	5	5	3

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018, 2019 and 2020 Dallas ISD PBMAS/RDA reports.

Note: Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2020 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website. PLs by area are provided in Appendix B.

The three SPED program areas identified in the RDA system as areas of concern (noted above) in 2019 because of an *SD Year 3* assignment were targeted for interventions for the upcoming school years. 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.²³

2020-21 District to State Comparisons

In 2020-21, no performance level indicators were assigned for either the state or (as previously noted) the Dallas ISD for SPED program areas related to STAAR testing. PLs were assigned for both the district and the state for the areas of SPED Program Settings and SPED Dropout and Graduation Rates, thus providing PLs for a total of five program areas. Within these domains, the state performed better than the Dallas ISD in three areas [1) SPED Regular Early Childhood Program Rate (Ages 3-5), 2) SPED Annual Dropout Rate, and 3) SPED Graduation Rate], while PLs of the state and the district were comparable (equal) in two SPED program areas [1) SPED Regular Class $\geq$ 80% Rate (Ages 6-21), and 2) SPED Regular Class $<$ 40% Rate (Ages 6-21)]. Details can be found in the table in Appendix B.²⁴

What changes were made to the special education program in 2020-21, and what resources and activities were implemented in 2020-21 to support student achievement?

This section provides information about 2020-21 changes the SPED program related to 1) audiology services, 2) child find services, 3) speech services, and 4) at-home learning-related changes to SPED evaluations and SPED services.

Methodology

To obtain information about changes in the Dallas ISD SPED program for 2020-21, 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 In 2020-21, the district served approximately 527 Dallas ISD has the largest RDSPD in the state of Texas and the second largest RDSPD in the nation.

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

²³ For more detail please contact the Dallas ISD Federal and State Accountability Office.

²⁴ Ibid.

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

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 Progress in 2020-21 included: tracking and monitoring of school equipment issues, provision of professional development for campus staff, weekly monitoring and support provision for campuses, same-day troubleshooting as needed, working with students on self-advocacy skills, and supporting parents with resources for personal hearing assistive technology.²⁷

Child Find Services Remained Decentralized

According to SPED leadership, the district Child Find process was decentralized beginning in 2019-20 and continued in 2020-21. Before 2019-20, a designated 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.”²⁸ 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 Further Expanded. SPED program administrators 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 began supplementing in-house speech teletherapy services with those provided through AmplioSpeech, a company the TEA first identified in spring 2020 as “a leading provider of speech technology.”²⁹ SPED staff members indicated that more than 320 licenses had been obtained as of June 2020 for provision of this additional service in the Dallas ISD, and services through AmplioSpeech were

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

²⁷ Source: email communications with SPED central staff member, spring 2021.

²⁸ Source: email communications with SPED central staff member, January and June 2020.

²⁹ 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.

provided through summer 2020. In 2020-21, Presence Learning³⁰ served over 500 students districtwide for speech teletherapy services – translating, according to SPED administrative staff – to eight percent of all district students receiving speech therapy services. These services will continue to supplement the speech program in the 2021-2022 school year.³¹

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 and throughout 2020-21 as well. 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. In 2020-21, a remote platform was incorporated to facilitate play-based assessments for Autism referrals. According to SPED administrative staff members, many parents continued to express concerns about face-to-face assessments involving their children.

SPED service modifications for students engaging in 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 support and resources for parents of SPED students during this time, including through the Dallas ISD SPED department website.³²

What were the characteristics of students served by Special Education?

Methodology

SPED student data for 2020-21 were extracted from the district PEIMS snapshot student demographic data file for October 30, 2020. 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 previous years were taken from the 2019-20 (Mejan, 2020) evaluation report.

Results

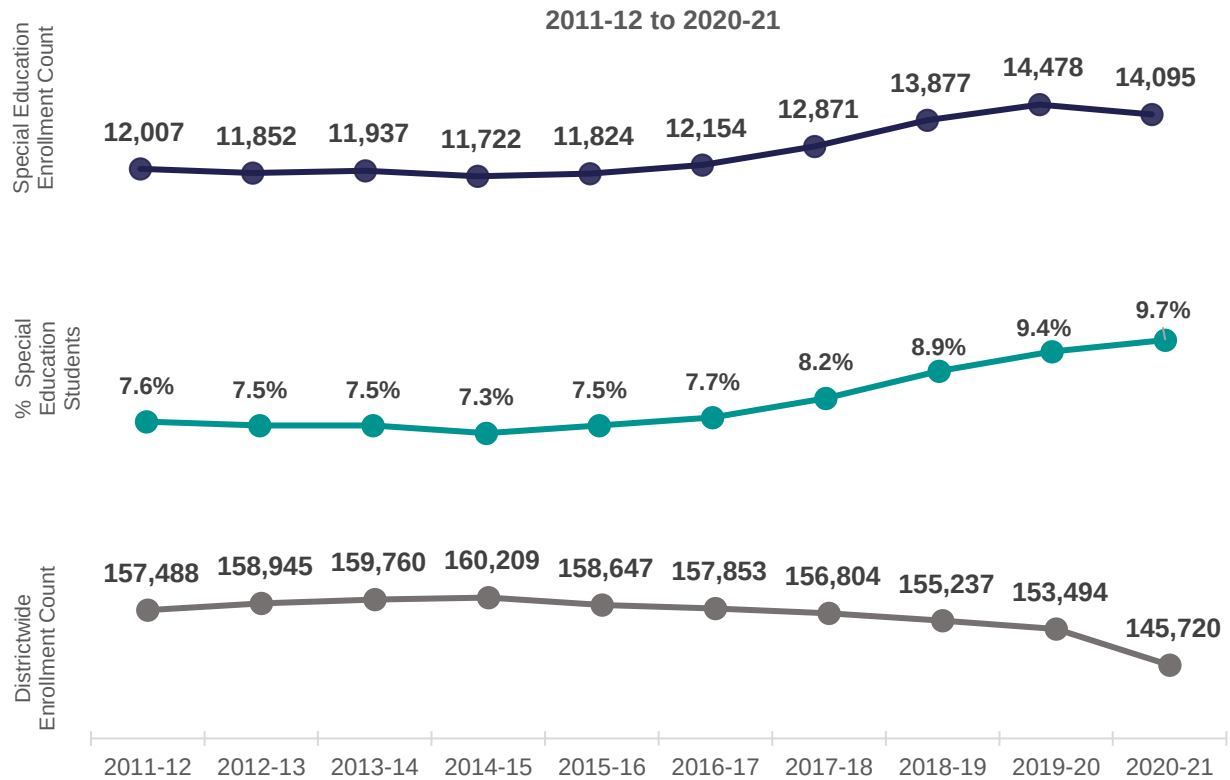
SPED Enrollment

Longitudinal Enrollment Trends. The SPED population in the Dallas ISD totaled 14,095 in 2020-21 (9.7% of district enrollment). As Figure 1 shows, the number and percentage of students served in the program increased each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20 (from 7.3% to 9.4% of district enrollment). Notably, although both the districtwide enrollment count and SPED student count dipped in 2020-21, the percentage of district students enrolled in SPED in 2020-21 continued to increase.

³⁰ See <https://www.presencelearning.com/> for more information.

³¹ Source: email communications with SPED central staff member, spring 2021.

³² See: <https://www.dallasisd.org/sped>.

Figure 1: 2011-12 to 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21) and Mejan, 2020 (2011-12 through 2019-20).

SPED Enrollment by Feeder Pattern. As shown in Table 3, the level of SPED representation by feeder pattern varied, ranging from 7.5 to 12.8 percent. The Carter (12.8%) and Lincoln (12.6%) feeder patterns reported the largest proportions of students served in SPED. Conversely, the Single Gender Schools (7.5%) and ACE (7.5%) feeder patterns enrolled the smallest proportions of SPED students in 2020-21.

Table 3: 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment by Feeder Pattern

Feeder Pattern	SPED (N=14,095)		General Education (N=131,625)		Total (N=145,720)
	N	%	n	%	N
Carter	531	12.8	3,615	87.2	4,146
Lincoln	147	12.6	1,016	87.4	1,163
Madison	224	12.5	1,567	87.5	1,791
Pinkston	692	12.0	5,098	88.0	5,790
Seagoville	723	11.7	5,475	88.3	6,198
North Dallas	521	11.5	3,992	88.5	4,513
Kimball	735	11.3	5,748	88.7	6,483
South Oak Cliff	606	11.3	4,777	88.7	5,383
Spruce	776	11.3	6,121	88.7	6,897
Wilmer-Hutchins	257	11.0	2,084	89.0	2,341
Samuell	797	10.8	6,579	89.2	7,376
Hillcrest	589	10.8	4,865	89.2	5,454
Wilson	666	10.7	5,542	89.3	6,208
Molina	568	10.7	4,739	89.3	5,307
White	817	10.1	7,288	89.9	8,105
Adamson	397	10.0	3,592	90.0	3,989
Skyline	982	9.8	9,054	90.2	10,036
Roosevelt	248	9.6	2,346	90.4	2,594
Jefferson	618	9.3	6,062	90.7	6,680
Adams, B	841	9.2	8,266	90.8	9,107
Conrad	383	9.1	3,809	90.9	4,192
Sunset	643	8.6	6,868	91.4	7,511
Alternative Programs	*	*	*	*	25
Transformation & Innovation	349	7.6	4,232	92.4	4,581
Single Gender Schools	295	7.5	3,660	92.5	3,955
ACE	525	7.5	6,514	92.5	7,039
Hospital/Homebound	*	*	*	*	57
No Feeder Group	26	2.5	1,018	97.5	1,044

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20.

Note: Districtwide SPED enrollment was 9.7 percent. Magnet Schools not included in table; SPED count for Magnet Schools=133; 1.7%; Gen Ed count for Magnet Schools = 7,755, 98.3%. "*" used to mask Ns smaller than 5. ACE=Accelerating Campus Excellence.

SPED Enrollment by Student Group. As shown in Table 4, the proportion of Black or African American SPED students in 2020-21 (27.5%) was larger than the general education rate (20.2%). Conversely, a smaller proportion of Hispanic students were enrolled in SPED (64.9%) compared to the general education district rate (71.2%). Both of these trends in ethnicity narrowed slightly compared to 2019-20. In addition, although males and females were equally represented in the 2020-21 general education student population, more than two-thirds of SPED students were male (67.0%). Finally, English learners (ELs) constituted 39.4 percent of SPED students, a rate lower than the general education percentage of ELs (46.9%).

Table 4: 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED and General Education Enrollment by Student Group

	SPED (N=14,095)		General Education (N= 131,625)		Total (N=145,720)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Sex						
Female	4,656	33.0	66,831	50.8	71,487	49.1
Male	9,439	67.0	64,794	49.2	74,233	50.9
Ethnicity						
Hispanic/Latino	9,143	64.9	93,678	71.2	102,821	70.6
Black or African American	3,873	27.5	26,595	20.2	30,468	20.9
White	624	4.4	6,598	5.0	7,222	5.0
Other	455	3.2	4,754	3.6	5,209	3.6
Student Groups						
Economically Disadvantaged	12,193	86.5	111,103	84.4	123,296	84.6
English Learner	5,551	39.4	61,771	46.9	67,322	46.2
Homeless	286	2.0	2,724	2.1	3,010	2.1

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20.

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 2.3 percentage points since 2018-19.

Table 5: 2018-19 to 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment by Student Group

	2018-19 (N=13,877)		2019-20 (N=14,478)		2020-21 (N=14,095)		One Yr Change %pts	Two Yr Change %pts
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Sex								
Female	4,524	32.6	4,730	32.7	4,656	33.0	0.3	0.4
Male	9,353	67.4	9,748	67.3	9,439	67.0	-0.3	-0.4
Race/Ethnicity								
Hispanic/Latino	8,784	63.3	9,233	63.8	9143	64.9	1.1	1.6
Black or African American	4,010	28.9	4,110	28.4	3873	27.5	-0.9	-1.4
White	694	5.0	717	5.0	624	4.4	-0.6	-0.6
Other	375	2.7	418	2.9	455	3.2	0.3	0.5
Student Groups								
Economically Disadvantaged	12,226	88.1	12,558	86.7	12,193	86.5	-0.2	-1.6
English Learner	5,148	37.1	5,498	38.0	5,551	39.4	1.4	2.3
Homeless	139	1.0	223	1.5	286	2.0	0.5	1.0

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data files for 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/28/19 (2019-20) and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

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 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 five (9.8%) and six (9.5%). The lowest percentage of SPED students was for students enrolled in prekindergarten (PK; 1.0%). It's important to note that many students are not evaluated for SPED services until higher grade levels, when certain disabilities may become more evident.

Table 6: 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Grade Level

Grade Level	Hispanic (N=9,143)		African American (N=3,873)		White (N=624)		Other (N=455)		Total (N=14,095)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
EC	204	2.2	80	2.1	23	3.7	16	3.5	323	2.3
PK	106	1.2	26	0.7	6	1.0	6	1.3	144	1.0
KN	400	4.4	124	3.2	43	6.9	35	7.7	602	4.3
1	569	6.2	156	4.0	49	7.9	34	7.5	808	5.7
2	646	7.1	237	6.1	50	8.0	39	8.6	972	6.9
3	780	8.5	266	6.9	67	10.7	40	8.8	1,153	8.2
4	854	9.3	327	8.4	62	9.9	50	11.0	1,293	9.2
5	924	10.1	351	9.1	56	9.0	47	10.3	1,378	9.8
6	851	9.3	404	10.4	49	7.9	38	8.4	1,342	9.5
7	801	8.8	366	9.5	46	7.4	36	7.9	1,249	8.9
8	748	8.2	342	8.8	44	7.1	28	6.2	1,162	8.2
9	666	7.3	362	9.3	37	5.9	26	5.7	1,091	7.7
10	575	6.3	309	8.0	33	5.3	15	3.3	932	6.6
11	470	5.1	251	6.5	22	3.5	20	4.4	763	5.4
12	549	6.0	272	7.0	37	5.9	25	5.5	883	6.3

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 10/30/20.

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 100.0 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 2020-21 were specific learning disability (29.8%, Table 7), autism (24.1%), and other health impairment³³ (15.2%). Among elementary school students, the most common primary disabilities were autism (32.0%), specific learning disability (21.7%), and speech impairment (20.7%). At the middle and high school levels, specific learning disability was the most common primary disability (37.7% and 36.8% respectively).

³³ "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: 2020-21 Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Campus Level

Primary Disability	Elementary (N=6,622)		Middle (N=3,436)		High (N=3,555)		All Levels (N=14,095)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Specific Learning Disability	1,440	21.7	1,296	37.7	1,310	36.8	4,194	29.8
Autism	2,116	32.0	614	17.9	573	16.1	3,395	24.1
Other Health Impairment	774	11.7	667	19.4	628	17.7	2,136	15.2
Speech Impairment	1,374	20.7	112	3.3	38	1.1	1,610	11.4
Intellectual Disability	454	6.9	438	12.7	635	17.9	1,567	11.1
Emotional Disturbance	215	3.2	168	4.9	147	4.1	553	3.9
Auditory Impairment	121	1.8	78	2.3	129	3.6	339	2.4
Orthopedic Impairment	60	0.9	37	1.1	50	1.4	155	1.1
Visual Impairment	17	0.3	19	0.6	24	0.7	64	0.5
Traumatic Brain Injury	32	0.5	-	-	-	-	34	0.2
No Disability	9	0.1	6	0.2	16	0.5	32	0.2
Developmental Delay	6	0.1	-	-	-	-	6	0.0
Non-cat EC	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Deaf/Blindness	*	*	-	-	*	*	*	*

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20.

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 3.4 percentage points between 2018-19 and 2020-21, while the proportion of SPED students whose primary disability was identified as speech impairment decreased 1.6 percentage points during that same time period. Longitudinal changes during this period in among other primary disabilities equaled 1.1 percentage points or less.

Table 8: 2018-19 to 2020-21 Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students

Primary Disability	2018-19 (N=13,877)		2019-20 (N=14,478)		2020-21 (N=14,095)		One-Year Change %pts	Two-Year Change %pts
	N	%	n	%	n	%		
Specific Learning Disability	3,992	28.8	4,244	29.3	4,194	29.8	0.5	1.0
Autism	2,870	20.7	3,336	23.0	3,395	24.1	1.1	3.4
Other Health Impairment	2,244	16.2	2,265	15.6	2,136	15.2	-0.4	-1.0
Speech Impairment	1,800	13.0	1,711	11.8	1,610	11.4	-0.4	-1.6
Intellectual Disability	1,697	12.2	1,673	11.6	1,567	11.1	-0.5	-1.1
Emotional Disturbance	555	4.0	562	3.9	553	3.9	0.0	-0.1
Auditory Impairment	403	2.9	374	2.6	339	2.4	-0.2	-0.5
Orthopedic Impairment	195	1.4	181	1.3	155	1.1	-0.2	-0.3
Visual Impairment	85	0.6	69	0.5	64	0.5	0.0	-0.1
Noncategorical Early Childhood	*	*	6	0.0	34	0.2	0.2	n/a
Traumatic Brain Injury	32	0.2	35	0.2	32	0.2	0.0	0.0
Developmental Delay	*	*	6	0.0	6	0.0	0.0	n/a
No Disability	*	*	15	0.1	5	0.0	-0.1	n/a
Deaf/Blindness	*	*	*	*	*	*	n/a	n/a

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data files for 10/30/2020 (2020-21); 2019-20 Evaluation of Special Education report (Mejan, 2020) for previous years.

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 2020-21 varied by race/ethnicity (Table 9). Among Hispanic SPED students, the most common primary disabilities were specific learning disability (32.5%), autism (25.3%), speech impairment (12.9%), and other health impairment (12.9%). Among African American SPED students, most common were specific learning disability (25.9%), other health impairment (20.8%), autism (19.2%), and intellectual disability (15.8%). Among white SPED students, autism (30.8%), specific learning disability (19.6%), speech impairment (16.5%), and other health impairment (13.6%) were most common.

Table 9: 2020-21 Primary Disabilities of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Race/Ethnicity

Primary Disability	Hispanic (n=9,143)		African American (n=3,873)		White (n=624)		Other (n=455)		Total (N=14,095)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Specific Learning Disability	2,972	32.5	1,005	25.9	122	19.6	95	20.9	4,194	29.8
Autism	2,312	25.3	744	19.2	192	30.8	146	32.1	3,395	24.1
Other Health Impairment	1,179	12.9	805	20.8	85	13.6	67	14.7	2,136	15.2
Speech Impairment	1,179	12.9	271	7.0	103	16.5	57	12.5	1,610	11.4
Intellectual Disability	866	9.5	611	15.8	50	8.0	40	8.8	1,567	11.1
Emotional Disturbance	181	2.0	312	8.1	34	5.4	26	5.7	553	3.9
Auditory Impairment	247	2.7	63	1.6	17	2.7	12	2.6	339	2.4
Orthopedic Impairment	123	1.3	20	0.5	7	1.1	5	1.1	155	1.1
Visual Impairment	45	0.5	14	0.4	*	*	*	*	64	0.5
Noncategorical Early Childhood	20	0.2	7	0.2	*	*	*	*	34	0.2
Traumatic Brain Injury	12	0.1	16	0.4	*	*	*	*	32	0.2
Developmental Delay	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	6	0.0
No Disability	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	5	0.0
Deaf/Blindness.	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	*	*

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic file for 10/30/20.

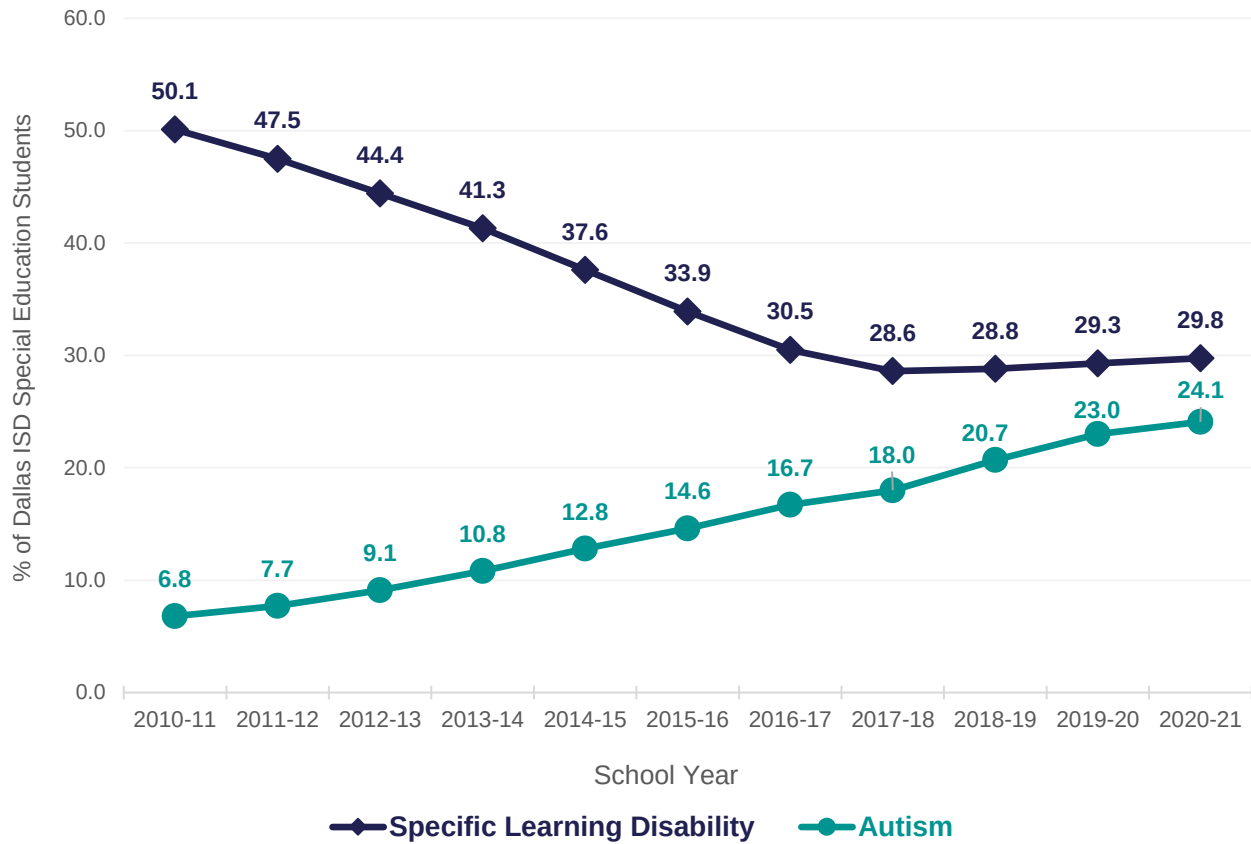
Note: Other includes students classified as Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding. * = fewer than five students in a category. - = no students in a category.

Frequently Identified 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 2020-21, from 6.8 percent to 24.1 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. 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.³⁴ 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 2020-21 Percentage of Dallas ISD SPED Students Identified with Autism and Specific Learning Disability as Primary Disability



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21) and Mejan, 2020 (2010-11 to 2019-20).

Instructional Settings for Dallas ISD SPED Students

Instructional Settings by Campus Level. The largest percentage of SPED students were placed into a mainstream educational setting (44.9%, Table 10). 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).

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 (16.0%) – typically a separate classroom or smaller space designated for individual and/or small-group SPED student instruction.

³⁴ See <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html> for more information.

By campus level, the highest percentage of mainstreamed SPED students were at the high school level (64.6%), followed by the middle school level (58.3%). In contrast, 27.2 percent of elementary level SPED students were mainstreamed, and more were placed in a Resource Room (23.5%) or Speech Only setting (17.1%) compared to those in higher school levels.

Table 10: 2020-21 Instructional Settings of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Campus Level

Primary Disability	Elementary (N=6,622)		Middle (N=3,436)		High (N=3,555)		All Grades (N=14,095)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Mainstream	1,798	27.2	2,002	58.3	2,297	64.6	6,329	44.9
Resource Room	1,554	23.5	497	14.5	112	3.2	2,257	16.0
Functional Living Skills	738	11.1	509	14.8	634	17.8	1,907	13.5
Speech Only	1,134	17.1	82	2.4	24	0.7	,322	9.4
Total Communication	395	6.0	140	4.1	164	4.6	700	5.0
No Setting Data	227	3.4	32	0.9	55	1.5	324	2.3
ECSE-4/5SC	310	4.7	-	0.0	-	0.0	322	2.3
Behavior Program	132	2.0	78	2.3	54	1.5	265	1.9
Regional Day School for the Deaf Class	86	1.3	49	1.4	62	1.7	197	1.4
Activities of Daily Living	47	0.7	27	0.8	64	1.8	148	1.1
ECSE-3SC	63	1.0	-	0.0	-	0.0	63	0.4
ECSE-KNCO	60	0.9	-	0.0	-	0.0	60	0.4
Vocational Adjustment Class	-	0.0	-	0.0	56	1.6	57	0.4
Homebound Class	17	0.3	14	0.4	8	0.2	42	0.3
ECSE-PK4CO	40	0.6	-	0.0	-	0.0	40	0.3
Wrap around intervention network	9	0.1	6	0.2	-	0.0	21	0.1
TACCAM	-	0.0	-	0.0	13	0.4	13	0.1
ECSE-PK3CO	10	0.2	-	0.0	-	0.0	10	0.1
TACDIST	-	0.0	-	0.0	7	0.2	7	0.0

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20.

Note: * = fewer than five students in this category. - = no students in this category. Multi-level campus data not included; percentages among all special education students in these multilevel campuses equaled 2.1 percent (n=294) for the "Elementary/Middle" level and 1.3 percent (n=188) for the "Middle/High level. Additional information on SPED instructional settings can be found on the Dallas ISD SPED program web pages.

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 for white SPED students and those of "other" race/ethnicity (Table 11). White SPED students (14.9%) were slightly more commonly placed in a Speech Only setting compared to African American (5.3%) and Hispanic (10.8%) SPED.

Table 11: 2020-21 Instructional Settings of Dallas ISD SPED Students by Race/Ethnicity

Instruction Setting	Hispanic (N=9,143)		African American (N=3,873)		White (N=624)		Other (N=455)		All SPED Students (N=14,095)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Mainstream	4,069	44.5	1,852	47.8	235	37.7	173	38.0	6,329	44.9
Resource Room	1,586	17.3	477	12.3	113	18.1	81	17.8	2,257	16.0
Functional Living Skills	1,149	12.6	639	16.5	62	9.9	57	12.5	1,907	13.5
Speech Only	983	10.8	206	5.3	93	14.9	40	8.8	1,322	9.4
Total Communication	456	5.0	177	4.6	39	6.3	28	6.2	700	5.0
No setting data	191	2.1	93	2.4	23	3.7	17	3.7	324	2.3
ECSE-4/5SC	208	2.3	88	2.3	10	1.6	16	3.5	322	2.3
Behavior Program	64	0.7	172	4.4	18	2.9	11	2.4	265	1.9
Regional Day School for Deaf	140	1.5	41	1.1	8	1.3	8	1.8	197	1.4
Activities of Daily Living	107	1.2	32	0.8	5	0.8	4	0.9	148	1.1
ECSE-3SC	39	0.4	14	0.4	7	1.1	*	*	63	0.4
ECSE-KNCO	34	0.4	16	0.4	*	*	9	2.0	60	0.4
Vocational Adjustment Class	32	0.3	22	0.6	*	*	*	*	57	0.4
Homebound Class	31	0.3	6	0.2	*	*	5	1.1	42	0.3
ECSE-PK4CO	21	0.2	14	0.4	*	*	*	*	40	0.3
Wraparound intervention network	8	0.1	12	0.3	*	*	*	*	21	0.1
TACCAM	9	0.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	13	0.1
ECSE-PK3CO	6	0.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	10	0.1
TACDIST	*	*	5	0.1	*	*	*	*	7	0.0

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20.

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>.

What were the characteristics of Special Education teachers?

Methodology

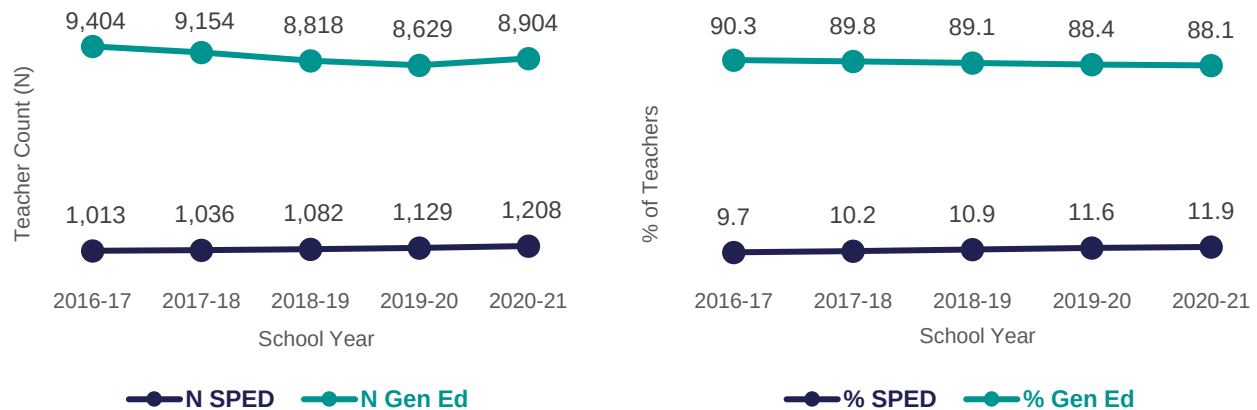
The evaluator extracted demographic and credential data for 2020-21 SPED teachers from the district personnel file dated October 1, 2020. District job codes were used to identify full-time, active, professional SPED teachers. The evaluator conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine numbers 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 2019-20 evaluation report (Mejan, 2020).

Results

2020-21 SPED Teachers Employed and Trends

A total of 1,208 SPED teachers were employed in the Dallas ISD during 2020-21 (Figure 3). Over the past five years the rate of district SPED teachers has increased by 2.2 percentage points. In the same time, the number of general education teachers has decreased by 2.2 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.³⁵

³⁵ Source: Program evaluator communications with SPED leadership, March 2021.

Figure 3: 2016-17 to 2020-21 Number and Percentage of SPED and General Education Teachers

Source: District personnel data file dated 10/01/20 (2020-21) and 2019-20 evaluation report (2016-17 to 2019-20; Mejan, 2020).

Characteristics of 2020-21 SPED Teachers

More than three-quarters (77.0%) of SPED teachers in the district in 2020-21 were female (Table 12). A smaller percentage of SPED teachers were Hispanic (11.3%) compared to general education teachers (35.4%), while a higher percentage of SPED teachers were African American (53.9%) compared to general education teachers (32.7%). A higher percentage of SPED teachers held a master's degree (30.6%) compared to general education teachers (21.1%). Approximately three percent (2.6%) 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 (4.1%). The average length of teaching experience in the Dallas ISD for SPED teachers was 8.5 years, which was slightly higher than for general education teachers (7.9 years).

Table 12: 2020-21 Characteristics of SPED Teachers

	Special Education (N = 1,208)		General Education (N = 8,904)		All Teachers (N = 10,112)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Gender						
Female	930	77.0	6132	68.9	7,062	69.8
Male	278	23.0	2772	31.1	3,050	30.2
Ethnicity						
Black or African American	651	53.9	2,916	32.7	3,567	35.3
White	369	30.5	2,462	27.7	2,831	28.0
Hispanic or Latino	136	11.3	3,153	35.4	3,289	32.5
Asian	47	3.9	290	3.3	337	3.3
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	0.3	65	0.7	69	0.7
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	*	*	18	0.2	19	0.2
Highest Degree Obtained						
Associate or Unspecified	92	7.6	885	9.9	977	9.7
Bachelor	738	61.1	6,029	67.7	6,767	66.9
Master	370	30.6	1,879	21.1	2,249	22.2
Ph.D.	8	0.7	111	1.2	119	1.2
Alternative Certification						
In AC Program	32	2.6	366	4.1	398	3.9
DISD Experience						
Newly hired	136	11.3	910	10.2	1,046	10.3
1-2 years	222	18.4	1,849	20.8	2,071	20.5
3-5 years	218	18.0	1,926	21.6	2,144	21.2
6-10 years	254	21.0	1,686	18.9	1,940	19.2
More than 10 years	378	31.3	2,533	28.4	2,911	28.8
Average Number of Years	8.5		7.9		8.0	

Source: Dallas ISD Personnel data file dated 10/01/20.

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

What professional development opportunities did the special education department offer to campus administration and other campus staff members in 2020-21?

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 2020-21. The evaluator reviewed professional development documents and summarized contents by topic.

Results

In total, the evaluator identified 68 unique topics covered in SPED professional development sessions provided during 2020-21. An exhaustive list of these topics is provided in Appendix C. SPED professional development session themes in 2020-21 included 1) SPED policy and compliance issues, 2) early childhood/prekindergarten SPED needs, 3) classroom organization for specialized SPED programs, 4) SPED technology rollout, 5) new SPED teacher orientation, 6) Review 360, 7) assistive technology, 8)

accommodations, 9) behavior issues, 10) virtual teaching and learning, 11) academic assessments, and 12) data entry and analysis (across multiple SPED-related platforms).

What were campus staff perceptions and experiences with the SPED department?

Methodology

In spring 2021, the evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey titled the SPED Customer Service Survey. The survey was designed to solicit feedback from Dallas ISD SPED teachers, SPED teacher assistants, campus principals, and assistant principals about a range of experiences and perceptions, including the customer service experience with the SPED department as well as their understanding of SPED policy, procedures, and resource access – particularly in light of the hybrid (in-person and distance-) learning arrangement the district instituted for the 2020-21 school year.

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. Campus staff members received an invitation to participate in the survey on May 20, 2021; periodic reminders were sent to those who had yet to respond. The survey closed on June 7, 2021.

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 (campus) administrator 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 2020-21 survey were compared to those for the previous year.

Results

Of the 2,674 individuals invited to complete the SPED Customer Service Survey, 1,363 (1,087 teachers or teacher assistants, 274 principals or assistant principals, and two who identified as “other – unspecified”) at least partially completed the survey. This rendered an overall response rate of 51 percent. Responses ($n=2$) from those identifying as “other” were excluded from analysis by staff group. The most commonly reported amount of professional experience within the district among survey respondents was 11 or more years (36% of teachers reported this as did 60% of administrators. Detailed survey item response rates are provided in Appendix D.

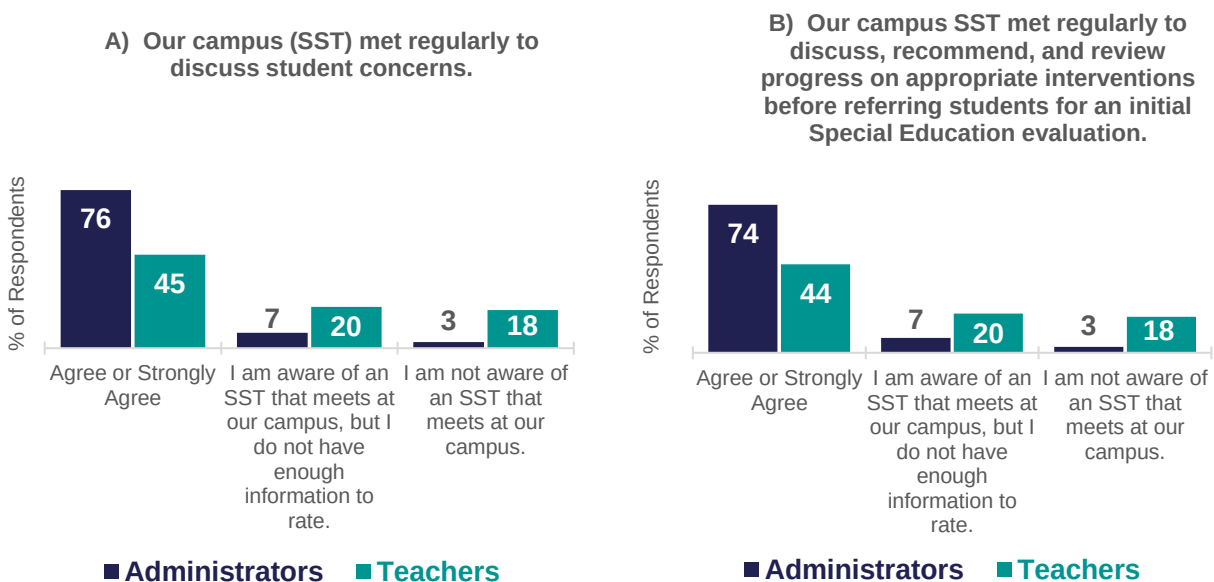
Perceptions About Campus Student Support Teams (SSTs)

A noteworthy finding in survey results was that campus administrators and SPED teachers differed with respect to perceptions about campus SST activities in 2020-21. Approximately three-quarters (76%; down from 85% in 2019-20) of campus administrators agreed or strongly agreed that their campus SSTs

met regularly to discuss student concerns, and that SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (74%; Figure 4; also down from 85% in 2019-20). In contrast, fewer than half of SPED teachers agreed or strongly agreed that SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns (45%; down from 57% in 2019-20), and that campus SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (44%; down from 55% in 2019-20). Also noteworthy was that 38 percent of SPED teachers reported that they were either aware of an SST that meets at their campus but did not have enough information to provide feedback on SST activities, or that they were not aware of an SST meeting regularly on their campus.

Likewise, 38 percent of teachers reported that they did not have enough information to as to whether their campus SST met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial Special Education evaluation. These findings may provide evidence of possible under-engagement of SPED staff members in SST activities at the campus level – and that this under-engagement was more pronounced in 2020-21.

Figure 4: 2020-21 Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions of SSTs



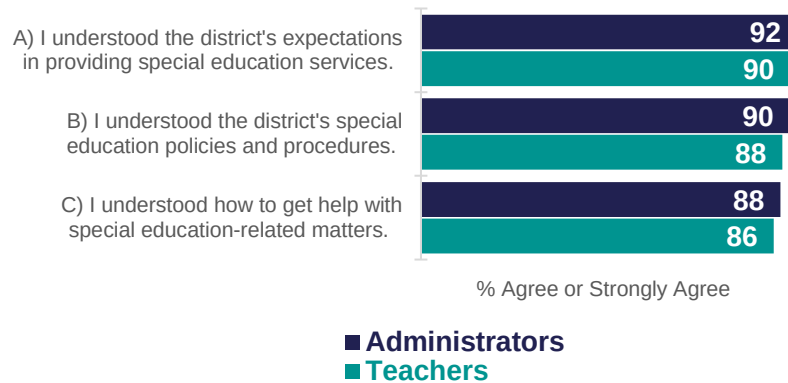
Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Administrator N=274 (A) and 273 (B), Teacher N=1,078 (A) and 1,064 (B). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix D.

Understanding of District Expectations, Policies and Procedures for SPED Services

Most campus administrator and SPED teacher respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they 1) understood the district's expectations in providing SPED services (92% and 90% respectively), 2) they understood the district's SPED policies and procedures (90% and 88% respectively), and 3) they understood how to get help with SPED-related matters (88% and 86% respectively, Figure 5).

Figure 5: 2020-21 Understanding of District Expectations, Policies and Procedures with SPED



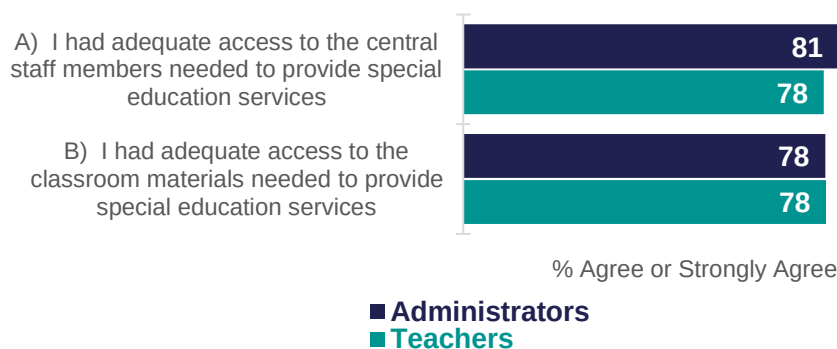
Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Administrator N=274 (A, B), 273 (C), Teacher N=1,080 (A), 1,071 (B), 1,065 (C). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix D

Access to SPED Central Staff and to SPED Classroom Resources

Approximately four out of five (78% to 81%) campus administrator and SPED teacher respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had adequate access to SPED central staff members needed to provide SPED services in 2020-21, as well as to the classroom materials needed to serve SPED students (Figure 6). In 2018-19, when the question of adequate access to the central staff members needed to provide SPED services was last addressed in the SPED Customer Service survey, a larger discrepancy was seen between campus administrator and SPED teacher responses – that year, only 63 percent of campus administrators agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (78% of SPED teachers did so), so an 18 percentage-point increase in 2020-21 from this group suggests notable improvement in this SPED service area.

Figure 6: 2020-21 Access to SPED Central Staff and Classroom Resources



Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Administrator N=273 (A, B), Teacher N=1,075 (A), 1,073 (B). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix D.

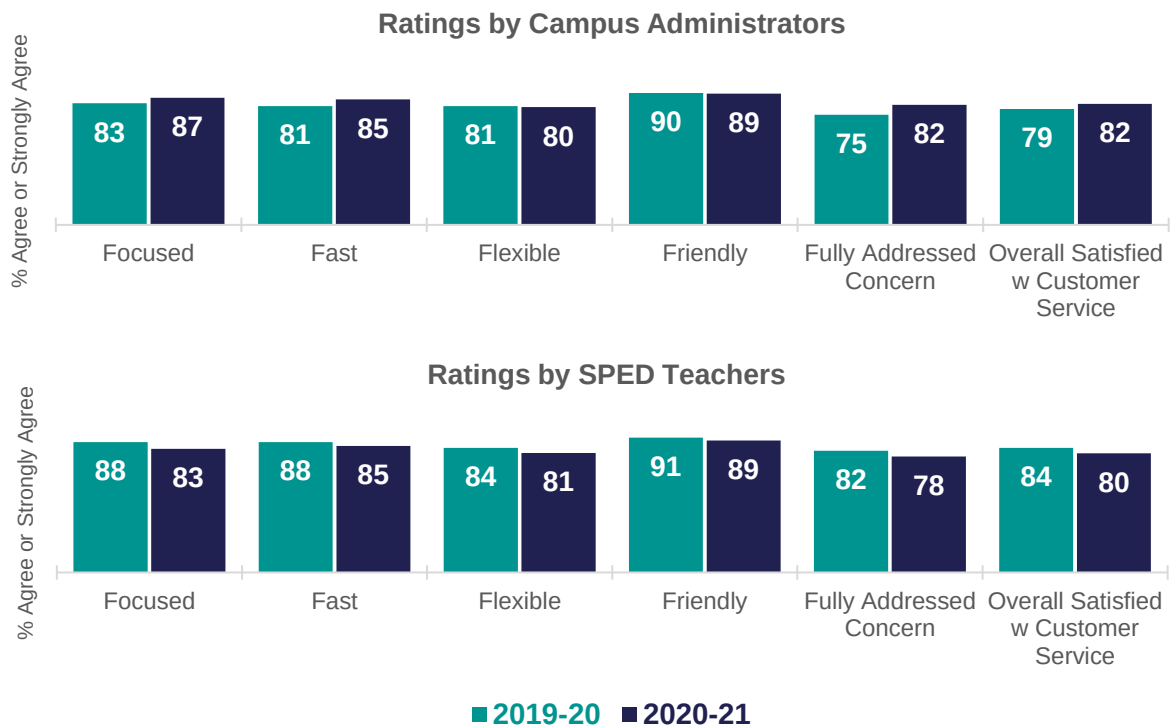
SPED Core 4 Ratings

The SPED Customer Service Survey also provided campus administrators and SPED teachers the opportunity to rate the special education department on the district's "Core 4" dimensions of customer

service, including how focused, fast, flexible, and friendly³⁶ SPED department representatives were when campus staff contacted them for assistance in 2020-21.

Ratings for all Core 4 domains for the SPED department were generally positive in 2020-21 (range: 78% to 89% agree or strongly agree) and among campus administrators, mostly improved from 2019-20 (Figure 7). Most favorably, 89 percent of respondents from both participant groups agreed or strongly agreed both in 2020-21 and in 2019-20 that staff members at the SPED central office were friendly. The strongest ratings improvements from 2019-20 to 2020-21 were found for administrators who agreed that central SPED staff members were focused, 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 (4-and 7-percentage point increases, Figure 7).

Figure 7: 2019-20 and 2020-21 Ratings on Central Office SPED Department Core 4



Source: 2019-20 and 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Surveys.

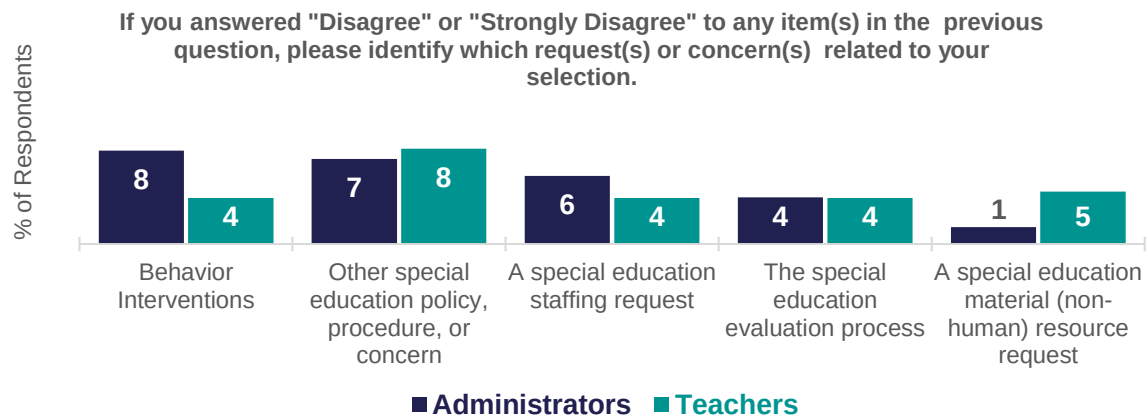
Note: Administrator $N=172$ (2020-21), $N=206$ (2019-20), Teacher $N=521$ (2020-21), $N=702$ (2019-20). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix D.

Among respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their concern(s) presented to central SPED staff were effectively addressed, unresolved issues included concerns about student behavior interventions (8% of all campus administrators indicated this, Figure 8), a SPED staffing request (6% of

³⁶ Question labels in Figure 7 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."

administrators and 4% of all SPED teachers), the SPED evaluation process, or a SPED material resource request.

Figure 8: 2020-21 Unresolved Issues with SPED Customer Service



Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

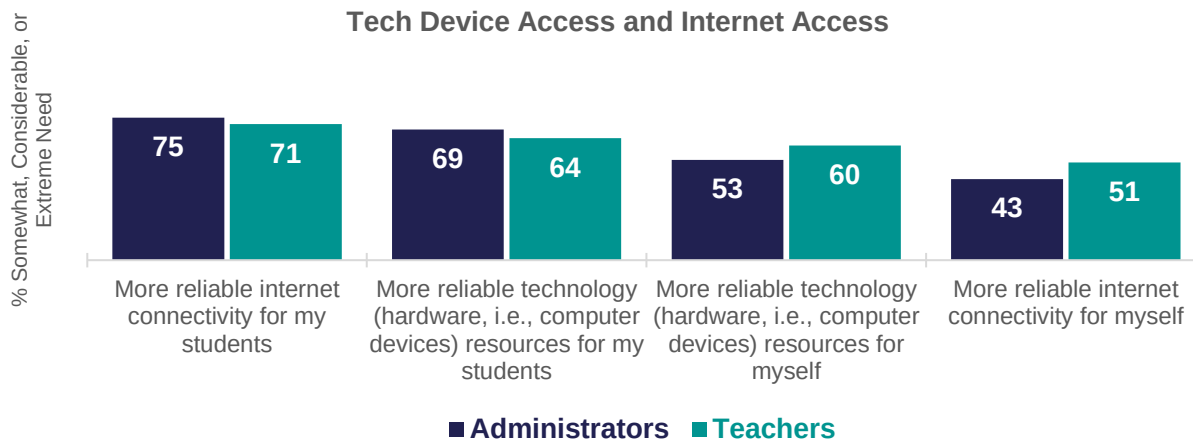
Note: Percentages reflect total respondent Ns of N=1,087 (Teachers), N=274 (Administrators).

Technology and Online Platforms: Needs for the Hybrid Learning Arrangement

The hybrid teaching and learning arrangement in 2020-21 has proven challenging for most stakeholders who were presented with the task of attempting to balance meeting the needs of their in-person students with the need to improvise to keep their distance-learning students engaged during the school day. According to survey respondents, in 2020-21, many students still lacked basic internet connectivity and appropriate technology devices needed to proceed with a distance-learning arrangement.

As Figure 9 shows, approximately three out of four campus administrators and SPED teacher respondents indicated 'somewhat,' 'a considerable,' or 'an extreme' need for more reliable internet connectivity for their students in 2020-21, and approximately two out of three of these respondents reported at least somewhat of a need for more reliable technology devices for students. In addition, approximately half (range: 43% to 60%) of both campus staff groups indicated they also personally lacked reliable internet connectivity, and particularly, reliable technology devices needed to provide distance learning services in 2020-21.

Figure 9: 2020-21 Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions - Technology and Online Platform Needs

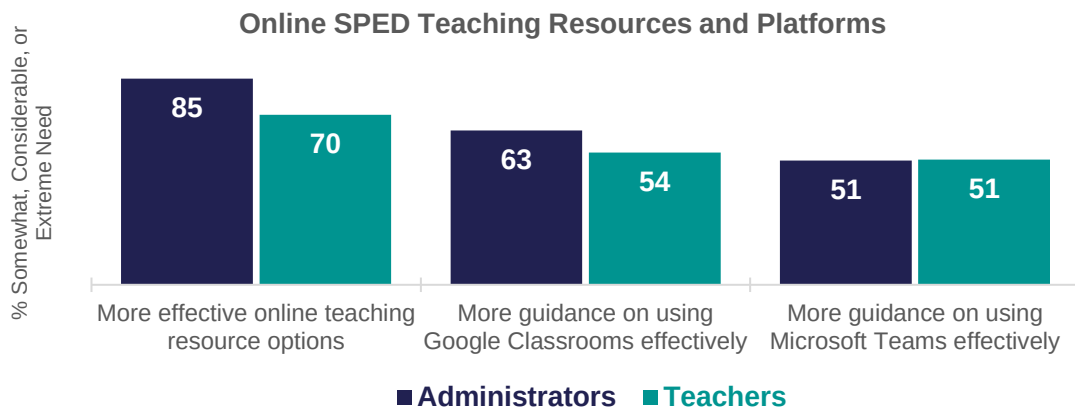


Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Response rates per question varied. Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix D.

Survey respondents also indicated a continued need for effective online teaching resource options and for more guidance on effectively using online learning platform such as Google Classrooms and Microsoft Teams to teach distance-learners. The greatest indicated need came from campus administrators who, at a rate of 85 percent reported somewhat, a considerable, or an extreme need for more effective online teaching resource options (Figure 10).

Figure 10: 2020-21 Campus Administrator and SPED Teacher Perceptions - Technology and Online Platform Needs



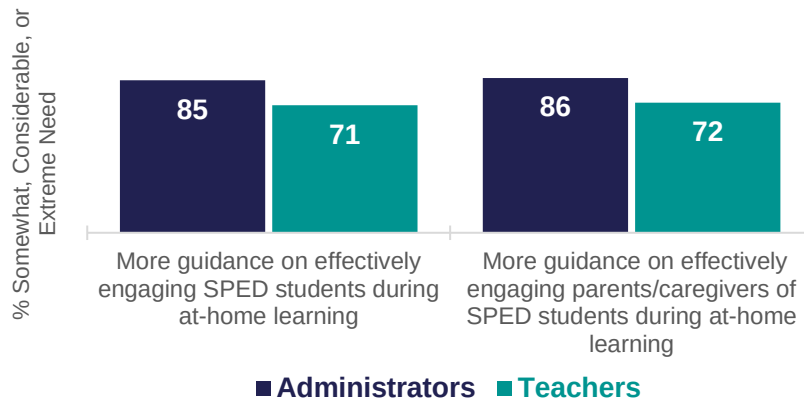
Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

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

Campus 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 (85% and 86%, Figure 11) reporting at least somewhat of a need for more guidance on effectively engaging distance-learning students and parents. The percentages of teachers

indicating a need for more guidance in these areas were slightly lower than for administrators, but were still noteworthy, ranging from 71 percent (student engagement) to 72 percent (parent engagement).

Figure 11: 2020-21 SPED Student and Parent Engagement Needs



Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

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

What were the activities and perceptions of SPED evaluators?

Methodology

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program administrative staff members to design an online survey to solicit feedback about the activities and perceptions of 2020-21 SPED evaluators (diagnosticians and LSSPs). The survey focused on experiences related to the hybrid (in-person and distance) learning arrangement the district instituted for the 2020-21 school year.

The evaluator obtained SPED evaluator email addresses from SPED central staff members in spring of 2021 and sent an email invitation to all those listed to participate in SPED Evaluator Experience survey beginning on May 18, 2021. Periodic reminders were sent to evaluators who had yet to respond. The survey closed on June 2, 2021. The evaluator conducted frequency analyses on responses to closed-ended survey items and content-analyzed open-ended survey item responses into themes.

Results

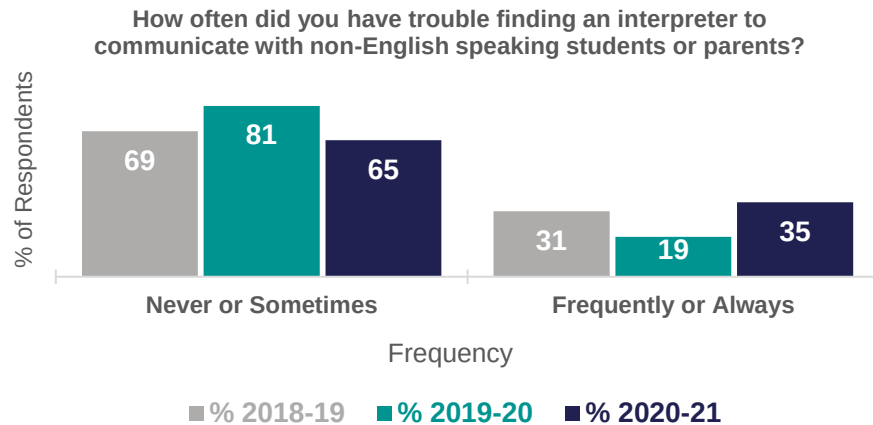
Of the 114 SPED evaluators invited to participate in the 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Survey, 71 at least partially completed it (63%). Of these, 87 percent identified as diagnosticians and 13 percent as LSSPs. Detailed survey item response rates are provided in Appendix E.

Monolingual Evaluators and Finding Interpreters

More respondents identified as monolingual evaluators ($n=49$, 71%) than bilingual in 2020-21 (respondents identifying as monolingual were 78% in 2019-20 and 70% in 2018-19). Among monolingual evaluators, 80 percent reported at least “Sometimes” having difficulty finding an interpreter to communicate with students or parents who did not speak English (72% in 2019-20), with 35 percent indicating that they

“Frequently” or “Always” experienced difficulty (up from 19% in 2019-20). Those never having this problem decreased eight percentage points in 2020-21 (20%; 28% in 2019-20, Figure 12).

Figure 12: 2018-19 to 2020-21 - SPED Evaluators' Difficulty Finding an Interpreter



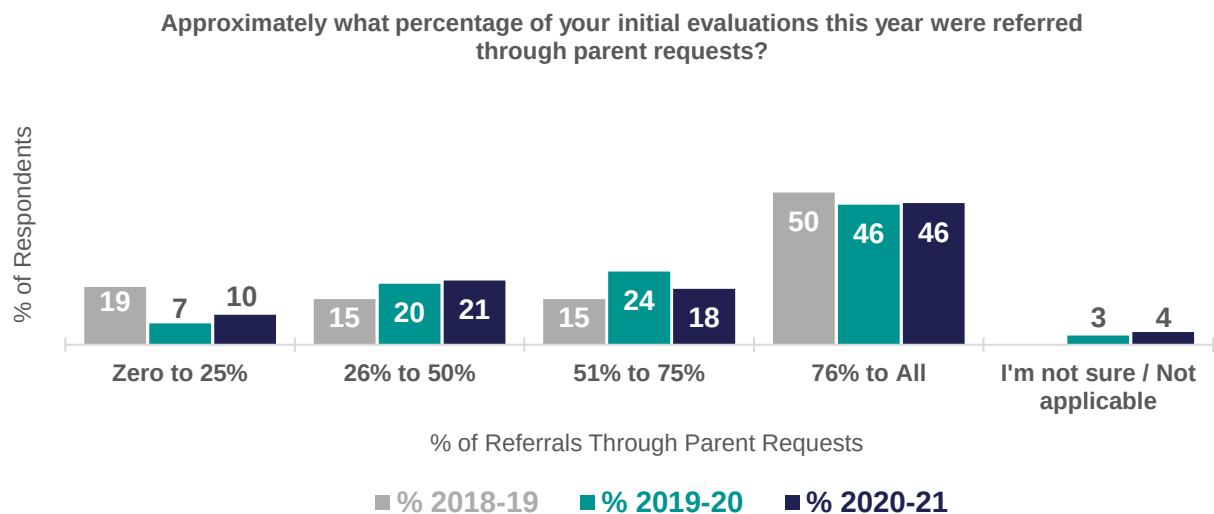
Source: 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys.

Note: N=51 (2020-21); N=87 (2019-20); N=59 (2018-19).

Referrals and Adequacy of MTSS Interventions

Similar to both 2018-19 and 2019-20, SPED evaluators reported high rates of parent requests for initial student evaluations for special education in 2020-21. As Figure 13 shows, the percentage of evaluators reporting that at least half of the referrals they received for initial individual evaluations were made through parent requests in 2020-21 remained at a rate of around two out of every three referrals, though there was some improvement from 2019-20 with a slight decrease in the percentage reporting that at least half of referrals came from parents, at 64 percent in 2020-21, down from 70 percent in 2019-20.

Figure 13: 2018-19 to 2020-21 - Percentage of Initial Referrals Through Parent Requests

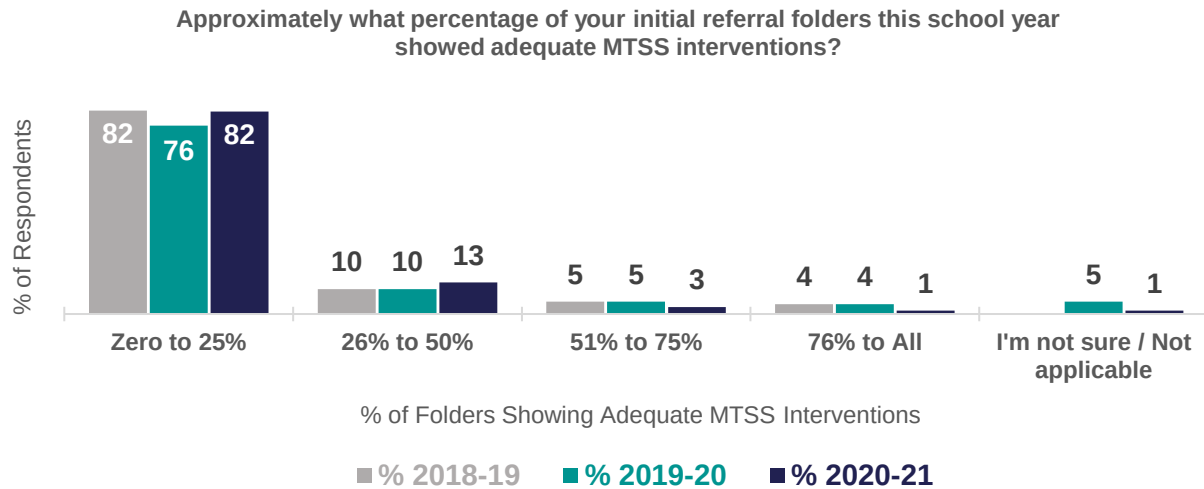


Source: 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys.

Note: N=71 (2020-21); N=111 (2019-20); N=84 (2018-19). Some percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. “I’m not sure/Not Applicable” was added as a response option to this item in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Also, and similar to 2018-19 and 2019-20 survey findings, a high rate of respondents (82%) reported that few (25% or fewer) referral folders for 2020-21 initial individual evaluations showed adequate MTSS interventions (2018-19: 82%; 2019-20: 76%; Figure 14).

Figure 14: 2018-19 to 2020-21 - Percentage of Referral Folders with Adequate MTSS Interventions



Source: 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys.

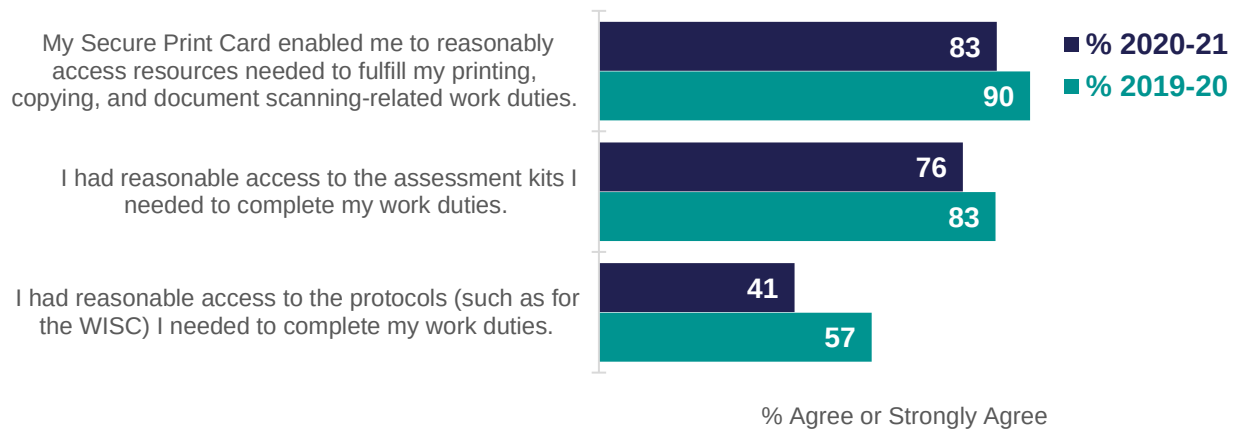
Note: N=71 (2020-21); N=111 (2019-20); N=84 (2018-19). Some percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. "I'm not sure/Not Applicable" was added as a response option to this item in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Access to Resources and Workspaces on Campuses

In 2017-18, SPED evaluators transitioned from working in a central office to working in campus-based spaces. Some Evaluator Experience Survey items since then have thus solicited feedback about experiences working on campuses, such as ease of access to adequate workspaces and other job-related resources like testing kits. Because 2019-20 and 2020-21 questions on these topics were not the same as those asked in 2018-19, year-over-year comparisons are only shown in this report for the past two years.

As shown in Figure 15, most respondents indicated that they could reasonably fulfill their printer- and copy-related needs on campus with their Secure Print Cards (83%) and that they had reasonable access to the assessment kits needed to complete their work duties (76%). These rates were slightly lower than those reported in 2019-20 (a 7-percentage-point decrease for each). A notably smaller percentage of respondents (41%) shared that they had reasonable access to the protocols (such as the *WISC*³⁷) needed to complete their job duties. This was also a decrease from the percentage (57%) reporting adequate access to protocols in 2019-20 (Figure 15).

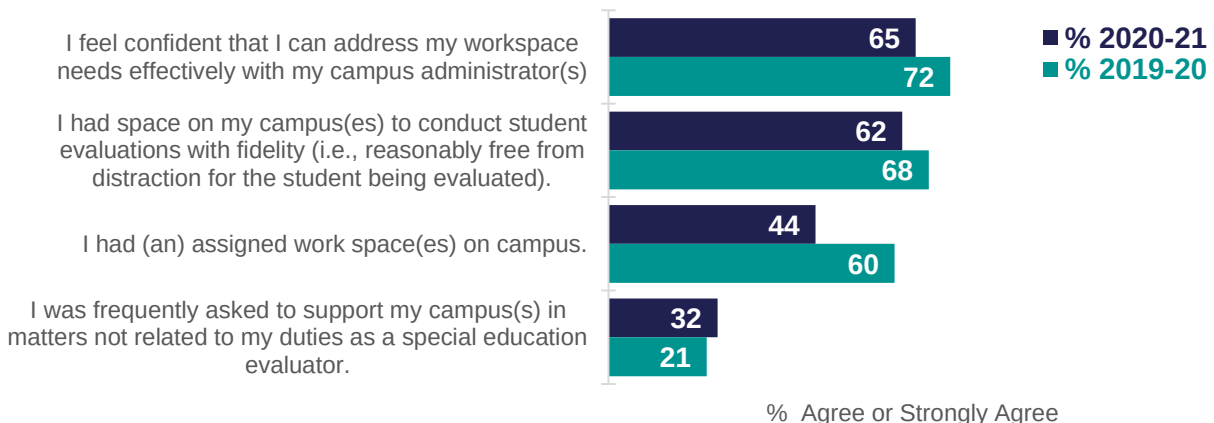
³⁷ *WISC* stands for *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children*

Figure 15: 2020-21 and 2019-20 - SPED Evaluator Access to Resources on Campuses

Source: 2020-21 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys.

Note: N=71 (2020-21), N=111 (2019-20). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix E.

In addition, as shown in Figure 16, approximately two-thirds of respondents (65%) indicated that they were confident they could address workspace needs effectively with their campus administrators (a slight decrease from 72% reporting this in 2019-20). The rate at which evaluators agreed or strongly agreed that they had space on campus to conduct student evaluations with fidelity remained at around two-thirds, but this rate was a decrease from 2019-20 (62% in 2020-21, down from 68% in 2019-20). Fewer evaluators in 2020-21 also reported having an assigned workspace on campus compared to 2019-20 (44% in 2020-21 versus 60% in 2019-20). There was a slight increase among evaluators indicating that they were frequently asked to support their campus in matters unrelated to their job as an evaluator in 2020-21 (32% compared to 21% in 2019-20).

Figure 16: 2020-21 and 2019-20 Campus Workspace Adequacy for SPED Evaluators

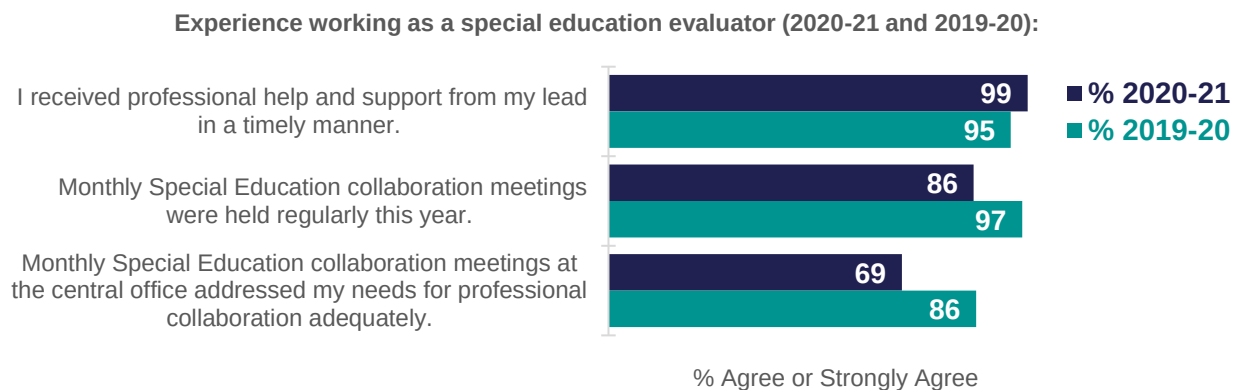
Source: 2020-21 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys.

Note: N=71 (2020-21), N=111 (2019-20). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix E. Some percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding

Professional Support and Collaboration Opportunities for SPED Evaluators

Ratings on individual professional support and collaboration were very positive among survey respondents in 2020-21, with 99 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that they received support from their lead evaluator in a timely manner – an increase from 94 percent in 2019-20. Although most respondents still reported in 2020-21 that monthly special education collaboration meetings were held regularly (86% agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case), this was a slight decrease from 2019-20 (when 97% reported this). Rates of respondents indicating that monthly special education collaboration meetings met their needs for professional collaboration adequately were moderately high, at 69 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was so, but this rate showed a drop from 2019-20 when 86 percent reported this (Figure 17)

Figure 17: 2020-21 and 2019-20 - Professional Support and Collaboration For Evaluators



Source: 2020-21 and 2019-20 SPED Evaluator Experience Surveys

Note: N=71 (2020-21), N=111 (2019-20). Detailed rates by response are provided in Appendix E.

SPED Evaluator Survey General Comments

Finally, respondents were asked to share any additional feedback about 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED services. A total of 42 SPED evaluators provided responses to this item. The six most common themes identified are summarized here and shown in Table 13.

The four most common suggestions (12% to 14% of responses) provided by respondents were 1) facilitate more collaboration with other SPED specialists on campus (to ensure student interventions are appropriate); 2) Ensure consistent implementation and documentation of MTSS prior to referral for SPED evaluations, and track the entire process in Easy IEP; 3) Caseloads are still too high to ensure quality appropriate evaluative services are provided to students and families; more SPED evaluators need to be hired; and 4) Ensure that SPED evaluators have adequate, dedicated workspace at each of their assigned campuses.

Table 13: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Survey - General Comments

Theme	N	%
Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding special education services in the district this (2020-21) school year?		
Facilitate more collaboration with other SPED specialists	6	14.3
Ensure consistent implementation and documentation of MTSS before referral and track these in Easy IEP	6	14.3
Caseloads are still too high to allow for quality work; hire more evaluators	6	14.3
Ensure adequate, dedicated evaluator workspace at all assigned campuses	5	11.9
Provide more training for evaluators	4	9.5
Ensure adequate protocol supplies, especially at the 9400 building	4	9.5

Source: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Survey.

Note: N=42. Respondents could provide comments reflecting multiple themes.

What were trends in special education student academic performance?

Analyses of SPED student academic performance on the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* 3-8 and *STAAR EOCs* for 2020-21 and of select trends from 2018-19 are included in this section.³⁸ *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* Growth findings for SPED students for 2020-21 are also included in this section.

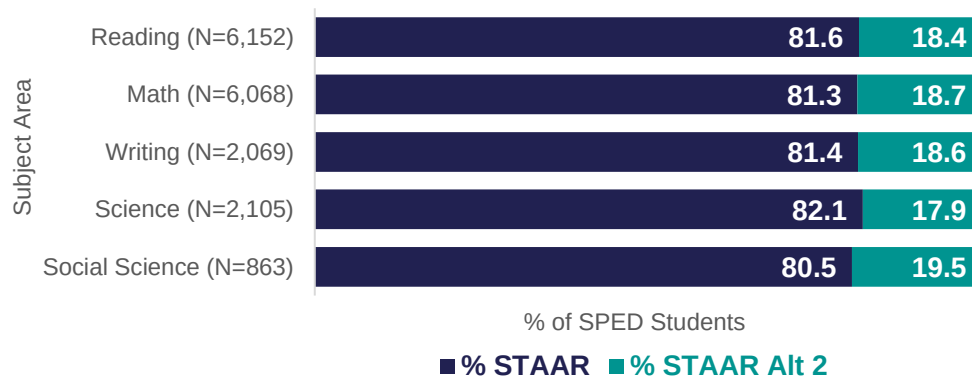
About STAAR

STAAR 3-8 and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)* assessments for 2020-21 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.³⁹ As noted previously, *STAAR* accommodations and *STAAR Alternate 2* eligibility are determined by student ARD committees.

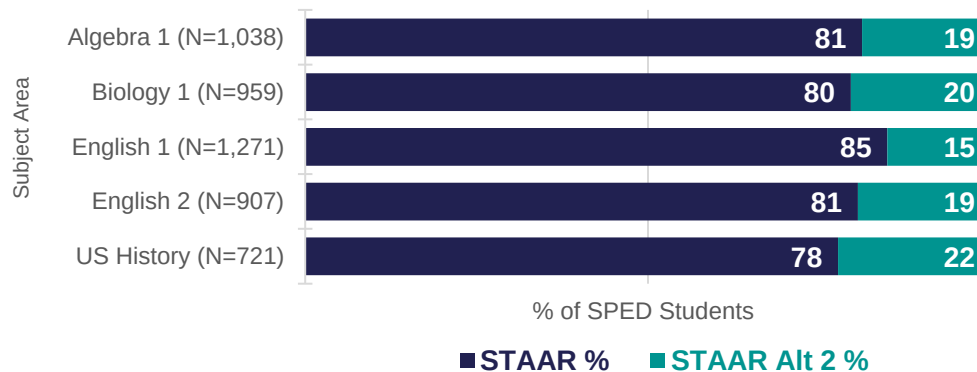
In 2020-21, approximately four out of five SPED students took the standard *STAAR* test version, and the remainder tested with the *Alt 2* version (Figure 18). The breakdown was similar among SPED students who took *STAAR EOCs* in 2020-21. (Figure 19).

³⁸ 2019-20 data were not produced because of statewide *STAAR* testing cancellations in 2019-20 after the transition to at-home learning.

³⁹ 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.

Figure 18: 2020-21 SPED Students: STAAR 3-8 – Percent Test Version Taken

Source: District STAAR 3-8 data file dated 06/28/21.

Figure 19: 2020-21 SPED Students: STAAR EOCs – Percent Test Version Taken

Source: District STAAR EOC data file dated 06/18/21.

About MAP Growth

MAP Growth data consist of several variables used to describe student performance and academic growth over time by subject. The Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP)⁴⁰ represents the extent to which student achievement changed from one testing window to the next, relative to change for other students who are similar in starting achievement level, grade, and number of instructional weeks between testing windows. For each subject assessed, CGPs for each student are calculated with respect to a large, nationally-normed sample obtained by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and can be calculated whenever a student takes a *MAP Growth* assessment in a new testing window (e.g., beginning of year, or BOY to end of year, or EOY). CGP scores below the 50th percentile indicate a level of progress below most peers of the same grade level in that time period, while CGP scores above the 50th percentile indicate a level of progress exceeding most same-grade peers in that time period. Importantly, students who are

⁴⁰ For more information, see <https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1630>.

considered academically behind their peers must exceed expected growth to meet grade-level expectations.

Methodology

STAAR

For 2020-21 STAAR 3-8 analyses, the evaluator used the district STAAR data file dated June 28, 2021 and merged it with the PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for October 30, 2020. 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.

For 2020-21 STAAR EOC analyses, the evaluator used the district STAAR data file dated June 4, 2021 and merged it with the PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for October 30, 2021. The evaluator conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine the rate of SPED students performing at Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+). Performance data were also grouped by subject.

MAP

The evaluator used the district MAP data file dated June 24, 2021 and the PEIMS snapshot student demographic data file dated October 30, 2020 and split cases based on the presence of a special education flag for each student. For 2020-21 Reading and Mathematics performance, the evaluator conducted frequency and crosstabs analyses to determine the average percentile for conditional growth scores (Conditional Growth Percentile, or CGP) by grade level (grades 1 to 11) for Dallas ISD students in the SPED program and for students in the general education program.

Results

STAAR Performance Over Time and Progress Measures

Performance outcomes of SPED students in 2018-19 and 2020-21 are provided below. Outcomes show the rate of SPED students achieving the Approaches+ (Appr+) performance standard. As noted previously, 2019-20 data were unavailable because of statewide testing cancellations.

STAAR 3-8

For STAAR 3-8 Reading, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, all grade levels (3 to 8) except grade eight showed declines in the percentages of SPED students achieving the Appr+ performance standard (grade 8 students showed a 1.0 percentage point increase). The largest decline was seen for grade four students in Reading, where in 2018-19 42.3 percent of SPED students achieved the Appr+ performance standard while 35.5 percent did so in 2020-21.

The percentage of SPED students achieving the Appr+ performance standard in Mathematics in 2020-21 showed larger declines from 2018-19 compared the declines for Reading: while grade eight SPED students were the only group to show any increase in Reading, in Mathematics, grade eight SPED students showed the largest decline from 2018-19 in the percentage achieving at the Appr+ level (54.0% in 2018-19 down to 37.9% in 2020-21). Declines in the percentage of SPED students in Writing, Science, and Social

Science in 2020-21 ranged from 6.6 percentage points from 2018-19 (grade 7 Writing) to 11.7 percentage points (grade 5 Science, Table 14).

Table 14: 2018-19 to 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED Students at STAAR 3-8 Approaches Grade Level or Above by Grade Level

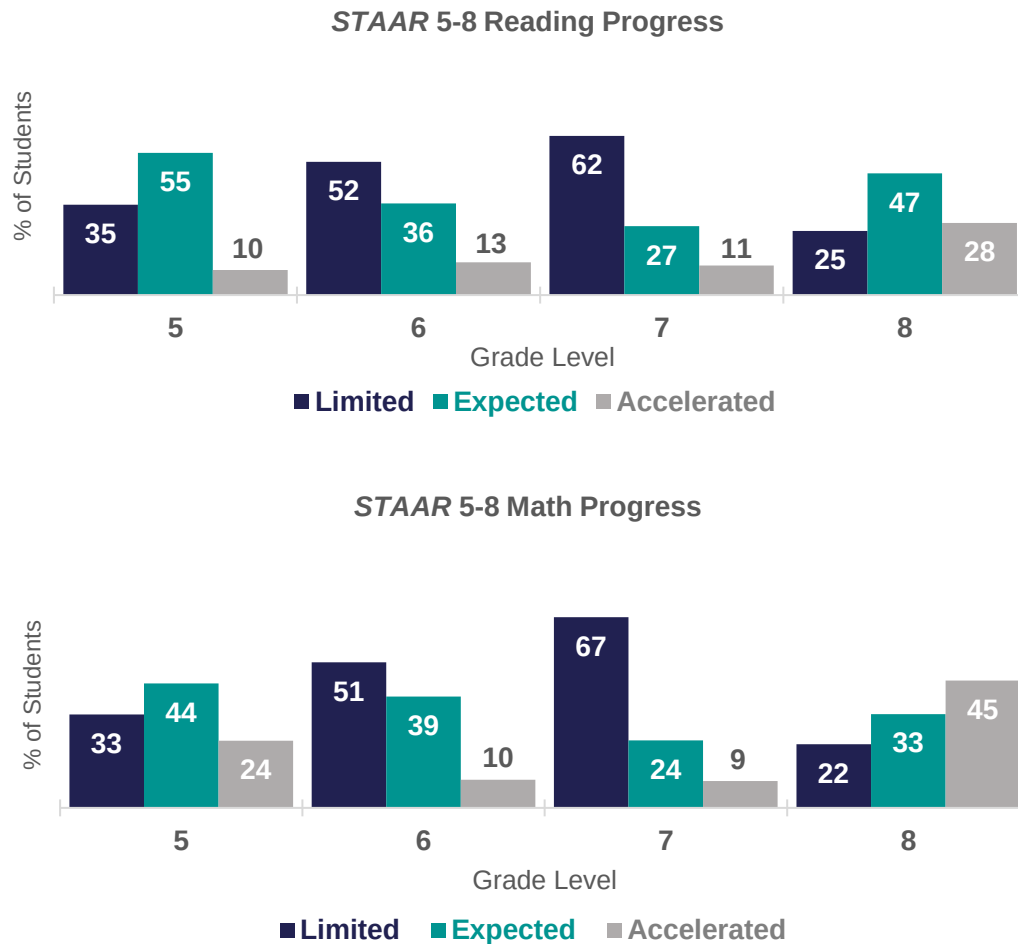
Grade Level	2018-19		2019-20*		2020-21		Two-Year Change
	Tested N	Appr+ %	Tested N	Appr+ %	Tested N	Appr+ %	
Reading							
Grade 3	1,166	48.1			991	42.8	-5.3
Grade 4	1,262	42.3			1,116	35.5	-6.8
Grade 5	1,288	49.7			1,205	46.9	-2.8
Grade 6	1,137	34.1			1,034	30.5	-3.6
Grade 7	1,000	39.9			935	34.8	-5.1
Grade 8	865	41.7			871	42.7	1.0
Mathematics							
Grade 3	1,163	53.7			999	46.0	-7.7
Grade 4	1,262	50.3			1,116	38.4	-11.9
Grade 5	1,288	59.2			1,209	53.9	-5.3
Grade 6	1,134	49.0			1,041	42.4	-6.6
Grade 7	1,001	47.4			927	34.4	-13.0
Grade 8	847	54.0			776	37.9	-16.1
Writing							
Grade 4	1,254	36.7			1,112	25.9	-10.8
Grade 7	998	32.5			957	25.9	-6.6
Science							
Grade 5	1,280	48.0			1,208	36.3	-11.7
Grade 8	828	49.0			815	37.7	-11.3
Social Studies							
Grade 8	849	41.4			858	34.6	-6.8

Source: District STAAR 3-8 data files dated 06/13/19 (2018-19) and 06/28/21 (2020-21).

Note: Includes data for all administrations of all versions (STAAR and STAAR Alt 2) of STAAR 3-8 subtests for SPED students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date. * 2019-20 data were unavailable because of assessment cancelations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.

STAAR Progress Measures for grade five through eight students in Reading and Mathematics are provided in Figure 20. Grade six and seven SPED students showed the highest rates of Limited progress in Reading and Mathematics in 2020-21. Grade eight students showed the highest rates of Accelerated progress in both Reading (28%) and Mathematics (45%).

Figure 20: 2020-21 STAAR Reading and Mathematics Progress Measures for SPED Students (Grades 5-8)



Source: District STAAR 3-8 data file dated 06/28/21.

STAAR EOCs

Results for STAAR EOCs were more mixed compared to those for STAAR 3-8. Algebra I, Biology, and US History each showed declines from 2018-19 in the percentages of students scoring at the Appr+ level (-8.5, -4.1, and -7.5 percentage points, respectively, Table 15). However SPED students did show increases on the percentages scoring at Appr+ for both English I (5.9 percentage points) and English II (7.9 percentage points).

Table 15: 2018-19 and 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED Students at STAAR EOC Approaches Grade Level or Above and Two-Year Trends

Subject	2018-19		2019-20*	2020-21		
	Tested N	Appr+ %		Tested N	Appr+ %	Two-Year Change
Algebra I	1,204	55.2		1,038	46.7	-8.5
English I	1,747	20.9		1271	26.8	5.9
English II	1,356	24.2		907	32.1	7.9
Biology	1,129	53.2		959	49.1	-4.1
U.S. History	780	65.5		721	58.0	-7.5

Source: District STAAR EOC data files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19) and 06/18/21 (2020-21).

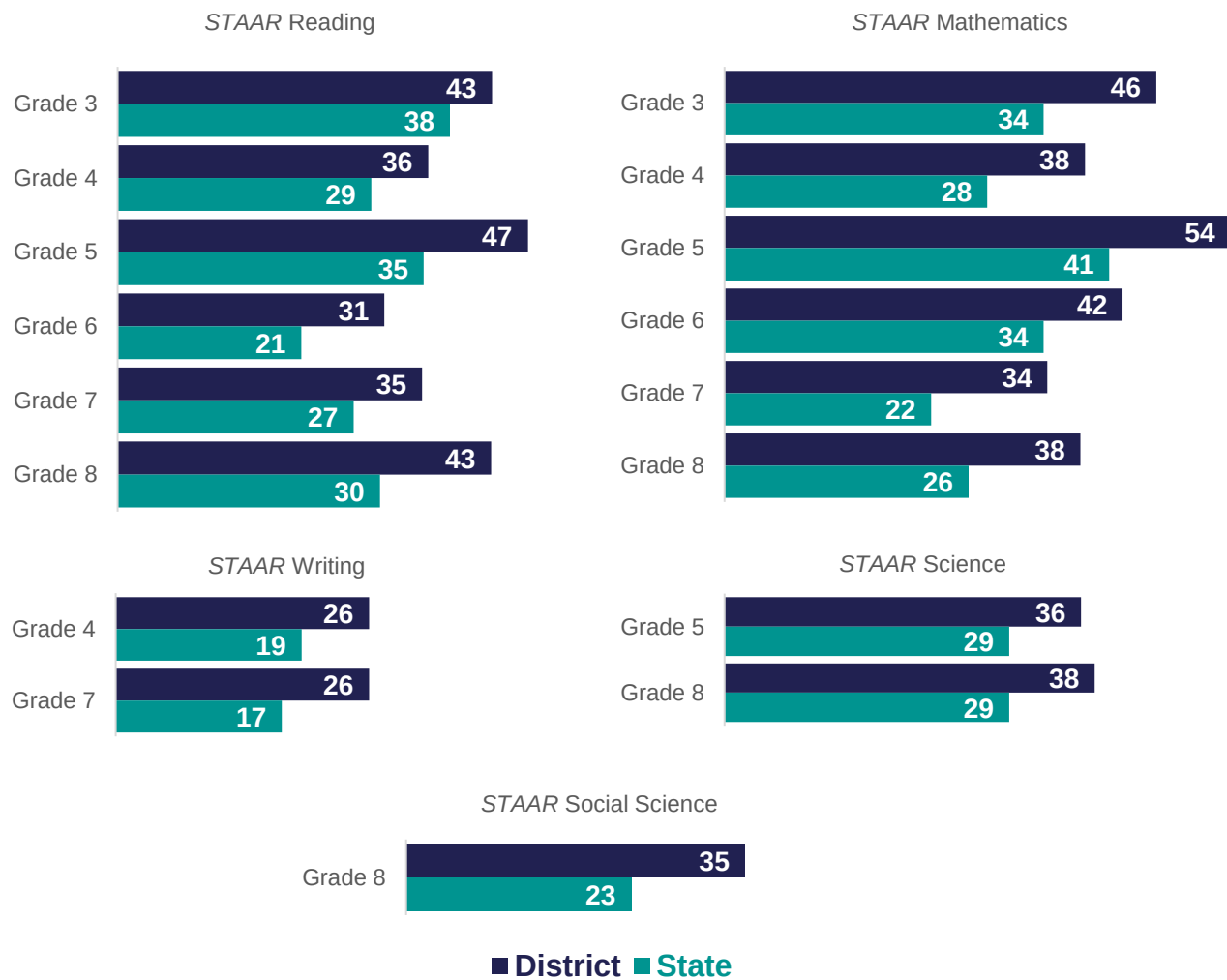
Note: Includes fall and spring administrations for all versions of STAAR EOC for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date. * 2019-20 data were unavailable because of assessment cancellations resulting from the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.

Comparisons to Statewide Results

STAAR 3-8

Although within the district there were declines from 2018-19 to 2020-21 across most subjects and grade levels on STAAR 3-8, compared to SPED student performance statewide in 2020-21, Dallas ISD SPED students outperformed SPED students statewide in nearly every subject and grade level (Figure 21). The largest contrasts were found among grade five students in mathematics (54% at Appr+ for Dallas SPED students compared to 41% at Appr+ for SPED students statewide) and grade eight SPED students in Reading (43% Dallas, 30% statewide).

Figure 21: 2020-21 Percentages of Dallas ISD and State Special Education Students at Appr+ on STAAR 3-8 Reading, Mathematics, Writing, Science, and Social Studies, by Grade Level



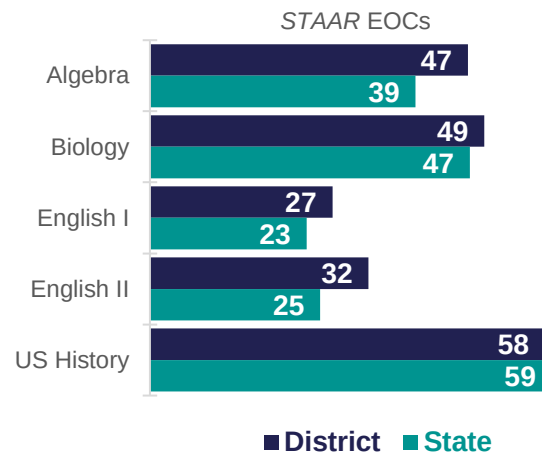
Source: District STAAR 3-8 data file dated 06/28/21. State-level data: [texasassessments.com](https://www.texasassessments.com), retrieved 07/19/21.

Note: Data reflect STAAR and STAAR Alternate 2 versions of the Spring 2021 (first administration) STAAR 3-8 results combined.

STAAR EOCs

Dallas ISD SPED students also outperformed SPED students statewide in 2020-21 in terms of percentages achieving at the Appr+ level in all STAAR EOC subjects except US History (students statewide outperformed Dallas students by one percentage-point in US History, Figure 22). Contrasts in all other subjects ranged from a two-percentage-point outperformance (Biology) to an eight percentage-point outperformance (Algebra I).

Figure 22: 2020-21 Percentages of Dallas ISD and State Special Education Students at Appr+ on STAAR EOCs



Source: District STAAR EOC data files dated 06/18/21 (2020-21). State-level data: texasassessments.com, retrieved 07/19/21.

Note: Includes fall and spring administrations for all versions of STAAR EOC for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date

MAP Growth

SPED student performance on MAP Reading and Mathematics assessments showed patterns similar to performances on STAAR in these subject areas: average Conditional Growth Percentiles (CGPs) were higher in Mathematics for all grade levels compared to Reading, with the exception of grade two, where students showed better performance in Reading (average CGP for Reading in grade two was 48.1, compared to 44.5 for mathematics). A general trend of a curvilinear performance was also observed from grade one to grade 11 in both Reading and Mathematics where early elementary grades performed better than middle elementary and middle school grades and then trended slightly upward again after grade eight, with a drop, particularly in Reading, in grade 11 (Figure 23).

Figure 23: 2020-21 Average Fall to Spring Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP) in Reading and Mathematics for SPED Students by Grade Level



Source: District MAP data file dated 06/24/21 and PEIMS snapshot file for 10/30/21.

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].”⁴¹

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.

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

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. For the Class of 2019, the SPED graduation rate was 69.9; the districtwide rate was 84.8 (Table 16). The SPED annual dropout rate for the Class of 2019 was 15.4 compared to districtwide rate of 10.6. The dropout and graduation rates for the class of 2018 were 11.2 percent and 72.1 percent, respectively.

Table 16: Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Rates: Class of 2019

	Class N	Graduated		Continued		Received TxCHSE		Dropped out		Graduated, continued, or received TxCHSE
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
SPED	742	519	69.9	109	14.7	0	0.0	114	15.4	519
Districtwide	9,541	8,088	84.8	428	4.5	14	0.1	1,011	10.6	8,088

Source: TEA report on four-year longitudinal graduation and dropout rates, Class of 2019, retrieved from TEA website 07/07/21.

Attendance Rate

To examine 2020-21 attendance rates for SPED students, the evaluator used the district attendance data file dated August 20, 2021. This file was merged with the PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for October 30, 2021. Attendance rates were calculated by dividing the total days of attendance by

⁴¹Source: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/support-risk-schools-and-students/risk-schools-and-students-dropout-prevention/dropout-2>.

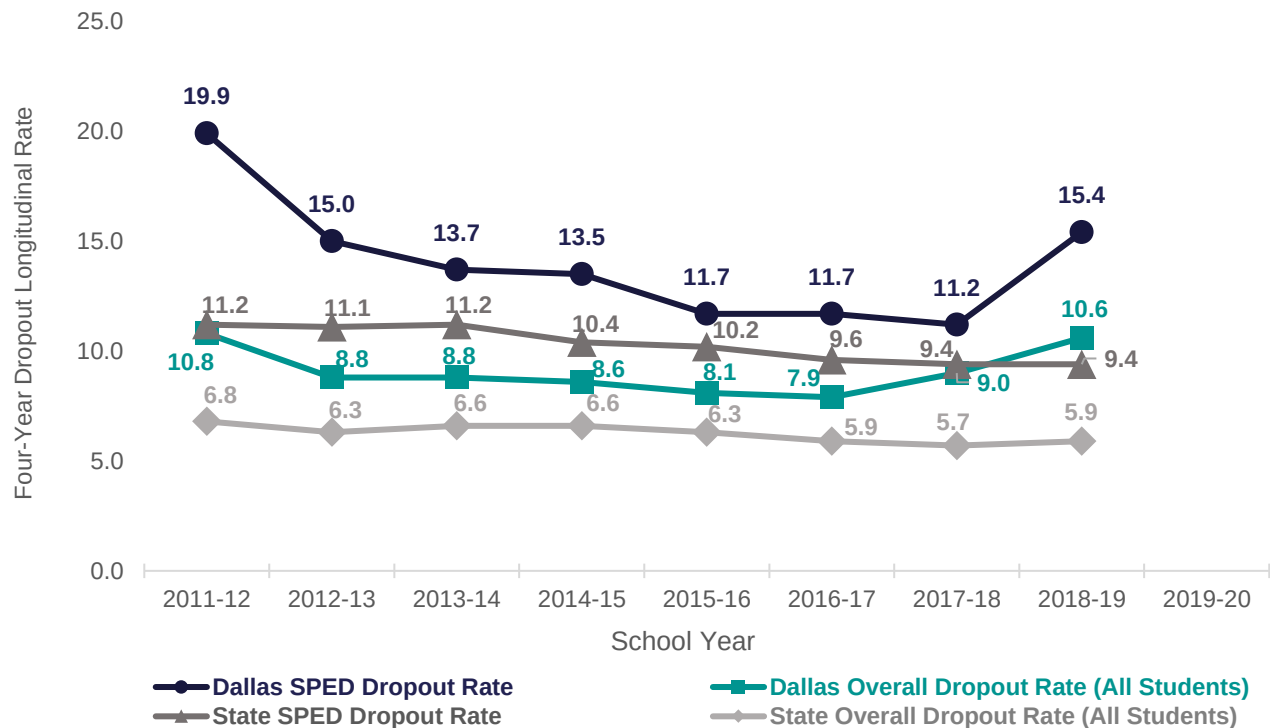
the total days enrolled and grouped by grade level. These calculations and groupings were completed for both SPED and general education students.

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 2018-19 are shown in Figure 24 for informational purposes. Historically, district SPED dropout rates have been higher than for statewide SPED students; they have also been higher than districtwide and statewide dropout rates. While over time these gaps have narrowed somewhat, between 2017-18 and 2018-19, the gap between Dallas ISD SPED students and other groups widened once again; the overall Dallas ISD four-year longitudinal dropout rate, however, also increased between 2017-18 and 2018-19 (Figure 24).

Figure 24: 2011-12 to 2020-21 Four-Year Longitudinal Dropout Rates

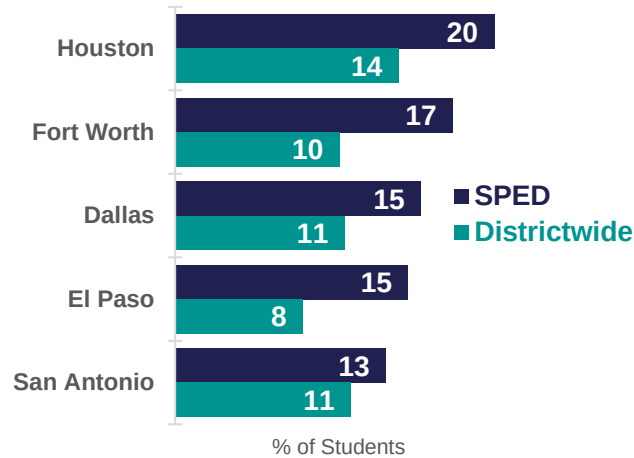


Source: TEA report retrieved from TEA website on 06/29/21 (2019-20). 2019-20 evaluation report (Mejan, 2020) (2011-2018).

Note: Four-year longitudinal data are lagged by one year. Data for 2019-20 were not provided by TEA in summer 2021, as expected.

Four-year high school dropout rates were also compared to other large school districts in Texas. Figure 25 shows SPED and districtwide rates for Houston, Fort Worth, Dallas, El Paso, and San Antonio. Among these five districts, Dallas showed rates in the middle where Houston reported the highest four-year dropout rate for SPED students for the Class of 2019 (20%) and San Antonio the lowest (13%).

Figure 25: Texas School District Comparisons of SPED and Districtwide 4-Year Longitudinal Dropour Rates (Class of 2019)



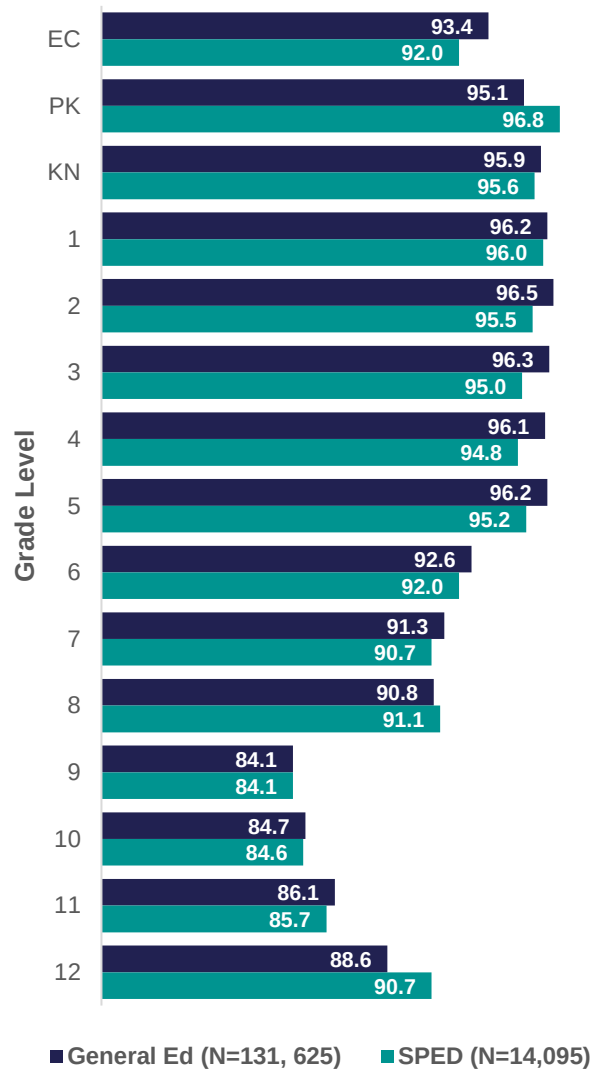
The Source: Texas Education Agency High School Dropout Reports for Class of 2019. Retrieved from TEA website 06/29/21.

Attendance

For 2019-20, because of the districtwide transition to at-home learning, attendance rates were calculated based on the first four six-week period attendance data file for 2019-20. For 2020-21, the end-of-year attendance data file was used, so comparisons between the two years should be read with caution. The overall attendance rate among SPED students (early childhood through grade 12) for 2020-21 was 92.0 (93.9% for 2018-19 and 93.1% for 2019-20). General education students showed an overall attendance rate in 2020-21 of 92.3 (94.4% in 2019-20).

By grade level among SPED students, attendance rates were highest in the elementary grades (a trend across most prior years), with the highest rates in prekindergarten (96.7% - higher even compared to grade one general education students who averaged a 96.2 rate) and grade one students (96.0%; general ed: 96.2%), Figure 26). In contrast, the lowest attendance rates for SPED students were seen in grades nine (84.1%) and ten (84.6%), down more than four percentage points from the pre-at-home transition attendance rate of 88.2 percent for grade 9 and 90.2 percent for grade 10 in 2019-20. This trend mirrored a drop seen among grades nine and ten general education students (from 90.9% and 91.6% in 2019-20 to 84.1% and 85.7% in 2020-2, respectively). Attendance rates among high school SPED students were slightly higher after grade 10 for each consecutive grade level in 2020-21, and this was true for general education students as well, but all high school grade levels except grade 12 showed substantial decreases (approximately 5 percentage points each) compared to pre-at-home transition 2019-20 attendance rates.

Figure 26: 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED and General Education Student Average Attendance Rates by Grade Level



Source: Dallas ISD student attendance data file, End of Year 2020-21 dated 08/20/21 and PEIMS student demographic data file dated 10/30/20.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

The 2020-21 Dallas ISD SPED department employed 1,208 full-time SPED teachers who served 14,095 students (9.7% of district enrollment) and operated with a budget of \$65,877,857 (a \$5.7M increase from 2018-19). ChildFind services were decentralized in 2019-20 and remained so in 2020-21. Speech services for SPED students were further expanded to include more teletherapy with a new vendor (Presence Learning). Other focus areas for the department in 2020-21 included: parent support, tracking and monitoring of school equipment issues, provision of professional development for campus staff, and working with students on self-advocacy skills. Key findings for 2020-21 included the following:

- The districtwide SPED population increased each year between 2014-15, when SPED student enrollment totaled 11,722 (7.3% of district enrollment) and 2019-20 ($N=14,478$). There was a slight drop in SPED enrollment in 2020-21, concurrent with the districtwide enrollment drop in 2020-21; however, the percentage of SPED students districtwide continued its six-year upward trend in 2020-21, 9.7 percent.
- Over five years, the percentage of district SPED teachers increased by 2.2 percentage points, but SPED administrators continue to experience a shortage of SPED teachers.
- The most common SPED student primary disabilities districtwide in 2020-21 were specific learning disability (29.8%), autism (24.1%), and other health impairment (15.2%). The rate of district SPED students with some form of autism more than tripled between 2010-11 (6.8%) and 2020-21 (24.1%).
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of SPED teachers reported that they were either aware of an SST that meets at their campus but did not have enough information to rate on SST activities, or that they were not aware of an SST meeting regularly on their campus. Likewise, 38 percent of teachers reported that they did not have enough information to rate as to whether their campus SST met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial Special Education evaluation. These findings may indicate possible under-engagement of SPED staff members in SST activities at the campus level.
- Most campus administrator and SPED teacher respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they 1) understood the district's expectations in providing SPED services (92% and 90% respectively), 2) they understood the district's SPED policies and procedures (90% and 88% respectively), and 3) they understood how to get help with SPED-related matters (88% and 86% respectively).
- Ratings for all Core 4 domains for the SPED department were generally positive in 2020-21 (range: 78% to 89% positive). Most favorably, approximately 90 percent of respondents from both campus administrators and teachers agreed or strongly agreed both in 2020-21 and in 2019-20 that staff members at the SPED central office were friendly.
- Three out of four campus administrator and SPED teacher survey respondents indicated somewhat, a considerable, or an extreme need for more reliable internet connectivity for their students in 2020-21,

and approximately two-thirds of survey respondents reported at least somewhat of a need for more reliable technology devices for students.

- SPED Customer Service survey respondents also indicated a continued need for effective online teaching resource options and for more guidance on effectively using online learning platform such as Google Classrooms and Microsoft Teams to teach distance-learners. The greatest indicated need came from campus administrators who, at a rate of 85 percent reported somewhat, a considerable, or an extreme need for more effective online teaching resource options.
- Among monolingual SPED evaluators, 80 percent reported at least sometimes having difficulty finding an interpreter to communicate with students or parents who did not speak English (72% in 2019-20), with 35 percent indicating that they frequently or always experienced difficulty (up from 19% in 2019-20).
- Similar to both 2018-19 and 2019-20, SPED evaluators reported high rates of parent requests for initial student evaluations for special education in 2020-21. The percentage of evaluators reporting that at least half of the referrals they received for initial individual evaluations were made through parent requests in 2020-21 remained at a rate of around two out of every three referrals coming by this means.
- Fewer evaluators in 2020-21 reported having an assigned workspace on campus compared to 2019-20 (44% in 2020-21 versus 60% in 2019-20).
- The four most common suggestions (12% to 14% of responses) for central staff provided by SPED survey respondents were 1) facilitate more collaboration with other SPED specialists on campus (to ensure student interventions are appropriate); 2) Ensure consistent implementation and documentation of MTSS prior to referral for SPED evaluations, and track the entire process in Easy IEP; 3) Caseloads are still too high to ensure quality appropriate evaluative services are provided to students and families; more SPED evaluators need to be hired; and 4) Ensure that SPED evaluators have adequate, dedicated workspace at each of their assigned campuses.
- For *STAAR* 3-8 Reading, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, all grade levels (3 to 8) except grade eight showed declines in the percentages of SPED students achieving the Appr+ performance standard (grade 8 students showed a 1.0 percentage point increase). The largest decline was seen for grade four students in Reading, where in 2018-19 42.3 percent of SPED students achieved the Appr+ performance standard while 35.5 percent did so in 2020-21.
- The percentage of SPED students achieving the Appr+ performance standard in Mathematics in 2020-21 showed larger declines from 2018-19 compared to the declines for Reading: while grade eight SPED students were the only group to show any increase in Reading, in Mathematics, grade eight SPED students showed the largest decline from 2018-19 in the percentage of students achieving at the Appr+ level (54.0% in 2018-19 down to 37.9% in 2020-21). Declines in the percentage of SPED students in Writing, Science, and Social Science in 2020-21 ranged from 6.6 percentage points from 2018-19 (grade 7 Writing) to 11.7 percentage points (grade 5 Science).

- Dallas ISD SPED students outperformed SPED students statewide in 2020-21 in terms of percentages achieving at the Appr+ level in all *STAAR EOC* subjects except US History (students statewide outperformed Dallas students by one percentage-point in US History).
- SPED student performance on *MAP* Reading and Mathematics assessments showed patterns similar to performances on *STAAR* in these subject areas: average CGPs were higher in Mathematics for all grade levels compared to Reading, with the exception of grade two, where students showed better performance in Reading (average CGP for Reading in grade two was 48.1, compared to 44.5 for mathematics).
- The overall attendance rate among SPED students (early childhood through grade 12) for 2020-21 was 92.0 (93.1% for 2019-20). General education students showed an overall attendance rate in 2020-21 of 92.0.

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. Thirty-eight 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 (this rate decreased from 43% in 2019-20). 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. Less than half (44%) of SPED evaluators reported they had an assigned workspace on campus (down from 60% in 2019-20). These findings indicated that approximately 40 percent would benefit from improved on-campus space allocation to serve students properly.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have needed supplies. Forty-one percent (down from 57% in 2019-20) of SPED evaluators reported they had reasonable access to needed protocols (e.g., *WISC*). This finding indicates 59 percent of respondents needed improved access to supplies.

Work to ensure more opportunities for professional collaboration for SPED evaluators. In 2020-21, 69 percent of SPED evaluators indicated that monthly SPED collaboration meetings addressed their need for professional collaboration adequately (86 percent in 2019-20). Ensuring adequate professional collaboration for SPED evaluators with one another and with other integral SPED staff members will help ensure that current and potential SPED students and their families are effectively and efficiently supported.

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 (70%, up from 61% in 2019-20) and campus administrators (85%, up from 74% in 2019-20) reported needing more effective online teaching resource options for at-home learning and more guidance on effective use of

Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms. Other needs mentioned included more reliable internet connectivity and more reliable, age-appropriate technology (hardware) resources for students.

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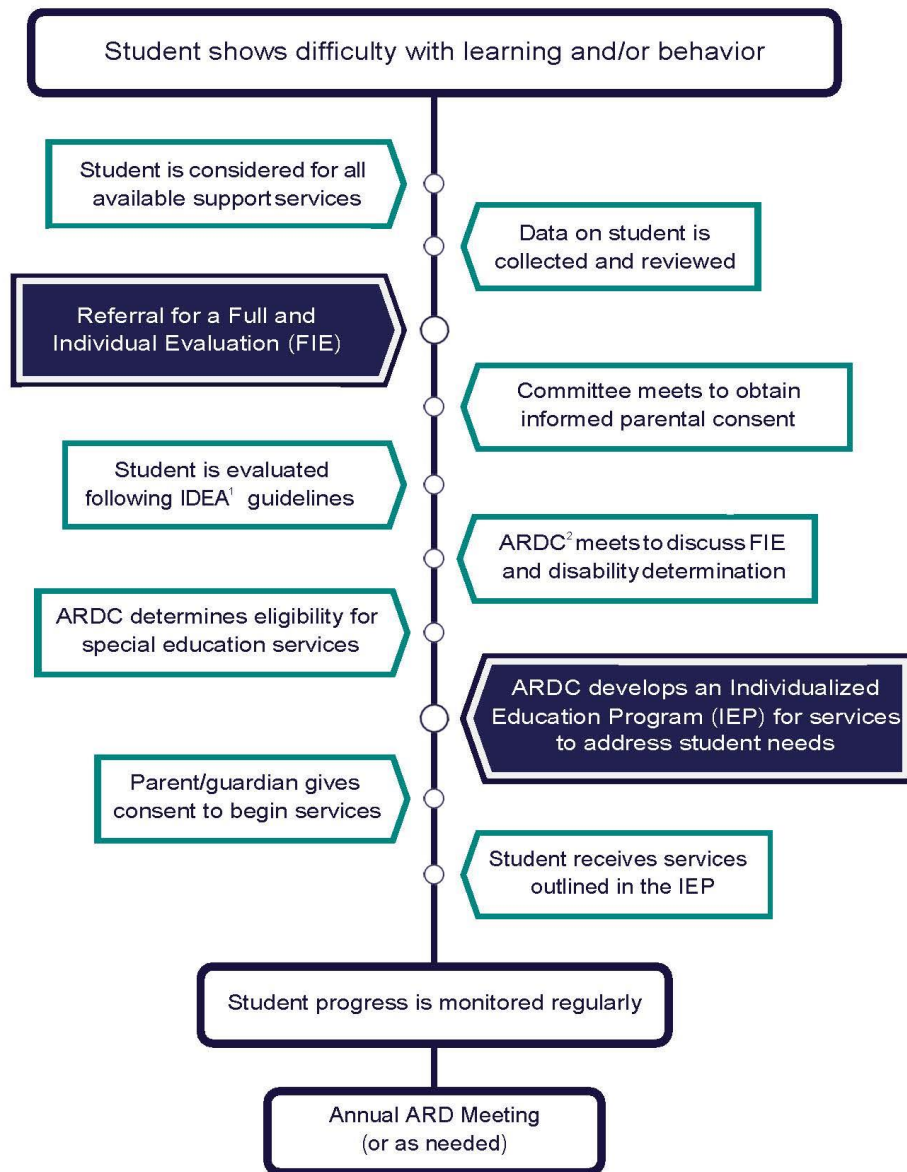
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APPENDICES



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: 2018 to 2020 Dallas ISD SPED Program Area Performance: PBMAS/RDA Report

Indicator	2018			2019			2020		
	N	%	PL	N	%	PL	N	%	PL
SPED STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate									
Mathematics	6,360	53.6	2	7,074	54.5	2	*	*	ND
Reading	6,030	45.6	2	7,097	44.7	2	*	*	ND
Science	2,140	44.6	2	2,246	48.4	2	*	*	ND
Social Studies	871	35.2	3	863	41.3	2	*	*	ND
Writing	2,014	33.3	3	2,379	33.5	3	*	*	ND
SPED Year-After-Exit STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate									
Mathematics	219	76.7	0	268	82.5	0	*	*	ND
Reading	219	58.0	2	270	73.7	0	*	*	ND
Science	59	61.0	1	77	66.2	0	*	*	ND
Social Studies	18	51.2	2	21	50.6	2	*	*	ND
Writing	70	45.7	3	95	57.9	2	*	*	ND
SPED STAAR EOC Passing Rate									
Mathematics	1,108	54.3	2	1,057	62.0	0	*	*	ND
Science	1,092	57.0	2	1,026	58.1	2	*	*	ND
Social Studies	769	63.1	1	778	65.3	1	*	*	ND
English Language Arts	2,450	25.6	3	2,495	26.1	3	*	*	ND
STAAR Test Version Participation									
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation	1,436	20.2	3	1,503	2.1	RO	*	*	RO
SPED Program Settings									
SPED Regular Early Childhood Program Rate (Ages 3-5)	*	19.7	2	*	19.2	2	*	19.7	2
SPED Regular Class >=80% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	74.8	0	*	75.8	0	*	74.6	0
SPED Regular Class <40% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	16.4	1	*	16.1	1	*	16.5	1
SPED Dropout/Graduation									
SPED Annual Dropout Rate	5,760	2.5	1	5,852	3.0	1	6,020	2.9	1
SPED Graduation Rate	699	71.0	1	671	72.1	1	519	69.9	2
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	4,172	7.8	SD3
SPED OSS and Expulsion <=10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)	*	*	*	*	14.2	SD3	*	13.8	SD3
SPED OSS and Expulsion >10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)	*	*	*	*	*	SD3	*	*	SD3

Source: Texas Education Agency 2020 RDA report for Dallas ISD and 2020 RDA State Report. Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2020 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+. ND = No Data. RO = Report Only. SD3 = Significant Disproportionality, Year 3.

Appendix B, Table 2: 2020 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	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Reading	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Science	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Social Studies	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Writing	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
SPED Year-After-Exit STAAR 3-8 Passing Rate						
Mathematics	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Reading	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Science	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Social Studies	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Writing	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
SPED STAAR EOC Passing Rate						
Mathematics	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Science	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
Social Studies	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
English Language Arts	*	*	ND	0	0	ND
STAAR Test Version Participation						
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation	*	*	RO	0	0	RO
SPED Program Settings						
SPED Regular Early Childhood Program Rate (Ages 3-5)	*	19.7	2	59,552	29.5	1
SPED Regular Class >=80% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	74.6	0	527,819	71.0	0
SPED Regular Class <40% Rate (Ages 6-21)	*	16.5	1	520,461	14.3	1
SPED Dropout/Graduation						
SPED Annual Dropout Rate	6,020	2.9	1	241,106	1.8	0
SPED Graduation Rate	519	69.9	2	31,537	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)	4,172	7.8	SD3	NP	NP	NP
SPED OSS and Expulsion <=10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)	*	13.8	SD3	40,794	6.3	RO
SPED OSS and Expulsion >10 Days Rate (Ages 3-21)	*	*	SD3	2,454	0.4	RO

Source: Texas Education Agency 2020 RDA report for Dallas ISD and 2020 RDA State Report. Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2020 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+. NP = not provided in or not calculated for PBMAS/RDA report). ND = No Data. RO = Report Only. SD3 = Significant Disproportionality, Year 3.

Appendix C

Appendix C: 2020-21 SPED Professional Development Session Topics (General Campus Staff)

Topic	Attendance	Session N
AC Training - Inclusive Practices	N/A	1
Accommodations & Modifications in a Virtual Setting	1060	1
Accommodations & Modifications in Virtual Setting	3321	5
Accommodations Resources, STAAR Accessibility-Detailed	232	1
Core 5 Data Deep Dive	25	3
Core 5 Data Follow Up and Instructional Materials Review	23	1
Core 5 Follow Up Data Review	46	1
Core 5 Launch Training	76	1
Dallas Writes - RLA Writing Team	N/A	1
EL/SPED Support, Brief overview of STAAR Accommodations Resources, STAAR Accessibility	203	1
Grading and Progress Monitoring	32	1
Guest Speaker – EL Sped	226	1
Guest Speaker, Assistive Technology	295	1
Indicator 7	31	1
Instructional Resources - Interventions, Assessment Updates	231	1
Intervention Gone Virtual	150	1
Lexia Reading, Core5 (license)	N/A	1
Lexia Reading, PowerUp (license)	N/A	1
Map Assessment, Data Collection, Reentry	91	1
New Teacher Academy Content training	80	1
New Teacher Academy Follow-Up	82	1
Power Up Basic Data Coaching	19	1
Power Up Launch Training	29	3
Power Up Materials Review	12	5
Power Up Targeted Instruction using TEKS Alignment Data	11	2
Really Great Reading (license)	N/A	1
Review 360 Academic Progress Plan	89	1
Review 360 Q & A	11	1
Review 360 Refresher	23	1
Review 360 Scoring	6	1
RLA Writing Packages	N/A	1
Scaffolding Instruction and Accommodations and Modifications	70	1
Special Populations Guidelines	198	1

table continues

Appendix C, Table 1 (continued)

Topic	Attendance	Session N
STAAR Parent Workshops	N/A	1
Stetson Resources, Reading Interventions, Review 360 APP, District Guidelines	166	1
Summer PD, Indicator 7, End of Year Checklist	311	1
Understanding IEP Goals and Objectives	76	1
Vocabulary Games	35	1
Which Manipulative Would You Use?	46	1

Source: SPED department administrative staff members, July 2021.

Appendix C, Table 2: 2020-21 SPED Early Childhood Professional Development

Topic	Attendance N	Session N
Assistive Technology	N/A	2
Close of School / Complete EOY Checklist	N/A	2
End of Year Checklist	N/A	2
IAReports / Extended School Year Documentation	N/A	2
R360 Improvement Analysis Reports	N/A	2
R360 Summary Reports & IA Reports; New Website	N/A	2
Review 360; Adaptive Science Fair	N/A	2
Schedules; Setting Up Virtual Classrooms	N/A	2
STAAR Alt 2 / TELPAS Alt Reminders	N/A	2
STAAR Alt 2 Preparations	N/A	2

Source: SPED administrative staff members, July 2021.

Appendix C, Table 3: 2020-21 SPED Centralized Programs Professional Learning Communities – Session Topics

Topic	Attendance N	Session N
Behavior Basics	18	N/A / Self-paced
Boardmaker 7 for ECSE Teachers	23	N/A / Self-paced
Brigance: Inventory of Early Development III	23	N/A / Self-paced
Child Outcome Summary (COS) Process for State Performance Plan Indicator 7 (SPP-7)	47	N/A / Self-paced
Co-Teaching in Early Childhood Special Education	9	N/A / Self-paced
Creating Playful and Purposeful Learning Centers in ECSE	30	N/A / Self-paced
ECSE Boardmaker 7 for Veteran Teachers	9	N/A / Self-paced
ECSE Content Part 1: IEP Development	2	N/A / Self-paced
ECSE Content Part 2: Continuum of Services, LRE, Service and Placement codes	0	N/A / Self-paced
ECSE: Curriculum-Based and Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives	13	N/A / Self-paced
ECSE: Self Help Routines & Schedules	2	N/A / Self-paced
Introduction to Functional Routines & Scheduling	17	1
Literacy-Rich Environment in ECSE	16	N/A / Self-paced
Review 360: Early Childhood Plan (ECP)	76	N/A / Self-paced
Schedules - Why, What and How	14	N/A / Self-paced
STAAR Evidence-based Practices Workshop	N/A	N/A
STAAR Program Overview"	34	1
STAAR Online Learning System	15	1

Source: SPED administrative staff members, July 2021.

Appendix D

Appendix D, Table 1: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey – Respondent Characteristics

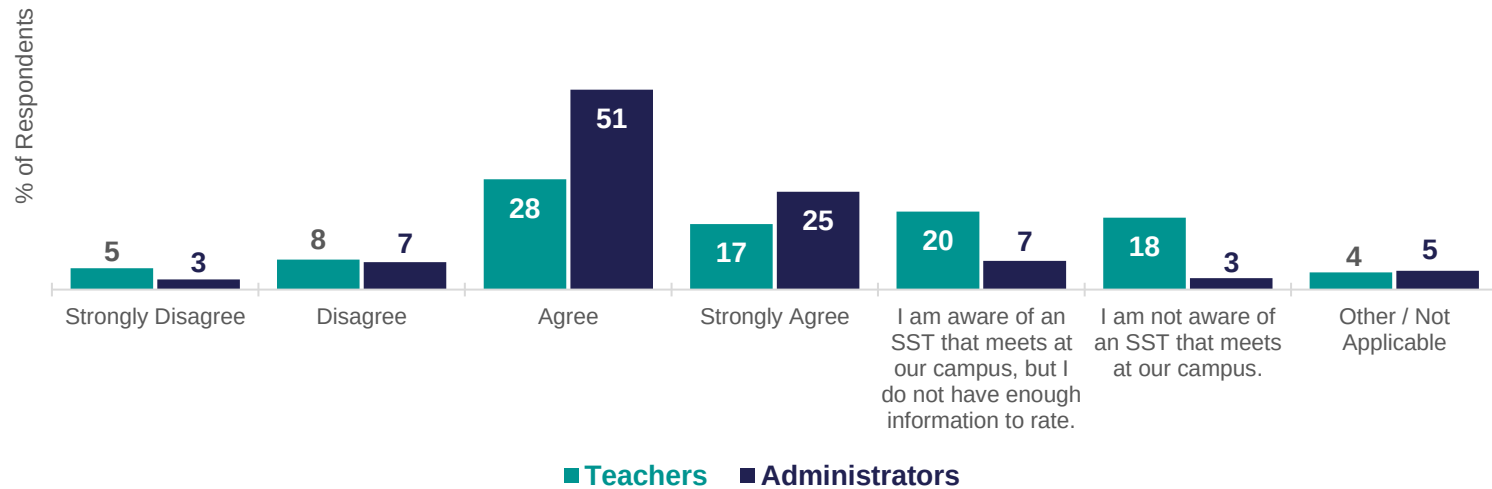
	Teachers (N=1,085)		Administrators (N=274)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Which of the following best describes your current position?				
SPED Teacher	652	60.0		
SPED Teacher Assistant	435	40.0		
Principal			93	33.9
Assistant Principal			181	66.1
How many years have you worked in the Dallas ISD (as of the end of 2019-20)?				
1	144	13.3	11	4.0
2-5	317	29.2	42	15.3
6-10	228	21.0	58	21.2
11 or more	396	36.5	163	59.5

Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

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

Appendix D, Figure 2: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey – Perceptions about Student Support Team (SST) on Campuses

Our campus Student Support Team (SST) met regularly to discuss student concerns.

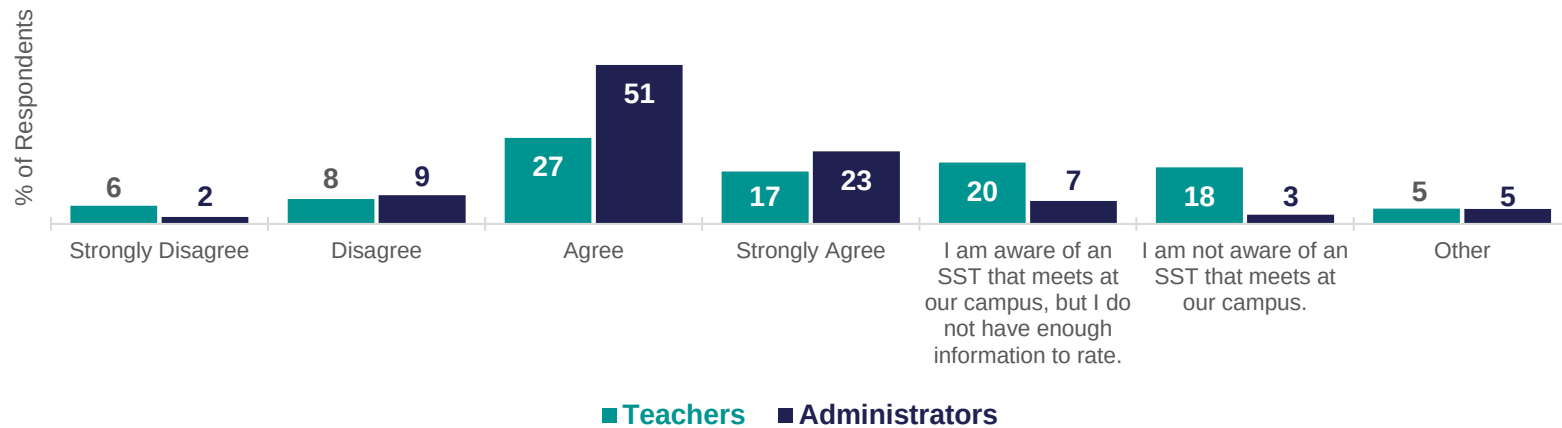


Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: N=1,078 (SPED Teachers, N=274 (Campus Administrators). Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Figure 2: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey – Perceptions about Student Support Team (SST) on Campuses

Our campus SST met regularly to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial Special Education evaluation.



Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: N=1,064 (SPED Teachers, N=273 (Campus Administrators). Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 1: 2020-21 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	1,087	39	3.6	37	3.4	539	49.9	433	40.1	32	3.0
Administrators	274	6	2.2	15	5.5	137	50.0	114	41.6	2	0.7
I understand the district's special education policies and procedures.											
Teachers	1,071	36	3.4	54	5.0	544	50.8	399	37.3	38	3.5
Administrators	274	6	2.2	20	7.3	145	52.9	101	36.9	2	0.7
I know how to get help with special education-related matters.											
Teachers	1,065	44	4.1	69	6.5	510	47.9	405	38.0	37	3.5
Administrators	273	9	3.3	23	8.4	129	47.3	110	40.3	2	0.7
I have adequate access to the central staff needed to provide special education services.											
Teachers	1,075	56	5.2	98	9.1	507	47.2	328	30.5	86	8.0
Administrators	273	15	5.5	24	8.8	135	49.5	86	31.5	13	4.8
I have adequate access to the classroom materials needed to provide special education services.											
Teachers	1,073	66	6.2	126	11.7	518	48.3	321	29.9	42	3.9
Administrators	273	11	4.0	20	7.3	138	50.5	75	27.5	29	10.6

Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Appendix D, Table 2: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey – SPED Customer Service 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>	%
The Special Education department was focused in their response(s) to my request(s).											
Teachers	526	19	3.6	55	10.5	260	49.4	179	34.0	13	2.5
Administrators	172	5	2.9	16	9.3	89	51.7	60	34.9	2	1.2
The Special Education department responded to me in a timely manner.											
Teachers	525	18	3.4	51	9.7	255	48.6	193	36.8	8	1.5
Administrators	172	6	3.5	17	9.9	84	48.8	63	36.6	2	1.2
The Special Education department was flexible in their responses to my requests.											
Teachers	526	20	3.8	62	11.8	254	48.3	170	32.3	20	3.8
Administrators	172	8	4.7	20	11.6	80	46.5	58	33.7	6	3.5
The Special Education department was friendly in their responses to my requests.											
Teachers	522	17	3.3	26	5.0	259	49.6	206	39.5	14	2.7
Administrators	171	4	2.3	10	5.8	84	49.1	69	40.4	4	2.3
The Special Education Department fully addressed my question(s) and/or concern(s).											
Teachers	521	31	6.0	69	13.2	227	43.6	181	34.7	13	2.5
Administrators	171	9	5.3	20	11.7	82	48.0	58	33.9	2	1.2
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of customer service I received from the Special Education Department.											
Teachers	519	31	6.0	55	10.6	236	45.5	181	34.9	16	3.1
Administrators	171	8	4.7	17	9.9	80	46.8	61	35.7	5	2.9

Source: 2019-20 SPED Customer Service Survey.

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

Appendix D, Table 3: 2020-21 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	1,035	146	14.1	105	10.1	200	19.3	292	28.2	230	22.2	62	6.0
Administrators	259	21	8.1	13	5.0	49	18.9	99	38.2	71	27.4	6	2.3
More guidance on using Google Classrooms effectively													
Teachers	1,038	257	24.8	153	14.7	208	20.0	213	20.5	142	13.7	65	6.3
Administrators	261	57	21.8	30	11.5	68	26.1	67	25.7	30	11.5	9	3.4
More guidance on using Microsoft Teams effectively													
Teachers	1,033	271	26.2	166	16.1	198	19.2	202	19.6	130	12.6	66	6.4
Administrators	259	78	30.1	41	15.8	45	17.4	56	21.6	31	12.0	8	3.1
More guidance on effectively engaging SPED students during at-home learning													
Teachers	1,037	137	13.2	117	11.3	168	16.2	252	24.3	313	30.2	50	4.8
Administrators	259	16	6.2	19	7.3	36	13.9	72	27.8	111	42.9	5	1.9
More guidance on effectively engaging parents/caregivers during at-home learning													
Teachers	1,039	127	12.2	114	11.0	169	16.3	255	24.5	326	31.4	48	4.6
Administrators	260	14	5.4	18	6.9	41	15.8	73	28.1	109	41.9	5	1.9
More reliable technology (hardware) resources for myself													
Teachers	1,046	267	25.5	116	11.1	160	15.3	229	21.9	242	23.1	32	3.1
Administrators	260	81	31.2	30	11.5	51	19.6	49	18.8	37	14.2	12	4.6
More reliable technology (hardware) resources for my students													
Teachers	1,041	226	21.7	114	11.0	154	14.8	236	22.7	278	26.7	33	3.2
Administrators	259	33	12.7	40	15.4	58	22.4	54	20.8	66	25.5	8	3.1
More reliable internet connectivity (for myself)													
Teachers	1,036	355	34.3	120	11.6	159	15.3	171	16.5	203	19.6	28	2.7
Administrators	260	108	41.5	31	11.9	51	19.6	32	12.3	28	10.8	10	3.8
More reliable internet connectivity (for my students)													
Teachers	1,035	158	15.3	111	10.7	159	15.4	250	24.2	331	32.0	26	2.5
Administrators	259	25	9.7	33	12.7	40	15.4	61	23.6	93	35.9	7	2.7

Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

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

Appendix E

**Appendix E, Table 1: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Survey –
Position and Monolingual Staff Issues**

	<i>n</i>	%
Which of the following best describes your current position?		
Diagnostician	62	87.3
LSSP	9	12.7
Other		
Are you a bilingual evaluator?		
Yes	20	29.0
No	49	71.0
Have you had any trouble finding an interpreter to communicate with non-English speaking students or parents this year?		
Never	10	19.6
Sometimes	23	45.1
Frequently	14	27.5
Always	4	7.8

Source: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Survey.

Note: Note: *N*=71. Not all respondents answered all items. Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 2: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Survey – Parent Referrals and MTSS Interventions for Initial SPED Evaluations

	<i>n</i>	%
Approximately what percentage of your initial evaluations this year were referred through parent requests?		
0% to 25%	7	9.9
26% to 50%	15	21.1
51% to 75%	13	18.3
76% to 100%	33	46.5
I'm not sure	3	4.2
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.")		
0% to 25%	58	81.7
26% to 50%	9	12.7
51% to 75%	2	2.8
76% to 100%	1	1.4
I'm not sure	1	1.4

Source: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Survey.

Note: Note: N=71. Not all respondents answered all items. Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Appendix E, Table 3: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Survey – Access to Resources

	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 as they apply to your 2020-21 experience:											
My Secure Print Card enabled me to reasonably access resources needed to fulfill my printing, copying, and document scanning-related work duties.	71	3	4.2	6	8.5	21	29.6	38	53.5	3	4.2
I had reasonable access to the assessment kits I needed to complete my work duties.	71	4	5.6	13	18.3	42	59.2	12	16.9	0	0.0
I had reasonable access to the protocols (such as for the WISC) I needed to complete my work duties.	71	18	25.4	22	31.0	24	33.8	5	7.0	2	2.8
I had (an) assigned work space(es) on campus. I had space on my campus(es) to conduct student evaluations with fidelity (i.e., reasonably free from distraction for the student being evaluated).	71	20	28.2	18	25.4	16	22.5	15	21.1	2	2.8
I feel confident that I can address my workspace needs effectively with my campus administrator(s)	71	7	9.9	14	19.7	28	39.4	18	25.4	4	5.6
I was frequently asked to support my campus(s) in matters not related to my duties as a special education evaluator.	71	24	33.8	22	31.0	17	23.9	6	8.5	2	2.8

Source: 2020-21SPED Evaluator Experience Survey.

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

Appendix E, Table 4: 2020-21 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 select the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements as they apply to your 2020-21 experience working as a special education evaluator:											
I received professional help and support from my lead in a timely manner.	71	0	0.0	1	1.4	13	18.3	57	80.3	0	0.0
Monthly Special Education collaboration meetings were held regularly this year.	71	0	0.0	9	12.7	28	39.4	33	46.5	1	1.4
Monthly Special Education collaboration meetings at the central office addressed my needs for professional collaboration adequately.	71	3	4.2	13	18.3	29	40.8	20	28.2	6	8.5

Source: 2020-21 SPED Evaluator Experience Survey.

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

APPENDIX F

Appendix F Table 1: 2020-21 SPED Student STAAR 3-8 Outcomes by Student Group (Approaches+)

	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Science	
	<i>N</i> <i>Tested</i>	% at Appr+	<i>N</i> <i>Tested</i>	% at Appr+	<i>N</i> <i>Tested</i>	% at Appr+	<i>N</i> <i>Tested</i>	% at Appr+	<i>N</i> <i>Tested</i>	% at Appr+
Sex										
Male	4,056	38.4	4,001	44.5	1,352	26.0	1,395	39.6	569	36.9
Female	2,096	40.0	2,067	39.4	717	25.7	710	32.0	294	29.6
Ethnicity/Race										
Hispanic/Latino	4,252	36.9	4,184	42.7	1,419	23.7	1,460	34.7	604	30.1
Black or Afr Am	1,438	39.1	1,440	38.4	491	27.5	501	35.7	206	40.3
White	271	64.6	256	62.9	97	46.4	76	73.7	29	69.0
Asian	33	54.5	32	68.8	10	30.0	13	53.8	6	50.0
English Learner										
Not English Learner	5,415	36.6	5,355	41.0	1,818	23.9	1,864	35.2	757	32.8
English Learner	737	56.6	713	56.4	251	40.2	241	51.5	106	46.2
Economically Disadvantaged										
No	3,423	43.9	3,384	45.4	1,140	31.9	1,180	42.5	487	42.3
Yes	2,721	32.7	2,679	39.3	926	18.3	921	30.0	372	23.4
Homeless										
No	6,044	39.1	5,959	42.8	2,038	26.0	2,068	37.3	851	34.4
Yes	108	32.4	109	42.2	31	19.4	37	24.3	12	33.3

Source: District STAAR EOC data files dated 06/18/21 (2020-21).

Note: Includes all administrations for all versions of STAAR EOC for SPED students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date. Appr+=Approaches Grade Level or Above performance standard. Afr Am= African American.

Appendix F Table 2: 2020-21 SPED Student STAAR EOC Outcomes by Student Group (Approaches+)

	Algebra		Biology		English 1		English 2		US History	
	<i>N Tested</i>	<i>% at Appr+</i>	<i>N Tested</i>	<i>% at Appr+</i>	<i>N Tested</i>	<i>% at Appr+</i>	<i>N Tested</i>	<i>% at Appr+</i>	<i>N Tested</i>	<i>% at Appr+</i>
Sex										
Male	690	46.7	620	50.5	833	26.9	590	30.0	450	59.8
Female	348	46.8	339	46.6	438	26.7	317	36.0	271	55.0
Ethnicity/Race										
Hispanic/Latino	645	52.1	580	54.7	775	27.2	566	31.8	437	59.5
Black or Afr Am	332	35.5	331	37.5	431	24.6	298	31.9	244	53.7
White	42	50.0	32	59.4	38	47.4	27	40.7	21	71.4
Two+ Races	13	30.8	10	50.0	19	5.3	13	30.8	13	53.8
Asian	5	100.0	4	100.0	5	60.0	2	50.0	4	75.0
English Learner										
Not English Learner	645	45.0	596	49.3	775	30.8	539	35.8	449	59.7
English Learner	389	49.1	357	48.7	490	20.2	359	26.7	254	53.5
Economically Disadvantaged										
Yes	884	45.4	821	47.4	1,082	26.0	770	30.6	589	55.3
No	154	54.5	138	59.4	189	31.7	137	40.1	132	69.7
Homeless										
No	1,014	46.5	940	48.7	1,239	26.6	893	32.1	712	58.0
Yes	24	54.2	19	68.4	32	37.5	14	28.6	9	55.6

Source: District STAAR EOC data files dated 06/18/21 (2020-21).

Note: Includes all administrations for all versions of STAAR EOC for SPED students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date. Appr+=Approaches Grade Level or Above performance standard. Afr Am= African American.