2014 Fall TSA Special Education Administrators Meeting
Questions from Districts

HB 5 & GRADUATION

- What are other districts doing to address HB 5 for students on a functional curriculum?
  - Students in life skills are assigned local credit course # for each academic area.
  - Aligning courses with State course numbers. Difficult to get it done at HS campuses.
  - Allen ISD has aligned and used PEIMS codes for functional curriculum. Taught by SE teachers.

Schedule of Services in ARD

- On the schedule of services page for secondary students, do you list the actual name of the core class instead of just English or Math, for example? What do you list on the schedule page for speech only students, a full schedule or just time in speech therapy?
  - One district lists speech time only. Location is gen ed.
  - Midland audit from TEA showed that the ARD schedule had to exactly match the PEIMS schedule. Other districts have had similar experience. Can list elective and don’t have to specify name of elective.
  - Some districts do not list general ed subjects on schedule page.
  - Lots of discussion. Districts that have gone through RF audits were vocal regarding exact matches.

Adult students/Guardians

- What procedures do you have in place for adult students (ID) to participate in ARDs without guardians?
  - SAISD said parents have chosen not to get guardianship, but student is not really capable.
  - NISD will allow an educational power of attorney. What if you have a student that is nonverbal? Eventually move forward and allow parent to attend.
  - Many allow parents to attend, but if parent disagrees then go with student decision.
  - Round Rock would ask their parent liaison to contact the parent to see if they could work with the parent to discuss the need for guardianship.

ARD Paperwork

- Any good ideas on keeping your ARD paperwork compliant and uniform?
  - ISD was shocked when audited by TEA that had so many errors.

  - Allen ISD does a checklist for auditing. LSSP/Ed. Diag run ARDs. They do monthly folder checks using a checklist. They do an audit with each case manager at HS, 2 folders per case manager per month. It has helped train staff to do correct ARD prep. They have 3 clerks that review incoming ARD for errors. Clerks send back to campus for needed corrections. Checking for compliance is the goal.
  - Houston has a tool that is available to staff to use to review ARDs. It is a training tool. Did some mock interviews prior to a TEA audit. The role playing helped. Training provided to staff on how to use the tool.
  - NISD has an audit tool/checklist that has been used for RF Tracker audits. Done at campuses and is subject to interpretation by those using. NISD has full time campus coordinators at HS that are to review ARDs for compliance. They run the ARD.

Advocate Requests

- How are you handling advocate requests to attend parent meetings that are not ARD related? (North East)
Principals feel they need to be present due to advocates attendance at parent meetings, not just ARDS and is very time consuming.

Katy has had this occur. Will send a SE support person to the meeting or an admin will sit in.

NISD - Be cautious to deny a parent the right to invite someone to attend with them. Allen ISD agreed.

HISD – Document the discussion at the meeting and read and sign at parent meeting.

RISD – SE needs to support the campus by providing support. Listen for what is discussed and should it be an ARD rather than a parent meeting.

El Paso – Always get release of information signed to have another person present.

**Staffing**

All districts are seeing so many kids at younger ages that are severe and in need of PPCD and Life Skills units entering districts. It is a huge expense to districts. Many need 1:1 support.

Districts are seeing more aggressive behaviors and extremes. More workman comp claims due to injuries of staff from severely behaviorally challenged kids.

**SPP/PBMAS**

- We would like to hear from districts that have a “0” on PBMAS Indicator 6 – SPED placements in instructional settings 40/41 (Ages 3-5) – regarding what strategies/programs they utilize to achieve compliance.(Fort Worth, Arlington)

  - NISD and BISD do a ECC program which is a collaborative with PPCD and early childhood teachers teaching PPCD eligible students and staff children ages 3 and 4. NISD has an electronic registration. It is a benefit to the district as a recruiting tool. NISD ECC is $525 per month plus $100 registration fee. BISD is $500 plus $100 registration fee. ECC in NISD runs from 6:50 am. to 6:00 pm. NISD also has PK collabs and HeadStart collabs. Headstarts are located within NISD schools and staffed with Headstart staff and PPCD teacher.
  - Wichita Falls has dually certified teachers that co-teach with PK.
  - Ysleta has ECC and PK collabs.
  - SAISD has Headstart collabs and run a locally developed 3 year old PK program. They have PK collabs also.

**Behavior**

- Are districts still doing the TBSI training? If so, what format? (Round Rock)
  - Katy – combines TBSI and CPI training.
  - BISD does as well. Crisis teams required to attend to stay current.
  - For which staff members do you provide CPI training? What other programs have you used? (San Antonio) SAISD says it is so costly to train so much staff yearly. Thought about training after an incident to stay compliant with 30 day timeline requirement.
  - NISD – Uses NCI and trains PPCD, Life Skills, AU staff, Behavior units
  - Katy trains same group as above.

**STAAR**
• What are your thoughts regarding the STAAR Alt2 and the “exemptions”? (Ysleta)
  What are thoughts on going back to paper and pencil and exemptions? What are you doing to
  ensure teachers have time to complete this? Should we (TSA) request an extension to TEA’s
  window? (North East, Northside)

  o Most not there yet, need more info. Don’t think many will qualify for exemptions.
  o Doubtful will have many qualifying for medical or NAAR exceptions. Still processing info.
  o HISD – It is in their Operating Guidelines on their website.

  o STAAR Alt: What are you doing to ensure teachers have time to complete this? Should we
    (TSA) request an extension to TEA’s window? (North East, Northside)

  o Communicate to Supt. as is 9 days due to Presidents Day holiday. Should take to TSA to
    appeal for extension.
  o Preparation time is going to be a major issue for teachers. With only 2 weeks to get all
    prepared this is too demanding. Student outcomes will be impacted. Should TCASE draft
    a statement? Draft a Position Statement.
  o Killeen has written for a waiver. Need a longer window to administer test.
  o HISD said purpose of legislation was to decrease time of prep for teachers and more time
    on task for students’ instruction.
  o TCASE, Janna, stated that she was surprised and pleased with exceptions. Justin Porter at
    TETN questioned timeline. Districts can request more time with good reasoning and
    support. Would need data provided for a Position Statement.
  o All are appreciative of the ALT improvements, but need more time for administration of
    test.
  o The window is open during the Assessment Conf. which pulls CO staff away from
    supervising administration of test.

• STAAR A -Are there any concerns about administering the test and having adequate inventory
  of computers? How are districts handling a plan of care for students who require this documentation?
  (Ysleta, Northeast)

  o The tools provided seem to be a wonderful support for our kids.
    So new that districts don’t have firmed up plans for administration.
  o Questions regarding # of computers, will benchmarks be produced with same tools and
    when student tutorials will be ready are issues being discussed at districts.
  o CCISD – Will have a computer program as many kids have extended time to take test so
    won’t be able to do two groups in one day on computers. They use SOA also so more
    computers are needed. Teachers are wanting to adapt benchmarks and tests on paper that
    shows some of the accommodations on regular curriculum tests.
  o HISD – Kurzweil is becoming more popular due to need for oral administration.
  o There is an RFP out for a testing vendor. Texas may have 1 or 2 vendors in future.
  o NISD is creating a checklist for campus administrators: Train parents, train staff,
    computer inventory, headphone sets, letter going out to SE and 504 parents with State
    brochure explaining tests. Will share.
    Tutorial is good and Educators Guide is good.

18-22

  o Please provide information about the variety of programs your district has for students
    ages 18-22. (Allen, Katy)
  o Irving – Project Search Board approved a teacher and 2 job coaches.
  o Garland – Grant for Project Search. Goal when partner with Project Search is for them to
    have employment upon graduation.
Round Rock has Project Search. Partnered with Seton Hospitals. It is a one year deal. Kids with right training can have successful employment upon graduation. Parents are responsible for transportation. It is part of the agreement.

Allen – Has kids that have been successful and are ready to exit out, but parents refusing to allow to leave before 22.

Midland – experienced same thing with 18-22 pop. Group homes especially been problematic. Need to be patient and work through individually with families. Start discussions with parents at elementary regarding transition and guidelines.

HISD – Use Unique, use Transition strand with older kids. Also have adult transition classes. Communicate with parents a lot. Kids need to be employable to meet graduation requirements.

Irving – Hard to get DARS support. It is time consuming on school district part to work with parents and DARS. Need someone to work with families and DARS to get the needed support.

Austin – travel training is huge piece to teach kids. Need to learn public transportation and how to use.

Dallas - Person Centered planning is being done with many kids. Have a staff person working on this with families. 29 kids in their adult program. Need to start training families on Life Outcomes starting in MS or sooner. Start the Person Centered Process.

1. How are 18+ programs impacting districts as far as graduation rates and PEIMS attendance? When students only need to attend a few days a week or certain hours on certain days, depending on work schedules, we are getting dinged for keeping them in and having difficulty with ADA funding. (Round Rock)

A task force at TEA is working on this issue.

**DYSLEXIA**

1. Have any of you had an audit of your Dyslexia Program to monitor effectiveness, compliance and quality? If so, who conducted the audit? (Boerne)

- Isleta – Through an audit they found that testing done by Teachers as evaluators on dyslexia was inconsistent. So now, teachers do not do any testing.
- El Paso – Hired 2 Diagnosticians, services improved because there was not attached to the campus.
- Richardson - Makes sure that you are following the new Dyslexia handbook. Relies on the Scottish Rite profile. Make sure you can stand behind your testing decisions. They use a committee of knowledgeable staff (2-4 people) all are campus/district staff. Timeframe was the other challenge – 2 year program. But this did not work, because once you are dyslexic, you are always dyslexic. Admin needed training as well, because they were the worst at saying the most inappropriate things.
- Boerne has hired a dyslexia specialist in addition to the reading specialist at every elem. Plus an itinerant that floats between the campuses. BISD has hired Stetson and Assoc. to conduct a Dyslexia Audit of their program.
- In the law it states that all of the teachers that work with the student must have training. Every year, R/ELA teachers must have training in Dyslexia.
- Programs: Wilson, Esperanza, and Scottish Rite, Really Great Reading. MTA (multi teaching approach). Scottish Rite does really good training.
- Houston – Light house education Center
- Richardson - Has started a newcomers group. They give strategies to the teacher in the interim.
- How are people testing for dysgraphia? OrthoGraphic competencies.

1. What programs/interventions are you using with students who are Spanish dominant?
• NISD works closely with Bilingual Dept. but doesn’t have names of interventions.
• Esperanza
• Imagine Learning
• Training for teachers and evaluation staff
• Some feel it is more of an economic issue rather than a language issue
• Calla or maybe Challa Program/Training
• Guided Reading strategies used with kids
• I Station for lower reading levels in Spanish
• Differentiated Instruction

1. Does any district have guidelines to share that provides details about process/procedures for parent requests to allow private duty nurses to attend school with an assigned student? Specifically, have you addressed denying this type of request? What situations are appropriate to consider denying these requests? When does it become appropriate to employ a nurse for a specific student or classroom? (Allen, Northeast)

• RISD – recommend through ARD what is needed for student. They have some forms to complete regarding care.
• Allen – Many kids with private duty nurses in same class. Very cumbersome and hard to manage. Haven’t denied permission for a private duty nurse to come to school with child.
• NISD – PDN are guests in the district. They follow dress codes, cell phone usage rules etc. set up by district. Look at as a related service, nursing. Document in ARD through a Health Care Plan.
• HISD has nurse consultants. If ARD determines nursing is needed then address through ARD as related service and district provides.
• SAISD has a nurse coordinator that reviews cases. They do allow PDN in schools.
• NEISD has PDN riding district buses, but not covered fully under insurance. They are looking at this practice.
• El Paso has strict guidelines that they have Nursing Agencies sign off on.
• Nursing Agencies have asked districts to sign saying the district can’t provide service. Don’t agree to sign.

MISC

1. As technology continues to become an integrated part of the public education environment, how is your district’s response to requests for AT evaluations, devices and support changing? What service models do you find to be the most appropriate and efficient? How many students does an AT specialist carry on his/her caseload? (Allen)

• Ysleta has 1 AT person to provide for most severe.
• HISD – Teams of teachers, SLPs and evaluation staff determine if technology needs are there. If can’t provide then get AT involved.
• Question for future discussion in R20 districts – How are AT services being provided in your district?

2. Are your transportation boundaries flexible when daycare or guardian is located outside school attendance boundaries or district boundaries? Also, does anyone provide transportation for “walk in” speech students? If so, how does that work? (North East)

• Round Rock – Doesn’t go out of district boundaries, but do transport to daycare that may be out of the campus area. Ask parents to look for daycare in the area if possible.
• NISD – Tries to transport within the cluster. Don’t go outside boundaries.
• Amarillo – Transports to the 1 daycare that takes kids with disabilities that is a mile outside their boundary.
• A few districts transport outside if it is a reasonable distance.
3. In Round Rock ISD students may retake an exam they failed, but only for a grade up to 70. Do any districts allow for retakes and the student gets whatever the grade is rather than a maximum of 70? If so, do you consider that modifying the grading policy, thus modifying the curriculum and in turn affecting graduation plan? (Round Rock) RR has a parent wanting same test given multiple times. They are looking at it as modifying the grading policy.
   - Ysleta – kids may have accommodation to retest and then get grade they receive.
   - RISD – Don’t have to give same test. Test on same content, but are given a variation of test.
   - RR – Gives study guide week prior and has study sessions, but parent still asking for multiple testing accommodations. GPA is a major consideration for this parent.
   - Arlington – Kathy Sartain has presented to staff regarding grading. Well received by staff. It has been very helpful. AISD is going to standards based grading.

**TCASE Updates from Janna L.**

- Reviewed a State report on retention. State rate across districts is at 3%, but SE retention rate is at 6%. Largest numbers retained in Kinder and first.

- TEA has had 2 committees: CIP and Steering. They have laid out topics for next 4 meetings. Rider 70 is one of the topics. 7-8 SE Directors are on the committee. They have had 1 meeting. Working on setting PBMAS State targets. Committees are divided into separate work groups to provide info to TEA so TEA is willing to accept input.

- On Sept 8, TEA put out a letter regarding RF Tracker. There will be a series of meetings scheduled to review RF monitoring. If anyone is asked to participate in the work group, please let Janna know. She can give some support to participants.

- PBMAS intervention stages coming out Oct. 17th.

- Transition and Employment Guide was part of legal requirement. Was to be out by Sept. 1, but advocates petitioned TEA for extra time. Roll out is scheduled for Oct. It will be an ongoing project. Once received, districts can add local info on resources to the Guide.

- IEP Facilitation Task Force was very productive. There is a difference between IEP Facilitation process and using IEP Facilitation strategies/techniques. Difference is you have a neutral person facilitating the meeting. Districts can hire own person or use TEA hired people to facilitate. It is free through TEA, but you don’t get to choose the person.

- TEA presented their LAR, Legislative Request, It is on TEA website. Literacy Initiative, NCLB waiver, $ for Technology such as updates to PEIMS, $ for revised PDAS, $ for Complaint issues not specific to SE and more. Priority is closing achievement gap for lower economic and ethnic groups. SE not included in this except in overall count, all student level.

- Graduation rules do not exist yet. A lot of feedback was sent to TEA. Great deal of discussion around modified coursework and endorsements. Advocacy groups presented a lot of recommendations. Lots of pressure for very high standards. May not win on getting modified course work and endorsements to meet.
• 74.13 Talks about 4th math and 4th science. Will send out to us. May have some courses that count in existence now.

• Janna will meet with TCASE Legislative Committee regarding more time for ALT.

• SBOE – Recent hearing looked at instructional arrangements in SE. VAC, 08, added paid or unpaid. 08 helps districts in LRE. Off home campus setting will have changes. Pay attention to this section when it comes out. Disability Rights is at the table and Janna at TCASE is in communication with them frequently.

• DARS – Need for more transition counselors from DARS. 94 DARS Counselors for entire State. 83,000 students with disabilities in the State. Need more available to help kids. DARS is making transition from public school their priority, but aren’t putting any $ into it. In fact have a cut in their projection. Need to talk to legislators about the need for more DARS Counselors.

• Speech – 10 years or more since had a licensing rule change. Tele-therapy is a way to deliver speech therapy to kids. There has been a rule that tele-therapy provider would have to come to the district to evaluate child to see if a good candidate. This is cost prohibitive. Proposed rule change is that face to face is required, but can be by any SLP so can be a district SLP.

• One thought was to do the tele-therapy in house by having a SLP conduct these sessions. It would cut down on in district travel. Consider for bilingual, proportionate share etc. Have to be well aware of all ASHA and licensing rules. Janna will send us info on this.

• Legislature

• Legislators are given homework while not in session. There is a lot of discussion regarding HB5, reducing number of tests at elem. and MS levels.

• Discipline is a topic being discussed. Decriminalizing kids is under discussion. Possibly expanding some parental involvement requirements.

• Truancy – decriminalize. Reduce ability to file on families. Presently shall file after so many days to “may”. Disability Rights is pushing this.

• Cameras in classrooms that are self-contained, Life Skills, Behavior units, Autism units. Hard to oppose as is a safety issue. Costs are extensive for districts. It would be another unfunded mandate.

• Vouchers – Will be back. It is a broad coalition. Anti-voucher – for a child with a disability to go to a private school, the parent and child lose all of their rights and supports. Typically, mild LD kids are ones that private schools will take. It would take $ away from districts needing it for more disabled kids.

• Funding Education in Texas

• Probably won’t go to next level until 2016. Some legislators are talking about it. Kids today are more disabled than 10 years ago. Need some more appropriate funding weights for our kids with significant disabilities. It is the 44 kids. There is no weight for 40s. More support for 40 kids is needed. 40 funding contributes to fund 199, but SE doesn’t get the credit for it. Need to look at some extra funding support for 40s as they do require SE staff support for SDI.

• If you have checklists you use in your district for what needs to be in a SE folder for compliance, please send to Janna.

• Join TCASE!!!!!! Encourage your staff to join.