# 2018 Report on Customer Service Texas Education Agency

May 18, 2018

## **Executive Summary**

Results from the 2018 Texas Education Agency (TEA) Customer Satisfaction Survey found that 81% of TEA customers are satisfied with the customer service TEA provides; 91% of respondents state TEA treats them with respect, and 86% report the staff demonstrates a willingness to assist them.

The survey collected information about TEA's website, service provided by phone, email and ticketing systems, information quality, educator certification support, complaints process, and online training resources. Overall, school and district staff responded positively across these services. A random sample of 23,000 school and district-level personnel across the state of Texas were surveyed with a total of **4,627** responding.

Responses were received from a variety of school staff including teachers, superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and other district staff throughout all 20 of the Education Service Center regions. The survey was available from April 4 through April 18, 2018. There was a 20% response rate with a margin of sampling error of  $\pm$ 1.45 at a 95% confidence level.

### Introduction

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducted the 2018 Customer Satisfaction Survey for the purposes of fulfilling a legislative mandate to assess the satisfaction level of customers who have had contact with the agency since September 1, 2016 (Texas Government Code § 2114.002) and identifying opportunities for improvement. The Texas Government Code specifies that each agency and higher education institute within the state will collect feedback from its customers along several areas of customer service that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Facilities, including the customer's ability to access the agency, the office location, signs and cleanliness.
- Staff, including employee courtesy, friendliness, knowledge, and whether staff adequately
  identifies themselves to customers by name, including the use of name plates or tags for
  accountability.
- Communications, including toll-free telephone access, the average amount of time a customer spends on hold, call transfers, access to a live person, letters, and electronic mail.
- Internet site, including the ease of use of the site, information found on the site, such as the physical location of the agency, program and service listings, and who to contact for further information or to complain.
- Complaint handling process, including whether it is easy to file a complaint and whether responses are timely.
- Ability to timely serve its customers, including the amount of time a customer waits for service in person, by phone, by letter or at a website.
- Brochures or other printed information, including the accuracy of that information.

In accordance with these requirements and in an effort to obtain valuable feedback about the services it provides, TEA conducted the Customer Satisfaction Survey with school and district-level personnel across the state of Texas between April 4 and April 18, 2018. The Texas Government Code §2114.002 also states agencies are required to submit a report on customer service to the Governor's Office of Budget, Planning and Policy and to the Legislative Budget Board no later than June 1 of every even-numbered year. This report presents the findings from the evaluation of customer service and fulfills the reporting requirements.

## Methodology

## Survey Development

The TEA Customer Satisfaction Survey was developed based on suggested content from the Texas Government Code § 2114.002, as well as agency-specific requests. The survey included a range of questions seeking customer input regarding levels of satisfaction related to TEA-customer interactions, and with the products and projects TEA administers.

### **Data Collection**

For the purposes of this evaluation tool, TEA customers were defined as school and district-level personnel who may have had contact with TEA since September 1, 2016. In order to obtain a wide sample of respondents from across the state, a list of email addresses for certified teachers (as of March 1, 2018) was used to create a random sample of  $\sim$ 14,000 classroom educators. In addition,  $\sim$ 9,000 principals, administrators, superintendents, and other district-level personnel were randomly selected from emails queried from the AskTED directory.

The survey was emailed to 23,000 customers utilizing a link to a web-based survey administration system at no monetary cost to the agency. The survey link was also provided on the Texas Association of School Administrators' website to promote additional customer feedback. The survey was voluntary and remained open for data collection from April 4 through April 18, 2018.

## Respondents

A total of 4,627 individuals responded to the online customer satisfaction survey.

The respondents included school principals (47%), teachers (42%), superintendents/assistant superintendents (or other local education agency central administrators) (4%), district-level office staff (2%), assistant principals (or other school administrators) (1%), counselors (1%), and a variety of additional personnel (3%).

Of those responding, 1,453 (31%) reported they had contacted (or had been contacted by) TEA since September 1, 2016. The remainder of the respondents had not had direct contact with TEA within that timeframe.

The state of Texas is divided into 20 Education Service Center regions. Survey respondents were from all of the 20 regions across the state with the largest percentage from Region 4 (17%) which serves the Houston area. The next two largest response rates came from Region 10 (13%) and Region 11 (10%) which serve the Richardson/Dallas and Fort Worth areas respectively. These areas are some of the more densely populated regions in the state; therefore, more respondents from these areas would be expected.

## **Key Findings**

The following highlights the responses received from the 4,627 school and district-level personnel. To improve calculation accuracy, the N/A responses were subtracted from the total responses.

#### **Overall Customer Service Rating**

- Overall, 81% of TEA customers were satisfied with the customer service provided by TEA.
- Ninety-one percent of respondents agreed they were treated with respect by TEA staff (with only 2% in disagreement). Eighty-six percent reported staff members demonstrated a willingness to assist.

#### **Opportunities for Customer Contact**

- The top reasons for contacting (or being contacted by) TEA was to seek information about: (in % order)
  - (1) STAAR/ Assessment Testing
  - (2) Educator Certification & Exams (or State Board of Educator Certification)
  - (3) Accountability Ratings & Reporting
  - (4) Information Technology (e.g. PEIMS, TSDS, TEASE, TEAL)
  - (5) Educator Preparation Programs
  - (6) State Board of Education or Commissioner's Rules
  - (7) Curriculum & Graduation Plans
  - (8) Grant Administration
  - (9) Legal or Discipline Issues
  - (10) Programs for Students with Disabilities (Special Ed.)

These inquiries represent 3,573 contacts made by the 1,259 respondents during the two-year timeframe (averaging ~3 contacts per respondent).

#### Methods of Contact

- For those interacting with TEA by telephone (adjusted for those marking N/A), over 91% reported that the TEA staff were courteous and that they were treated in a professional manner. Three-fourths of the respondents (75%) indicated they were routed directly to the proper person and were given a clear explanation. Seventy-seven percent reported TEA staff responded to their telephone requests promptly. Sixty-nine percent agreed they gained accessed a live person quickly with 16% disagreeing.
- When interacting with TEA via email or one of the ticketing systems (adjusted for those marking N/A), 89% stated the staff was courteous and they were treated in a professional manner. Seventy-seven percent said their email requests were responded to promptly, were routed directly to the proper person, and they received a clear explanation to their request via email.

#### Complaint Handling

The majority of respondents (59%) indicated they had not accessed the TEA complaint
process (i.e. skipped questions or marked N/A). Of those applicable, 86% were satisfied or
neutral regarding the ease of submitting complaints to TEA and their timely handling; 14%
indicated dissatisfaction. This represents an opportunity as the agency has recently
established several new complaint-handling units to enhance service in this area.

### Information Provided by TEA

- Overall, 67% were satisfied with the information provided by TEA during this timeframe.
   Sixty-nine percent agreed TEA provides thorough and accurate information, with 9% disagreeing when adjusted for those marking N/A.
- "Usefulness" of the information provided by TEA was dis-aggregated by subject areas and adjusted for those marking N/A. Rankings in order of usefulness were:
  - (1) Educator Preparation & Certification 78%; (2) Curriculum & Graduation Plans 72%;
  - (3) STAAR/ Assessment Testing 71%; (4) Program Guidance 68%; (5) School Financial Information 63%; (6) Accountability Ratings & Reporting 62%; (7) Grant Information 61%.

#### Information Requested from School Personnel

- When asked if TEA allows adequate time for school personnel to respond to TEA requests (adjusting for those marking N/A) 63% agreed, 8% disagreed, 29% were neutral. When asked if requests were reasonable: 60% agreed, 13% disagreed, and 27% were neutral.
- About half (51%) of the respondents believed TEA's process for requesting information seemed to be improving, with 8% disagreeing, and 41% neutral.

#### **TEA Correspondence**

- Correspondence received from TEA was considered useful and accurate by the majority of respondents (69%); 15% disagreed that the correspondence was understandable.
- When asked about their experience with "To the Administrator Addressed Letters", less than
  half of the respondents had seen or utilized them (41%). Of those, 88% believed they were
  relevant and useful, and 82% indicated it was easy to join the email distribution list. Overall,
  three-fourths of respondents (76%) agreed they "greatly benefitted from this correspondence"
  (with only 4% disagreeing).

#### TEA Website

With regards to TEA's website, 96% had utilized the website during the last two years.
 Seventy-six percent agreed the content was accurate; however, 29% disagreed that it was easy for them to find the information they needed. Approximately 64% stated the website met their needs and the content was easy to understand.

• Approximately half (51%) of the respondents believed TEA's website quality and ease-of-use seemed to be improving, with 14% disagreeing, and others marking N/A or staying neutral.

#### **Educator Certification Process**

When asked about their experience with the Educator Certification process, almost a third of
respondents marked N/A. Of those applicable, 79% agreed the information TEA provided was
thorough, and that they understood the process for taking certification exams. 71% were
satisfied with their experience contacting TEA for guidance regarding educator certifications
(with only 7% disagreeing). Overall, 82% agreed that they understand the process necessary
to maintain their educator certification.

### Online Educator Training

When respondents were asked if they had accessed The Texas Gateway for Online Resources
educator training site, only 22% said they had during this timeframe. Of those, approximately
78% agreed that the online training was easy to access, useful, clear, understandable, and in
a good format for their learning style. Almost three-fourths (72%) agreed they would
recommend the online educator training to their colleagues (with 9% disagreeing).

### **Conclusions**

The survey indicates school and district-level personnel were satisfied with the quality of service received from TEA since September 1, 2016. During this period, the "overall satisfaction rating" remained high at 81% (consistent with the previous rating in 2016).

Respondents gave their highest satisfaction ratings (91%) to their experience interacting directly with TEA staff – being treated courteously and professionally. In addition, customers were highly-satisfied with TEA staff treating them with respect and demonstrating a willingness to assist them. Another area of strong satisfaction included the accuracy and usefulness of information provided in: agency correspondence, the website, online educator trainings, and related to educator certifications.

Opportunities exist regarding: phones being answered quickly by a live-person, improving the overall experience with customer complaints, reasonableness of requests for information from school personnel, improving the agency website to help customers find information quickly, making TEA's correspondence more understandable, increasing the number of educators using the TEA-provided online training resources, and continuing to improve the usefulness of the STARR/Assessment and Accountability Rating information TEA provides.

In summary, TEA is very pleased with the overall results and high survey response rate of 20% and appreciates all the customers who took the time to respond. We look forward to continuously improving our services provided to our customers in the coming years.

(See Appendix A for detailed survey results.)

Appendix A

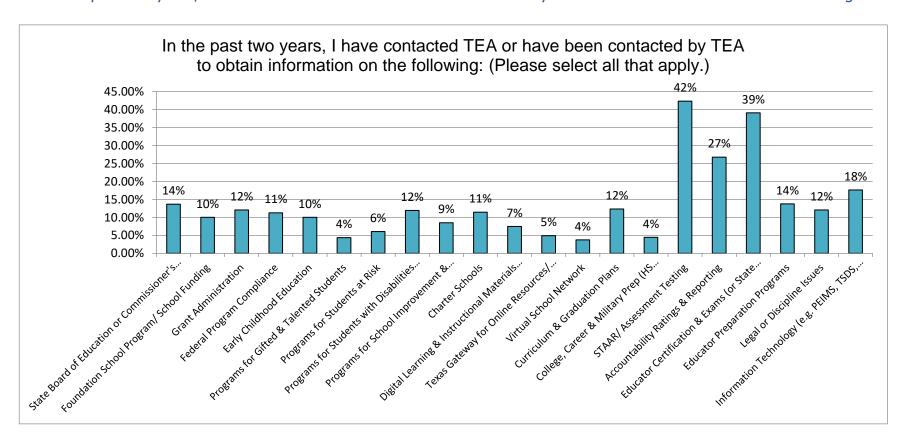
# Texas Education Agency Customer Satisfaction Survey 2018

Results

1. Have you contacted TEA, or have you been contacted by TEA in the last two years (since September 1, 2016)?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31.4%	1453
No	38.6%	3174
	answered question	4627
	skipped question	0

2. In the past two years, I have contacted TEA or have been contacted by TEA to obtain information on the following:



In the past two years, I have contacted TEA or have been contacted by TEA to obtain information on the following: (Please select all that apply.)	Response Percent	Response Count
State Board of Education or Commissioner's Rules	13.66%	172
Foundation School Program/ School Funding	10.01%	126
Grant Administration	12.07%	152
Federal Program Compliance	11.28%	142
Early Childhood Education	10.01%	126
Programs for Gifted & Talented Students	4.37%	55
Programs for Students at Risk	6.04%	76
Programs for Students with Disabilities (Special Ed.)	11.91%	150
Programs for School Improvement & Accreditation	8.50%	107
Charter Schools	11.44%	144
Digital Learning & Instructional Materials (Textbooks)	7.47%	94
Texas Gateway for Online Resources/ Educator Professional Development	4.92%	62
Virtual School Network	3.73%	47
Curriculum & Graduation Plans	12.31%	155
College, Career & Military Prep (HS Programs, AP/IB)	4.45%	56
STAAR/ Assessment Testing	42.34%	533
Accountability Ratings & Reporting	26.77%	337
Educator Certification & Exams (or State Board of Educator Certification)	39.08%	492
Educator Preparation Programs	13.74%	173
Legal or Discipline Issues	12.07%	152
information Technology (e.g. PEIMS, TSDS, TEASE, TEAL)	17.63%	222
Other (please specify)		158
an	swered question	1259
	skipped question	3368

158 respondents specified other areas such as: Hurricane Harvey issues, bilingual programs, UIL, grievance issues, waivers, Early College High Schools, career education, teacher assessments, retirement, compliance issues, monitoring site visits, military and homeless students, Districts of Innovation, Pre-K programs, The Principal Survey, foster care issues, extracurricular credits, graduation and transition plans, attendance, music and fine arts, etc.

## 3. If you have contact with TEA via <u>telephone</u>, please respond regarding your overall experience with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
Staff members are courteous.	34.31% 411	40.15% 481	5.76% 69	1.17% 14	0.83% 10	17.78% 213	1,198
I gain access to a live person quickly.	20.84% 249		12.22% 146	8.87% 106	4.10% 49	19.16% 229	1,195
I am routed directly to the proper person.	21.98% 262		12.75% 152	6.71% 80	2.43% 29	19.80% 236	1,192
I am given a clear explanation.	24.29% 290		10.39% 124		2.35% 28	17.50% 209	1,194
I am treated in a professional manner.	37.58% 448		4.95% 59	1.01% 12	0.76% 9	17.20% 205	1,192
Staff members respond to my telephone request promptly.	26.36% 315		12.55% 150	4.18% 50	2.18% 26	19.41% 232	1,195

# 4. If you have contact with TEA via <u>email or one of the ticketing systems</u>, please respond regarding your overall experience with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
Staff members respond to email requests promptly.	20.91% 240	32.14% 369	8.54% 98		7.7.2		1,148
Staff members are courteous.	27.20% 312	31.82% 365	6.45% 74		0.61% 7	33.39% 383	1,147
I am routed directly to the proper person.	20.40% 234	29.90% 343	10.11% 116		1.05% 12		1,147
I am given a clear explanation.	22.14% 254	30.34% 348			1.66% 19		1,147
I am treated in a professional manner.	29.00% 332	31.09% 356	5.50% 63		0.87% 10		1,145

## 5. Regarding contact with TEA staff in general, please respond regarding your overall experience with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
TEA staff members treat me with respect.	40.75% 478			1.36% 16		6.73% 79	
TEA staff members demonstrate a willingness to assist.	39.36% 466			2.62% 31		6.50% 77	1,184

## 6. Overall, I am satisfied with my contact with TEA.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
	34.45%	43.84%	11.82%	4.44%	1.93%	3.52%	
Overall, I am satisfied with my contact with TEA.	411	523	141	53	23	42	1,193

# 81% of customers reported they were satisfied with the customer service provided by TEA. (adjusted for those marking N/A)

# 7. Please respond to the following regarding your overall experience with TEA's customer complaint process for any TEA employee concerns:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
Complaints to TEA are easy to submit.	6.95% 80				2.26% 26	65.16% 750	
My complaints are handled in a timely manner.	6.52% 75				2.09% 24		

# 8. Please respond to the following regarding your overall experience with information provided by or requested from TEA:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
TEA provides thorough and accurate information.	15.59% 531	49.84% 1,698	20.58% 701		2.17% 74	5.02% 171	3,407
School financial information is useful.	12.66% 429	38.57% 1,307	21.92% 743		2.42% 82	18.26% 619	3,389
Program guidance information is useful.	14.63% 495	45.42% 1,537	20.04% 678		1.98% 67	12.03% 407	3,384
STAAR/ Assessment information is useful.	22.47% 765	43.55% 1,483	12.25% 417	7.61% 259	6.84% 233	7.28% 248	3,405
Curriculum and graduation plan information is useful.	16.16% 546	43.86% 1,482	17.58% 594		1.86% 63	16.75% 566	3,379
Accountability ratings and reporting information is useful.	18.48% 627	39.14% 1,328	16.30% 553		7.87% 267	7.25% 246	3,393
Grant information is useful.	12.83% 433	34.62% 1,168	24.60% 830		1.72% 58	22.58% 762	3,374
Educator preparation and certification information is useful.	20.40% 691	50.50% 1,711	14.46% 490		1.77% 60	9.56% 324	3,388
Overall, I am satisfied with the information I receive from TEA.	16.22% 551	48.59% 1,650	21.05% 715		3.47% 118	3.36% 114	3,396
TEA's requests of information from educators are reasonable.	11.16% 378	41.52% 1,406	23.39% 792		3.99% 135	12.79% 433	3,386
TEA allows adequate time for me to respond to their requests.	11.18% 379	40.48% 1,372	23.64% 801	3.95% 134	2.18% 74	18.56% 629	3,389
TEA's process for requesting information from me seems to be improving.	8.94% 303	30.97% 1,050	32.12% 1,089		1.89% 64	21.74% 737	3,390

9. Please respond to the following questions regarding your overall experience with TEA's distributed correspondence:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
	13.76%	48.64%	22.49%	5.40%	2.01%	7.71%	
Correspondence from TEA is generally useful to me.	459	1,622	750	180	67	257	3,335
	14.89%	49.20%	23.33%	3.51%	0.96%	8.11%	
Correspondence from TEA is accurate.	496	1,639	777	117	32	270	3,331
	11.52%	42.65%	25.26%	10.65%	3.10%	6.83%	
Correspondence from TEA is easy to understand.	383	1,418	840	354	103	227	3,325

10. Have you seen or utilized the TEA correspondence entitled "To the Administrator Addressed Letters" which provide important messages of interest to school districts and charter schools?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count					
Yes	41.15%	1,378					
No	35.06%	1,174					
I don't think so	23.80%	797					
	answered question						

11. Please respond to the following regarding your overall experience with information in the "To the Administrator Addressed Letters":

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
This information is relevant and useful.	25.73% 351			1.61% 22		0.22% 3	1,364
It is easy for me to join the email distribution list for this correspondence.	25.74% 350			2.65% 36		4.63% 63	1,360
Overall, I greatly benefit from this correspondence ("To the Administrator Addressed Letters").	24.52% 333			3.24% 44		0.44% 6	1,358

## 12. Have you visited the TEA website (www.tea.texas.gov)?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	96.22%	3,205
No	3.78%	126
	answered question	3,331

## 13. Please respond to the following questions regarding your experience with the TEA website:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
It is easy to find information I need on the website.	9.86% 307	43.59% 1,357	17.54% 546	22.45% 699	6.30% 196	0.26% 8	3,113
I am able to easily find contact information for agency employees.	8.97% 278	36.39% 1,128	25.48% 790	14.06% 436	4.81% 149	10.29% 319	
The website content is accurate.	14.22% 442	60.15% 1,870	20.42% 635	2.67% 83	0.93% 29	1.61% 50	
The information on the website is easy to understand.	11.23% 349	50.66% 1,575	20.65% 642	13.77% 428	3.18% 99	0.51% 16	
It is easy for me to locate complaint procedures.	6.32% 196	21.82% 677	25.04% 777	10.02% 311	3.51% 109	33.29% 1,033	
It is easy for me to locate the Compact with Texans.	5.07% 157	19.14% 593	26.31% 815	7.49% 232	3.13% 97	38.86% 1,204	
I am satisfied with the content quality.	10.33% 320	49.18% 1,524	27.20% 843	8.71% 270	2.71% 84	1.87% 58	
The overall organization of the website helps me locate what I am looking for.	9.60% 298	42.69% 1,325	22.81% 708	17.62% 547	6.35% 197	0.93% 29	
My visits to the website meet my needs.	11.94% 371	53.54% 1,664	21.56% 670	9.17% 285	2.99% 93	0.80% 25	
TEA's website quality and ease-of-use seems to be improving.	9.41% 292	41.68% 1,293	32.14% 997	10.12% 314	3.35% 104	3.29% 102	

# 14. Do you have a suggestion to improve TEA's website? (Please do not include confidential or personally identifiable information. Thanks!)

Over 800 respondents provided comments. Many simply said "Make it more user friendly".

Specific suggestions included topics such as: improving website navigation, posting alerts for changes, revising the sensitivity of the menu bar and banner, improving the drop-down tool, making STAAR assessment information easier to find and more usable, providing instructions for using various reports, writing more succinctly ("less wordy").

In addition, many respondents complimented the website, felt it was "very helpful", and acknowledged site improvements.

### 15. Please respond to the following regarding your overall experience with TEA's Educator Certification process:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
TEA provides thorough information regarding educator certifications.	15.13% 462			4.29% 131		22.99% 702	3,053
TEA's website information on this topic has been helpful to me.	13.51% 412					23.91% 729	3,049
I am satisfied with my experience when contacting TEA for guidance regarding educator certifications.	13.06% 398			3.77% 115		32.20% 981	3,047
I understand the process necessary to register and take educator certification exams.	15.56% 474					25.27% 770	3,047
I understand the process necessary to maintain my educator certification.	17.45% 532			3.64% 111	1.08% 33	20.11% 613	3,048

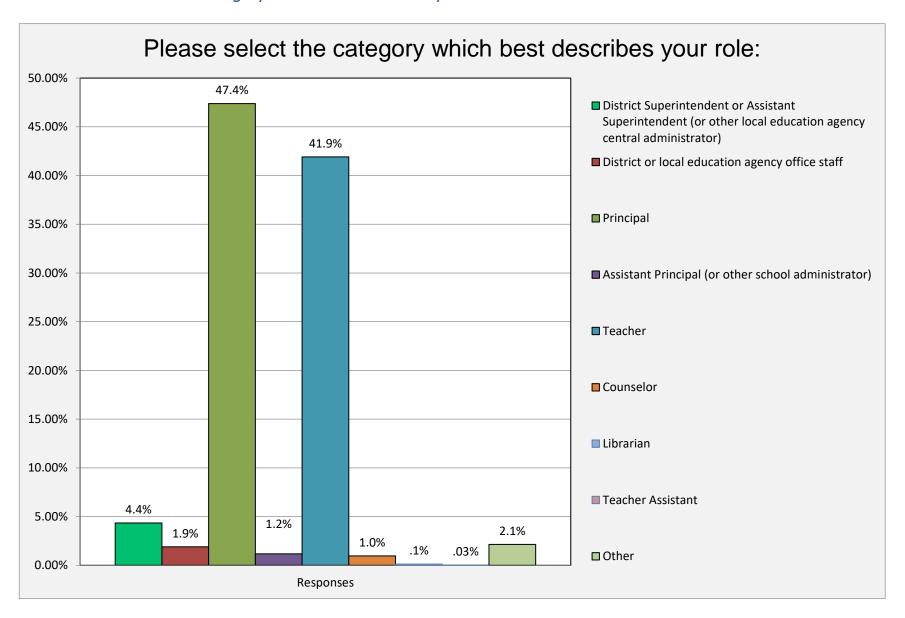
16. Have you accessed TEA's online educator training (The Texas Gateway for Online Resources) in the last two years?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	21.63%	681
No	78.37%	2,467
	answered question	3,148

17. Please respond to the following questions regarding your overall experience with TEA's online educator training (The Texas Gateway for Online Resources):

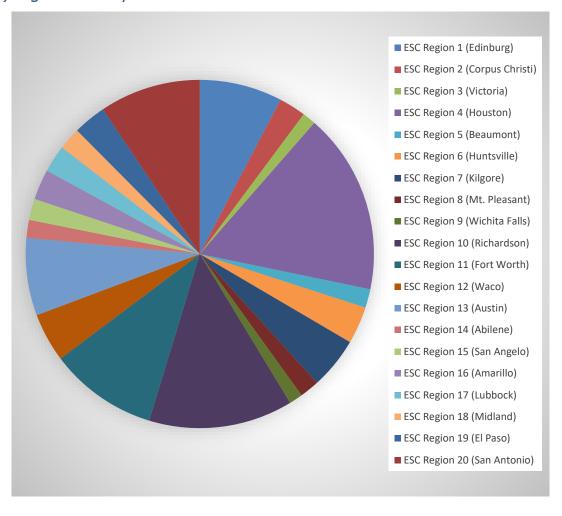
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total
It is easy for me to access TEA's online educator training.	19.70% 132		14.18% 95			1.79% 12	670
The information provided in TEA's online educator training is clear and understandable.	21.08% 141		13.75% 92			2.09% 14	669
The information provided in the online training is useful.	20.99% 140		14.84% 99	3.30% 22		2.55% 17	667
The online training resources are in a good format for my learning style.	20.81% 139		19.31% 129			2.69% 18	668
I would recommend TEA's online educator training to my colleagues.	21.11% 141		18.71% 125			2.25% 15	668

### 18. Please select the category which best describes your role:



### 19. Please select the Education Service Center (ESC) region where your school district resides:

Education Service Center (ESC) Regions:	Response Percent	Response Count
ESC Region 1 (Edinburg)	7.68%	240
ESC Region 2 (Corpus Christi)	2.50%	78
ESC Region 3 (Victoria)	1.25%	39
ESC Region 4 (Houston)	16.83%	526
ESC Region 5 (Beaumont)	1.73%	54
ESC Region 6 (Huntsville)	3.46%	108
ESC Region 7 (Kilgore)	4.80%	150
ESC Region 8 (Mt. Pleasant)	1.82%	57
ESC Region 9 (Wichita Falls)	1.25%	39
ESC Region 10 (Richardson)	13.38%	418
ESC Region 11 (Fort Worth)	10.05%	314
ESC Region 12 (Waco)	4.54%	142
ESC Region 13 (Austin)	7.20%	225
ESC Region 14 (Abilene)	1.66%	52
ESC Region 15 (San Angelo)	1.98%	62
ESC Region 16 (Amarillo)	2.82%	88
ESC Region 17 (Lubbock)	2.53%	79
ESC Region 18 (Midland)	2.08%	65
ESC Region 19 (El Paso)	3.07%	96
ESC Region 20 (San Antonio)	9.38%	293
answered question		3,125
skipped question		1,502



# 20. Do you have a suggestion to improve customer service at TEA? (Please do not include confidential or personally identifiable information. Thanks!)

TEA received over 500 comments on topics such as: providing consistent answers, reducing the volume of information and communications, providing assessment information earlier, providing reminders for recertifications, funding and supporting teachers and schools. Also, many complimented TEA for their efforts and thanked the staff for their support, assistance and willingness to serve them.