



Texas Continuous Improvement Process

Texas Continuous Improvement Process Public Input and Information Meetings

*2008-09 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 2008-09 school year, the following SPP Indicators were selected:

- Indicators 1-2: Graduation and Dropout
- Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion
- Indicator 8: Parent Participation
- Indicator 13: Secondary Transition

All ESCs were required to select one question from Indicator 8, as well as one question from two of the three remaining indicators (1-2, 4, and 13). 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 1-2, 4, 8, and 13 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 *2008-09 Statewide Summary of Regional Feedback* reflects the trends indicated in PIIM stakeholder responses to the ten questions developed for SPP Indicators 1-2, 4, 8, and 13. A total of 710 stakeholders participated in 26 PIIMs in 2008-09.

The following chart on page 2 shows the SPP Indicators and questions selected by each regional ESC.

2008-09 Selected SPP Indicators and Questions by Region

Region	Required		ESC Selection							
	8.1	8.2	1-2.1	1-2.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	13.1	13.2	13.3
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				
Total	10	10	7	8	10	3	0	5	3	4

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Indicators 1 and 2: Graduation and Dropout

Indicator 1: Percent of youth with (Individualized Education Program) IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma

Indicator 2: Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school

Background:

Indicator 1: The Class of 2006 had 24,851 out of 34,176 students with disabilities graduating from high school which resulted in a 72.71% graduation rate. The target for this indicator is 75.80%. Texas did not meet the target.

Indicator 2: The Class of 2006 had 3,622 out of 34,176 students with disabilities classified as dropouts which resulted in a 10.6% dropout rate. The target for this indicator is 2.90%. Texas did not meet the target.

Transition is a results-oriented process which includes coordinated, measureable, individual education program goals, and transition services in coordinated activities. The process and the activities enable a student to reach postsecondary goals. The coordinated efforts among schools, parents, and the community are of the utmost importance in assisting students with disabilities in working toward attainment of goals after graduation.

Questions:

1-2.1 How can schools, parents, and the community support students with disabilities in completing high school and meeting their goals after graduation?

To address how schools, parents, and the community can support students with disabilities in completing high school and meeting their goals after graduation, districts may need to consider three issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 1-2.1: Student-centered Transition Focus, Varied Educational Opportunities, and Community Resources

Student-centered Transition Focus

- Address transition issues as early as elementary school to assist students in developing appropriate long-term goals and awareness of options for meeting their goals
- Provide on-going mentoring for individual students and monitoring of the implementation of each student's transition plan
- Involve parents and students in making decisions on transition plans based on each individual student's interests and strengths
- Incorporate self-advocacy training into student transition plans

Varied Educational Opportunities

- Expand vocational and career and technology classes to include more real-life experiences leading to certification
- Provide options in addition to traditional paths, such as credit recovery and dual enrollment programs

Community Resources

- Provide information to parents and students on services available through agencies and educational institutions
- Develop partnerships with local agencies, vocational schools and colleges, and employers that would provide opportunities for students with disabilities

1-2.2 When it becomes apparent that a student with disabilities may not graduate, what can schools, parents, and the community do to prevent the student from dropping out?

To address what schools, parents, and the community can do to prevent a student with disabilities who may not graduate from dropping out, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 1-2.2: Nurturing Climate and Instructional Opportunities

Nurturing Climate

- Identify contributing factors for the individual student's situation and develop an appropriate intervention plan
- Develop a program for mentoring students to encourage them in meeting their goals and monitoring their progress
- Offer non-traditional options to meet student needs such as flexible scheduling and computer-based credit recovery
- Involve community resources for supporting the student's post-school goals

Instructional Opportunities

- Develop varied opportunities with vocational and career and technology courses

Indicator 4: Suspension and Expulsion

Indicator 4A: 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:

Since adoption of the Texas Safe Schools Act in 1995, all Texas public school districts have been required to provide disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs). DAEPs serve as alternative education settings for students temporarily removed for disciplinary purposes from their regular instructional settings. Assignments of students to DAEPs may be mandatory or discretionary. State law, TEC Chapter 37, requires removal from campus for conduct involving drugs, weapons, or bodily injury. Local school districts may also adopt student codes of conduct which include removal from campus for other types of violations.

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.

Questions:

4.1 *How can parents and schools support learning for students with disabilities who have especially challenging behaviors?*

To address how parents and schools can support learning for students with disabilities who have especially challenging behaviors, districts may need to consider three issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 4.1: Consistent PBS Implementation, Training, and Child-centered

Consistent PBS Implementation

- Implement a PBS program throughout the district with an emphasis on campus-wide consistency and alignment within feeder systems

Training

- Educate teachers and students on the characteristics of disabilities and how they may affect behaviors
- Provide training on PBS for parents and all administrators, teachers, and support personnel who interact with students
- Provide training for educators and parents on developing effective Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)s

Student-centered

- Include the student's interests and preferences in developing a BIP based on individual student needs
- Provide for reviewing and adjusting the BIP whenever the need is indicated by changes in student behavior
- Promote improved behavior through mentoring programs and providing opportunities for academic success

4.2 *How can school personnel and parents work together to find appropriate options to DAEP placements for students with disabilities?*

To address how school personnel and parents can work together to find appropriate options to DAEP placements for students with disabilities, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 4.2: Collaborative Efforts

Collaborative Efforts

- Implement district-wide training on PBS and the development of BIPs for parents and school personnel
- Provide on-going monitoring of student progress with BIPs
- Use a team approach in developing BIPs and a support system for students

4.3 *What can schools and parents do to keep pre-school students with disabilities in school and not be suspended or expelled?*

Not selected

Indicator 8: Parent Participation

Indicator 8: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.

Background:

Parents are integral participants of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARDC). In order to make informed decisions and act as equal partners in planning the education of their children, parents must understand all information received in writing or discussed in ARDC meetings. It is the responsibility of schools to help parents understand their rights and responsibilities and have the information they need to participate fully in the decision-making process.

Questions:

8.1 How can school personnel and parents communicate better in order to improve services for students with disabilities?

To address how school personnel and parents can communicate better in order to improve services for students with disabilities, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 8.1: Effective Outreach and Training

Effective Outreach

- Determine a liaison to serve as contact for parents when they need assistance or information
- Ensure that technical language and acronyms are avoided in all communications, including written forms and ARD discussions
- Provide on-going communication with parents through various means including pre-ARD information, frequent progress reports, and newsletters

Training

- Provide training for parents and school personnel on special education terms and issues including the ARD process
- Provide training for general educators on special education requirements, such as modifications and participating in ARD meetings
- Provide training for parents and school personnel on developing strategies for effective communication

8.2 How can school personnel and parents work together to encourage and strengthen parent involvement in the ARD process?

To address how school personnel and parents can work together to encourage and strengthen parent involvement in the ARD process, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 8.2: Environment and Improved ARD Process

Environment

- Appoint a liaison to provide training and support to parents and enhance communication between parent and schools
- Use varied communication methods such as email and web sites
- Provide alternative means for parents to participate when they are unable to attend ARD meetings in person
- Encourage a comfortable atmosphere by respecting diverse cultural needs and allowing flexibility in scheduling to the greatest extent possible

Improved ARD Process

- Provide training for parents and school personnel on special education issues, terms, and the ARD process
- Use varied technology means to ensure that parents have opportunities to provide input before and during the ARD meeting
- Hold pre-ARD meetings to ensure that staff members are well-informed and prepared for the meeting
- Send ARD meeting materials to parents far enough in advance to allow for thorough preparation for the meeting
- Develop a system for continuing follow-up with parents to clarify questions and provide information on the implementation of their child's IEP

Indicator 13: Secondary Transition

Indicator 13: Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measureable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals

Background:

Self Advocacy refers to students with disabilities speaking up for themselves. Schools, parents, and community agencies should educate students with disabilities to help them understand their strengths and needs, identify their goals, know their legal rights and responsibilities, and communicate these to others. Self Advocacy enables students to make informed decisions and take responsibility for their decisions.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA-2004; PL 101-476) includes required transition services for every child with disabilities. Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences and interests and includes instruction; related services; community experiences; the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and if appropriate, acquisitions of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation. With parental consent, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. Federal Law: 34 CFR §300.321(b)(3), 300.43, 300.622(b)(2), and State Law:

TEC.29.011

Examples of Community Agencies

- Private companies that hire students with disabilities
- DARS (Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) – Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (TVRC) program through the local school district
- Social Security Administration
- Texas Workforce Commission

Commissioner's Rules 19 TAC §89.1055(g): Secondary Transition

For each student with a disability, beginning at age 16 (prior to the date on which a student turns 16 years of age) or younger, if determined appropriate by the ARD committee, the following issues must be considered in the development of the IEP, and, if appropriate, integrated into the IEP:

- (1) appropriate student involvement in the student's transition to life outside the public school system;
- (2) If the student is younger than 18 years of age, appropriate parental involvement in the student's transition;
- (3) if the student is at least 18 years of age, appropriate parental involvement in the student's transition, if the parent is invited to participate by the student or the school district in which the student is enrolled;
- (4) any postsecondary education options;
- (5) a functional vocational evaluation;
- (6) employment goals and objectives;
- (7) if the student is at least 18 years of age, the availability of age-appropriate instructional environments;
- (8) independent living goals and objectives; and
- (9) appropriate circumstances for referring a student or the student's parents to a governmental agency for services.

Questions:

13.1 *How can parents, schools, and community agencies ensure that students with disabilities make connections with post school opportunities before they leave high school?*

To address how parents, schools, and community agencies can ensure that students with disabilities make connections with post school opportunities before they leave high school, districts may need to consider two issues indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 13.1: Collaboration and Student-focused Transition.

Collaboration

- Provide training for school personnel, parents, and students on educational and employment opportunities and community resources
- Develop partnerships with agencies, area employers, and vocational schools to enhance participation in transition planning for individual students
- Provide opportunities for face-to-face meetings with parents, students, and providers of post-school services such as agencies or educational institutions

Student-focused Transition

- Provide training for students to develop self-advocacy skills and awareness of post-school opportunities
- Involve students and parents in transition planning as early as possible
- Use interest inventories or other appropriate assessments to assist students in identifying strengths and interests in order to build an appropriate transition plan

13.2 *What needs to be done so that parents, students, and members of the community understand that goals after graduation may include apprenticeship opportunities, vocational/technical skills training, higher education, and military service?*

To address what needs to be done so that parents, students, and members of the community understand that goals after graduation may include apprenticeship opportunities, vocational/technical skills training, higher education, and military service, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 13.2: Developing Awareness

Developing Awareness

- Provide opportunities for schools and the community to collaborate on activities such as career days and mentoring programs to enhance student awareness
- Provide students and parents a comprehensive list of available resources

13.3 *How can parents and school personnel help students with disabilities develop self-advocacy skills and knowledge to prepare the students to participate in the transition process?*

To address how parents and school personnel can help students with disabilities develop self-advocacy skills and knowledge to prepare the students to participate in the transition process, districts may need to consider one issue indicated in Stakeholder responses to Question 13.3: Student-focused Training.

Student-focused Training

- Include a training program for developing self-advocacy skills in the student's IEP
- Provide training to students to develop their awareness of appropriate skills and to help them understand their disability and appropriate modifications
- Encourage student participation in ARD meetings as early as possible and provide training to the students on how to participate effectively