



# The State of the State in Special Education

TCASE  
Great Ideas  
February 4, 2020



# Suite of Resources for Parents

## Overall Corrective Action Response Progress

100%

15/15

### Updates in Special Education

#### Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

School:  
  
Contact Person:  
  
Phone Number:

To begin the special education process for your child:

#### Resources for Families

TEA has created topic specific information for families. Scan the QR code or use the link to access these resources.

direct to/DTN

#### SPEDTex

Family members can call or log on to find answers to their questions as well as general information about special education.

SPEDTex.org  
1.855.773.3839

Beginning with the 2017 school year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) changed the way it reports special education enrollment in school systems. TEA no longer includes a target for a school system's total numbers of students in special education as part of state monitoring.

For special education representation, TEA only reports on over-representation within certain race, ethnicity and disability categories, as required by federal law. School systems cannot use this reporting data to delay, deny or prevent a referral for an evaluation for special education services.

#### Special education/IDEA eligibility:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA, is a federal law that gives eligible students with disabilities the right to receive special education services and assistance in school. To be eligible for special education services, a student with a disability must need instruction that is specially designed to meet the student's unique needs based on that disability.

#### Who can request an evaluation for special education?

School: If the school knows or has reason to suspect that the student has a disability and a need for special education services, the school must refer the student for a special education evaluation.

Parents or Guardians: A parent or guardian has the right to request a special education evaluation at any time. It is best to submit this request in writing to your school's principal or to the school district's special education director. If your child is pre-school age and not yet enrolled in school, send the letter to the district's special education director. More information on evaluation timelines can be found at: [childfind.tea.texas.gov/eval\\_timelines.html](http://childfind.tea.texas.gov/eval_timelines.html)

A parent or guardian has the right to request a special education evaluation at any time.

TEA.Texas.gov/TexasSpEd

### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

#### Who is eligible for special education?

To be eligible for special education services, a student must:

1. have a disability as defined by one or more of the 13 IDEA disability categories; and
2. because of the disability, requires special education services

Students who have disabilities not covered by the IDEA or students with disabilities who do not require special education services are not eligible. However, a student with a disability may be eligible for supports and services under Section 504.

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A parent or guardian has the right to request a special education evaluation at any time.

TEA.Texas.gov/TexasSpEd

#### Fact Sheet for Families

##### What is IDEA?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that has been in effect since 1975. IDEA requires public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible students ages 3-21 with disabilities. IDEA also provides legal protections for these students and their parents.

##### IDEA requires public schools to...

- Find and evaluate students who have or are suspected of a disability and need special education services (Child Find).
- Develop and implement an individualized education program (IEP) for eligible students with a disability.

##### What is Special Education?

Special education means instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability. It includes any related services needed for the student to benefit from his or her special education services. Special education is not a place, but a set of services and supports that can be provided in many ways and in many different settings. What special education looks like for an individual student is outlined in his or her IEP. The IEP is developed by a team referred to in Texas as the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. The parent is a member of the ARD committee.

##### Child Find also includes...

- Any child suspected of having a disability and need for special education despite passing from grade to grade.
- Homeless, under the care of the state, attending private school, or highly mobile.
- May not be attending public school

More information about IDEA can be found at: [tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd](http://tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd)

### Dyslexia

#### Fact Sheet for Families

##### What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a brain-based learning disability that makes learning to read, write, and/or spell difficult despite adequate instruction and intelligence. Students with dysgraphia, a related learning disorder, demonstrate academic challenges in handwriting, spelling, and written expression.

##### Characteristics of dyslexia:

- Primary characteristics include difficulties:
- Learning the sounds letters make
  - Reading words in isolation or reading unknown words
  - Reading smoothly with enough speed and accuracy to comprehend
  - Spelling
- Secondary characteristics may include difficulty:
- Expressing ideas or concepts in writing
  - Understanding what is read

Students with dyslexia may also present with additional difficulties and/or disorders, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speech and language disorders, and/or other academic needs.

##### What rights do families have?

Your children are legally entitled to receive customized academic support. State and federal law requires schools to follow specific procedures to support students with or suspected of having dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning disability that may require special education services.

Parents may request special education evaluation through their child's campus or district.

More information about dyslexia can be found at: [tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd](http://tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd)

### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

#### Texas public schools must...

Notify a parent of each child who receives assistance from the school district for learning difficulties every year. This includes supports through an MTSS program that are above the level of intervention used with all children. This notice does not apply to parents of children receiving special education.

#### Parents or guardians may request a special education evaluation for their child at any time.

##### What is Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)?

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a framework that focuses on intervention best practices within the areas of academics, behavior, and social/emotional supports for the whole child. Tiers are based on student need and increase the level of support provided as a student moves from classroom-wide, to targeted and intensive interventions.

##### How does MTSS help students?

The goal of MTSS is to find struggling students early and quickly provide intervention. The systems use interventions proven by research to meet a student's needs. Progress monitoring data is used to make decisions about movement between the tiers.

##### What type of support is available?

- Tier 1 includes high quality classroom-wide instruction and support for all students.
- Tier 2 provides targeted support to address a student's gaps in skills.
- Tier 3 involves intensive support usually provided more often and in smaller groups.

More information about MTSS/RTI can be found at: [tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd](http://tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd)

### Section 504

#### Fact Sheet for Families

##### What is Section 504?

Section 504 is part of a long-standing federal civil rights law that guarantees certain protections to people with disabilities.

##### Who does Section 504 protect?

Section 504 protects people with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, such as caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning.

##### Are dyslexia and related disorders included under Section 504?

Students with dyslexia and related disorders are protected under Section 504. These conditions are also included within the definition of specific learning disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Some students with these conditions may require special education services, while others may receive the state's standard protocol dyslexia instruction under Section 504.

##### Section 504 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) both...

- Provide protections for students with disabilities. However, while all students in special education are protected under Section 504, not all students covered by Section 504 are eligible for special education.
- Set requirements for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Section 504 defines FAPE differently than IDEA defines FAPE.

Section 504 Parent and Educator Resource Guide

More information about Section 504 can be found at: [tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd](http://tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd)

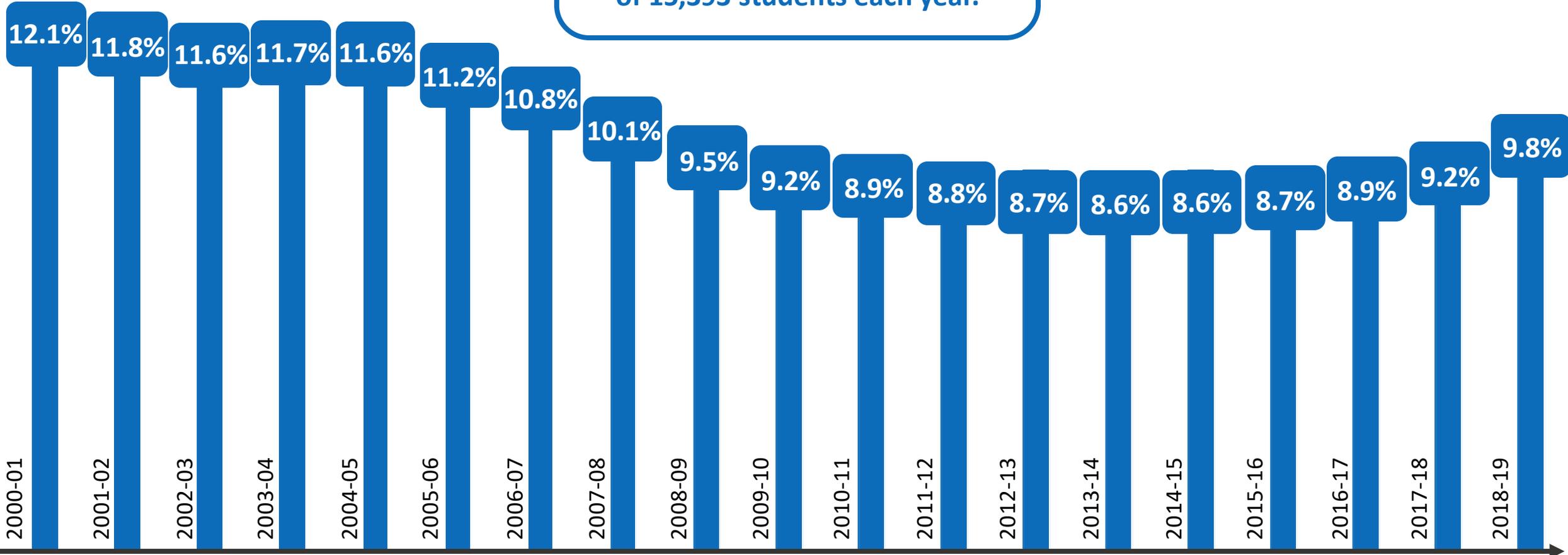
SB 139





# Identification and Evaluation

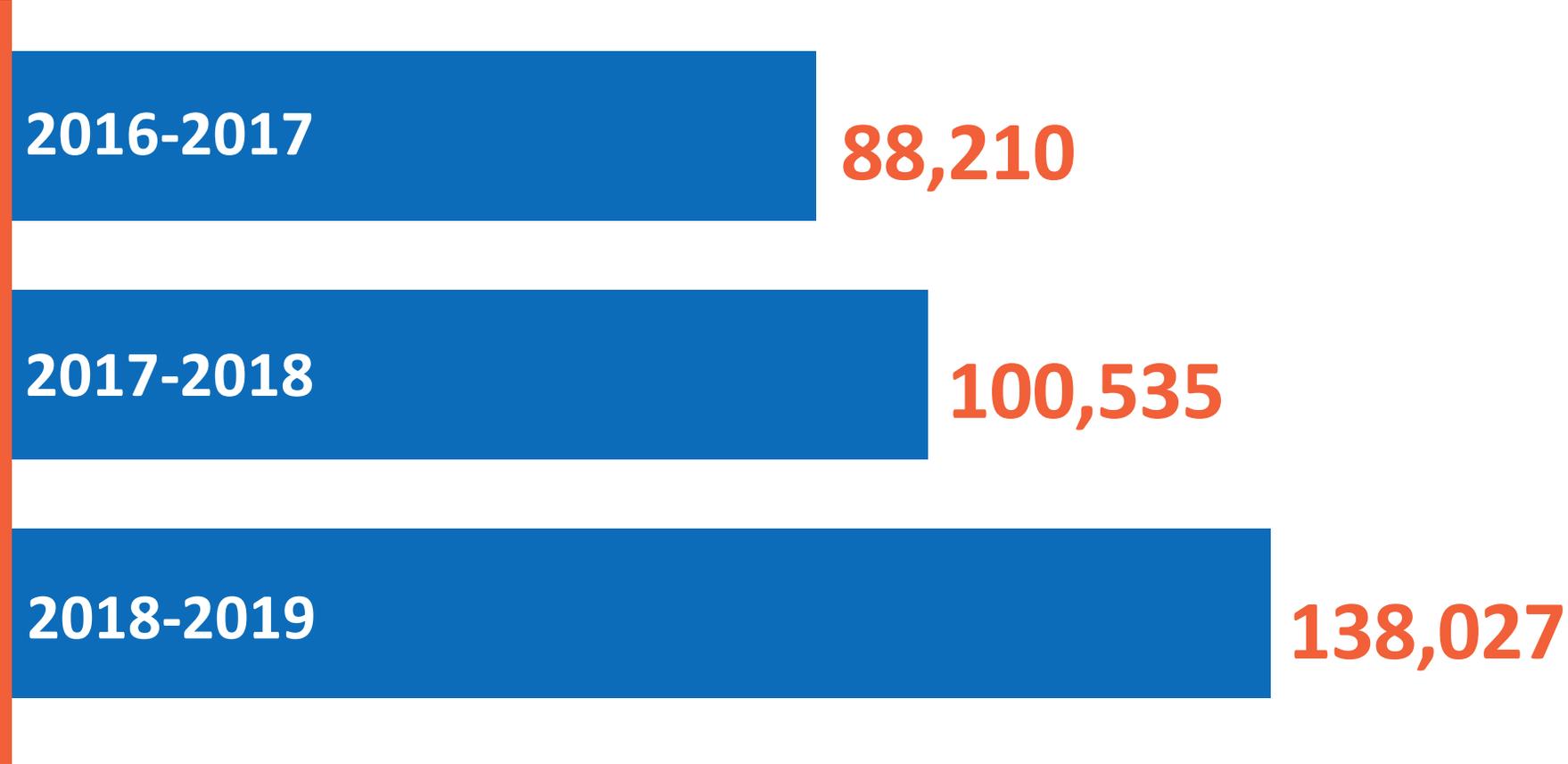
Since 2013, Texas has seen a growth in the number of special education students by an average of 15,393 students each year.



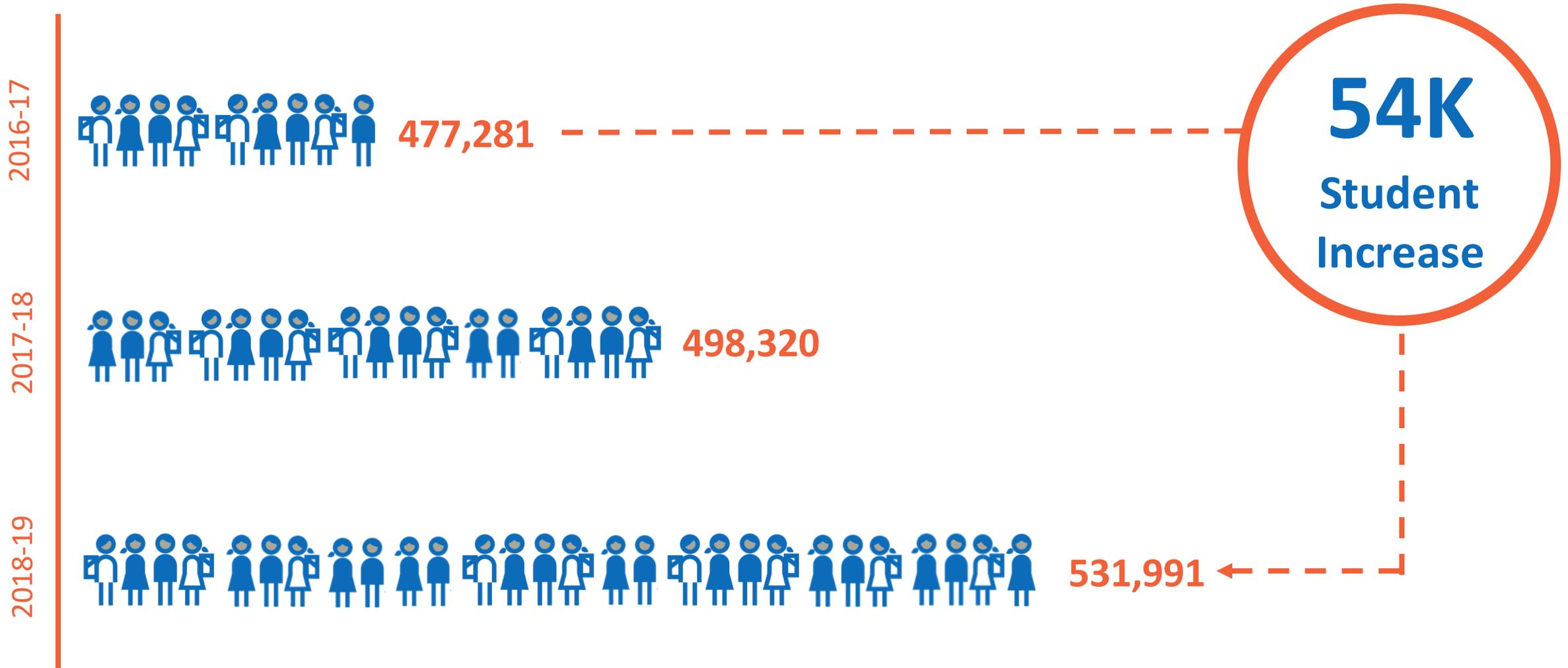
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Digest of Education Statistics, 2015 (NCES 2016-014), Chapter 2. and <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>



The number of Initial Evaluations has increased each year by at least 13%.



The number of special education students in Texas continues to show growth.

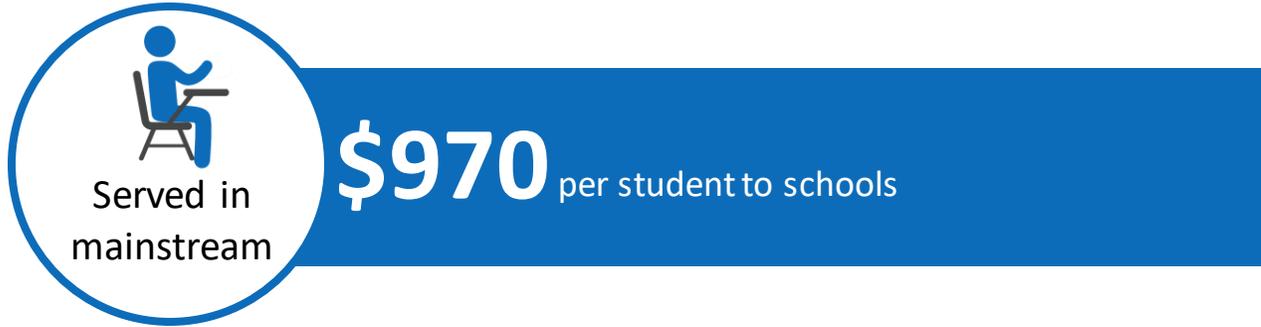






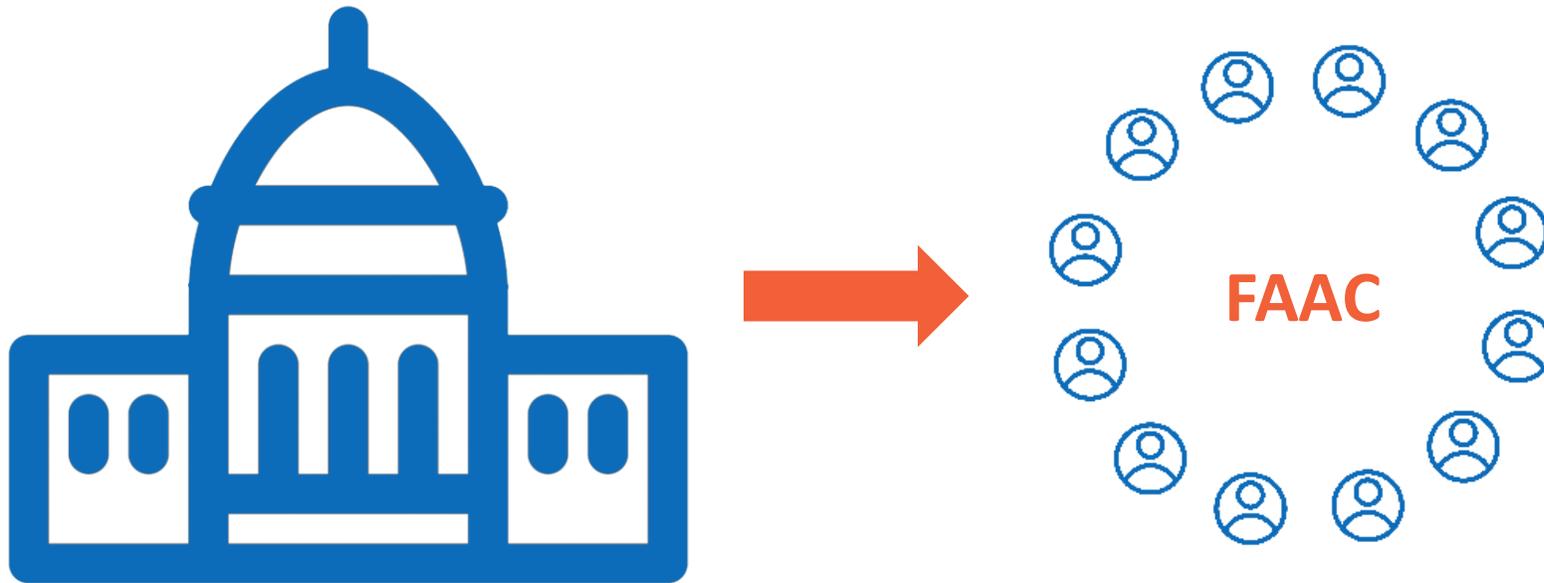
# Funding for Students with Disabilities

House Bill 3 – 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature increased funding for students with disabilities in these three specific areas.



# House Bill 3 Special Education Finance Allotment Advisory Committee

- HB 3 of the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas legislature required TEA to establish an advisory committee to develop recommendations about how special education programs are financed by the state of Texas.



# The Charge

The SpEd Finance Allotment Advisory Committee is required to provide the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and Chairs of both Education Committees with a report in May of 2020. The report is required to include:



A review of current methods for funding special education programs in Texas public schools



An analysis of a possible funding system based on the services and supports each student receives instead of instructional arrangement



Data on current special education expenditures from a representative sample of LEAs



Recommendations for a new funding system or for improvements to the current system of funding special education programs



# Strategic Plan for Special Education

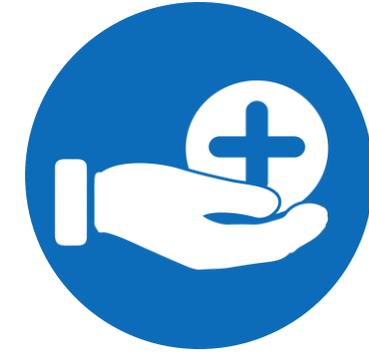
# Strategic Plan



**Monitoring**



**Training,  
Support &  
Development**



**School, Family,  
and Community  
Engagement**



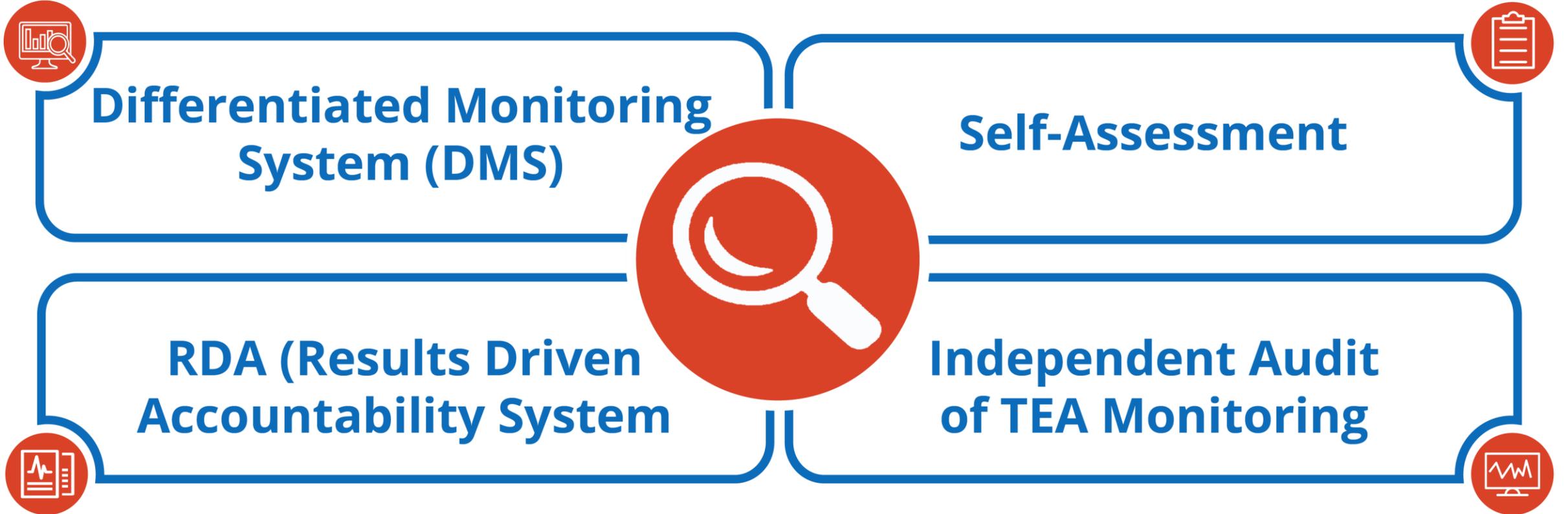
**Identification  
& Evaluation**



**Technical  
Assistance**



# Monitoring



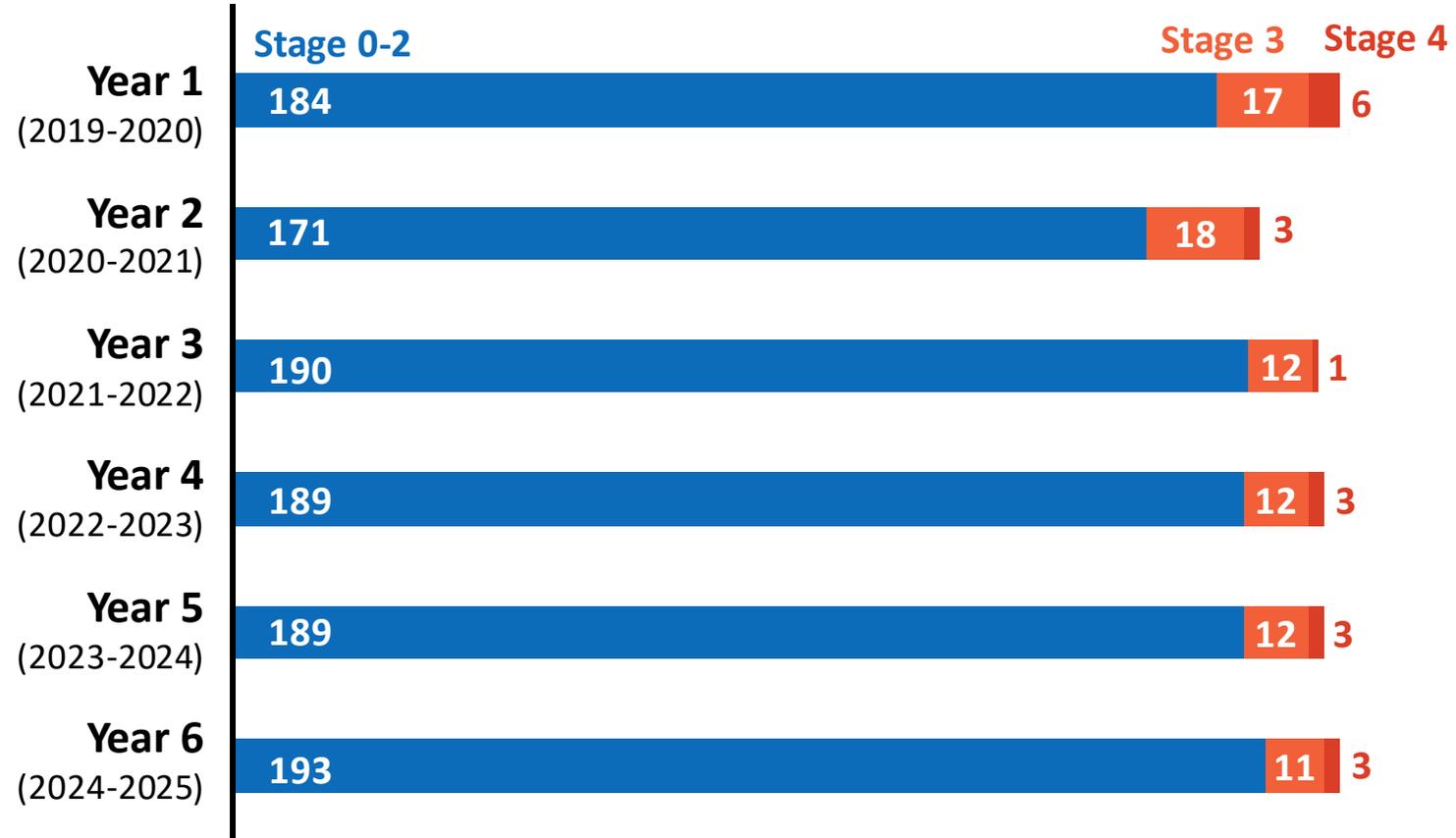
Strengthen support and supervision to schools.





# Monitoring Cyclical Monitoring Distribution

Approximately  
**23%**  
LEAs Monitored  
Annually



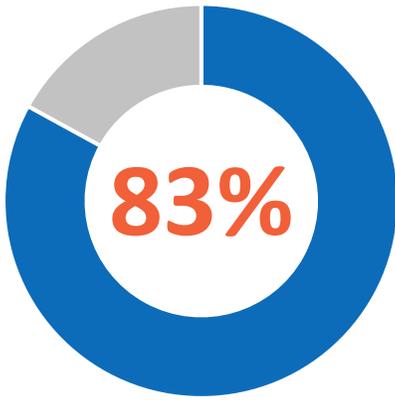
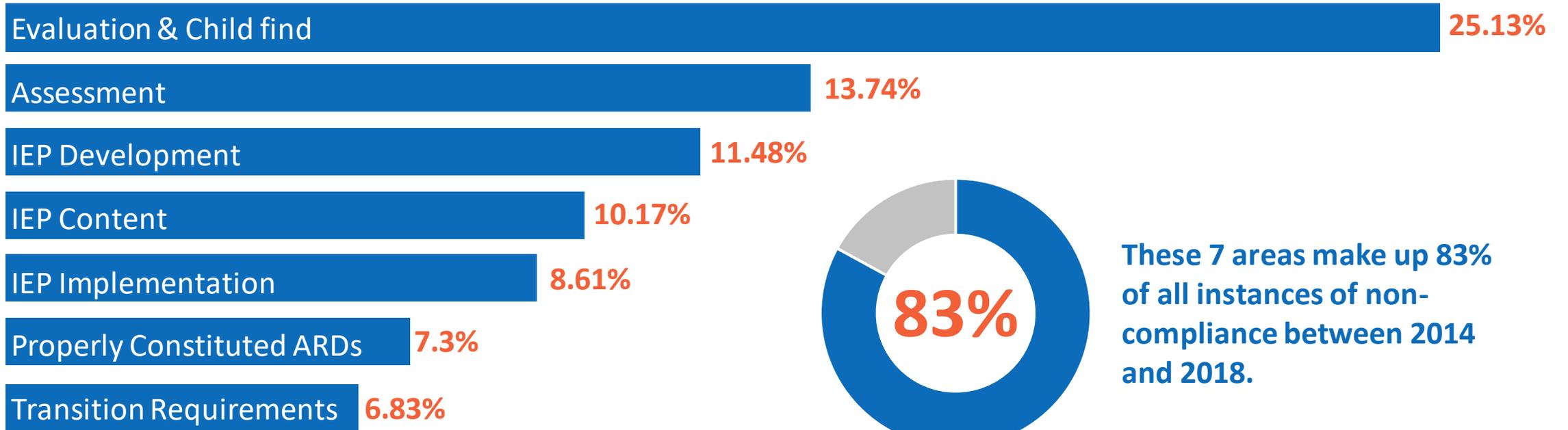
All the schools in blue, prior to this year would not have been monitored.





# Monitoring

## Current Compliance concerns, 7 Areas of Non-compliance, the most common substantiated SPED complaints



These 7 areas make up 83% of all instances of non-compliance between 2014 and 2018.

Representativeness: 450 LEAs  
 Categories of non-compliance: 33  
 Instances of non-compliance: 2,300



# Training, Support & Development



SpEd Academies



ESC Liaisons



Technical Assistance Networks



Technical Assistance Guides



Dispute Resolution Expansion

Complaints Redesign

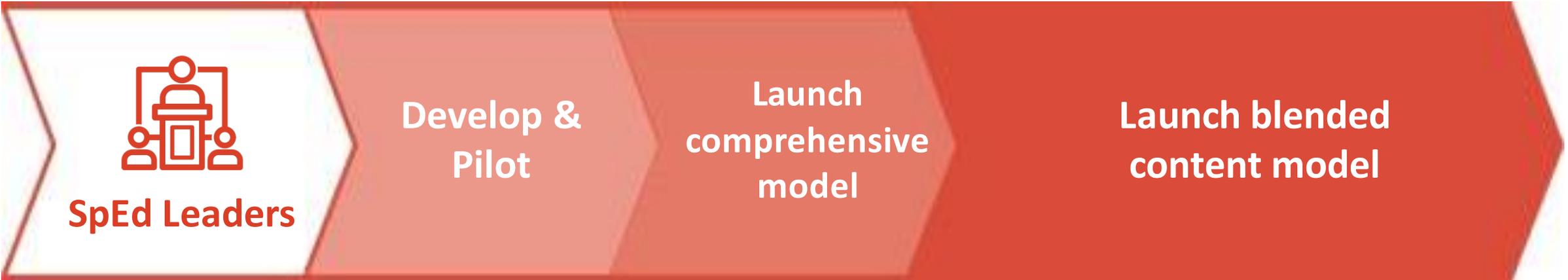


Improve practice of teachers, principals, and systems to support students with special needs.





# Training, Support & Development SpEd Academies



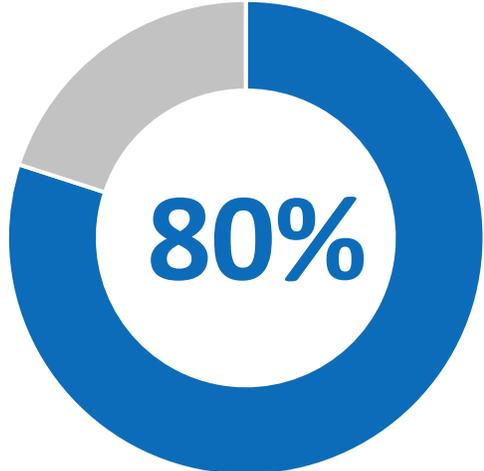


# Training, Support & Development SpEd Academies



Under Development

Most students receiving special education services are spending



or more of their academic day in the general education setting.

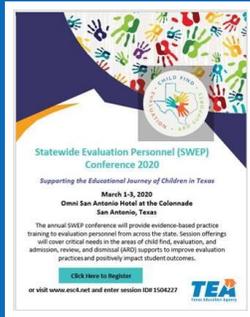




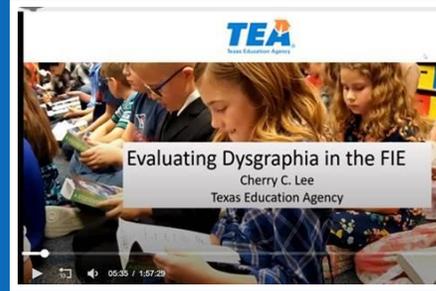
# Training, Support & Development Technical Assistance

## Types of Resources

- Technical Assistance Guidebooks
- Webinars
- Online Courses
- Trainings –
  - Face to Face
  - Online
- Coaching Guides
- Conferences



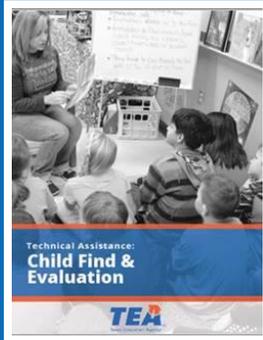
Upcoming statewide evaluation conference hosted by TEA and Child Find Network



Recent live recorded Webinar (1 of 5)



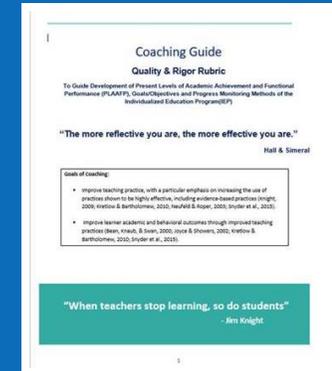
Draft cover slide for a training currently under review



Cover of Technical Assistance Guide on Child Find and Evaluation (first in series)



TSLAT (Autism Network) Mini Courses (30 min.) and Full Courses (6 hrs.)



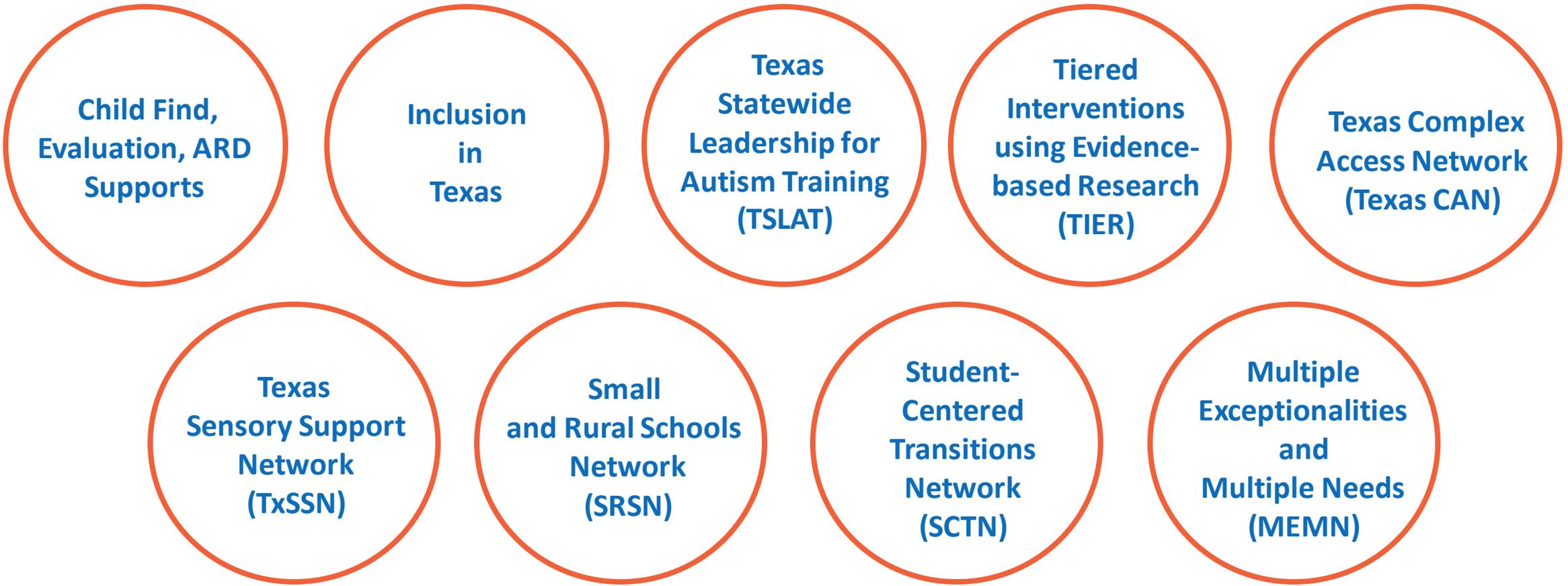
Coaching Guide to accompany training





# Training, Support & Development Technical Assistance

## Technical Assistance





# How Does a Network Work?

Vision, Strategy  
Development, and  
Content Creation  
and Approval

Network  
Grantee

Network Website

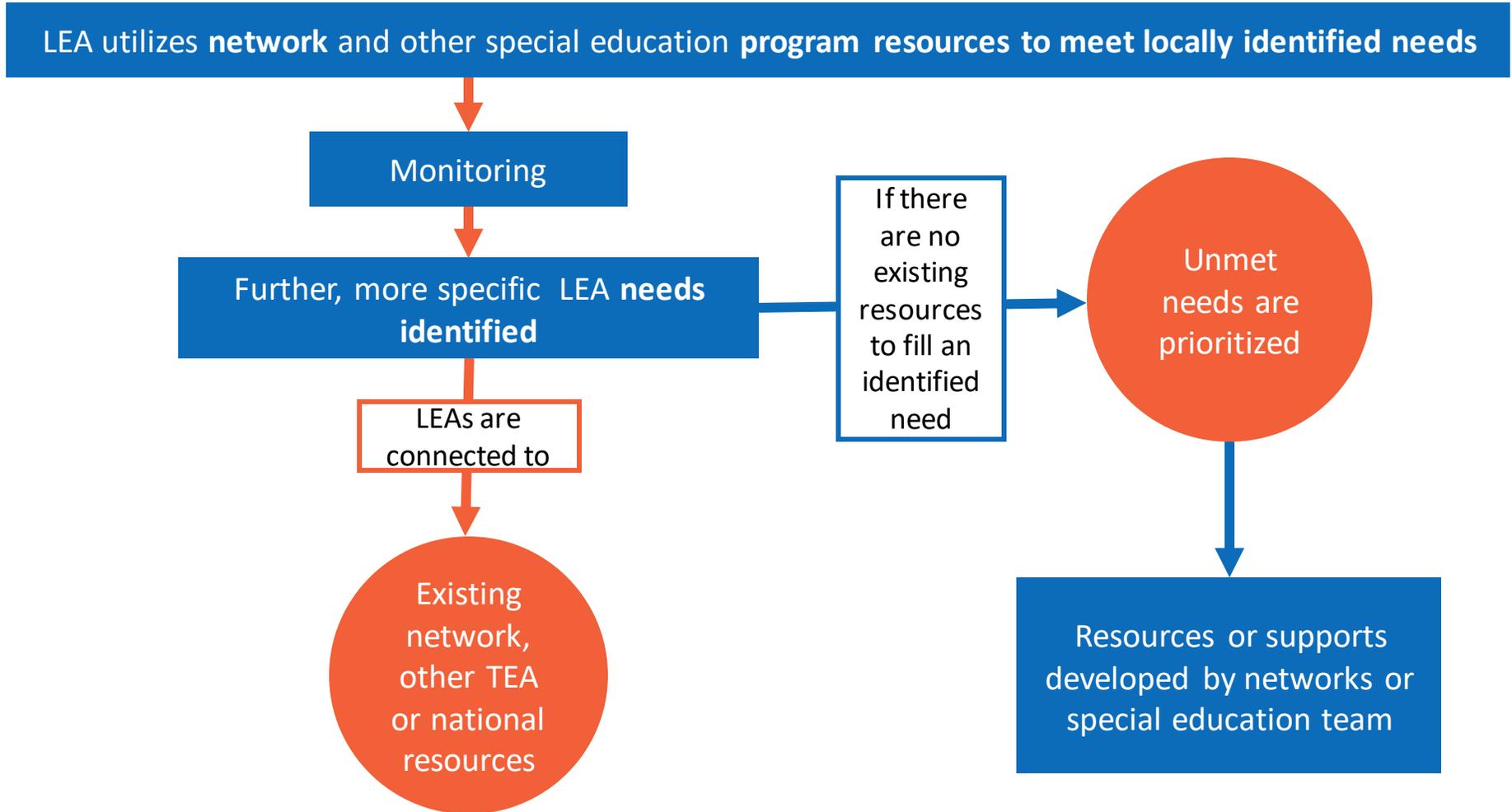
Network  
Members at  
every ESC

LEAs, Parents,  
and Other  
Stakeholders

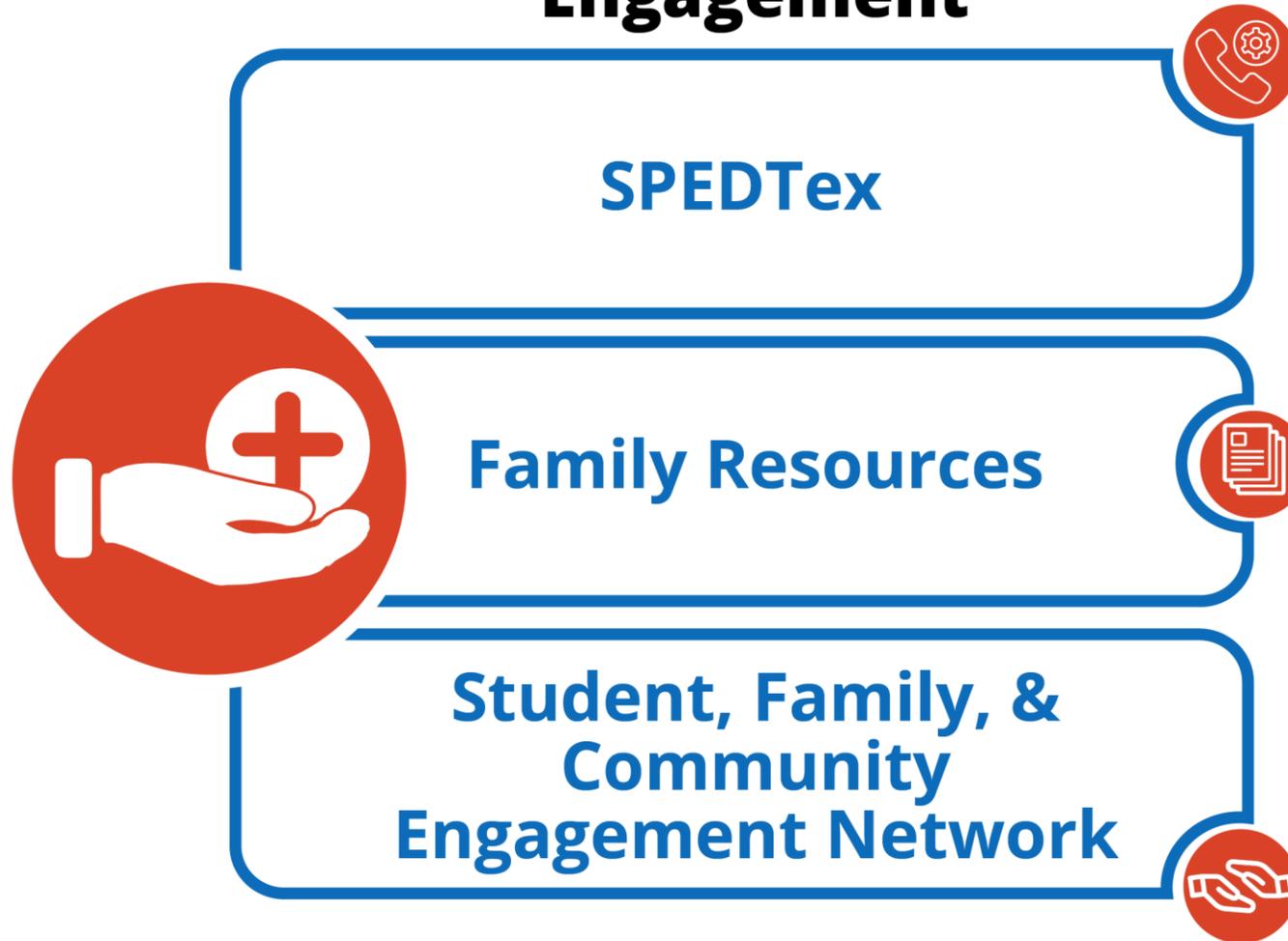




Connections: Review and Support Plan



# Student & Family Engagement



Ensure families are knowledgeable and able to engage in the educational decisions for their children.





## School, Family, and Community Engagement



1

Build the capacity of educators to work collaboratively with families and community members in supporting positive outcomes for students with disabilities

2

Provide resources and technical assistance about special education through the SPEDTex call center and website

3

House or link to resources for parents on the SPEDTex website

 Region 10 ESC  
*Experience the Power of 10*

 Partners Resource Network  
*Empowerment Through Education*

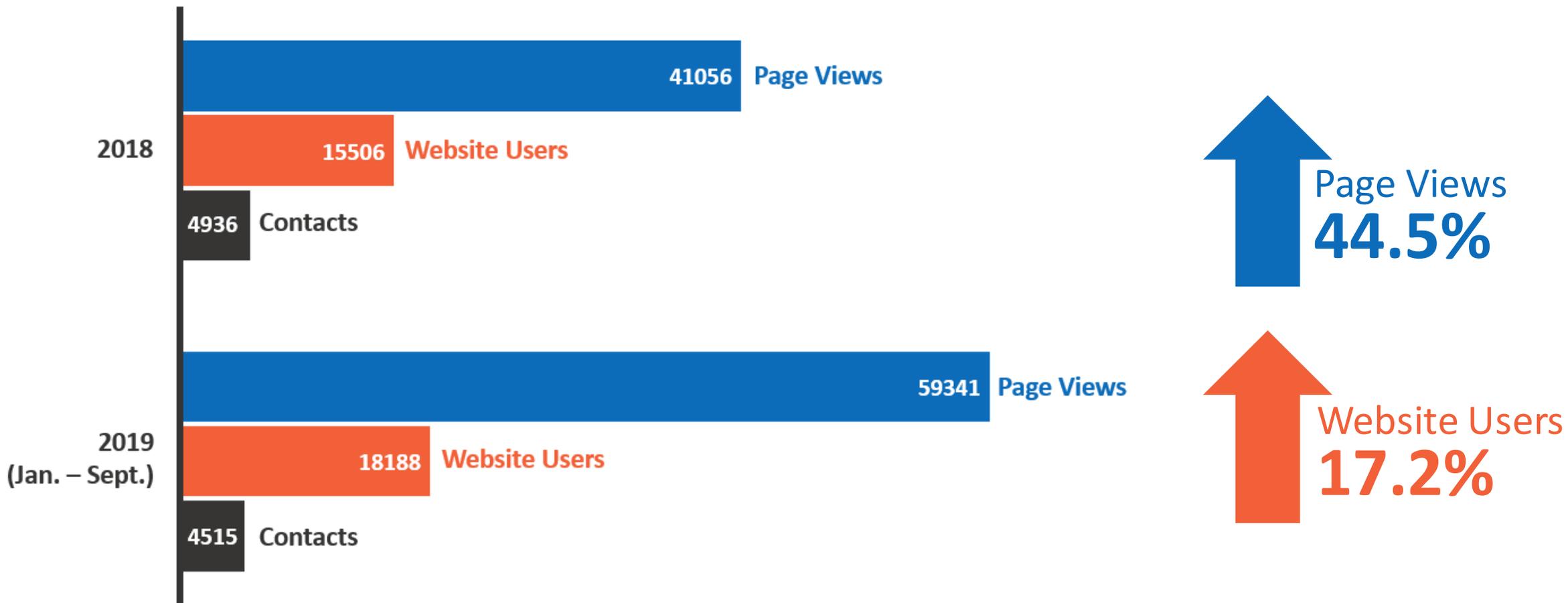
SPEDtex.org





## School, Family, and Community Engagement

Page views, website users, and contacts for SPEDTex have either surpassed or will surpass totals from last year.



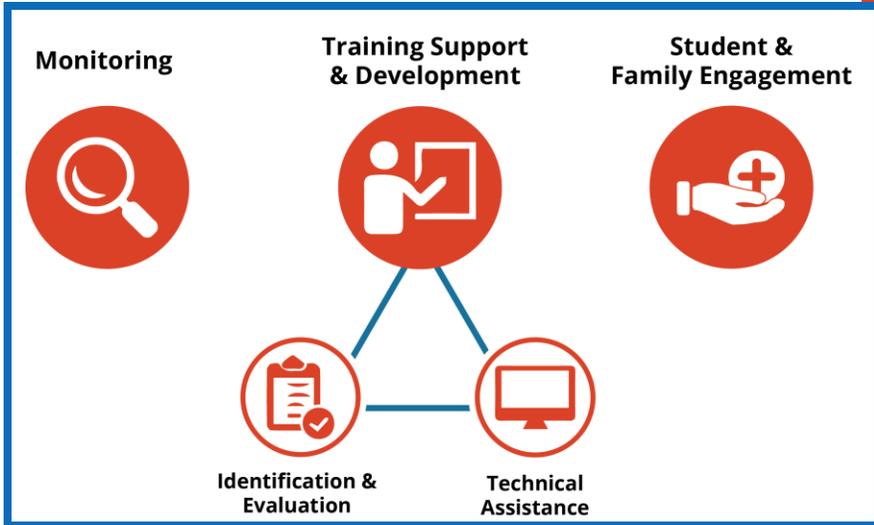


# New Texas SpEd Website - Preview



### Desktop View

### Mobile View



Each of the pieces of the strategic plan (the red circles) are clickable



Each part of the Strategic Plan will have priority initiatives – each of these will be clickable

The desktop view of the TEA website features a blue header with navigation links: Popular Applications, AskTED, ECOS For Educators, Grant Opportunities, TEA Secure Applications, TEAL Login, TEASE Login, and TSDS. Below the header is the TEA logo and a search bar. A secondary navigation bar includes links for A - Z Index, Contact, Employment, Sign Up for Updates, and TEA Correspondence. A main navigation bar contains icons and labels for About TEA, Academics, Finance & Grants, Reports & Data, Student Testing & Accountability, Texas Educators, and Texas Schools. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: Home / Academics / Special Student Populations / Special Education. The title is "Monitoring". A central graphic features a magnifying glass icon and four boxes: Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS), Self-Assessment, RDA (Results Driven Accountability System), and Independent Audit of TEA Monitoring. Below this graphic is the text "Strengthen support and supervision to schools." To the right is a "Special Student Populations" sidebar with a list of categories: Bilingual - ESL Education, Dyslexia, Gifted and Talented Education, Review and Support, Special Education (highlighted), Data and Report, Dispute Resolution and Complaints, Resources for Families, Monitoring, Review, and Support, Regional Supports, and Technical Assistance and Guidance.

Desktop View

The mobile view of the TEA website features a blue header with the TEA logo and a search bar. A hamburger menu icon is on the left. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: Home / Academics / Special Student Populations. The title is "Monitoring". A paragraph states: "Together, we are committed to high expectations and strong systems that achieve equitable outcomes for every student with a disability." Below this is a central graphic with a magnifying glass icon and four boxes: Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS), Self-Assessment, RDA (Results Driven Accountability System), and Independent Audit of TEA Monitoring. Below the graphic is the text "Strengthen support and supervision to schools." The sidebar content is not visible in this view.

Mobile View



# Each of the priority initiatives will have either a progress or a completed graphic

The desktop views show two pages from the TEA website. The left page is titled 'Training, Support & Development' and features a 'Technical Assistance Guides' section with six progress cards: 20% (Feb. 2019), 30% (Feb. 2019), 40% (July 2019), 50% (Sept. 2019), 70% (Nov. 2019), and 100% (End of Feb. 2020). The right page is titled 'Special Student Populations' and features a 'Technical Assistance Networks' section with a 'Strategic Plan Initiative Complete' graphic (100%) and a 'Next Steps' graphic (100%).

Desktop Views

The mobile views show the same two pages from the TEA website, but with a responsive layout. The left page is titled 'Training, Support & Development' and features a 'Technical Assistance Guides' section with six progress cards: 20% (Feb. 2019), 30% (Feb. 2019), 40% (July 2019), 50% (Sept. 2019), 70% (Nov. 2019), and 100% (End of Feb. 2020). The right page is titled 'Special Student Populations' and features a 'Strategic Plan Initiative Complete' graphic (100%) and a 'Next Steps' graphic (100%).

Mobile Views





***TEA Department of Special  
Education***

Web: [www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSped](http://www.tea.texas.gov/TexasSped)

Phone: (512) 463-9414

