



Texas Continuous Improvement Process

Texas Continuous Improvement Process Public Input and Information Meetings

*2007-08 Statewide Summary
of Regional Feedback*

**Texas Education Agency
Division of IDEA Coordination**
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/tcip/>

Overview

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), Section 616(b), requires each state to develop a six-year performance plan. The State Performance Plan (SPP) evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and illustrates how the State will continuously improve upon this implementation. An Annual Performance Report (APR) is submitted in February of each year through the 2010-1011 school year. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires broad stakeholder input in the development of the SPP and for its public dissemination. The SPP/APR can be accessed on the TEA website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/spp>.

One of the avenues through which the State of Texas receives stakeholder input on issues related to the SPP is the Public Input and Information Meeting (PIIM). Each of the twenty regional education service centers (ESC) is required to hold at least one PIIM annually. The ESCs invite stakeholders knowledgeable of regional interests in special education issues to attend the meeting and participate in providing feedback on questions supporting three indicators of the SPP. The group of invited stakeholders includes parents, educators, and community agencies representative of the region's demographic diversity. In addition, ESCs announce the meeting through a variety of media to ensure that interested members of the public also have the opportunity to attend and participate in providing feedback. All stakeholders in the special education process are welcome.

The ESCs and the TEA collaborate in selecting which SPP Indicators will be used and developing questions for each year's PIIMs. For the 2007-08 school year, the following SPP Indicators were selected:

- Indicator 2: Dropout
- Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion
- Indicator 5: Educational Environment, Ages 6-21
- Indicators 9/10: Disproportionality

All ESCs were required to select one question from Indicator 5, as well as one question from two of the three remaining indicators (2, 4, and 9/10). During the PIIM, ESCs obtain consensus from participating stakeholders on the feedback to be reported to the TEA. The TEA analyzes the feedback reported from all twenty regions in order to identify trends for guiding improvement planning within the State. This qualitative data is also included to support quantitative data of Indicators 2, 4, 5, and 9-10 in the APR. Feedback at the regional level remains at the ESC and is used for guiding improvement planning within the region. Statewide summary reports are available on the TEA website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/tcip/> and regional summary reports are available from each ESC.

The 2007-08 Statewide Summary of Regional Feedback reflects the trends indicated in PIIM stakeholder responses to the eleven questions developed for SPP Indicators 2, 4, 5, and 9-10. A total of 700 stakeholders participated in 24 PIIMs in 2007-08.

The chart below shows the SPP Indicators and questions selected by each regional ESC.

ESC	Required Indicator 5		ESC Selected 2 of 3 Indicators (2, 4, 0r 9/10)								
	Q5.1	Q5.2	Q2.1	Q2.2	Q2.3	Q4.1	Q4.2	Q4.3	Q9-10.1	Q9-10.2	Q9-10-3
1	X			X					X		
2	X				X	X					
3	X		X							X	
4	X						X		X		
5	X							X	X		
6	X		X				X				
7	X			X					X		
8		X						X	X		
9	X						X		X		
10	X						X		X		
11	X				X						X
12	X					X			X		
13	X		X						X		
14	X		X					X			
15		X					X		X		
16	X		X								X
17	X			X					X		
18		X	X						X		
19	X		X			X					
20	X		X						X		

Indicator 2: Dropout

Indicator 2 Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the State dropping out of high school.

Background for Indicator 2

- During the 2005-2006 school year, a total of 271,218 students graduated, and 11,650 were classified as dropouts, which resulted in a dropout rate of 4.3% for the State.
- The total included 33,408 students with disabilities graduating, and 2,273 students with disabilities being classified as dropouts.
- These figures resulted in a dropout rate for students with disabilities of 6.8%, which did not meet the State target of no more than 1.9% of students with disabilities dropping out.

Question 2.1 What can school districts do to keep students with disabilities from dropping out of school?

To address what can be done to keep students with disabilities from dropping out of school, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 2.1: A Systematic Approach and Diverse Opportunities

A Systematic Approach

- Implementing early intervention strategies and effective practices based on research
- Collaborating between general education and special education to implement school-wide screening
- Monitoring consistently to review students' progress and determine appropriate interventions for individual students

Diverse Opportunities

- Allowing for flexibility and creativity in developing students' schedules and courses, providing access to resources, and providing participation in extra-curricular activities
- Teaching self-advocacy skills and encouraging active student participation in admission, review, and dismissal committee (ARDC) meetings
- Placing an early emphasis on transition to post-school education, including options in vocational/career and technology courses
- Considering the individual student's strengths, interests, and learning styles
- Promoting parents' involvement in the transition process and awareness of post-secondary options

Question 2.2 How can improvements to the transition planning process help to decrease the dropout rate by ensuring successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities?

Background for Question 2.2 Schools are required to provide a transition plan for high school students with disabilities to prepare them for life beyond high school. The transition plan for each student with a disability includes a coordinated set of activities designed to improve the student's achievement in order to make sure the student's move from school to post-school activities is successful. The transition plan must take into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests.

To address how improvements to the transition planning process can help to decrease the dropout rate by ensuring successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 2.2: Early Intervention.

Early Intervention

- Introducing transition planning to students in middle schools
- Training students to develop self-advocacy skills and awareness of post-secondary opportunities
- Facilitating connections between students and other agencies
- Developing peer mentoring programs

Question 2.3 What can school districts do to promote high expectations in both academic and non-academic areas to prevent students with disabilities from dropping out of school?

To address what school districts can do to promote high expectations in both academic and non-academic areas to prevent students with disabilities from dropping out of school, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 2.3: Promote a Sense of Belonging and Long-range Transition Planning.

Promote a Sense of Belonging

- Developing an inclusive environment, including access to elective classes and extra-curricular activities
- Training general education teachers in providing support through appropriate modifications, accommodations, and assistive technology
- Establishing peer mentoring and tutoring programs for academic and social support

Long-range Transition Planning

- Developing a comprehensive plan based on each student's interests and needs, including study skills and social skills
- Promoting awareness for parents and students of all career and education options
- Facilitating access to community agencies and service providers

Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion

Indicator 4 Percent of districts identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year.

Background for Indicator 4

The TEA has developed and implemented the Performance-Based Monitoring (PBM) System and Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) to identify and select for intervention those districts whose data indicate significant patterns of removing children with disabilities at a higher rate than children without disabilities. In addition, the State is required to review suspension and expulsion data on children with disabilities at the state and district-level in its State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report.

Question 4.1 What factors contribute to disciplinary actions for students with disabilities? How can parents and local education agencies (LEA) collaborate to address these factors?

Background for Question 4.1

- School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a student with a disability who violates a student code of conduct.
- Under some circumstances involving drugs, weapons, or bodily injury a district may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior was a manifestation.
- If the district decision is appealed by the parent, the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting until the hearing officer makes a decision or until the time applicable to the relevant disciplinary consequences expires, whichever occurs first.

To address factors that contribute to disciplinary actions for students with disabilities and how parents and LEAs can collaborate to address these factors, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 4.1: A System-wide Approach.

A System-wide Approach

- Adopting a positive behavior program such as Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI) for all schools
- Training parents and all school personnel including administrators, general education teachers, and special education teachers in implementing the adopted program
- Promoting a pro-active and creative approach to developing support for students such as peer mentoring and self-esteem programs

Question 4.2 How can LEAs increase the use of early, positive academic and behavioral interventions?

Background for Question 4.2

The Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI) is designed to provide positive behavioral support (PBS) to all students. The goal of PBS is to educate all students, especially students with challenging behaviors, by adopting a sustained, positive, and preventative instructional approach to school wide discipline and behavior management. This approach focuses on teaching and encouraging positive school-wide behavioral expectations.

To address how LEAs can increase the use of early, positive academic and behavioral interventions, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 4.2: A System-wide Approach.

A System-wide Approach

- Training parents, teachers, and administrators for consistent implementation of positive behavior supports
- Reviewing and analyzing data systematically for decision-making on behavior and instruction

Question 4.3 How can LEAs support appropriate implementation of Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) by staff and parents?

Background for Question 4.3

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) provides additional information, analysis, and strategies for dealing with behavior that is interfering with a child's education. The FBA is developed by the parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff who interact with the child on a regular basis. It is used by the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee to develop the behavior intervention plan (BIP) which is a proactive approach to help prevent behaviors that interfere with the child's education.

Functional behavioral assessments (FBA) are generally considered to be a problem-solving process for addressing student problem behavior. A functional behavioral assessment looks beyond the behavior itself and focuses on identifying significant social, cognitive, and/or environmental factors associated with specific behaviors. The purpose is to understand why these behaviors occur.

Behavioral intervention plans (BIP) are based on an understanding of "why" a student misbehaves. Intervention plans that emphasize the skills students need in order to behave more appropriately, or plans that provide motivation to conform to required standards, will be more effective than plans that simply serve to control behavior. Positive plans for behavioral intervention will address both the reason for the problem and the problem itself.

To address how LEAs can support appropriate implementation of BIPs by staff and parents, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 4.3: A Coordinated, System-wide Approach.

A Coordinated, System-wide Approach

- Training teachers, administrators, and parents on developing and implementing BIPs that are clear and easy-to-follow
- Establishing a system for coordinating communication between school staff and parents and sharing problem-solving strategies
- Involving students in planning and implementing positive behavior support systems

Indicator 5: Educational Environment, Aged 6 – 21

- Indicator 5 Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21:
- A. Removed from regular class less than 21% of the day;
 - B. Removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day; or
 - C. Served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.

Background for Indicator 5

Continuum of placements refers to the different instructional settings provided by districts to meet the needs of children with disabilities based on the children's individualized education programs (IEP). The general education classroom should always be the first consideration when determining an appropriate placement. Examples of placement options include the mainstream setting in which children receive special education and related services in the regular classroom, resource room in which services are provided outside the regular room for a portion of the school day, and self-contained in which services are provided on a regular campus but outside the regular classroom most of the school day.

Placement decisions should never be based solely on the disability category of the student or on administrative convenience for the school.

Question 5.1 What needs to be included in an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee's discussion regarding instructional placement choices for a student with disabilities?

To address what needs to be included in an ARD committee's discussion regarding instructional placement choices for a student with disabilities, districts may need to consider three issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 5.1: Individual Student Needs, Implementation Plan, and Parent Communication.

Individual Student Needs

- Promoting self-advocacy and active participation for the student in discussing the student's strengths, interests, and preferences
- Ensuring a comprehensive review that includes the student's current evaluation and present levels of performance in social, behavioral, and academic skills
- Considering the educational benefit for the student in each placement option

Implementation Plan

- Training the student's general education teachers on specific needs including accommodations, modifications, and assistive technology to support the student in the least restrictive environment
- Collaborating between special education and general education on effective strategies for facilitating the student's success

Parent Communication

- Implementing strategies to ensure that parents understand appropriate placement options and services for their child which may include the following:
 - Pre-ARD meetings to review options and terms
 - A list of terms and acronyms that may be used during the ARDC meeting
 - A description of all placement options

Question 5.2 What factors affecting a student with disabilities should be considered by the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee regarding instructional placement choices?

To address factors affecting a student with disabilities that should be considered by the student's ARD committee regarding instructional placement choices, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 5.2: Individual Student Needs for Support in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Individual Student Needs for Support in the LRE

- Including the student's strengths, interests, and long-term goals in the discussion
- Including the student's present levels of academic and behavioral performance in the discussion
- Specifying the supports needed for each appropriate placement option which may include training for teachers

Indicators 9 and 10: Disproportionality

- Indicator 9 Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.
- Indicator 10 Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Background for Indicators 9 and 10

Disproportionate representation means that too many students of a particular ethnicity are in special education classes. Children are represented proportionately when, for example, 10% of all children in a district are of a certain ethnicity, and the number of children of that ethnicity with disabilities reflects approximately the same percentage. Likewise, approximately the same percentage should be reflected in the number of children of that ethnicity with any one disability. A significant difference between the percentages may indicate disproportionate representation.

Although Indicators 9 and 10 focus on disproportionate representation based on ethnicity and race, other variables such as language, poverty, cultural differences, assessment practices, or inadequately trained educators may also have an inappropriate influence on placement decisions.

Question 9-10.1 What practices are in place to ensure that struggling students (non-special education) are receiving appropriate intervention strategies?

To address what practices are in place to ensure that struggling students (non-special education) are receiving appropriate intervention strategies, districts may need to consider three issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 9-10.1: Response to Intervention, Data-driven Decisions, and Parent Involvement.

Response to Intervention

- Developing system-wide, research-based early intervention strategies
- Collaborating among general education, special education, administrators, and parents to develop and implement intervention programs
- Reflecting cultural diversity appropriately in evaluation decisions and instructional decisions

Data-driven Decisions

- Reviewing data systematically for appropriate identification of struggling students and to determine causes for shifts in population
- Reviewing data for instructional decisions regarding individual students and for system-wide curriculum improvements

Parent Involvement

- Ensuring that information on placement options, resources, and student supports are made available to parents systematically
- Providing parents with training in effective intervention practices

Question 9-10.2 What efforts are in place to ensure that parents and school personnel understand the impact of cultural / language diversity in the evaluation process?

To address what efforts are in place to ensure that parents and school personnel understand the impact of cultural / language diversity in the evaluation process, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 9-10.2: Decisions Based on Individual Student Needs.

Decisions Based on Individual Student Needs

- Training parents and staff members on cultural diversity/language issues in making evaluation decisions
- Ensuring that the student's present levels of performance, progress in intervention programs, and language proficiency are considered in the evaluation

Question 9-10.3 How can a district assure parents that the special education referral process, including the full individual and initial evaluation (FIE), is non-biased?

To address how a district can assure parents that the special education referral process, including the FIE, is non-biased, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 9-10.3: Promote Cultural Awareness and Parent Involvement.

Promote Cultural Awareness

- Training all staff members in diversity issues, including language training for evaluation personnel
- Strengthening intervention programs in the general education setting

Parent Involvement

- Providing parent training on evaluation procedures and intervention programs
- Emphasizing the importance of parent in-put in decisions regarding intervention programs and evaluations