

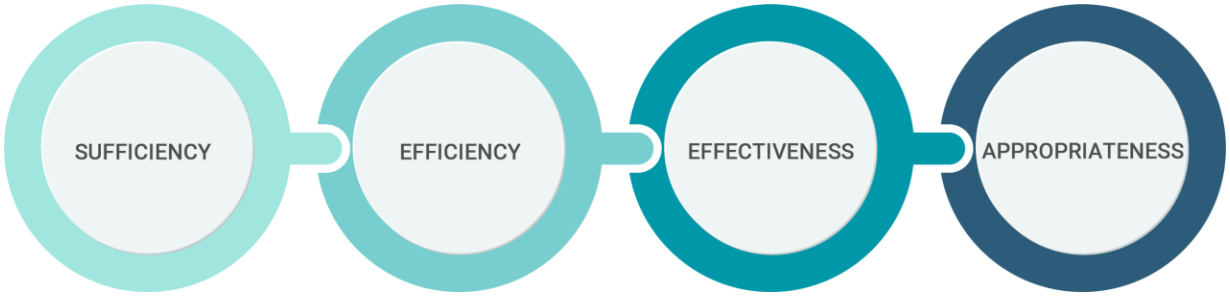
A Review of Staffing and Resource Utilization for Students with Disabilities

New Braunfels Independent School District

STETSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Introduction

New Braunfels Independent School District (New Braunfels ISD) commissioned a structured review of staffing practices for students with disabilities in the Fall of 2026. The district requested a comprehensive staffing review to determine whether it optimally uses available resources to provide services to students with disabilities in accordance with effective research-based practice. Stetson and Associates, Inc. reviewed current staffing practices, gathered perspectives from various stakeholders, and collected data from a variety of sources to identify strengths and weaknesses in the district's practices.



Sufficiency

Sufficiency refers to the adequate number of individuals required to accomplish the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. This includes having sufficient teachers and paraprofessionals to provide services along a continuum that includes advanced support, in-class support, and specialized support settings. It also refers to having adequate staff to address child-find requirements and related services needs, and to leadership and supervisory support for this population of students.

Efficiency

Efficient use of staff refers to the extent to which the system organizes the delivery of needed services to students with disabilities while ensuring the maximum use of time, talent, and resources. Considerations include efficient scheduling, the use of system communication structures, such as electronic management systems with clear guidelines, and a non-categorical approach when assigning special education staff.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which staff achieve success in meeting learners' needs through excellence in instruction and classroom management practices. This includes a view of student performance and outcomes for students with disabilities and the extent to which

collaborative partners (teachers and paraprofessionals) share responsibility in delivering quality instruction.

Appropriateness

Appropriate staffing includes properly trained, qualified teachers and related service providers delivering instructional and related services with support from experienced paraprofessionals. Providers have the necessary tools and resources to implement these services. It also includes the extent to which all individuals understand their clearly defined roles. Appropriateness refers to the extent to which staff accountability systems are in place.

Methodologies

Six basic methodologies were used.

1. A formal **comparable district study** was completed. Information for the study was obtained from the Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) data elements, the Results Driven Accountability Report (RDA) indicators, PEIMS Standard Reports on Student Enrollment by Disability, Staff Salaries and FTE Counts, and Actual Financial Data provided on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website. The written review and analysis of six comparable district statistics on student enrollment with disabilities, assessment performance, graduation rates, staffing for students with disabilities, compliance, budget, and financial information for special education is included in this report along with comparisons to the national, state, and Region 20 levels. Districts selected for this study included:
    - Bastrop ISD
    - Boerne ISD
    - Comal ISD
    - San Marcos CISD
    - Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD
    - Seguin ISD

    Results of the comparable district study are in **Appendix A.**
2. **Interviews** were conducted with the Superintendent, Chiefs of Schools, Chief Human Resources, Chief Academic Officer, Chief of Business Support Services, Director of Financial Services, and the Executive Director of Special Education. These seven individuals provided rich information regarding their perceptions of special education services and staffing practices for students with disabilities, as well as additional data on staffing assignments, district operations, and staff roles and responsibilities.

3. Twelve **focus group sessions** were held. The mixed groups were comprised of campus administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, appraisal staff, ARD facilitators, speech and language pathologists, instructional and related services staff, and special education coordinators. An analysis of comments from each focus group is provided in **Appendix B.**
4. Approximately 1,621 **faculty surveys** regarding the staffing process and instructional impact at the schools were distributed to all instructional staff in the district. A total of 202 were returned. The survey yielded a response rate of 12.5%. This low response rate may limit the representativeness of the findings and increase the potential for nonresponse bias. The data and comments are included in this report to provide additional perspective; however, they should be interpreted cautiously and considered alongside other sources of evidence. In addition to the survey responses, 102 substantive comments were received, addressing the positive aspects of special education services and suggestions for improving services for students with disabilities. These were reviewed and addressed throughout this report. A copy of the survey with results is available in **Appendix C.**
5. Structured **classroom observations** were conducted on six campuses in New Braunfels ISD (two high schools, one middle school, and three elementary schools. A total of 32 classrooms were visited, and observations took place in both general education and special education settings where students with disabilities received services. Brief observations identify practices not observed during a visit, rather than proving their absence during instruction. Data from the classroom observations can be found in **Appendix D.**
6. District-provided **data** was also reviewed. This included Operating Guidelines, district enrollment, district and special education organizational chart, the continuum of services, staffing assignments, referral data for the past three years, and staff and students with disabilities by campus.

This report was developed with the active participation of the New Braunfels ISD central office and campus administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other support service providers. Stetson & Associates, Inc. commends the New Braunfels ISD staff for supporting the review process. We hope this study's findings will support the district's commitment to program improvement and ensure the most effective use of resources to accomplish the goal of success for students with disabilities.

Systems Factors

This study is not a formal evaluation of services for students with disabilities but rather a review of staffing practices and their impact on the quality of services provided.

A system-wide strength emerged as stabilizing factors for special education services. New Braunfels ISD demonstrates a strong foundation for special education services through inclusive practices, positive classroom environments, favorable student outcomes in several areas, and examples of effective collaboration and specialized support. These strengths provide a basis for improving consistency across campuses and strengthening the overall service delivery system.

Additionally, the methods and quantity of information revealed a system factor directly impacting staffing practices for students with disabilities. The district is beginning a comprehensive long-range sustainability process designed to ensure the district remains financially strong while continuing to provide high-quality educational experiences for students.

According to current information from the district's website, New Braunfels ISD serves 9,779 students, of whom 38.6% are economically disadvantaged, 37.5% are identified as at-risk, 15.1% are special education, and 9.9% are emergent bilingual. After years of growth, New Braunfels ISD is now experiencing flattened or declining enrollment at campuses across the district. At the same time, state funding has not kept pace with inflation and the rising costs associated with operating schools, with no substantial increase in state funding to address rising operational costs since 2019. For the 2027–2028 school year, New Braunfels ISD is currently projecting a $7 million budget deficit, with deficits projected to grow in subsequent years if changes are not made.

While flattened or declining enrollment is occurring across the district, the number of students receiving special education services has increased. As district enrollment flattens or declines, growth in the number of students receiving special education services can increase demands for instruction, evaluations, case management, and related services. At the same time, financial constraints heighten the importance of allocating resources carefully. Together, these conditions underscore the need to base staffing decisions on individual student needs and workload demands while examining opportunities to improve scheduling, deployment, and service delivery. The table below represents that growth as compared to the total population of students in the district.

Table 1: Number of Students Receiving Special Education Services from 2022 until 2025

Date	Total Population	Total Students with Disabilities	Percentage
2022	9,673	1,117	11.5
2023	9,744	1,281	13.1
2024	9,777	1,478	15.1
2025	9,890	1,618	16.4

Source: TEA 2022-2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA)

The remaining key findings and recommendations from this report are categorized within the four critical elements previously listed: sufficiency, efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriate use of staff.

Sufficiency

Sufficiency addresses the extent to which the number of staff is adequate to fill the roles needed. This is a particularly complex question because variables such as the quality of services provided, the scheduling of staff, and the extent to which staff members are prepared for their roles contribute to final sufficiency decisions. Class size, caseload, and workload significantly determine staff sufficiency, making it a multifaceted issue requiring thorough analysis.

> ***Does New Braunfels ISD have sufficient staff to provide special education services for students with disabilities?***

Finding 1

Addressing sufficiency requires a comprehensive review of several data points. The first point of review is the number of students receiving special education services.

Table 2: National, State, Regional, and District Comparison of Enrollment for Students with Disabilities

	Total Students with Disabilities	% Students with Disabilities
National	7,500,000	15.0
Texas	852,032	15.4
Region 20	85,104	16.8
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**16.4**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	14.8
Boerne ISD	1,973	17.8
Comal ISD	5,517	18.5
San Marcos CISD	1,591	19.4
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	19.7
Seguin ISD	1,391	19.2

Source: US Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics, Children and Youth with Disabilities (May 2024), Texas Education Agency: 2025 Results Driven Accountability

While current data suggest the district has a higher percentage of students with disabilities than the nation and the state. The district therefore does not appear to have an unusually high special education identification rate when viewed in its regional context. Its percentage is very close to Region 20, suggesting that overall identification alone is not likely to explain staffing or resource pressures. From a comparative-study standpoint, New Braunfels ISD

begins with a relatively typical regional enrollment profile rather than with an exceptionally large special education population.

In addition to the number of students needing services, the district must also consider the type and severity of the disability conditions. An over-representation of students in a disability area that frequently requires more staffing due to behavioral issues, such as ED, OHI, or AU, can often require a higher level of staff.

Table 3: Enrollment of Students with Disability by Primary Disability Category

	Other Health Impaired	Intellectual Disability	Emotional Disability	Learning Disability	Speech Impairment	Autism
Texas	95,062/11.2%	72,540/8.5%	42,697/5%	376,552/44.2%	130,425/15.3%	160,218/18.8%
Region 20	9,519/11.2%	6,398/7.5%	4,490/5.3%	38,251/44.9%	13,958/16.4%	13,597/16%
New Braunfels ISD	**216/13.3%**	**69/4.3%**	**75/4.6%**	**771/47.7%**	**254/15.7%**	**244/15.1%**
Bastrop ISD	182/9.2%	186/9.4%	68/3.4%	1,033/52.1%	355/17.9%	259/14.2%
Boerne ISD	270/13.7%	94/4.8%	104/5.3%	949/48.1%	370/18.8%	281/13.1%
Comal ISD	803/14.6%	309/5.6%	360/6.5%	2,548/46.2%	739/13.4%	243/13.4%
San Marcos CISD	203/12.8%	134/8.4%	59/3.7%	862/54.2%	191/12%	273/17%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	327/11.1%	157/5.3%	213/7.2%	1,444/49%	374/12.7%	483/16.5%
Seguin ISD	224/16.1%	117/8.4%	62/4.5%	516/37.1%	247/17.8%	243/17.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025-2026 PEIMS Standard Reports Special Education Student Enrollment Information by Disability Category

The disability distribution in New Braunfels ISD is dominated by learning disability, with 771 students, or 47.7% of students with disabilities. The next largest categories are speech impairment at 15.7%, autism at 15.1%, and other health impairment at 13.3%. Intellectual disability and emotional disturbance account for much smaller proportions, at 4.3% and 4.6%, respectively.

The overall pattern is generally comparable to the state and Region 20. Learning disability represents 44.2% statewide and 44.9% in Region 20, so New Braunfels ISD is somewhat higher in this category. Conversely, New Braunfels ISD has lower proportions of intellectual disability and autism than the statewide percentages shown in the table.

Several peer districts have even higher concentrations of learning disability, including Bastrop ISD at 52.1% and San Marcos CISD at 54.2%. Seguin ISD, by contrast, is substantially lower at 37.1%.

The main implication is that New Braunfels ISD's disability profile does not appear unusually weighted toward the highest intensity categories. Its population contains a somewhat larger proportion of students with learning disabilities, which may place greater demands on inclusion, intervention, co-teaching, and academic support models rather than on highly specialized low-incidence programs.

The next data point to consider is the percentage of special education teachers and the teacher-to-student ratio for students with disabilities.

Table 4: State/Region and Comparable District Staffing Ratios for Special Education

	Students With Disabilities*	Special Education Teachers	Percentage Of Special Education Teachers	Teacher: Student With a Disability	Teacher Turnover Rate
Texas	852,032	42,196	11	20	19
Region 20	85,104	4,340	13	20	18
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**53**	**8**	**31**	**20**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	59	7	34	27
Boerne ISD	1,973	138	20	14	16
Comal ISD	5,517	321	16	17	17
San Marcos CISD	1,591	112	19	14	22
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	165	17	18	14
Seguin ISD	1,391	42	9	33	22

*Source: Texas Education Agency: 2024-2025 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) * Texas Education Agency: 2025 Results Driven Accountability*

New Braunfels ISD serves 1,618 students with disabilities with 53 special education teacher FTEs, resulting in approximately 31 students with disabilities per special education teacher. This is substantially higher than both the Texas and Region 20 ratios of 20:1.

The percentage of the teaching workforce assigned to special education reinforces this difference. In New Braunfels ISD, 8% of teachers are special education teachers, compared with 11% statewide and 13% in Region 20. Among the comparison districts, only Bastrop ISD has a lower percentage, while Seguin ISD is slightly higher. By contrast, Boerne ISD, San Marcos CISD, SCUC ISD, and Comal ISD devote approximately twice the proportion of their teaching workforce to special education as New Braunfels ISD.

The student-to-special-education-teacher ratios show essentially the same pattern. New Braunfels ISD's 31:1 ratio is considerably higher than Boerne ISD, San Marcos CISD, Comal ISD, and SCUC ISD. Only Bastrop ISD and Seguin ISD have higher ratios. Thus, regardless of whether staffing is viewed as a percentage of the teaching workforce or relative to the number of students with disabilities, New Braunfels ISD is clearly operating toward the lean end of the comparison group.

It should be noted that the staffing figures presented above do not reflect the district's most current data and additional data was provided by the district addressing current teacher positions.

Table 5: Current Staffing Numbers and Ratios for Special Education

	Students With Disabilities as of 8/25/26	Special Education Teachers as of 10.26.26	Teacher: Student With a Disability
New Braunfels ISD	**1,804**	**106**	**1:17**

Source: New Braunfels ISD Data

Updated district data indicate a substantially different staffing picture from the historical comparison data. The district reported 1,804 students with disabilities and 106 special education teachers, resulting in approximately 17.1 students per teacher.

The difference between the approximately 53 special education teachers reported in TAPR and the district's current count of 106 reflects Ascender coding issues, the inclusion of approximately 12 to 13 dyslexia teachers following the TEA coding transition, and 21 FTEs approved by the Board last spring. If these positions represent filled teacher FTEs comparable to those reported in Table 4, the updated ratio is lower than the historical state and regional ratios and does not support a conclusion of insufficient special education teachers districtwide. However, an aggregate ratio does not establish whether staffing is sufficient at individual campuses or within specific programs. Sufficiency must also be assessed through student service requirements, instructional intensity, staff responsibilities, vacancies, and the distribution of assignments.

New Braunfels ISD's 20% teacher turnover rate is higher than Texas, Region 20, Boerne ISD, Comal ISD and SCUC ISD. Only San Marcos CISD, Seguin ISD, and Bastrop ISD have higher turnover. Of particular interest, the three districts with the highest student-to-special-education-teacher ratios, Bastrop ISD, Seguin ISD, and New Braunfels ISD, have three of the four highest teacher turnover rates in the comparison group. The data do not establish that heavier special education staffing ratios cause turnover, particularly because the turnover measure applies to teachers generally rather than exclusively to special education teachers.

Statements across interviews, focus groups and results of the survey support a perception that New Braunfels ISD is understaffed regarding special education teachers. Comments across all focus groups identified staffing as a primary barrier to the provision of services for students with disabilities. Respondents described unfilled special education positions whose caseloads are redistributed to remaining staff, repeated year-to-year turnover in speech and early childhood positions, and paraprofessionals pulled to cover for absent staff when substitutes are unavailable. Several noted that these gaps result in IEP minutes not being met. Some respondents contrasted limited campus-level staffing with the size of the district-level special education office.

> *"When a special education position goes unfilled or a resignation occurs, those students are simply divided among the remaining case managers." — Special Education Teacher*
>
> *"Minutes are not being met due to shortage in staff. When our paras are being pulled to sub or we are not fully staffed, it is affecting the kids' needs." — General Education Teacher*

Data from the faculty survey quantifies the perception of understaffing in the district.

F1 Our campus has sufficient allocations for teachers and paraeducators to provide appropriate staff-to-student ratios in inclusive settings.



F2 Our campus has sufficient staffing allocations to provide support in specialized settings.



When asked whether their campus has adequate staffing allocations for teachers and paraeducators to maintain appropriate staff-to-student ratios in an inclusive setting, almost two-thirds (59%) report insufficient staffing. When asked the same question about specialized support settings, similar staffing concerns were noted.

Of the 102 substantive comments from the survey, 35% described concerns related to caseloads, paperwork, and work completed outside contract hours, including ARDs, IEPs, and documentation. An additional 31% referenced staffing shortages, vacancies, turnover, or uncovered absences.

Sufficiency must also account for instructional delivery, case management, collaboration, and documentation, not simply student headcounts or scheduled service minutes. Focus groups and survey comments described planning periods absorbed by ARDs, IEP preparation, meetings, and documentation, with work extending into evenings and weekends.

Another factor that can contribute to the staffing issue of teachers and paraprofessionals is salary.

Table 6: Base Salary Comparison for Teacher and Educational Aides Average Base Pay

	Teachers	Educational Aides
Texas	$68,001	$26,281
Region 20	$66,697	$27,362
New Braunfels ISD	**$66,654**	**$25,439**
Bastrop ISD	$61,487	$27,775
Boerne ISD	$65,788	$28,044
Comal ISD	$64,669	$25,259
San Marcos CISD	$64,042	$29,631
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	$68,283	$26,798
Seguin ISD	$64,852	$27,985

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025-2026 Staff Salaries and FTE Counts

New Braunfels ISD's salary position varies substantially by staff category. The district reports an average teacher salary of $66,654 which is below the Texas average of $68,001 and slightly below the Region 20 average of $66,967. Among the comparison districts, New Braunfels ISD exceeds Bastrop ISD, Boerne ISD, Comal ISD, San Marcos CISD, and Seguin ISD, but falls below SCUC ISD. Thus, while New Braunfels ISD is slightly below state and regional averages, its teacher compensation remains competitive with most comparison districts. Educational aide pay in New Braunfels ISD is $25,439, below Texas, Region 20, and most peers; only Comal ISD is slightly lower. The district does not provide stipends to any special education teaching positions.

Overall, New Braunfels ISD's compensation structure does not indicate a broad salary disadvantage relative to comparable districts, although teachers and educational aide salaries fall below state and regional averages.

> ***Summary of Finding 1:*** *Current districtwide staffing totals do not establish a general shortage of special education teachers; however, concerns remain regarding the sufficiency of staffing in specific assignments.*

Updated district data suggest increased overall staffing capacity, while staff feedback indicates continuing workload and coverage concerns. A review of filled teacher FTEs, campus and program assignments, and student service requirements is needed to determine where additional staffing or reassignment is warranted. Special education teacher capacity is comparatively lean, and multiple sources identify workload, insufficient protected time, and coverage concerns.

Finding 2

Appraisal Staff

Appraisal staff include school psychologists and educational diagnosticians. Their roles and responsibilities differ, and licensure and certification requirements determine the scope of assessment for these positions.

Table 7: Base Comparison of Staffing Information for Appraisal Staff

	Students With Disabilities*	Educational Diagnosticians	School Psychologists	Total Appraisal Staff	Appraisal Staff Per Student with a Disability
Texas	852,032	6,469	2,394	8,863	96
Region 20	85,104	285	371	656	130
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**9**	**3**	**12**	**135**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	12	6	18	110
Boerne ISD	1,973	4	10	14	141
Comal ISD	5,517	16	28	44	125
San Marcos CISD	1,591	4	6	10	159
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	10	15	25	118
Seguin ISD	1,391	6	5	11	126

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025-2026 Staff Salaries and FTE Counts (Does Not Include Contract Staff)

** Texas Education Agency:2025 Results Driven Accountability*

TEA data indicates that New Braunfels ISD has 12 appraisal staff FTEs, nine educational diagnosticians and three school psychologists, for 1,618 students with disabilities, or approximately 135 students with disabilities per appraisal staff member. This ratio is slightly higher than Region 20's 130. It is also higher than Bastrop ISD, Comal ISD, SCUC ISD, and Seguin ISD, though lower than Boerne ISD and San Marcos CISD. This data must be interpreted with caution, as it does not include contract service providers.

Current data provided by the district reflects 17 total appraisal staff - 12 diagnosticians and five school psychologists for the current 1,636 students served, adjusting the appraisal staff per student with a disability ratio to 96. The data indicate greater appraisal capacity for staffing than the historical TEA figures suggest. This updated ratio is more favorable than Region 20's ratio of 130:1 and those of all comparison districts listed. However, these comparisons involve different reporting periods and should be interpreted with caution.

Updated staffing data suggest that appraisal capacity has increased substantially, shifting the focus from aggregate staffing levels to workload distribution and service delivery. Evaluation volume and complexity, reevaluations, behavioral assessments, meeting responsibilities, and completion timelines should determine whether current staffing is sufficient.

The district has strengthened evaluation services through improved staffing stability, additional diagnostician positions, district-employed school psychologists, and collaborative assessment practices. However, focus group participants consistently described workload pressures associated with transfer evaluations, increasing referrals, reevaluations, and behavioral assessment demands. Local scheduling and procedural expectations reportedly compound these pressures, limiting time for comprehensive evaluations and contributing to extended work hours. These findings suggest a need to examine evaluation capacity using workload complexity, referral trends, meeting responsibilities, and seasonal demands, rather than filled positions or caseload counts alone.

F3 Our campus has sufficient staffing allocations to meet Child-Find requirements.



Data from the faculty survey suggests that a majority of staff (53%) believe their campus does have adequate staffing allocations to meet Child-Find requirements.

Texas had seen a significant increase in Full and Individual Initial Evaluations (FIIE) over the past several years. The requirement to conduct an FIIE for students suspected of having dyslexia has affected this number, as have actions and requirements from the Texas Education Agency, parent request for private school vouchers, and the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Although the study did not determine the contribution of each factor, interview and focus group participants described dyslexia-related evaluation requirements, student transfers, and increasing referrals as contributing to workload pressures.

Table 8: Number of Initial Evaluations

Date	Number of Initial Evaluations
2023-24 SY	339
2024-25 SY	315
2025-26 SY	450

Source: New Braunfels ISD Data

Data provided by the district highlights the current pattern of referrals. This trend is concerning because a sustained increase in FIIEs significantly expands the workload and staffing demands placed on appraisal personnel. As referral volumes rise, appraisal staff must manage more evaluations, eligibility determinations, and ARD committee participation within required timelines, increasing the risk of delays and reduced evaluation quality. Interview and focus group participants described dyslexia-related evaluation requirements, student transfers, and increasing referrals as contributing to workload pressures. Without strategic adjustments to referral practices, staffing models, and early intervention systems, the district may face challenges maintaining compliance, ensuring timely evaluations, and delivering consistent, high-quality services to students.

Speech-Language Pathologists and Related Services

Speech Therapy services for students with disabilities are typically provided by a licensed speech pathologist, a speech pathologist in their clinical fellowship year (CFY), or a speech therapy assistant. The roles and responsibilities of these individuals are limited by their licensing requirements, and a licensed speech pathologist must supervise the CFY and speech therapy assistant. The licensing board limits the number of supervision hours per licensee, and a speech therapy assistant may not represent speech therapy at the ARD committee meeting or complete evaluations. These limitations can significantly impact the staffing ratios in a district.

Table 9: Comparison of Speech-language Pathologist Staff

	Students With Disabilities*	Speech Therapists/ Pathologists (SLP)	SLP Per Student with a Disability
Texas	852,032	6,490	131
Region 20	85,104	591	144
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**13**	**124**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	12	165
Boerne ISD	1,973	16	123
Comal ISD	5,517	44	125
San Marcos CISD	1,591	9	176

	Students With Disabilities*	Speech Therapists/ Pathologists (SLP)	SLP Per Student with a Disability
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	23	128
Seguin ISD	1,391	11	126

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025-2026 Staff Salaries and FTE Counts (Does Not Include Contract Staff)

** Texas Education Agency:2025 Results Driven Accountability*

TEA data indicates that the district has 13 SLP FTEs (9 SLPs and 4 SLP-As), resulting in approximately 124 students with disabilities per SLP. This compares favorably with both Texas at 131 and Region 20 at 144. New Braunfels ISD also has a more favorable ratio than Bastrop ISD, San Marcos CISD, SCUC ISD, and Seguin ISD, and is essentially comparable to Boerne ISD and Comal ISD. This data must be interpreted with caution, as it does not include contract service providers.

Within the limitations of using total students with disabilities as the denominator, this table does not suggest an obvious SLP staffing deficit in New Braunfels ISD. The district appears relatively well positioned compared with the broader regional benchmark and most peers.

However, focus group participants described speech-language services as challenged by persistent recruitment and retention difficulties, high caseloads, and substantial evaluation, meeting, and documentation responsibilities. Frequent turnover at some campuses reportedly disrupts continuity, while a prior staffing gap resulted in outstanding service minutes and concerns about the therapeutic appropriateness of concentrated make-up sessions. Expanded SLP assistant staffing and ARD facilitator support were identified as positive strategies for increasing capacity and reducing role overload. These findings suggest reviewing total SLP workload, compensation and hiring flexibility, assistant deployment, and service continuity to determine whether staffing adequately supports student needs.

F4 There are sufficient related service providers and speech-language pathologists to meet ARD/IEP requirements.



Comparative data is not available for related service providers. Still, data from the faculty survey suggests that almost two-thirds of staff (64%) believe the campus has sufficient speech-language pathology and related services staff to meet ARD/IEP requirements.

Focus group participants valued related services staff and campus administrative support but described limited staffing capacity, high OT caseloads, and scheduling challenges for itinerant providers. Growing early childhood enrollment reportedly adds pressure, while reliance on single districtwide PT and adaptive PE providers limits coverage flexibility. Participants also identified uneven access to sensory support and limited specialized assistive technology expertise. These comments suggest examining provider's workload, travel and scheduling demands, service delivery records, and access to consultation and specialized support.

> *"The number of students on a caseload should not determine staffing decisions. It should be specifically looking at the needs of the students on the caseload." — Related Service Provider*

Another factor that may contribute to the recruitment and retention of appraisal staff and speech-language pathologists is salary.

Table 10: Salary Comparison for Appraisal Staff and Speech-Language Pathologists Average Base Pay

	Educational Diagnosticians	School Psychologists	Speech-Language Pathologists
Texas	$78,226	$78,628	$72,649
Region 20	$76,824	$74,945	$68,006
New Braunfels ISD	**$74,168**	**$78,670**	**$66,518**
Bastrop ISD	$74,616	$72,245	$62,692
Boerne ISD	$69,834	$66,789	$65,379
Comal ISD	$76,220	$72,581	$75,164
San Marcos CISD	$73,451	$69,883	$65,603
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	$75,412	$77,911	$64,367
Seguin ISD	$69,009	$73,307	$63,869

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025-26 Staff Salaries and FTE Counts

Educational diagnosticians average $74,168, below Texas and Region 20 and below Comal ISD and SCUC ISD, though above Boerne ISD and Seguin ISD. School psychologist pay is much more competitive: New Braunfels ISD averages $78,670, slightly above the statewide rate and higher than all comparison districts listed.

SLP pay, at $66,518, is below Texas and Region 20 but competitive with most peers. Comal ISD is the clearest outlier at $75,164.

Overall, New Braunfels ISD's compensation structure does not indicate a broad salary disadvantage relative to comparable districts, although diagnostician, and SLPs salaries fall

below state and regional averages. School psychologist compensation is particularly competitive.

The district employs ARD Facilitators to coordinate, plan, and prepare compliance documents for students eligible for special education services. The ARD Facilitator is also responsible for chairing ARD meetings at assigned campuses. The ability to conduct ARD meetings virtually was expressed as a positive, which has dramatically increased family participation, especially for parents who are at work or have limited flexibility.

As a result of the increase in evaluations and the growing number of students with disabilities, there is not sufficient appraisal staff, speech-language pathologists, or ARD Specialists to support campus-based efforts in providing services for students with disabilities, including monitoring compliance, conducting FIIEs, providing instructional support, and responding to multiple matters associated with quality special education services.

Department Staff

Special education departments are typically structured around multiple variables, including student disability types and levels of need, instructional settings and program models, school levels and feeder patterns, and specialized functions such as evaluation, related services, health supports, and compliance oversight. As a result, staffing alone does not provide an accurate or comparable measure of capacity or efficiency.

In New Braunfels ISD, the department is organized under an executive director, an assistant director, three coordinators, and three specialists.

In a special education department, these positions typically divide responsibility as follows. Exact duties vary with district size and organizational structure. Typically, the executive director sets direction and holds overall responsibility for special education while the assistant director translates department priorities into coordinated daily operations. Coordinators manage defined programs, services or a group of campuses while specialists provide focused expertise and practical support to improve services. The key distinction is: executive directors set direction and allocate resources; assistant directors oversee implementation; coordinators manage assigned services; and specialists build staff capacity and support student services. Clear assignments help prevent duplicated oversight and conflicting guidance to campuses.

Comments about special education department administrators reflected appreciation for their expertise and support, alongside concerns about coordination and clarity. Focus group participants praised leadership continuity, legal knowledge, trust-building, supportive communication, and targeted classroom walkthroughs. However, participants and interviewees also described inconsistent guidance, multiple communication streams, competing campus and district expectations, and frequent directives without clear priorities.

Some principals perceived departmental support as overly focused on processes, with some support personnel functioning more as visitors than integrated campus partners. These comments suggest opportunities to clarify administrative responsibilities, streamline communication, and strengthen campus collaboration; they do not establish that the department has too many administrators.

The district also employs 14 ARD Facilitators. ARD Facilitators coordinates and guides the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee process so meetings are organized, collaborative, and focused on developing an appropriate individualized education program (IEP).

Typical responsibilities include:

- Before meetings: Coordinate scheduling, confirm required participants, monitor deadlines, and ensure necessary information and draft documents are ready.
- During meetings: Guide the agenda, encourage parent and staff participation, clarify procedures, and help the committee work through disagreements.
- After meetings: Ensure decisions are accurately documented, paperwork is completed, and responsibilities and next steps are communicated.
- Ongoing support: Help staff understand ARD procedures, documentation expectations, and timelines.

Focus group participants valued ARD facilitators for coordinating meetings, monitoring timelines and documentation, supporting difficult parent conversations, and reducing administrative responsibilities for teachers, SLPs, and administrators. Expanded facilitator staffing reportedly improved campus support and allowed staff to focus on their primary responsibilities. However, participants described recurring turnover, including five facilitators at one high school in the previous year and annual changes at another campus over four years. Competing campus and district expectations created challenges when enforcing preparation deadlines and obtaining required paperwork. Participants also reported conflicting guidance, insufficient meeting notice, and instances of teachers not being invited to ARD meetings. Although guidelines, templates, and peer support were valued, the role's steep learning curve and compensation concerns were identified as challenges to retention.

Overall, comments raised questions about the distribution of resources between direct student services and positions further removed from daily service delivery. Participants also recognized benefits from expanded facilitator and evaluation staffing. Interview findings raise questions about whether overall growth in special education staffing and expenditures has translated into corresponding improvements in service delivery and student outcomes. Leaders emphasized examining staff deployment, role clarity, scheduling, and campus integration. These concerns support reviewing the department's staffing structure and

effectiveness which will be addressed later in the report, but do not establish that the department or its central office is overstaffed.

> ***Summary of Finding 2:*** *Reported workload pressures and service gaps warrant position-specific review to determine where additional staffing, revised deployment, or procedural changes are needed.*

The appraisal ratio of 96 students with disabilities per appraisal FTE is somewhat lower than Region 20's 130. Interviews and focus groups described evaluation pressures associated with transfers, initial referrals, and reevaluations, while also reporting improved staffing stability and currently filled assessment positions. Speech staffing compares favorably at 124 students with disabilities per SLP, versus 131 statewide and 144 regionally. Nevertheless, participants reported heavy workloads, turnover, and outstanding service minutes. Focus group comments about ARD Facilitators suggest a need to clarify supervisory authority, establish shared campus and district expectations, strengthen onboarding, and examine workload and compensation factors affecting retention. OT, PT, Adaptive PE, bilingual services, and assistive technology capacity also surfaced as concerns. Favorable aggregate ratios do not resolve workload or service coverage questions. Actual recipients, service intensity, evaluation duties, travel, vacancies, and make-up obligations must be examined.

Finding 3

Texas has a long history of supporting the fundamental skill of reading. This history focuses on early identification and intervention for children who experience reading difficulties. In support of dyslexia legislation passed by the Texas Legislature in January 1986, the State Board of Education (SBOE) first approved a handbook titled Dyslexia and Related Disorders: An Overview of State and Federal Requirements. The handbook provided school districts and parents/guardians with information regarding the state's dyslexia laws and their relation to these federal laws: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 as amended in 2008, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In 2023, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3928, which changed how dyslexia is evaluated, identified, and taught. As a result, the handbook was updated again and went into effect in June 2024.

The most significant change required districts to provide students identified with dyslexia with full special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), rather than the previously common practice of offering limited accommodations through Section 504 plans. This shift aimed to ensure that students with dyslexia receive comprehensive evaluations and individualized education programs (IEPs) tailored to their specific needs.

Over the past decade, the identification rate of dyslexia in Texas students has more than doubled. This surge reflects heightened awareness and improved screening processes within the state's education system. However, this rapid increase has also placed significant strain on school resources. Districts are facing challenges such as hiring qualified dyslexia specialists, providing adequate staff training, and managing the financial implications of expanded services.

Some new requirements require the multidisciplinary committee conducting an FIIE to include a professional with expertise in the reading process, dyslexia and related disorders, and dyslexia instruction. The ARD committee must also include a professional with expertise in these areas. Schools are encouraged to employ highly trained individuals for dyslexia intervention; however, they are not required to be certified in special education.

While the staffing study is not a formal program evaluation around quality standards, several issues around dyslexia services were mentioned in focus groups and during interviews. Following is a summary of the comments.

Dyslexia instruction produces positive results in some settings.	Participants praised Reading by Design at elementary and middle school. One middle school reported no students continuing into high school intervention in two years. Campus-based dyslexia teachers also provide consultation to general education teachers.
Caseload growth is straining instructional capacity and program fidelity.	Reports included caseloads of nearly 50 and one middle school interventionist serving 59 students across six classes. Participants described groups exceeding stated program limits, mixed instructional levels, and substitute shortages that further increased group size.
Scheduling sometimes compromises access to core instruction.	Cross-grade grouping and pull-out schedules reportedly cause students to miss Tier 1 instruction. Experiences varied: some campuses protect dyslexia schedules, while others reportedly schedule these services last.
The available program does not consistently fit the full range of student needs.	Participants described students who struggle with the pace, attention demands, or session length. They requested smaller, slower-paced groups and alternative approaches. Some also questioned requiring program completion when students' needs had changed.
Progress monitoring and decisions about next steps need greater consistency.	Participants reported inconsistent monitoring practices and no clear process for responding when students fail to progress. Comments also raised concerns about exits, subsequent requests for reentry, and support after intervention ends.
Bilingual services and transitions have gaps.	Participants reported late identification, limited bilingual dyslexia staffing, and no clear Spanish-language continuation into middle school after Esperanza.

Training is valued, but staff qualifications and deployment limit flexibility.	Region 20 support received praise. Participants noted limited Reading by Design training among special education teachers, while expanded training opportunities and support for two teachers pursuing advanced preparation were identified positively.
IEP and case-management responsibilities need clarification.	Participants reported special education teachers writing goals for students they do not know, while dyslexia teachers prepare present levels and goals without holding the case-management role.

Most districts utilize their dyslexia specialists/teachers to provide dyslexia instruction; however, these staff members cannot case-manage students with an IEP unless they are certified in special education. Case management involves coordinating services and support for students with disabilities to ensure they receive appropriate educational opportunities. It typically includes ensuring the IEP is developed, implemented, and reviewed annually, monitoring student progress toward IEP goals, and working with teachers, therapists, administrators, and families to implement IEP services.

The interview summary reinforces the workload concern specifically addressing the issue of dyslexia teachers who cannot case manage which add responsibilities to certified special education teachers.

Also reported during focus groups was the concern that special education teachers' involvement in dyslexia instruction had been reduced and that limited access to training restricted who could provide services. Specifically:

- Special education teachers had previously been trained in dyslexia instruction but were subsequently pulled from that role and were reportedly several years behind on training updates.
- A previous model using special education teachers trained in Reading by Design had faded. Participants suggested restoring this capacity to provide smaller, slower-paced groups.
- Participants reported that special education teachers were not being trained in Reading by Design, limiting the number of staff available to deliver intervention.

The notes do not reference an explicitly established policy prohibiting special education teachers from providing dyslexia instruction, rather a current practice.

> ***Summary of Finding 3:*** *Dyslexia staffing capacity appears insufficient to consistently meet the volume and range of student needs.*

Although participants identified effective instruction and positive results in some settings, they reported high caseloads, instructional groups exceeding stated program guidelines,

and scheduling conflicts that reduce access to core instruction. Limited bilingual staffing and the reduced use of special education teachers trained in dyslexia instruction further constrain capacity to provide appropriately sized groups, flexible pacing, and continuity across grade levels. These reports indicate a need to assess staffing sufficiency using student needs, instructional grouping requirements, and service schedules rather than caseload totals alone.

Efficiency

Efficient staff use occurs when the district maximizes staff members' time and talent. Service scheduling, resource allocation, communication structures, and clear, consistent guidelines impact efficiency.

> ***Does the district efficiently utilize the special education staff?***

Finding 1

Current best practices and legislative regulations support a continuum of placement for students with disabilities, with a strong expectation that every student is viewed as a general education student and a member of his or her enrolled grade. A full array of service options for students with disabilities refers to the type and level of services and supports available to students with disabilities that are individually determined and based on the specific needs of the student. The "full array" of services and supports is often referred to as the continuum of services and typically includes:

- **Advance Supports:** Supports that are provided to a student with a disability prior to instruction. This includes supports such as preparing accommodations, modifying content, providing a behavior checklist, and other activities that will enable the student to access the general curriculum standards in the general education setting without another adult in the classroom. Ongoing collaboration between the special education provider and the general education teachers is critical for this type of support to be successful.
- **In-Class Support:** Services are provided within the general education setting. This includes using peers to assist a student with a disability, providing an paraprofessional or special education teacher within the general education setting two to three times per week (support facilitation), or the most intensive in-class support; and formal co-teaching, where two certified teachers jointly plan, prepare, and deliver instruction daily for a specified segment of time, generally the entire content period.
- **Specialized Supports:** Services are delivered in another location for a specific part of the day by a special education teacher or specially certified personnel. This option is considered when advanced support and/or in-class support are insufficient to enable the student to progress in the enrolled grade-level curriculum. It typically involves students with disabilities being pulled out of the general education classroom for scheduled times to receive targeted instructional services that cannot be delivered within the general education setting. For students with more severe disabilities, it

may be extended, and the students may require pre-requisite skills to access the enrolled grade-level curriculum.

These three primary options are general descriptors yet reinforce that special education is a service with specially designed instruction (SDI) provided to students with disabilities, not a special location or classroom. It also reinforces that students may need a variety of these services throughout the day from different providers. The appropriate supports and services for a student must be carefully and systematically considered, using the enrolled grade level as a reference point. The full array of service and support options would be equitably distributed across all schools, class sizes, and caseloads, with a focus on consistent implementation from campus to campus.

New Braunfels ISD offers a large array of services on the continuum in line with best practices for students with disabilities. The district provided the following information pertaining to those services and supports.

Early Childhood Special Education

Collaborative Supports
General Education Teacher plus Certified Special Education Teacher providing direct SDI and consultation.

ECSE Supported Inclusion
A Dual Certified (General Education and Special Education) Teacher provides both core instruction and specially designed instruction throughout the instructional day in the general education classroom.

ECSE Life Skills Classroom
A certified special education teacher provides intensive specially designed instruction, functional academics, adaptive behavior instruction, and related services in a specialized classroom.

Kindergarten through 12th Grade

Advanced Supports
A general education teacher provides Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to students with disabilities and instruction to non-disabled peers.

Support Facilitation 2 or 3
Is provided in the general education setting by a special education teacher or paraprofessional. When provided by a paraprofessional, the paraprofessional must work under the direct supervision of a certified special education teacher. The supervising teacher provides direction, communicates student needs, monitors implementation, and offers ongoing feedback.

Co Teach

Co Teach is a service provided in the general education setting in which a special education teacher and general education teacher share responsibility for planning, instruction, and student progress. Powerhouse models, including station teaching, parallel teaching, and alternative teaching, allow both teachers to actively provide targeted instruction and support.

Specialized Support

Specialized Support is a special education setting taught by a special education certified teacher. Students served in this setting have a modified curriculum aligned with their unique needs and impact of disability.

Specialized Instructional Behavior Supports (SIBS)

Push in Support: Support provided to address student behaviors. This service can be provided in the general education setting.

Self-Contained Support: Support provided to students that need a specialized behavior intervention. This service and support is provided in a special education setting.

Social Skills: Social Skills instruction takes place daily in a special education setting and is taught by a Special Education certified teacher.

Push-in support is provided within the general education setting to promote inclusion and access.

Areas of Support

- Support for social/emotional/behavior needs
- Instruction to address social skills, sensory and self-regulation challenges
- Flexible support in both general education and/or special education setting
- Crisis prevention/intervention/management

Life Skills Supports

Structured Support: Instruction is provided in a structured, consistent, small group setting based on each student's individual needs.

Academic Instruction: A certified special education teacher provides an alternate curriculum with access to enrolled grade level TEKS through vertically aligned prerequisite skills.
Functional Skills: Instruction combines functional academics with daily living, self-help, social, communication, and motor skills.

General Education Access: Students participate with nondisabled peers and in campus activities to the greatest extent appropriate.

Life Skills placement is determined by the ARD committee. Instruction is individualized, functional, and age appropriate. Student progress is measured through ongoing data collection. Instruction may occur individually, in small groups, in general education settings, and in the community.

Instructional Focus

- Structured, consistent, small group instruction
- Grade level TEKS access through prerequisite skills
- Daily living, social communication, and motor skills
- Independence vocational skills, and community readiness

Gateway 18 Plus

18+ Community Base Program

Community Exploration: Students will explore their community where they live, work, volunteer, and play. The goal: determine personal areas of interest for each transition domain (employment, volunteer, transportation, community living, recreational leisure, and post-secondary education). Personalized Transition Goals: Student's goal is to sustain work or be in the community for 1- 2 hours per day. 10-20 hours per week 18+ service time per ARD Committee

Program Focus

- Community Integration
- Personalized Transition Planning
- Skill Development
- Future Readiness

An analysis of focus group and interview comments suggest that New Braunfels ISD has an established continuum of services, but staff report gaps in its flexibility, availability across grade levels, and alignment with individual student needs. The strongest concern is the availability of services for students who need more intensive support than general education or traditional resource instruction provides, but whose needs do not align with existing life skills or intensive behavior programs.

The following comments are paraphrased from the focus group findings.

Several focus groups described students whose needs fall between general education/resource and life skills. Participants identified particular concerns at the elementary level and for students with autism who need structured instruction and regulation support.
Some participants valued standardized service expectations; others reported prescribed minutes, limited flexibility, and decisions based heavily on a single assessment score. One focus group questioned whether minimal "advanced supports" provided meaningful instruction.

Participants described effective proactive push-in support, while other groups reported limited campus options for students needing more than general education behavior support but less than intensive specialized placement.
Participants described abrupt transitions from early childhood to kindergarten and middle to high school, along with limited high school work experience opportunities. The written continuum includes Gateway 18+ community and employment exploration.

> ***Summary of Finding 1:*** *The district's written continuum outlines available service options, while focus group feedback highlights concerns about their consistent availability and the flexibility to tailor them to individual student needs.*

The 2026–27 Continuum of Supports describes services ranging from general education supports and co-teaching to specialized instruction, behavior support, life skills, and transition services. Focus groups acknowledged improved consistency and scheduling but repeatedly identified gaps between resource and life skills options, uneven availability across grade levels, and service minutes shaped by program models rather than individual needs. Interview feedback reinforced concerns about scheduling and staff deployment that can limit access to the services needed.

Finding 2

A non-categorical or cross-categorical staffing model allows special education teachers and paraprofessionals to deliver a continuum of supports aligned with student needs rather than program labels. Under this approach, staff may provide advanced supports (e.g., accommodations, modifications, instructional preparation, and progress monitoring), in-class supports (e.g., support facilitation or co-teaching), and specialized instruction delivered outside the general education classroom, as appropriate. Such models increase staffing flexibility, improve responsiveness to student needs, and enhance the district's capacity to maintain consistent service delivery during periods of enrollment change or staff turnover.

While a categorical approach provides clarity around staffing expectations within individual programs, it also limits flexibility in staff deployment. Assigning teachers and paraprofessionals to discrete programs constrains the district's ability to reallocate staff in response to changing student needs, fluctuating enrollment, or short-term staffing gaps. As a result, campuses may experience situations in which staff capacity exists in one program area while unmet needs persist in another, contributing to inefficiencies and inconsistent service delivery.

Information gathered through interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations indicates that New Braunfels ISD primarily relies on program-based (categorical) staffing models, in which special education teachers and paraprofessionals are assigned to support students in specific programs.

The decision-making process for determining required services for students is closely related to a non- or cross-categorical approach to staffing. The ARD committee is charged with developing an IEP outlining annual goals, special education and related services, accommodations, modifications, and other components. Districts must provide an objective, student-centered process for determining if personal supports are needed for each student, when and where they are required, and in what manner. Too often, requests are based on the belief that adult proximity addresses students' needs or serves as a substitute for effective instruction. If, following this objective process, it is determined that personal assistance (staff) is needed, staff must be provided. There is typically intense pressure to hire more staff in districts nationwide when existing staff are not being used effectively, efficiently, or appropriately.

Information gathered during interviews indicates that the district begins its special education staffing discussions around caseload numbers and scheduled services, with less consistent attention to case management, planning, collaboration, evaluations, and the intensity of student needs. Comments from focus groups indicate that New Braunfels ISD uses student data, service minutes, and campus requests to guide staffing decisions, but staff question whether those decisions consistently account for workload complexity and actual service delivery needs. Participants also described uneven caseloads and noted that student counts do not adequately distinguish the demands of different life skills settings, behavioral needs, or multiple instructional preparations.

The faculty survey addressed the topic of a data-driven decision-making process in the district.

F5 The staffing process for special education services is data-driven and based on individual student needs and learning preferences rather than disability labels.



F6 General education and special education teachers collaborate in making decisions about student needs.



Faculty survey results indicate that most respondents view special education decision-making positively 67% agreed that staffing is data-driven and based on individual student needs and learning preferences rather than disability labels, and 69% agreed that general and special education teachers collaborate in decisions about student needs. However, disagreement from 33% and 31%, respectively, suggests that these practices are not consistently experienced across the district.

The district has developed a number of tools to support the decision-making process. Focus group participants identified the level-of-support tool, student dashboard, and end-of-year campus reviews as positive steps toward a more systematic approach to determining services and organizing staff. These processes provide a common framework for reviewing student needs, accessing current information, and adjusting services based on student progress. Participants reported that the continuum model also improved scheduling and student grouping, reducing some case manager strain. However, feedback suggests that implementation remains uneven, with concerns about reliance on individual assessment scores and standardized service minutes. These tools offer a stronger foundation for decisions when used alongside teacher input, multiple measures of student performance, and consideration of individual needs and staff workload.

> *"Data should absolutely inform decisions, but it should never replace professional judgment, campus-level knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of the individual child." — General Education Teacher*

Summary of Finding 2: *New Braunfels ISD has established tools and collaborative processes to support student-centered staffing decisions; however, its primarily program-based staffing model and inconsistent consideration of workload complexity limit flexibility in staff deployment.*

Although most survey respondents view decisions as data-driven and collaborative, interviews and focus groups indicate that program assignments, caseload counts, and standardized service minutes can outweigh a comprehensive review of individual student needs and staff responsibilities. As a result, staffing allocations may not consistently align available personnel with service demands across campuses and instructional settings.

Finding 3

Special education staffing needs can change throughout the school year as enrollment and student needs shift, requiring a timely, clearly defined process for reviewing requests and adjusting staff support.

Focus group comments suggest that the district responds to requests for additional staff, but the criteria and process for reviewing those requests are not consistently clear. Some examples include additional special education teaching positions, more full-time campus facilitators, expanded speech assistant support, and substitute coverage when a teacher vacancy created excessive case manager workloads. While some participants reported more manageable caseloads, improved dyslexia scheduling, and stronger coordination following staffing increases, others described growing behavior program enrollment without corresponding staffing increases, paraprofessional shortages, and uneven workloads.

The survey provides stronger evidence of concern about the process of requesting additional staff than the interviews and focus groups alone.

F8 When the number of students receiving special education services unexpectedly grows, the district has an appropriate review process for requesting additional staff.



When asked whether the district has an appropriate review process for requesting additional staff when special education enrollment unexpectedly increases, 27% agreed and 73% disagreed, including 37% who strongly disagreed. Agreement was low across all levels: 26% at early childhood/elementary, 34% at middle school, and 26% at high school and only Only 18% of general education teachers and 33% of special education teachers agreed, compared with 50% of administrators.

Open-ended responses reinforce these concerns. Staff described vacant positions resulting in caseloads being redistributed, paraprofessionals reassigned to cover absences, and staffing gaps affecting service minutes. Other respondents acknowledged that additional staff made a meaningful difference where positions were filled.

> ***Summary of Finding 3:*** *Although New Braunfels ISD has responded to some staffing requests through additional positions and temporary support, faculty survey results indicate limited confidence in the process of addressing increases in the number of students who qualify for special education services.*

Nearly three-fourths of respondents disagreed that an appropriate review process exists. Combined with reports of redistributed caseloads and service coverage gaps, these results suggest a need for a clearly communicated, consistently implemented process with defined review criteria, response timelines, and interim support. The survey reflects staff perceptions; it does not establish that a formal process is absent.

Finding 4

In reviewing the literature on master scheduling, a wide array of approaches is evident. Some are theoretical, some are technology-driven, and all offer ideas for creating the schedule. Even the best references, considering inclusive practices, offer troubleshooting methods after the schedule is built. All references cite the various factors that must go into a master schedule, including the "singletons" that must be placed first to ensure specific students are in exact classes. When developing a master schedule, special education in its entirety should be considered a singleton. Doing so ensures that students with IEPs receive their recommended services. If special education supports are scheduled after the school's master schedule is complete, there will be many conflicts.

When building a special education schedule, several factors should be considered:

- Support provided by a paraprofessional is not equivalent to support provided by a special education teacher.
- Student groups should be prioritized. Students with the greatest needs should receive support from a teacher, while those with less needs can receive support from a paraprofessional if the skills of the paraprofessional are sufficient to the tasks required.

Across focus groups, scheduling emerged as a significant systems constraint affecting students with disabilities. Comments indicate that scheduling practices vary across campuses and do not consistently protect special education instruction, collaboration, and case management. Focus groups described some campuses prioritizing student services, while others scheduled dyslexia, resource, and life skills services after other campus priorities. Interviews and focus groups reported that special education services are not consistently built into master schedules early enough, limiting the effective deployment of available staff. Staff reported supporting multiple subjects and grade levels, sometimes without advanced knowledge of lessons. Annual changes in co-teaching assignments also disrupted established partnerships and content familiarity.

> *"Case managers are working after school and weekends for hours trying to get caught up." — Special Education Teacher*

Faculty survey results support comments from the interviews and focus groups.

F7 Special education instructional services are treated as singletons and entered first on the master schedule.



Only 37% of survey respondents agreed that time is provided for general and special education teacher collaboration.

While scheduling emerged as a significant constraint some effective practices provide internal models. Examples included protected ARD preparation periods, substitute coverage, shared planning time, improved dyslexia group scheduling following staffing additions, and stable teaching assignments that supported continuity.

> ***Summary of Finding 4:*** *New Braunfels ISD has examples of effective scheduling practices; however, implementation varies across campuses.*

Master schedules, staff assignments, and ARD calendars do not consistently align student services with instructional needs or protect time for collaboration and case management. This variation limits the effective use of available staff and contributes to service conflicts and workload pressure.

Effectiveness

Effective staff use is reflected when students with disabilities succeed in meeting their academic and behavioral needs. This is usually the result of research-based, high-quality instructional practices implemented with fidelity and a collaborative sharing of responsibility for the success of all students.

Are the services provided to students with disabilities effective?

Finding 1

Effective staff use is reflected in students with disabilities making meaningful academic and behavioral progress both in the general education setting as well as specialized support settings. STAAR performance and graduation rates provide important indicators of how well instruction and supports prepare students to meet academic expectations and complete high school. These outcomes are supported by research-based, high-quality instructional practices implemented with fidelity and shared responsibility among general and special education staff. Examining these measures alongside other student progress data helps the district assess service effectiveness and identify priorities for improvement.

Table 11: Comparison of Special Education STAAR 3-8 Passing Rates for Students with Disabilities

Performance Standard	Mathematics 70%	Reading 70%	Science 65%	Social Studies 65%
Texas	44.7	48.8	41.3	31
Region 20	42.6	47.0	40.7	31.9
New Braunfels ISD	**42.9**	**49.7**	**39.1**	**30.9**
Bastrop ISD	20.9	24.5	15.9	14.2
Boerne ISD	62.1	70.7	62.8	48.7
Comal ISD	56.3	61.8	58.4	37
San Marcos CISD	34.9	39.1	35.0	33.7
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	43.7	45.4	43.0	37.9
Seguin ISD	38.3	37.5	33.5	23.6

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025 Results Driven Accountability

New Braunfels ISD's performance in grades 3–8 is close to state and regional results. The district reports passing rates of 42.9% in mathematics, 49.7% in reading, 39.1% in science, and 30.9% in social studies.

Reading is the strongest relative result: New Braunfels ISD exceeds both Texas at 48.8% and Region 20 at 47.0%. Mathematics is aligned with Region 20 and slightly below the state. Science is slightly below both benchmarks, while social studies is identical to state and regional performance.

The peer comparison shows considerable variation. Boerne ISD and Comal ISD outperform New Braunfels ISD in every tested subject, while Bastrop ISD performs below New Braunfels ISD. San Marcos CISD and Seguin ISD are also generally lower, while SCUC ISD is more comparable.

The conclusion is that New Braunfels ISD's grades 3–8 performance is average rather than exceptional. The district does not demonstrate widespread academic weakness, but the performance of Boerne ISD and Comal ISD indicates that stronger outcomes are attainable within comparable systems.

Table 12. Comparison of Special Education STAAR EOC Passing Rates for Students with Disabilities

Performance Standard	Algebra 1 65%	Biology 75%	U.S. History 70%	English I & II 60%
Texas	53.7	76.6	80.2	37.2
Region 20	52.7	78.1	80.6	36.9
New Braunfels ISD	**57.9**	**81.1**	**87.1**	**43.6**
Bastrop ISD	58.9	64.8	68.8	24
Boerne ISD	64.8	80.0	88.0	54.6
Comal ISD	59.0	84.2	84.3	49.2
San Marcos CISD	47.2	68.8	76.3	28.5
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	47.6	72.5	84.4	32.2
Seguin ISD	35.9	68.5	78.2	27.3

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025 Results Driven Accountability

The EOC results are one of New Braunfels ISD's strongest outcome areas. Students with disabilities achieve passing rates of 57.9% in Algebra I, 81.1% in Biology, 87.1% in U.S. History, and 43.6% in English I and II.

New Braunfels ISD exceeds both the state and Region 20 in all four areas. It is especially strong in U.S. History, where the district's 87.1% rate is seven percentage points above the state. Among peers, Boerne ISD remains particularly strong, and Comal ISD also performs well. Nevertheless, New Braunfels ISD compares favorably with most districts and exceeds San Marcos CISD, SCUC ISD, and Seguin ISD in several subjects.

Table 13: Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities

	Graduation Rate
Texas: Target 80-100%	80.9
Region 20	78.4
New Braunfels ISD	**79.7**
Bastrop ISD	85.6
Boerne ISD	93.7
Comal ISD	88.8
San Marcos CISD	72.1
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	81.3
Seguin ISD	70.0

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2025 Results Driven Accountability

The graduation rate for students with disabilities in New Braunfels ISD is 79.7%. This is just below the state rate of 80.9% and above Region 20's 78.4%.

Among the comparison districts, however, New Braunfels ISD falls in the middle. Boerne ISD performs exceptionally well at 93.7%, followed by Comal ISD at 88.8% and Bastrop ISD at 85.6%. SCUC ISD is slightly higher than New Braunfels ISD at 81.3%, while San Marcos CISD and Seguin ISD are lower.

The district's graduation performance is therefore respectable but represents an area for improvement. New Braunfels ISD is not substantially below state or regional expectations, but stronger peer performance, particularly in Boerne ISD and Comal ISD, suggests that there may be useful practices to examine in secondary programming, transition planning, course access, credit recovery, and support for students approaching graduation.

F9 Scores on the STAAR and EOC reflect access to the general education curriculum.



F10 Diverse instructional strategies and flexible grouping are used to engage all students.



Results from the faculty survey indicate an overall belief that STAAR and EOC scores for students receiving special education services reflect access to the general education curriculum and that diverse instructional strategies and flexible grouping are used to engage students. Survey results indicate that the majority (68%) agree that STAAR and EOC scores reflect access to the general education curriculum, yet one-third (32%) have concerns. Additionally, 68% of respondents agreed that diverse instructional strategies and flexible grouping are used to engage all students, while 32% disagreed. However, classroom observation data does not support this perception and will be addressed in Finding 2.

Table 14: Data Comparison for Special Education Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Dropout Rate

	Regular EC Program (3-5)	Regular Class ≥80% (6-21)	Regular Class <40% (6-21)	SPED Dropout Rate
Texas PL Cut Points	30-100%	70.0 – 100%	0 - 10.0%	N/A
Texas	23.9	75.8	12.3	1.7
Region 20	38.0	79.9	11.2	2.2
New Braunfels ISD	**47.6**	**84.6**	**7.2**	**1.4**
Bastrop ISD	13.7	79.1	9.6	0.5
Boerne ISD	60.9	85.7	7.9	0.5
Comal ISD	10.2	80.4	7.9	0.5
San Marcos CISD	36.2	74.8	10.0	2.0
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	47.7	75.9	11.8	0.9
Seguin ISD	13.7	79.1	9.6	1.7

Source: Texas Education Agency 2025 Results Driven Accountability

New Braunfels ISD performs especially well on Least Restrictive Environment measures.

The district serves 47.6% of preschool students with disabilities in regular early childhood programs, compared with 23.9% statewide and 38.0% in Region 20. Only Boerne ISD is substantially higher among the peers.

For students ages 6–21, 84.6% are served in the regular classroom at least 80% of the day, compared with 75.8% statewide and 79.9% in Region 20. New Braunfels ISD is nearly the highest-performing district in the comparison group, just behind Boerne ISD at 85.7% and slightly ahead of Seguin ISD at 79.1%.

Only 7.2% of New Braunfels ISD students are in the regular classroom less than 40% of the day, well below the state and regional rates. This is the lowest percentage in the comparison group.

The special education dropout rate is 1.4%, better than the state and Region 20 but higher than Bastrop ISD, Boerne ISD, Comal ISD, and SCUC ISD.

Overall, LRE appears to be a clear program strength. New Braunfels ISD is serving a comparatively high proportion of students in inclusive settings, and that has important implications for staffing: the district's staffing model must support students not only in special education classrooms but across general education environments.

> ***Summary of Finding 1:*** *District outcomes demonstrate strengths, with room to improve academic performance and graduation.*

New Braunfels ISD earned Meets Requirements (DL 1) in the reported 2025 RDA data. Students with disabilities exceeded state and regional EOC results in all four reported areas:

- Algebra I: 57.9%
- Biology: 81.1%
- U.S. History: 87.1%
- English I and II: 43.6%

Grades 3–8 results are generally near state and regional benchmarks. The graduation rate of 79.7% is above Region 20's 78.4%, slightly below the state's 80.9%, and below several peers. The district has a foundation of positive outcomes, but stronger peer results warrant examining instructional and secondary completion practices.

Finding 2

High-quality Tier 1 instruction is the foundation of any school's success. It is the initial, research-based core teaching that all students receive in their general education classroom. Posting lesson objectives in the classroom is a strong Tier 1 strategy because it provides clarity, focus, and accountability for both students and teachers. Formative assessment is critical because it allows for ongoing feedback that enables both teachers and students to adjust instruction and learning in real time. Differentiation is essential to the general education classroom because it ensures that all students have access to meaningful and effective instruction regardless of their learning styles, abilities, or backgrounds.

Table 15: Classroom Observation Summary

Domain 3. Instructional Quality – Tier 1	% Yes	% No	
a) The lesson objective is visible and in student-friendly language.	73%	27%	
b) The pace and design of the lesson support student engagement.	71%	29%	

Domain 3. Instructional Quality – Tier 1	% Yes	% No	
c) Instruction is differentiated in content presentation, student interaction with content, and student choice of product to show what they know.	33%	67%	
d) Formative assessment present?	71%	29%	
e) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for students without disabilities?	81%	19%	
f1) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for students with disabilities?	74%	26%	
f2) Are supports non-stigmatizing and supportive of grade-level material and rigor?	85%	15%	
g) Curriculum content and instructional methodology maintain rigor and student higher-order thinking.	60%	40%	
h) Use of instructional technology	93%	7%	

While some classroom observations identified elements of effective Tier 1 instruction at the time of the visit, implementation was inconsistent across campuses. Lesson objectives were visible and presented in student-friendly language in 73% of the observed classrooms. Formative assessment was present in 71% of the classrooms, and differentiated instruction was seen in only 33%. Over three-fourths (81%) provided scaffolds and accommodations for students without disabilities, while 74% provided supports to students with disabilities. Curriculum content and instructional methodology which maintain rigor and higher-order thinking was observed in 60% of the classrooms. The use of instructional technology was seen in a large majority (93%) of classrooms.

Data gathered during classroom observations also examined additional quality instructional practices, including the effective use of academic learning time and the creation of a positive learning environment. Maximizing academic learning time is crucial in closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities. This requires districts to structure the school day and classroom activities to optimize students' learning opportunities.

The following tables reflect the classroom observation results for the indicators related to academic learning time and a positive learning environment.

Table 16: Classroom Observations: Academic Learning Time

Domain 2. Instructional Activities/Use of Academic Learning Time	% Yes	% No
a. Less than 10% of observed time spent on non-instructional issues.	93%	7%
b. 85% of students appear engaged in assigned activities.	73%	27%
c. Off-task behavior is quickly redirected.	97%	3%
d. Classroom routines (access to materials, homework submission, etc.) minimize lost time.	100%	0%

In 93% of the classrooms, less than 10% of the observed time was spent on non-instructional issues. Student engagement was observed in the majority (73%) of classrooms, and off-task behavior was quickly redirected or did not occur in 97% of classrooms. In 100% of the classrooms had routines that minimized lost time.

Table 17: Classroom Observations: A Positive Learning Environment

Domain 4. A Positive Learning Environment – Tier 1	% Yes	% No
a. Evidence of growth mindset.	79%	21%
b. Interactions between teacher and student are characterized by kindness and respect.	100%	0%
c. Student-to-student interaction is characterized by kindness and respect.	100%	0%
d. Expectations for behavior are described clearly and posted prominently.	78%	22%
e. Students comply with behavior expectations.	97%	3%
f. A schedule of class activities is posted prominently.	56%	44%
g. Room arrangement supports positive behavior, accommodates various groupings, and reduces wasted time.	93%	7%

There was evidence of a growth mindset in 79% of the classrooms, and interactions were overwhelmingly characterized by kindness and respect among teachers and students. While only 78% of classrooms had behavioral expectations posted, student compliance with expectations occurred in 97% of classrooms observed. Overall, the room arrangements supported positive behavior, accommodated various groupings, and reduced wasted time in 93% of the classrooms observed.

Overall, classroom observations documented respectful, well-managed learning environments, alongside variation in engagement and instructional practices. Respectful teacher–student interactions were observed in all 31 classrooms rated, and respectful student-to-student interactions in all 17 classrooms rated. Students met behavior expectations in 30 of 31 classrooms, off-task behavior was redirected quickly in 29 of 30, and fewer than 10% of instructional minutes were lost to non-instructional issues in 27 of 29 classrooms. At least 85% of students were engaged in 22 of 30 classrooms.

Differentiation was a significant area for improvement, observed in only 7 of 21 classrooms. When instructional supports were observed, they were non-stigmatizing and supported grade-level rigor in 17 of 20 classrooms. Posted schedules and student-friendly lesson objectives were less consistent, appearing in 18 of 32 classrooms and 19 of 26 classrooms, respectively. These findings identify positive classroom climate and behavior management as strengths, with opportunities to strengthen differentiation, engagement, and instructional clarity across the observed settings.

> ***Summary of Finding 2:*** *Classroom observations indicate that respectful interactions, clear behavioral expectations, and effective behavior management support positive learning environments and preserve instructional time. However, differentiation, student engagement, and instructional clarity were less consistent across observed classrooms.*

Differentiated instruction was evident in only one-third of classrooms rated, indicating a need to strengthen how instruction responds to varied student needs while maintaining the positive classroom conditions already established

Finding 3

Effective use of special education staff in general education classrooms requires staffing structures that maximize instructional impact, inclusion, and efficiency through high expectations and standards-aligned, evidence-based instruction implemented with fidelity and differentiated to meet diverse student needs.

Additionally, the effective use of personnel in specialized support settings requires clear instructional roles and coordinated staff support to deliver individualized, evidence-based instruction that promotes student progress, independence, and access to peers and grade-level learning.

Table 18: Classroom Observations: Appropriate, Effective, & Efficient Use of Personnel

Domain 5. Appropriate, Effective, & Efficient Use of Personnel	% Yes	% No
Collaborative Teaching		
a. Both teachers participate and appear to be content proficient in presenting the lesson.	33%	67%
b. Students ask questions of both teachers.	90%	10%
c. Teachers are not identified as assigned to specific students.	91%	9%
d. Both teachers are engaged in classroom management.	89%	11%
e. Teachers jointly share and use the classroom space	70%	30%
Use of Paraprofessionals (Gen Ed Classroom)		
a. The role of paraprofessionals appears to be appropriate for the class/needs of the student	100 %	0%
b. Students with disabilities are seated among peers, and paraprofessional supports are provided unobtrusively	75%	25%
c. Paraprofessional assistance does not appear to be linked to lower teacher involvement/responsibility	67%	33%
d. Paraprofessional proximity does not limit student-to-student interactions	67%	33%

Classroom observations indicate that shared classroom responsibility was more evident than shared instructional delivery in collaborative teaching settings. Students asked questions of both teachers in 90% of rated classrooms, teachers were not visibly assigned to specific students in 91%, and both teachers participated in classroom management in 89%. These results suggest that both teachers were generally accessible to students and shared responsibility for the classroom. However, both teachers actively participated and appeared proficient in presenting the lesson in only 33% of rated classrooms. Joint use of classroom space was observed in 70%. This pattern suggests that the instructional expertise of both teachers was not consistently used to its full potential.

Paraprofessional roles appeared appropriate in all general education classrooms. Support was unobtrusive and students were seated among peers in 75% of rated settings. In 67%, paraprofessional assistance-maintained teacher involvement, and paraprofessional proximity did not limit peer interactions. Thus, approximately one-third of rated settings raised concerns about maintaining teacher responsibility or preserving opportunities for student-to-student interaction.

F15 Personal support is provided in a manner that does not stigmatize individual students or groups of students.



Additionally, survey results suggest that a majority (82%) believe personal support, whether provided by special education teachers or a paraprofessional, does not stigmatize students

For students with disabilities to make progress, special education instruction that occurs outside of the general education classroom for any part of the day (part-time or full-time) must provide “specially designed instruction” that is aligned with the enrolled grade level curriculum or pre-requisite skills needed by the students and addresses the specific needs and supports of the students as outlined in their IEP. Instruction, services, and support for students with disabilities must be evidence-based and equitably distributed throughout the district. They must be routinely and consistently implemented by highly skilled teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers Anytime special education students are consistently pulled out of the general education environment, for whatever reason, by a special education teacher or paraprofessional into a separate educational environment with only other special education students, regardless of whether it is a designated special education classroom or not, that time must be tracked and documented as separate pull-out time in the student’s IEP.

Table 19: Classroom Observations: Appropriate, Effective, & Efficient Use of Personnel

Domain 5. Appropriate, Effective, & Efficient Use of Personnel	% Yes	% No
Specialized Support (Outside the General Education Setting)		
Standards-based general education is the framework for instructional delivery.	69%	31%
b. Teacher does not address multiple subjects or grade levels at the same time.	38%	62%
c. Age-appropriate materials and activities characterize instruction.	100%	0%
d. Paraprofessionals have clear roles and responsibilities for providing student support.	100%	38%
e. One or more students might be candidates for several lessons in the general education classroom	62%	38%

Fourteen (14) specialized support classrooms were observed. In only 69% of classrooms, instruction was aligned with general education standards, meaning less than half of the students did not receive instruction aligned with the grade-level curriculum. Only 38% of the classrooms observed had teachers addressing multiple subjects or grade levels simultaneously. There was an overall practice of using materials and instructional activities appropriate for the students' age, and paraprofessionals had clear roles and responsibilities. In our brief observation time, it was noted that almost two-thirds (62%) of classrooms contained one or more students that may be potential candidates for more inclusive opportunities in the general education classroom.

Overall, classroom observations revealed differences in instructional rigor, support practices, and staff use across general education and specialized settings. Rigor and higher-order thinking were observed in 80% of general education classrooms compared with 30% of specialized classrooms, with a similar pattern in growth-mindset indicators. Conversely, scaffolds and accommodations were more consistently evident in specialized settings (92%) than in general education classrooms (60%); when present, supports were generally non-stigmatizing and maintained grade-level rigor.

Co-teaching most often followed a One Teach, One Assist approach, with both teachers actively participating and demonstrating content proficiency in only 33% of rated classrooms. In specialized settings, teachers frequently addressed multiple subjects or grade levels simultaneously, and standards-based general education content framed instruction in 69% of classrooms. Observers also identified potential candidates for general education services in 62% of specialized classrooms, suggesting opportunities for individualized review of service arrangements and least restrictive environment considerations. Collectively, these observations support strengthening instructional rigor, shared teaching responsibilities, and access to appropriately supported general education instruction.

> ***Summary of Finding 3:*** *Limited shared instruction in co-taught settings and multiple teaching demands in specialized classrooms suggest opportunities to improve staff use and review students' access to supported general education. Specialized settings showed more consistent accommodations but less instructional rigor than general education classrooms.*

Classroom observations found both teachers actively participating and demonstrating content proficiency in only 3 of 9 co-taught classrooms, while teachers addressed multiple subjects or grade levels in 8 of 13 specialized classrooms. Accommodations were more evident in specialized settings than general education classrooms, but rigor and higher-order thinking were less evident (30% compared with 80%).

Appropriateness

Appropriate staffing includes properly trained, qualified teachers and related service providers delivering instructional and related services with support from experienced paraprofessionals. Providers have the necessary tools and resources to implement these services. It also includes the extent to which job assignments are clearly defined and how well all staff understand these requirements and expectations. Appropriateness of service delivery is foundational; without it, effectiveness and efficiency cannot be meaningfully evaluated.

> ***Are staffing practices for students with disabilities appropriate?***

Finding 1

Staff capacity and access to resources are essential to both compliance and instructional quality. Without them, even well-designed programs and staffing models cannot function as intended. Effective professional learning and adequate resources enable staff to carry out their responsibilities well, consistently, and sustainably, making this a cornerstone of appropriate, effective, and efficient special education services.

Interviews and focus groups identified valuable professional learning opportunities, but recurring concerns involved access, practical application, and follow-through. Participants described insufficient opportunities for general and special education teachers to learn and plan together. Interviews also indicated that principals lack a shared definition of effective co-teaching. Focus groups reported that paperwork and scheduling conflicts prevent special education teachers from attending curriculum training, leaving partners to use collaborative planning time to fill those gaps. Participants described brief introductions to service-delivery tools and practices without sufficient follow-up, coaching, or readily accessible guidance. Interviews identified variation in differentiation, scaffolding, and behavior support. Focus groups reported limited special education training for general education teachers and inconsistent understanding of accommodations. Participants described new teachers managing IEP development, documentation, and multiple instructional assignments without adequate preparation for those responsibilities. One focus group reported that only three of approximately 30 new teachers attended SDI training. Other participants described low attendance at after-hours behavior training.

> *"Push-in staff do not appear to receive adequate training or preparation for the classrooms and students they are assigned to support." — General Education Teacher*
>
> *"The district requires lengthy, rigid scripts to complete IEPs, yet expects employees to train themselves via a video rather than providing hands-on instruction." — Special Education Teacher*

Participants did value standards-based IEP training, facilitator peer reviews, focused lunch-and-learn sessions, Region 20 resources, and district support for advanced dyslexia preparation.

> *"The SPED department has improved processes greatly over the past few years, and the PD provided to staff this year was excellent." — Administrator*

F11 The necessary skills of each staff position are supported through effective professional learning opportunities.



Survey results indicate that most respondents (58%) believe the necessary skills of each staff member are supported through effective professional learning.

Focus group feedback indicates that instructional resources and materials are available in New Braunfels ISD, but their accessibility and suitability vary across settings. Some participants identified adequate reading materials and accompanying training, while others described district curriculum and intervention resources as insufficient for students working substantially below grade level, particularly in resource and life skills settings. Teachers reported independently adapting or developing materials, sometimes amid uncertainty about expectations for following district curriculum. Participants also valued sensory and motor rooms but noted uneven access for students in general education and inclusion settings. Training gaps in differentiation, specially designed instruction, accommodations, and specialized reading programs further limit effective resource use.

Collectively, these findings suggest a need for more consistent access to appropriate materials, clearer guidance on curriculum adaptation, and practical training to support individualized instruction.

Survey results reinforce these concerns.

F12 Teachers and paraeducators have the necessary resources to implement services.



Only 39% of respondents agreed that teachers and paraprofessionals have the resources necessary to implement services, while 61% disagreed.

> ***Summary of Finding 1:*** *New Braunfels ISD provides instructional resources and professional learning opportunities, but uneven access to appropriate materials, limited guidance on curriculum adaptation, and inconsistent training participation and follow-through constrain individualized instruction.*

Interviews and focus groups identified valuable training and instructional resources but described gaps in materials for students working below grade level, guidance on curriculum adaptation, and practical follow-up support. Participants also reported that paperwork and scheduling conflicts limit training participation. Survey results reinforce these concerns: 58% agreed that professional learning supports staff skills, while only 39% agreed that teachers and paraprofessionals have the resources necessary to implement services.

Finding 2

Collaboration between special education and general education teachers ensures that services are delivered in an inclusive, compliant manner and aligned with students' instructional needs, rather than in isolated or stigmatizing ways. Through shared planning, shared ownership, and coordinated delivery of supports, educators are better able to embed accommodations and services seamlessly within classroom instruction rather than isolating students. This collaborative approach ensures supports are delivered ethically and respectfully, in alignment with inclusive practices and student dignity, reinforcing the appropriateness of service delivery rather than focusing solely on outcomes.

Across focus groups, collaboration was consistently identified as both a strength and a gap, depending mainly on campus structures and leadership support. Where collaboration is intentional -

through shared planning time, regular special education meetings, interdisciplinary problem-solving teams, and strong communication between general education, special education, related services, and paraprofessional staff - greater consistency, clearer expectations, and improved student outcomes occur. These collaborative environments help mitigate system gaps, support effective IEP implementation, and reduce staff isolation. While collaboration occurs, protected time, shared training, and stable staff assignments do not consistently support it. Participants valued facilitator-led weekly meetings, case manager coordination, peer review of IEPs, and stable co-teaching assignments that preserve relationships and instructional continuity.

> *"There is no time to meet with the sped teacher to talk about the students we service. We have to talk in passing, which is not the best." — General Education Teacher*

Overall, the feedback indicates that while collaboration is highly valued and effective when present, it lacks consistent structures and expectations districtwide, limiting its impact on instructional quality and staffing efficiency. Survey results support comments made during focus groups.

F13 Time for collaboration between general education and special education teachers is provided.



Survey results show that only 37% agreed that time is provided for collaboration between general education and special education teachers.

> ***Summary of Finding 2:*** *Collaborative decision-making is a relative strength yet time for collaboration is a significant concern.*

Faculty survey results show that 69% of respondents agreed that general and special education teachers collaborate on decisions about student needs, but only 37% agreed that time is provided for collaboration. Interviews and focus groups described effective facilitator-led meetings and teaching partnerships alongside planning periods consumed by ARDs, paperwork, and other meetings, often leaving staff to coordinate informally.

Financial Data

Table 20: Special Education Actual Financial Data by State and District (Information Based on "All" Funds)

	Total Revenue Per Student All Funds	Operating Expenditures/ Instruction Per Student	Expenditures For Basic Educational Services	Expenditures For Basic Educational Services Per Student with a Disability	Program Expenditure Per Student with a Disability
Texas	$16,867	$12,951	40.4	14.1	$1,820
New Braunfels ISD	**$14,713**	**$11,593**	**44.5**	**13.7**	**$1,592**
Bastrop ISD	$21,436	$11,400	38.5	15.9	$1,804
Boerne ISD	$14,946	$10,869	43.2	17	$1,849
Comal ISD	$15,609	$10,947	45.6	15	$1,631
San Marcos CISD	$17,649	$11,877	35.9	17.3	$2,290
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	$14,210	$11,650	39.8	19.7	$2,298
Seguin ISD	$17,289	$13,102	36.1	14.7	$1,921

Source: Texas Education Agency: 2024-2025 Actual Financial Data by State and Districts

New Braunfels ISD reports $14,713 in total revenue per student and $11,593 in operating expenditures per student. Both are below the statewide figures of $16,867 and $12,951.

The district directs 44.5% of operating expenditures to basic educational services, which is higher than the state rate of 40.4% and higher than most comparison districts. In contrast, 13.7% of operating expenditures are attributed to students with disabilities, slightly below the statewide 14.1% and the lowest percentage among the comparison districts shown.

The program expenditure per student with a disability is $1,592, lower than the state figure of $1,820 and lower than all peers except none; even Comal ISD is slightly higher at $1,631, while San Marcos CISD and SCUCISD exceed $2,290.

Financially, therefore, New Braunfels ISD appears to run a comparatively lean special education program. This aligns closely with the staffing pattern in Table 4. Historical financial data indicate comparatively low special education spending, while updated staffing data suggest greater current capacity. Together, these findings support reviewing how resources are allocated and translated into effective services rather than concluding that additional funding or staffing is broadly needed.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations address the staffing issues based on findings from this report.

Sufficiency

Evaluate staffing by campus and program against student needs and staff workloads to guide reassignment and targeted staffing additions where needed.

Conduct a campus- and program-level staffing review using verified, filled full-time-equivalent positions, student service requirements, and staff workloads. Include instructional time, case management, planning, collaboration, and other assigned responsibilities. Use the results to rebalance assignments and identify targeted staffing additions where documented needs exceed available capacity.

Review appraisal, speech services, related services, and central office capacity by position and actual workload.

Conduct separate workload reviews for educational diagnosticians, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, adaptive physical education staff, and other specialized providers. Include actual students served, evaluation complexity, service frequency, meeting participation, documentation, supervision, travel, and outstanding service obligations.

- Use referral and reevaluation projections to anticipate seasonal staffing demands.
- Examine whether assistants, contractors, administrative support, or additional positions would address identified gaps.
- Review ARD facilitator and central office responsibilities to clarify roles, reduce duplication, and strengthen campus support. The findings support this review but do not establish central office overstaffing.

Expand dyslexia instructional capacity and clarify shared responsibilities.

Develop a dyslexia staffing and service plan that accounts for instructional group size, student skill levels, pacing, language needs, and program delivery expectations. Expand the pool of appropriately prepared staff, including special education teachers, through initial training, updates, and coaching.

- Adjust staffing and schedules where group size or mixed instructional levels compromise instruction.

- Establish consistent progress-monitoring procedures and a process for adjusting instruction when students are not progressing.
- Address bilingual service continuity across grade levels.
- Clarify responsibilities for present levels, goals, progress reporting, and case management so instructional providers and case managers coordinate their contributions.

Efficiency

Strengthen consistent access to an individualized continuum of services.

Review the practical availability of services across campuses and grade levels, particularly for students whose needs fall between existing resource, life skills, and intensive behavioral options. Develop flexible combinations of academic instruction, structured support, behavioral assistance, and supported general education access.

Service arrangements should reflect multiple sources of student information and professional judgment. Review practices that may allow program labels, standard service minutes, or a single assessment score to determine services disproportionately.

Increase flexibility in staff deployment while preserving instructional continuity.

Build on the district's level-of-support tool, student dashboard, and campus reviews to align staff assignments with documented service demands. Pilot a more flexible approach on selected campuses, allowing qualified personnel to provide support across service models when appropriate.

Review assignments periodically to balance workloads, preserve productive teaching partnerships, and ensure that changes in deployment do not create service gaps elsewhere.

Formalize and communicate the process for requesting additional staffing.

Establish a clearly communicated process for responding to enrollment growth, changes in student needs, vacancies, and excessive workloads. Specify:

- Required supporting information and review criteria.
- Who reviews requests and communicates decisions.
- Expected response times.
- Interim coverage arrangements.
- A process for reconsideration when concerns remain unresolved.

Track requests and resolutions to determine whether the process produces timely, effective support.

Build student services and staff work requirements into master schedules early.

Require joint schedule development by campus administrators, special education leaders, and instructional staff before master schedules are finalized. Confirm that schedules accommodate student services, appropriate instructional groupings, provider availability, collaboration, and case management.

Use effective practices already identified within the district, such as protected ARD preparation periods, shared planning, and stable teaching assignments, as models. Review schedules after enrollment changes and staffing adjustments.

Effectiveness

Connect staffing and instructional improvement to measurable student progress.

Establish annual improvement priorities using academic growth, IEP goal progress, course completion, attendance, graduation, and transition outcomes. Examine results by campus, grade span, and service arrangement to identify where additional investigation or support is needed.

Strengthen early identification of students at risk of not graduating and coordinate individualized support for credit attainment, course access, and postsecondary preparation. Review whether staffing investments improve service delivery and student progress over time.

Strengthen differentiated instruction and specially designed instruction through coaching.

Establish shared instructional expectations for differentiation, formative assessment, scaffolding, engagement, and clear learning objectives. Provide classroom demonstrations, collaborative lesson planning, coaching, and feedback that help teachers apply these practices to their students.

Use repeated observations and student work reviews to assess implementation. Preserve the district's strengths in respectful interactions, classroom routines, and behavior management while increasing instructional responsiveness.

Improve shared instruction, specialized classroom rigor, and student independence.

Develop a common district understanding of effective co-teaching and support partners in selecting instructional approaches that actively use both teachers' expertise. Provide content preparation and planning time so shared instruction extends beyond assistance and classroom management.

In specialized settings, review instructional groupings, competing teaching demands, and access to standards-aligned instruction. Clarify paraprofessional responsibilities to maintain teacher involvement, promote independence, and support peer interaction. Use observation findings to identify students for individualized review of supported general education opportunities.

Appropriateness

Ensure equitable access to suitable materials and practical professional learning.

Inventory instructional materials and specialized resources by campus and setting, then address gaps that require teachers to create substantial materials independently. Provide clear guidance and examples for adapting district curriculum while maintaining meaningful access to grade-level learning.

Develop a role-specific professional learning plan covering instructional practices, accommodations, behavior support, IEP responsibilities, and specialized interventions. Schedule training when staff can participate and follow it with coaching and accessible guidance.

Protect collaboration time and establish clear expectations for its use.

Provide recurring time for general and special education teachers to plan instruction, review progress, prepare accommodations, and coordinate responsibilities. Include paraprofessionals and related-service providers when their participation supports student needs.

Distinguish collaborative instructional planning from ARD preparation and routine administrative meetings. Campus leaders should monitor whether scheduled time occurs and produces usable instructional plans.

Conclusion

In summary, the central findings of the special education staffing review are as follows:

Sufficiency	Data suggest adequate overall special education teacher staffing; however, concerns remain about staff distribution, evaluation and related-service workloads, and dyslexia instructional capacity. Districtwide totals do not establish whether staffing is sufficient to meet student needs across campuses, programs, and specialized services.
Efficiency	Scheduling, administrative demands, and uneven staff deployment reduce the instructional value of existing resources.
Effectiveness	Accountability and student outcomes show strengths, while classroom evidence reveals inconsistent differentiation, co-teaching, and instructional rigor.
Appropriateness	Inclusion is a district strength, supported by promising professional learning and collaborative practices. However, inconsistent access to appropriate materials, practical training, clear instructional expectations, and protected collaboration time limits staff capacity to deliver individualized services consistently across settings.

Collectively, the findings indicate that New Braunfels ISD has a strong foundation for special education services, but greater consistency is needed in aligning staffing, time, and instruction with individual student needs. Addressing these concerns requires targeted staffing adjustments, more flexible deployment, protected collaboration and case-management time, and stronger implementation of differentiated instruction and co-teaching. Building on its inclusive practices and positive outcomes, the district can strengthen the sufficiency, efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriateness of services through coordinated planning and ongoing review of student progress and service delivery.

The complexity of staffing for students with disabilities is best addressed through a comprehensive, student-centered approach that balances sufficiency, efficiency, effectiveness, and appropriateness. Staffing decisions must be grounded in objective criteria aligned to student needs, supported by clear role definitions, and implemented through systems that allow for timely adjustment as needs change.

The recommendations outlined in this report are practical, attainable, and aligned with the district's stated philosophy. The district's existing strengths position it well to implement these changes successfully. With intentional action, New Braunfels ISD can strengthen

system coherence, improve instructional impact, and ensure the long-term sustainability of special education services for the benefit of students, staff, and the broader community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cyndi Short, Ed.D.

Stetson & Associates, Inc.
Lead Consultant, Special Education Staffing Study
November 2026



Appendix A

Comparison Study

STETSON
& ASSOCIATES, INC.

New Braunfels Independent School District

Comparative District Study

Tables in This Appendix

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Table 1: State, Region 20, and Focal District Enrollment

Table 1: State, Region 20, and Focal District Enrollment

Entity	Total Students with Disabilities	% Students with Disabilities
Texas	852,032	15.4%
Region 20	85,104	16.8%
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**16.4%**

Source: TEA 2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA), SPED Representation (Ages 3–21).

New Braunfels ISD serves 1,618 students with disabilities, representing 16.36% of district enrollment. This is higher than the statewide rate of 15.38%, but slightly below the Region 20 rate of 16.83%.

The district therefore does not appear to have an unusually high special education identification rate when viewed in its regional context. Its percentage is very close to Region 20, suggesting that overall identification alone is not likely to explain staffing or resource pressures. From a comparative-study standpoint, New Braunfels ISD begins from a relatively typical regional enrollment profile rather than from an exceptionally large special education population.

Table 2: Individual District Enrollment Comparisons

Table 2: Individual School District Enrollment Comparisons for Students with Disabilities

District	Total Students with Disabilities	SPED Determination	% Students with Disabilities
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**Meets Requirements (DL 1)**	**16.4%**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	Needs Intervention (DL 3)	14.8%
Boerne ISD	1,973	Meets Requirements (DL 1)	17.8%
Comal ISD	5,517	Needs Assistance (DL 2)	18.5%
San Marcos CISD	1,591	Needs Assistance (DL 2)	19.4%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	Meets Requirements (DL 1)	19.7%
Seguin ISD	1,391	Needs Assistance (DL 2)	19.2%

Source: TEA 2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA).

New Braunfels ISD has one of the lower percentages of students with disabilities among the comparable districts. At 16.36%, it is above Bastrop ISD at 14.83%, but below Boerne ISD, Comal ISD, San Marcos ISD, SCUCISD, and Seguin ISD, which range from approximately 17.8% to 19.7%.

More significant is the district's 2025 RDA determination of Meets Requirements (DL 1). Only Boerne ISD and SCUCISD share that determination within the comparison group. Comal ISD, San Marcos ISD, and Seguin ISD are rated Needs Assistance, while Bastrop ISD is rated Needs Intervention.

This combination is favorable for New Braunfels ISD: the district has a relatively moderate special education identification rate while still achieving the highest RDA determination category represented in the comparison group. The data do not suggest that New Braunfels ISD' staffing challenges are being driven by excessive identification or broad programmatic underperformance.

Table 3: Primary Disability Categories

Table 3: Enrollment of Students with Disabilities by Primary Disability Category

Entity	Other Health Impairment	Intellectual Disability	Emotional Disturbance	Learning Disability	Speech Impairment	Autism
Texas	95,062 (11.2%)	72,540 (8.5%)	42,697 (5%)	376,552 (44.2%)	130,425 (15.3%)	160,218 (18.8%)
Region 20	9,519 (11.2%)	6,398 (7.5%)	4,490 (5.3%)	38,251 (44.9%)	13,958 (16.4%)	13,597 (16%)
New Braunfels ISD	**216 (13.3%)**	**69 (4.3%)**	**75 (4.6%)**	**771 (47.7%)**	**254 (15.7%)**	**244 (15.1%)**
Bastrop ISD	182 (9.2%)	186 (9.4%)	68 (3.4%)	1,033 (52.1%)	355 (17.9%)	259 (14.2%)
Boerne ISD	270 (13.7%)	94 (4.8%)	104 (5.3%)	949 (48.1%)	370 (18.8%)	281 (13.1%)
Comal ISD	803 (14.6%)	309 (5.6%)	360 (6.5%)	2,548 (46.2%)	739 (13.4%)	243 (13.4%)
San Marcos CISD	203 (12.8%)	134 (8.4%)	59 (3.7%)	862 (54.2%)	191 (12%)	273 (17%)
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	327 (11.1%)	157 (5.3%)	213 (7.2%)	1,444 (49%)	374 (12.7%)	483 (16.5%)
Seguin ISD	224 (16.1%)	117 (8.4%)	62 (4.5%)	516 (37.1%)	247 (17.8%)	243 (17.5%)

Source: TEA 2025–26 PEIMS Special Education Reports

The disability distribution in New Braunfels ISD is dominated by learning disability, with 771 students, or 47.7% of students with disabilities. The next largest categories are speech impairment at 15.7%, autism at 15.1%, and other health impairment at 13.3%. Intellectual disability and emotional disturbance account for much smaller proportions, at 4.3% and 4.6%, respectively.

The overall pattern is generally comparable to the state and Region 20. Learning disability represents 44.2% statewide and 44.9% in Region 20, so New Braunfels ISD is somewhat higher in this category. Conversely, New Braunfels ISD has lower proportions of intellectual disability and autism than the statewide percentages shown in the table.

Several peer districts have even higher concentrations of learning disability, including Bastrop ISD at 52.1% and San Marcos ISD at 54.2%. Seguin ISD, by contrast, is substantially lower at 37.1%.

The main implication is that New Braunfels ISD' disability profile does not appear unusually weighted toward the highest-intensity categories. Its population contains a somewhat larger proportion of students with learning disabilities, which may place greater demands on inclusion, intervention, co-teaching, and academic support models rather than on highly specialized low-incidence programs.

Table 4: Graduation Rates

Table 4: Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities

Entity	SPED Graduation Rate
Texas	80.9%
Region 20	78.4%
New Braunfels ISD	**79.7%**
Bastrop ISD	85.6%
Boerne ISD	93.7%
Comal ISD	88.8%
San Marcos CISD	72.1%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	81.3%
Seguin ISD	70.0%

Source: TEA 2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA)

The graduation rate for students with disabilities in New Braunfels ISD is 79.7%. This is just below the state rate of 80.9% and above Region 20's 78.4%.

Among the comparison districts, however, New Braunfels ISD falls in the middle. Boerne ISD performs exceptionally well at 93.7%, followed by Comal ISD at 88.8% and Bastrop ISD at 85.6%. SCUCISD is slightly higher than New Braunfels ISD at 81.3%, while San Marcos ISD and Seguin ISD are considerably lower.

The district's graduation performance is therefore respectable but represents an area for improvement. New Braunfels ISD is not substantially below state or regional expectations, but stronger peer performance—particularly in Boerne ISD and Comal ISD—suggests that there may be useful practices to examine in secondary programming, transition planning, course access, credit recovery, and support for students approaching graduation.

Table 5: STAAR Grades 3–8 Passing Rates

Table 5: Special Education STAAR Grades 3–8 Passing Rates

Entity	Mathematics	Reading Language Arts	Science	Social Studies
Texas	44.7%	48.8%	41.3%	31.0%
Region 20	42.6%	47.0%	40.7%	31.9%
New Braunfels ISD	**42.9%**	**49.7%**	**39.1%**	**30.9%**
Bastrop ISD	20.9%	24.5%	15.9%	14.2%
Boerne ISD	62.1%	70.7%	62.8%	48.7%
Comal ISD	56.3%	61.8%	58.4%	37.0%
San Marcos CISD	34.9%	39.1%	35.0%	33.7%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	43.7%	45.4%	43.0%	37.9%
Seguin ISD	38.3%	37.5%	33.5%	23.6%

Source: TEA 2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA)

New Braunfels ISD' performance in grades 3–8 is generally close to state and regional results. The district reports passing rates of 42.9% in mathematics, 49.7% in reading/language arts, 39.1% in science, and 30.9% in social studies.

Reading/language arts is the strongest relative result: New Braunfels ISD exceeds both Texas at 48.8% and Region 20 at 47.0%. Mathematics is essentially aligned with Region 20 and slightly below the state. Science is slightly below both benchmarks, while social studies is virtually identical to state and regional performance.

The peer comparison shows considerable variation. Boerne ISD and Comal ISD substantially outperform New Braunfels ISD in every tested subject, while Bastrop ISD performs substantially below New Braunfels ISD. San Marcos ISD and Seguin ISD are also generally lower, while SCUCISD is more comparable.

The conclusion is that New Braunfels ISD' grades 3–8 performance is generally average rather than exceptional. The district does not demonstrate widespread academic weakness, but the performance of Boerne ISD and Comal ISD indicates that stronger outcomes are attainable within comparable systems.

Table 6: STAAR End-of-Course Passing Rates

Table 6: Special Education STAAR EOC Passing Rates

Entity	Algebra I	Biology	U.S. History	English I and II
Texas	53.7%	76.6%	80.2%	37.2%
Region 20	52.7%	78.1%	80.6%	36.9%
New Braunfels ISD	**57.9%**	**81.1%**	**87.1%**	**43.6%**
Bastrop ISD	58.9%	64.8%	68.8%	24.0%
Boerne ISD	64.8%	80.0%	88.0%	54.6%
Comal ISD	59.0%	84.2%	84.3%	49.2%
San Marcos CISD	47.2%	68.8%	76.3%	28.5%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	47.6%	72.5%	84.4%	32.2%
Seguin ISD	35.9%	68.5%	78.2%	27.3%

Source: TEA 2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA)

The EOC results are one of New Braunfels ISD' strongest outcome areas. Students with disabilities achieve passing rates of 57.9% in Algebra I, 81.1% in Biology, 87.1% in U.S. History, and 43.6% in English I and II.

New Braunfels ISD exceeds both the state and Region 20 in all four areas. It is especially strong in U.S. History, where the district's 87.1% rate is nearly seven percentage points above the state.

Among peers, Boerne ISD remains particularly strong, and Comal ISD also performs well. Nevertheless, New Braunfels ISD compares favorably with most districts and substantially exceeds San Marcos ISD, SCUCISD, and Seguin ISD in several subjects.

Table 7: State/Region and Comparable District Staffing Ratios for Special Education

Table 7: State/Region and Comparable District Staffing Ratios for Special Education

Entity	Students with Disabilities	Special Education Teachers (FTE)	% Special Education Teachers	SWD per SPED Teacher	Teacher Turnover Rate
Texas	852,032	42,195.7	11.4%	20	18.8%
Region 20	85,104	4,340	13.2%	20	18.0%
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**52.6**	**8.1%**	**31**	**20.3%**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	58.7	7.4%	34	27.4%
Boerne ISD	1,973	137.5	19.6%	14	16.3%
Comal ISD	5,517	321	16.4%	17	17.3%
San Marcos CISD	1,591	111.5	19.2%	14	22.0%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	165	17.1%	18	13.7%
Seguin ISD	1,391	41.7	9.2%	33	21.9%

Source: TEA 2024–25 TAPR Staff Information and 2025 RDA SWD counts.

New Braunfels ISD serves 1,618 students with disabilities with 52.6 special education teacher FTEs, resulting in approximately 31 students with disabilities per special education teacher. This is substantially higher than both the Texas and Region 20 ratios of 20:1.

The percentage of the teaching workforce assigned to special education reinforces this difference. In New Braunfels ISD, 8.1% of teachers are special education teachers, compared with 11.4% statewide and 13.2% in Region 20. Among the comparison districts, only Bastrop ISD has a lower percentage at 7.4%, while Seguin ISD is slightly higher at 9.2%. By contrast, Boerne ISD (19.6%), San Marcos ISD (19.2%), SCUCISD (17.1%), and Comal ISD (16.4%) devote approximately twice the proportion of their teaching workforce to special education as New Braunfels ISD.

The student-to-special-education-teacher ratios show essentially the same pattern. New Braunfels ISD's 31:1 ratio is considerably higher than Boerne ISD and San Marcos ISD at 14:1, Comal ISD at 17:1, and SCUCISD at 18:1. Only Bastrop ISD at 34:1 and Seguin ISD at 33:1 have higher ratios. Thus, regardless of whether staffing is viewed as a percentage of the teaching workforce or relative to the number of students with disabilities, New Braunfels ISD is clearly operating toward the lean end of the comparison group.

New Braunfels ISD's 20.3% teacher turnover rate is higher than Texas (18.8%), Region 20 (18.0%), Boerne ISD (16.3%), Comal ISD (17.3%), and SCUCISD (13.7%). Only San Marcos ISD (22.0%), Seguin ISD (21.9%), and Bastrop ISD (27.4%) have higher turnover. Of particular interest, the three districts with the highest student-to-special-education-teacher ratios (Bastrop ISD, Seguin ISD, and New Braunfels ISD) also have three of the four highest teacher turnover rates in the comparison group. The data do not establish that heavier special education staffing ratios cause turnover, particularly because the turnover measure applies to teachers generally rather than exclusively to special education teachers.

Overall, Table 7 provides strong comparative evidence that New Braunfels ISD operates with fewer special education teachers relative to both its student population and total teaching workforce than most comparable districts. This does not, by itself, establish that the district is understaffed. However, when the comparatively lean staffing ratios are considered alongside the district's above-state and above-region teacher turnover rate, they raise

legitimate questions regarding workload, sustainability, recruitment and retention, and the district's capacity to maintain current service levels over time.

Table 8: Appraisal Staffing

Table 8: Comparison of Staffing Information for Appraisal Staff

Entity	Students with Disabilities	Educational Diagnostician FTE	LSSP / Psychologist FTE	Total Appraisal FTE	SWD per Appraisal FTE
Texas	852,032	6,469	2,394	8,863	—
Region 20	85,104	285	371	656	130
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**9**	**3**	**12**	**135**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	12	6	18	110
Boerne ISD	1,973	4	10	14	141
Comal ISD	5,517	16	28	44	125
San Marcos CISD	1,591	4	6	10	159
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	10	15	25	118
Seguin ISD	1,391	6	5	11	126

Source: TEA Staff FTE Counts and Salary Reports - 2025–2026

New Braunfels ISD has 12 appraisal staff FTEs, 9 educational diagnosticians and 3 LSSP/psychologists, for 1,618 students with disabilities, or approximately 135 students with disabilities per appraisal staff member.

This ratio is slightly higher than Region 20's 130. It is also higher than Bastrop ISD, Comal ISD, SCUCISD, and Seguin ISD, though lower than Boerne ISD at 141 and San Marcos ISD at 159.

New Braunfels ISD therefore appears to operate on the higher workload side of the comparison group, although not at the extreme. The distribution of staff is also noteworthy: New Braunfels ISD relies more heavily on diagnosticians than psychologists, whereas several peers have a larger school psychologist presence.

The ratio alone does not establish understaffing, since appraisal workload is affected by initial evaluation volume, reevaluation schedules, student mobility, complexity of evaluations, and use of contractors. Still, the data support examining actual evaluation workload and compliance demands rather than relying only on total FTE.

Table 9: Speech-Language Pathologist Staffing

Table 9: Comparison of Speech-Language Pathologist Staffing

Entity	Students with Disabilities	Speech Therapist / Pathologist FTE	SWD per SLP FTE
Texas	852,032	6,490	131
Region 20	85,104	591	144
New Braunfels ISD	**1,618**	**13**	**124**
Bastrop ISD	1,983	12	165
Boerne ISD	1,973	16	123
Comal ISD	5,517	44	125
San Marcos CISD	1,591	9	176
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	2,944	23	128
Seguin ISD	1,391	11	126

Source: TEA Staff FTE Counts and Salary Reports - 2025-2026

New Braunfels ISD employs 13 SLP FTEs, resulting in approximately 124 students with disabilities per SLP. This compares favorably with both Texas at 131 and Region 20 at 144.

New Braunfels ISD also has a more favorable ratio than Bastrop ISD, San Marcos ISD, SCUCISD, and Seguin ISD, and is essentially comparable to Boerne ISD and Comal ISD.

Within the limitations of using total students with disabilities as the denominator, this table does not suggest an obvious SLP staffing deficit in New Braunfels ISD. The district appears relatively well positioned compared with the broader regional benchmark and most peers.

A true caseload analysis would still need to consider the number of students actually receiving speech services, service minutes, evaluation responsibilities, and campus travel, but the comparative FTE picture is favorable.

Table 10: Financial Data

Table 10: Special Education Actual Financial Data by State and District — All Funds

Entity	Total Revenue per Student	Operating Expenditures per Student	Basic Educational Services (% Operating)	Operating Expenditures SWD (%)	Program Expenditure per SWD
Texas	$16,867	$12,951	40.4%	14.1%	$1,820
New Braunfels ISD	**$14,713**	**$11,593**	**44.5%**	**13.7%**	**$1,592**
Bastrop ISD	$21,436	$11,400	38.5%	15.9%	$1,804
Boerne ISD	$14,946	$10,869	43.2%	17.0%	$1,849
Comal ISD	$15,609	$10,947	45.6%	15.0%	$1,631
San Marcos CISD	$17,649	$11,877	35.9%	17.3%	$2,290
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	$14,210	$11,650	39.8%	19.7%	$2,298
Seguin ISD	$17,289	$13,102	36.1%	14.7%	$1,921

Source: TEA 2024–25 PEIMS Actual Financial Data (All Funds)

New Braunfels ISD reports $14,713 in total revenue per student and $11,593 in operating expenditures per student. Both are below the statewide figures of $16,867 and $12,951.

The district directs 44.5% of operating expenditures to basic educational services, which is higher than the state rate of 40.4% and higher than most comparison districts. In contrast, 13.7% of operating expenditures are attributed to students with disabilities, slightly below the statewide 14.1% and the lowest percentage among the comparison districts shown.

The program expenditure per student with a disability is $1,592, lower than the state figure of $1,820 and lower than all peers except none; even Comal ISD is slightly higher at $1,631, while San Marcos ISD and SCUCISD exceed $2,290.

Financially, therefore, New Braunfels ISD appears to run a comparatively lean special education program. This aligns closely with the staffing pattern in Table 7. The district is devoting fewer financial resources per student with a disability while also employing fewer special education teachers proportionately.

Table 11: Salary Comparison

Table 11: Salary Comparison — Average Base Pay

Entity	Educational Diagnostician	LSSP / School Psychologist	Speech-Language Pathologist	Educational Aides
Texas	$78,226	$78,628	$72,649	$26,281
Region 20	$76,824	$74,945	$68,006	$27,362
New Braunfels ISD	**$74,168**	**$78,670**	**$66,518**	**$25,439**
Boerne ISD	$74,616	$72,245	$62,692	$28,044
Bastrop ISD	$69,834	$66,789	$65,379	$27,775
Comal ISD	$76,220	$72,581	$75,164	$25,259
San Marcos CISD	$73,451	$69,883	$65,603	$29,631
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	$75,412	$77,911	$64,367	$26,798
Seguin ISD	$69,009	$73,307	$63,869	$27,985

Source: TEA Staff FTE Counts and Salary Reports - 2025-2026

New Braunfels ISD' salary position varies substantially by staff category.

Educational diagnosticians average $74,168, below Texas and Region 20 and below Comal ISD and SCUCISD, though above Bastrop ISD and Seguin ISD. LSSP/school psychologist pay is much more competitive: New Braunfels ISD averages $78,670, slightly above the statewide rate and higher than all comparison districts listed.

SLP pay, at $66,518, is below Texas and Region 20 but competitive with most peers. Comal ISD is the clear outlier at $75,164. Educational aide pay in New Braunfels ISD is $25,439, below Texas, Region 20, and most peers; only Comal ISD is slightly lower.

The compensation picture therefore is mixed rather than uniformly weak. Psychologist compensation appears highly competitive, while aide compensation is comparatively low. Diagnostician and SLP salaries are closer to the middle of the peer group.

If the district experiences recruitment or retention challenges in particular roles, salary competitiveness should be examined by position rather than through a broad districtwide compensation conclusion.

Table 12: Least Restrictive Environment and Dropout Rates

Table 12: Special Education Least Restrictive Environment and Dropout Rates

Entity	Regular EC Program (3–5)	Regular Class ≥80% (6–21)	Regular Class <40% (6–21)	SPED Dropout Rate
Texas	23.9%	75.8%	12.3%	1.7%
Region 20	38.0%	79.9%	11.2%	2.2%
New Braunfels ISD	**47.6%**	**84.6%**	**7.2%**	**1.4%**
Bastrop ISD	13.7%	79.1%	9.6%	0.5%
Boerne ISD	60.9%	85.7%	7.9%	0.5%
Comal ISD	10.2%	80.4%	7.9%	0.5%
San Marcos CISD	36.2%	74.8%	10.0%	2.0%
Schertz-Cibolo-Universal City ISD	47.7%	75.9%	11.8%	0.9%
Seguin ISD	45.1%	84.2%	10.9%	2.5%

Source: TEA 2025 Results Driven Accountability (RDA).

New Braunfels ISD performs especially well on Least Restrictive Environment measures.

The district serves 47.6% of preschool students with disabilities in regular early childhood programs, compared with 23.9% statewide and 38.0% in Region 20. Only Boerne ISD is substantially higher among the peers.

For students ages 6–21, 84.6% are served in the regular classroom at least 80% of the day, compared with 75.8% statewide and 79.9% in Region 20. New Braunfels ISD is nearly the highest-performing district in the comparison group, just behind Boerne ISD at 85.7% and slightly ahead of Seguin ISD at 84.2%.

Only 7.2% of New Braunfels ISD students are in the regular classroom less than 40% of the day, well below the state and regional rates. This is the lowest percentage in the comparison group.

The special education dropout rate is 1.4%, better than the state and Region 20 but higher than Bastrop ISD, Boerne ISD, Comal ISD, and SCUCISD.

Overall, LRE appears to be a clear program strength. New Braunfels ISD is serving a comparatively high proportion of students in inclusive settings, and that has important implications for staffing: the district's staffing model must support students not only in special education classrooms but across general education environments.

Overall Study Summary

Taken collectively, the comparative data portray New Braunfels ISD as a relatively lean, inclusive, and generally effective special education system. The district's overall special education identification rate of 16.36% is slightly above Texas but below Region 20 and most comparison districts. New Braunfels ISD also received a Meets Requirements (DL 1) RDA determination, indicating that the district's relatively lean staffing model exists alongside generally positive program outcomes rather than widespread indicators of poor performance.

Student performance presents a similar picture. Grades 3–8 results are generally near state and regional benchmarks, while secondary EOC performance is a relative strength, with New Braunfels ISD exceeding Texas and Region 20 across all four reported EOC areas. The district's graduation rate is near state and regional levels, although several comparable districts demonstrate higher performance. LRE indicators are particularly favorable: New Braunfels ISD serves a comparatively high percentage of students with disabilities in general education environments and a relatively small percentage in more restrictive settings.

The most significant issue emerging from the comparative study is special education teacher staffing. New Braunfels ISD has approximately 31 students with disabilities per special education teacher compared with 20:1 for both Texas and Region 20. Only 8.1% of New Braunfels ISD teachers are assigned to special education, compared with 11.4% statewide and 13.2% regionally. Four of the six comparison districts devote between 16.4% and 19.6% of their teaching workforce to special education—approximately twice the proportion in New Braunfels ISD.

The turnover data increase the significance of this finding. New Braunfels ISD’s 20.3% teacher turnover rate exceeds both the state and regional rates, and the districts with the leanest special education teacher ratios, Bastrop ISD, Seguin ISD, and New Braunfels ISD, are also among those with the highest overall teacher turnover rates. While the data do not demonstrate a causal relationship, this pattern strengthens the case for examining whether workload and staffing expectations may be affecting sustainability and retention.

The financial data are consistent with the staffing picture. New Braunfels ISD directs a comparatively small proportion of its operating expenditures to students with disabilities and reports relatively low special education expenditures per student. Taken together, Tables 7 and 10 suggest that New Braunfels ISD is achieving generally favorable outcomes with comparatively fewer special education teaching resources and lower expenditures.



Appendix B

Focus Group Summary

STETSON
& ASSOCIATES, INC.

New Braunfels Independent School District

Focus Group Summary

Overview

Twelve focus group sessions were held with New Braunfels ISD staff on **September 23–24, 2026**. The mixed groups were comprised of campus administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, appraisal staff, ARD facilitators, speech and language pathologists, instructional and related services staff, and special education coordinators.

Notes from each session are presented below, organized by what participants described as working well and the challenges they identified. Statements reflect participant perceptions as shared during the discussions.

Table 1. Focus Group Sessions

Focus Group	Date	Topics Discussed
1	Sept. 23, 2026	Staffing and Caseloads; Bilingual Dyslexia and Student Identification; Compliance, Process, and SDI
2	Sept. 23, 2026	Accommodations and IEPs; Staffing, Training, and Specialized Placements; Progress Monitoring and Cross-Campus Collaboration
3	Sept. 23, 2026	Key Challenges
4	Sept. 23, 2026	Co-Teaching: Structural Failures; Staffing and Pipeline Crisis; Interventionist Elimination and Broader Concerns
5	Sept. 23, 2026	Key Challenges; Staffing and Training Gaps; Recommendations Surfaced by Group
6	Sept. 23, 2026	Staffing and Workload Challenges; Service Continuum and Placement Gaps; Transition Planning and Cross-Level Disconnect
7	Sept. 24, 2026	Training, Communication, and Rollout; Staffing, Caseloads, and Service Delivery
8	Sept. 24, 2026	Gaps in the Continuum of Services; Dyslexia Program: Fidelity and Fit; Behavior Support Gaps; Staffing, Scheduling, and Collaboration Time; Budget Priorities and Campus Security
9	Sept. 24, 2026	Caseload and Staffing Pressures; ARD Scheduling and Paperwork Overload; Systemic Concerns and Emerging Risks
10	Sept. 24, 2026	Staffing Shortages and Retention; Evaluation and Eligibility Pressures; Service Delivery and Scheduling Gaps; Out-of-District Placements and Transitions
11	Sept. 24, 2026	Inclusion and Placement Challenges; Paperwork, Accountability, and Compliance Gaps; Sensory Rooms, OT/PT, and Leadership Concerns
12	Sept. 24, 2026	Staffing and Caseload Challenges; Curriculum, Placement, and Continuum Gaps; Systems, Data, and Administrative Burden

Each session also discussed what is working well in the district.

Focus Group 1

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

What's Working

- Admin understanding of dyslexia at campus level
  - Helps build master schedules that protect pull-out group structures
- Two Rivers gained a dedicated special ed teacher after moving to its own campus
  - Previously had only a half-time para; special ed population runs 20-25%
- Collaborative master scheduling at secondary
  - Special ed and admin work in tandem; spreadsheets replaced ad hoc processes
  - Teachers feel less like "an island"
- Life skills units well-staffed with manageable class sizes
- SpedHub resource site: step-by-step guides for processes and compliance questions
- Strong diag team; district fills gaps well during transitions
- Facilitator role has clear guidelines, templates, and peer review time
  - Supervisor is accessible and responsive during ARDs
- Regular training via Region 20 (dyslexia-specific); book studies and chat channels for diags
- Two Rivers: structured intake process before special ed students enroll
  - ARD held in advance to confirm fit, resources, and expectations
- Stetson model rollout (approx. 5 years ago) aligned staffing to student need at elementary; rolled out to secondary

Challenges: Staffing and Caseloads

- One campus missing a permanent resource/inclusion teacher; long-term sub in place
  - Inflates caseloads for the two remaining teachers
- Caseloads at secondary running 35-45, which is high for a T-chart
- Case management time not embedded in schedules
  - Teachers absorbing it during planning time, which is already consumed by PLCs and team meetings (2 days/week)
- Co-teaching coverage spread thin when one grade level has higher need
  - Lower-need classrooms shifted to SF5 (para-only support) by default
- Preschool: two special ed paras embedded all day, but no structured collaboration time with lead teacher
  - No shared lunch, no after-school overlap; coordination happens informally or not at all

Challenges: Bilingual Dyslexia and Student Identification

- Only one bilingual dyslexia teacher on campus; no bilingual special ed teacher
  - Students identified late (4th-5th grade) with insufficient time to complete Esperanza
  - No clear protocol for what happens at middle school transition
- No bilingual dyslexia continuation at middle school
  - Students transition to Reading by Design, which has no Spanish component
  - No bilingual dyslexia teachers at secondary level (only two in the district)
- Co-teach in dual language: special ed teacher replaced by para (bilingual-certified)
  - 30 minutes/day, 5 days/week; rigor and vocabulary gap between Spanish intervention and Spanish testing
- IDA updated dyslexia definition in 2025
  - Removed "unexpected" criterion; added orthographic and environmental factors across English and Spanish
  - Expect significant increase in dyslexia identification numbers

Challenges: Compliance, Process, and SDI

- Transfer student evaluations (out-of-district, primarily Comal)
  - Missing "multiple sources of data" in FIEs triggers full re-evaluation process, not just a re-read
  - Cyclical reviews pull the original FIE, not the re-read, so accepting a deficient FIE creates compliance risk
  - Each campus may receive 20+ transfers; shared diags absorbing 40+ additional paperwork cycles
- Manifestation determination timelines creating operational strain at alternative campuses
  - Ten-day window forces students back into population before MDR is complete
  - Principal noted 20% of staff diverted to ISS supervision while waiting
  - Parents can waive the five-day notice period, but this option is not consistently communicated
- Students in the "in-between" zone: not qualifying for STAR Alternate 2, but not thriving in resource or co-teach
  - No blended or alternate curriculum option for this group
  - Some students receiving 60 min resource + 30 min co-teach, missing gen ed social context
- Specially designed instruction (SDI) not consistently visible in classrooms
  - Co-teaching often defaults to one teacher observing rather than parallel or alternative teaching
  - Accommodations being conflated with SDI
  - New staff unfamiliar with co-teaching models (parallel, alternative, etc.)
- Growing special ed population (district at ~17%; some campuses higher) without proportional increase in actual disability rates
  - Students with ADHD or autism not always requiring specially designed instruction
  - 504 plans underutilized as an exit pathway for students who no longer need SDI
  - Caseloads inflated by students who may not need special ed placement

Focus Group 2

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

What's Working

- ARD facilitation structure
  - Dedicated ARD facilitators act as unbiased mediators, freeing case managers and admins to focus on their roles
  - Supports collaborative mindset with families
- Continuum of services model (introduced by Nina)
  - Standardized service minutes replaced inconsistent campus-by-campus scheduling
  - Clustered student groupings improved scheduling and reduced case manager strain
  - Buy-in was initially hard but data-driven decision-making helped
  - New dashboard
  - Replaces manual "roadshow" step tool; auto-populates current data
  - Impressed participants; still in early rollout (two weeks in)
- Staffing levels: fully staffed for the first time in several years at some campuses
- Collaboration and timeline accountability
  - Multi-level meeting structure (campus, site, diagnostician) keeps timelines on track
  - School psych praised the district's collaborative culture as uncommon across districts
- Co-teach scheduling improvements
  - Sped kids scheduled first this year; push-in now aligned to small group time
  - Shared planning periods between co-teachers established at some campuses
- Dyslexia teachers on campus
  - Keeps groups small and compliant with program fidelity requirements (max 6-8 per group)
  - Provides a built-in consultation resource for gen ed teachers

Challenges: Accommodations and IEPs

- Accommodation misalignment
  - Accommodations in ARDs don't always match what's being provided in classrooms
  - Gen ed teachers often unaware of specific accommodations or how to use them
  - Laundry-list accommodations are common; teachers struggle to implement all of them
  - Distinction between disability-specific accommodations and good Tier 1 instruction is blurry
- Accommodation decision-making
  - No consistent process for evaluating whether an accommodation is still needed or effective
  - Stetson accommodation rubric recommended as a resource (stetsonassociates.com)
  - Eligibility criteria for accommodations (e.g., oral administration, calculator) not consistently applied
  - Some practices are holdovers: "they're in SPED, they get a calculator" regardless of eligibility
- IEP quality and time
  - Teachers lack sufficient time to write quality IEPs during the school day
  - Many writing IEPs at home; three-week windows still not always enough
  - Caseloads of ~22 students with heavy fall and spring spikes compound the problem
  - ARD complexity (life skills, SIBS, transfers) means one student can generate 3-4 meetings

Challenges: Staffing, Training, and Specialized Placements

- Co-teach and support facilitation training gaps
  - Insufficient training time at start of year due to C&I schedule conflicts
  - SPED teachers skipping HMH and other trainings to do paperwork; then half of co-plan time is spent catching up a partner who missed training
  - Key reframe shared: "How would instruction look different if I weren't there?" as a quality check
  - Six co-teaching approaches (parallel, station, etc.) trained ~5 years ago; not being reinforced
- Paraprofessional preparation
  - Paras pushing in for SF2/SF3 often don't know student goals or how to support them
  - Suggested solution: one-pager per student (disability-related needs, accommodations, key info)
- Specialized placement gaps
  - Students with autism who are too high-functioning for life skills but too disruptive for gen ed have no clear placement
  - SIBS units at capacity; numbers growing, ratio concerns emerging
  - Some students drowning in gen ed but maxed out of resource; getting lost
  - Contributor to staff burnout: feeling unable to truly help students in mismatched placements
- Dyslexia caseload and fidelity
  - Groups exceeding 6-8 student cap as new eligibilities and transfers arrive mid-year
  - Starting new students at Volume 1 while others are mid-program creates fidelity conflicts
  - Some campuses lack consistent curriculum or progress monitoring protocols across dyslexia teachers

Progress Monitoring and Cross-Campus Collaboration

- Progress monitoring inconsistency
  - Expectation: 3-4 data points per 9-week period, but no standard forms or templates district-wide
  - Some teachers using AI tools (ChatGPT, Magic AI) to generate goal-aligned monitoring templates
  - Goalbook mentioned as a structured alternative with built-in AI goal tracking
- No cross-campus collaboration among SPED teachers
  - Teachers don't know peers at other campuses; no vertical alignment equivalent for SPED
  - SPARK program mentioned (Supporting Progress through Academic Resources and Knowledge): teacher cohort model worth exploring

- Reading progress decision-making
  - No clear process for what to do when a student isn't progressing in their dyslexia program
  - District expanding training (Basic Language Skills, Take Flight) but protocol for next steps still developing

Focus Group 3

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

What's Working

- Admin support cited as a key positive across campuses
  - Elementary teacher, admin has been her "backbone" through first six weeks, providing input and collaboration time
  - High school principal: parents are engaged, timely, and invested in student success
  - High school involves students more directly in IEP decisions
- IEP template introduced this year well-received
  - Helpful for consistency, but not yet universally adopted
- Transition meetings (end-of-year student reviews) valued when done well
  - High school appreciates receiving info from feeder campuses before students arrive
  - Gateway program flexibility praised: one wheelchair-bound student housed on campus with familiar staff rather than forced into standard pathway
- Co-teaching works well in some contexts
  - One elementary teacher described a strong fourth-grade co-teach partnership last year
  - Reading co-teach cited as working well this year

Key Challenges

- Facilitator instability and inconsistency
  - Five different ARD facilitators at the high school last year alone
  - Contracted facilitators placed without campus principal input into hiring
  - Facilitators and district office communicating conflicting information, leaving principals caught in the middle
  - Elementary teacher not being invited to ARD meetings, writing IEPs the day before with no notice
  - New facilitator at elementary campus still inconsistent despite intensive training
- Caseloads too high, especially with unfilled positions
  - Emily carrying 44 students with one para and an unfilled FTE (covered by a long-term sub who cannot case-manage)
  - High school caseloads over 30; some reached 40 in prior years
  - SPED percentage at high school around 17-18% despite overall enrollment dropping from 2,600 to ~1,360
- Para pay and retention a serious problem
  - Some paras paid as low as $13/hour vs. $25-26/hour elsewhere in the region
  - Revolving door: paras leave because they "cannot afford to work here"
  - Many get certified as teachers to earn more, which still results in losing them from para roles
  - Para training described as "non-existent"
- Co-teach model not appropriate for all campuses or class sizes
  - Classes of 26-27 students with mixed needs (ADHD, OCD, behavior) make push-in ineffective
  - Smaller campuses don't have the staffing to sustain a full co-teach model
  - Recommendation: offer a menu of inclusion models and let campuses choose what fits
- Program and curriculum overload
  - Too many programs introduced year over year with no clear direction on what SPED teachers should actually use

  - SpedHub has extensive resources but no clear guidance on what applies where
  - Contrast drawn with district leadership simplifying focus for campus principals, while SPED keeps adding
- IEP template training was too brief
  - Covered in ~45 minutes as part of a slideshow; not reinforced
  - Not on the hub; inconsistently used across campuses
- End-of-year placement meetings feel rushed and over-reliant on a single AI tool
  - Decisions driven by one data point (MAP score) rather than multiple

Focus Group 4

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Participants: Principal, SLP, special ed teacher, dyslexia teacher, SpEd facilitator, and gen ed teacher

What's Working

- Pre-ARD staffing meetings: district unity and meeting norms prevent litigious situations from spiraling
- Assessment team staffing: diag and school psych positions currently filled; early childhood assessment team strong
- Facilitators now handling IEP clerical oversight: timelines, compliance, locking/closing ARDs
- Dyslexia training: strong support through Region 20, responsive liaison
- Costco (referral platform): replaced paper-based process, pulls in Ascender, MAP, and mClass data
- Not yet integrated with SameGoal or resource management systems
- SameGoal: user-friendly, responsive vendor, consistent IEP template expectations
- Simplified gen ed pre-ARD form: reduced burden vs. prior lengthy version

Co-Teaching: Structural Failures

- Staffing gaps make the model unworkable at several campuses
- One campus: single SpEd teacher covering all co-teach classrooms, position chronically unfilled
- Students missing minutes for weeks; four co-teach students failed STAAR reading last year
  - Too many SpEd kids per co-teach class; some students neglected while teacher focuses on others
  - Gen ed teachers don't understand co-teach models
  - Original rollout was strong, but no sustained training since; high staff turnover has erased institutional knowledge
  - Six co-teach models exist; most gen ed teachers unaware of them
  - Paraprofessionals often don't understand student goals or how to support them effectively
  - Planning time nearly impossible: SpEd teachers are in meetings during gen ed planning blocks
  - New HMH curriculum adds pressure: training covers content understanding, not classroom implementation in a 90-minute block
  - One campus: first-year SpEd teacher being taught math by the gen ed teacher, not the other way around

Staffing and Pipeline Crisis

- Chronic unfilled positions: life skills, SpEd teachers, SLPs
- SLP shortage led to role conversions; assistants now filling gaps without full scope
- SLPs prefer contract or part-time work; district won't hire part-time, reluctant on contracts
- Diagnostician overload: volume prevents best-quality evaluations; legally defensible but not optimal
- Private/non-enrolled referrals tripled summer-to-date vs. last year
- Three-year reevals and ongoing IEP maintenance will sustain the wave even after initials subside
- Dyslexia caseloads near 50 per teacher; groups of 10-12 violate program fidelity requirements
- District refuses to hire additional dyslexia teachers despite exceeding thresholds

- SpEd teachers trained in dyslexia instruction then pulled out; now four years behind on updates
- Losing staff to neighboring districts (Comal, Cibolo): culture, climate, and comparable pay with extras
- Comal pays lower base but adds stipends; net pay roughly equal, but perception of SpEd program quality draws candidates away
- Work-from-home offers exist for diags and school psychs but rarely used in practice
- Potential solutions discussed:
- Bridge/alternative certification programs for SLPs and school psychs (precedent: Region 10 diag bridge program)
- Part-time and contract positions with system access and shared training
- "Teacher tester" / psychometrist model: SpEd teachers trained to administer academic achievement tests to support diags
- College Station ISD model: dedicated work-from-home diag handling only reevaluations

Interventionist Elimination and Broader Concerns

- District phasing out interventionists: one interventionist will serve two campuses as a coaching role, not direct student support
- Gen ed teachers expected to absorb Tier 2 and 3 intervention on top of existing load
- High-performing interventionists leaving or redeploying (e.g., math interventionist becoming art teacher)
- Referral surge expected as intervention safety net disappears: more students flagged for SpEd, dyslexia, ADHD testing
- TIA incentive ($10,000 max) seen as insufficient to retain teachers facing this workload
- SpEd teachers and dyslexia teachers ineligible for TIA despite measurable student outcomes
- District in $7M deficit: budget pressure driving cuts to campus-level support roles
- Concern that overcorrection across curriculum, staffing, and intervention changes simultaneously is unsustainable
- One campus that lost interventionists three years ago adapted successfully, but notes the timing of all changes at once is the real burden
- Prediction: significant teacher turnover next year if conditions don't improve

Focus Group 5

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

What's Working

- Collaborative team meetings (Google Forms, spreadsheets, weekly staffing check-ins) keep staff aligned
- Strong communication and collaboration among diagnosticians and school psychologists
- New Boston assessment system streamlining paperwork, timelines, and requests (fully rolled out this year after partial last year)
- Procedures and systems significantly improved over the past three years
- RTI and behavior procedures well-developed; campuses being supported with implementation
- Department now conducting end-of-year data reviews with every campus to adjust services and ARDs based on student progress
- Supplant model (bridge between resource and essential academics) seen as a positive, keeps students with peers at their level
- Facilitator positions: most campuses now have one full-time facilitator on site, a notable improvement over prior years when nearly all had split campuses
- District relatively generous with staff development days compared to other districts

Key Challenges

- Transfer students arriving with incomplete or missing documentation, triggering re-evaluations and reopening cases
  - District currently at ~17% special ed population; evaluators nearly all carrying transfer-related caseloads
  - Growth driven partly by I-35 corridor expansion and cheaper housing on the east side
  - ~22 transfers still incoming; cyclical review and TEA not recognizing prior evals compounds the workload
- Master schedule not built around special ed first
  - High school scrambled at start of year; some gen ed teachers ended up with disproportionately high SPED caseloads
  - Co-teach conference periods disrupted when transfer students added mid-schedule
- Accommodations not consistently implemented in gen ed classrooms
  - Teachers report feeling overwhelmed: "I have 15 SPED kids and no support"
  - Accommodations work in therapy/pull-out settings but don't carry over to the classroom
  - Some gen ed teachers have never reviewed student accommodation plans
- Emergent bilingual (EB) students who also qualify for SPED are underserved
  - No bilingual SPED teachers or bilingual co-teachers available
  - Students receiving ESL support instead, which doesn't address academic language needs
  - Fourth graders presenting at kinder/first-grade level after years of services
- Dyslexia caseloads unmanageable within current scheduling constraints
  - Grouping across grade levels causes students to miss tier one instruction
  - No realistic way to serve all dyslexia students without creating instructional gaps
- High turnover, especially among special ed teachers and ARD facilitators
  - Burnout from overwhelming caseloads cited as primary driver
  - Facilitators moved to administrative pay scale but end up earning less per day than on teacher scale
  - Speech, OT, school psychologists can earn significantly more as contractors
  - Newer staff don't fully value TRS retirement benefits; contract pay more immediately attractive
- Co-teach model rolled out without sufficient or ongoing training
  - Assumed teachers knew how to co-teach; training was not consistent or sustained
  - Paras used for support facilitation without always knowing what's expected of them
- Contract staff lack district email access
  - Emails go to spam; communication gaps result
  - Contract staff cannot access district platforms via single sign-on

Staffing and Training Gaps

- More staff alone unlikely to solve the problem: "more of the same doesn't yield results"
  - Better training and deeper understanding of co-teach and accommodation implementation needed
- University preparation inadequate: new teachers entering with little foundational SPED knowledge
  - SPED teacher pipeline shrinking at the university level
- Professional learning days insufficient and fragmented
  - Multiple departments competing for the same limited PD days
  - Preference expressed for full, dedicated district PD days rather than split/partial sessions
  - Smaller, campus-tailored training sessions seen as more effective than large-scale PD
- ARD facilitator role frequently misunderstood by those transitioning into it from teaching
  - Requires high organization and detail orientation; steep learning curve
  - Supervisor is not the campus principal, creating dual-direction pressure
- Bilingual SPED staff essentially unavailable statewide, not just locally

Recommendations Surfaced by Group

- Build master schedule around special ed needs first, not after the fact
- Implement exit interviews to understand why staff are leaving
- Provide ongoing, structured co-teach training (not one-time rollout)
- Resolve contract staff email/platform access issue
- Explore campus-level, tailored PD rather than district-wide fragmented sessions
- Communicate TRS retirement value more clearly to newer staff as a retention tool
- Consider dedicated, protected district PD days for special ed training

Focus Group 6

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

What's Working

- Campus-level hiring quality rated highly; bilingual candidates successfully retained for three years
- Related services staff report strong admin support across campuses
- Diagnosticians described as collaborative, student-centered, and effective at leveraging team expertise
- ARD facilitators seen as a positive addition, especially for training new teachers and supporting hard parent conversations
- Case manager caseloads currently around 27 (district max is 30); manageable this year after staffing additions
- High school SPED teachers now getting an ARD prep period daily, freeing time for paperwork
- Some campuses building strong cultures of collaboration and autonomy

Staffing and Workload Challenges

- Caseload relief came, but took a full year from identified need to approved action
  - Resource teachers were carrying 37-38 students during the gap
  - No real collaboration time, minimal paperwork time, unmet service minutes
  - Process seen as slow, possibly constrained by budget approval chains above the SPED department
- ARD facilitator role has chronic turnover
  - One campus has had a minimum of one facilitator change per year for four years
  - Role spans multiple campuses with very different principals and cultures
  - Facilitators caught between district compliance demands and campus realities
  - At least one highly qualified candidate (PhD-level) declined to apply due to structural concerns
- Two-week IEP prep deadline seen as unrealistic given current caseloads
  - Facilitators reluctant to enforce it when teachers are already overwhelmed
  - Gets facilitators in trouble with district if not enforced, and sometimes with principals if enforced
  - High school ARD prep period helps, but not available at elementary level
- Support facilitation (SF) classes often covered by paras, not certified teachers
  - Concern that paras over-support students, limiting authentic skill development
  - Some participants suggested MTSS small-group with a teacher may be more effective than para-led SF twice a week

Service Continuum and Placement Gaps

- Significant gap between life skills and traditional resource settings
  - Students who are too high for life skills but too far behind to be effectively supported in resource have no clear placement
  - Example: fourth-grade student functioning at first-grade level, with autism features, doesn't qualify for life skills or STAR Alt, but struggles in resource

- District service guidelines (dashboard/scoring tool) intended as guidance but applied inconsistently
  - Some roadshows treated the guidelines as rigid cutoffs; others allowed advocacy and flexibility
  - One teacher described being treated dismissively for bringing work samples to advocate for a student
  - Principal support was key in resolving that case, but the process "shouldn't have been that hard"
  - Guidelines have evolved over three to four years; some campuses have built relationships that allow more nuance
- Gen ed classrooms increasingly overloaded with SPED students
  - Example: two fifth-grade sections of 26 students each, heavily SPED-concentrated, because the school didn't qualify for a third teacher
  - Gen ed teachers unable to realistically implement accommodations for 15 SPED students in a class of 25
  - Master schedule constraints force stacking; no easy solution given FTE limits
- Preschool campus enrolled 93 students in one intake period, straining OT and related services
  - Increase linked to growing parent awareness of child find obligations

Transition Planning and Cross-Level Disconnect

- Transitions between campus levels (PK to elementary, elementary to middle, middle to high) described as poorly prepared
  - Service levels and instructional environments differ vastly across levels
  - Students not being prepared for what the next environment actually looks like
  - Some principals push students out before they're ready; others are more collaborative
- Secondary SPED teachers face compounded complexity
  - Students may have seven classes, requiring support across four to seven gen ed settings
  - Only four to five SPED teachers on some campuses; paras filling gaps they aren't qualified to fill
- Science and social studies support remains an unresolved systemic issue
  - Reading gaps make content access very difficult; text-to-speech and accommodations help but don't close the gap
- Broader theme: services are built around programs and boxes, not individualized student need
  - Participants agreed a true audit of services would likely show limited individualization across the district

Focus Group 7

Thursday, September 24, 2026

What's Working

- Communication strong: admin responsive via email and text
- Staffing adequate for classroom support at most campuses (some high school gaps noted)
- Curriculum materials available and training provided (e.g., Foundations, Bridges for reading)
- Professional development opportunities robust: Region 20 offerings, ASHA credits for SLPs, opt-in trainings
- Facilitators highly valued
  - Lead facilitator collaborates closely with case managers, builds family/student relationships
  - Sabrina (second facilitator) also praised for relationships and including case managers
- STEP tool now integrated into a dashboard
  - Calculates service recommendations based on assessment data
  - Provides a defensible starting point; deviations require justification ("roadshow")
- Sheena's weekly lunch-and-learn praised as most effective PD format
  - One focused topic per session, implemented after a few weeks of practice
  - Conversational, real-time, virtual format
- APE evaluation process thorough: helps distinguish behavioral needs from true APE needs

- Sensory/motor rooms available at life skills and SIPS campuses
- Service continuum strong on the resource side; data-driven decision-making in place

Challenges: Training, Communication, and Rollout

- Teachers not attending voluntary PD: 3 out of 30 new teachers showed up to SDI training
  - Gen ed teachers especially underserved; SPED-specific PD not yet extended to them
- Co-teaching model training needed but not yet delivered this year
- Communication overload for campus leaders
  - Emails from facilitators, speech, life skills, behavior specialists, and director all arriving separately
  - New principal missed SAMA training signup due to volume; para attended untrained as a result
- Action Analytics rollout problematic
  - Introduced at Region 20 before the tool was ready; many staff had no login, link, or password
  - Case managers reportedly only 24% complete ahead of a hard deadline
  - Broader pattern noted: district builds custom tools instead of purchasing proven integrated solutions
- IEP template (PLAFPs and goals) introduced at Region 20 with no follow-up training
- New teacher cohort received no coaching training, SDI training, or SAMS Goal training this year
- Calendar shift (from OCT days to exchange days) disrupted summer training pipeline
- ARD scheduling extremely stressful, especially for itinerant staff
  - Competing calendar demands: PLCs, lunch duty, STAAR testing, admin availability
  - Itinerant staff covering 12 campuses struggle with missed minutes and rotating schedules
  - APE teacher navigating rotating elementary schedules with no fixed campus days

Challenges: Staffing, Caseloads, and Service Delivery

- OT caseloads cited at ~100 students vs. ~40 in Austin ISD
- SLP stressed by volume of ARDs, initials, transfers, and a lengthier dismissal process
- APE and PT are each a single person district-wide (“two unicorns”)
- Dyslexia pullout scheduling conflicts: volume/grade-level mismatches make grouping difficult
- Support facilitation (inclusion) model questioned
  - Some students placed in SF2/SF3 based primarily on MAP scores, not full individual picture
  - Risk of compensatory services if placement is wrong
  - Cyndi noted: not every student needs 5 days/week across all four core content areas
- Student refusal of accommodations at high school level a growing issue
  - Teachers frustrated; SLP must document non-progress due to refusal
- Co-teaching model inconsistently implemented: “one teach, one observe” or “one teach, one assist” predominates
- SPED-certified staff with content-area expertise very hard to hire
  - District recently recommended a social studies teacher for a math inclusion role due to lack of qualified applicants
- Expertise within the district underutilized: experienced teachers (e.g., “Miss Garza”) not leveraged to mentor newer staff

Focus Group 8

Thursday, September 24, 2026

What's Working in Special Education

- Referral and qualification protocols much clearer than 7 years ago
- IEP templates praised as compliant, easy to use, and confidence-building

- Facilitators added district-wide (grew from 6 to ~18+), reducing role overload for SLPs and others
  - Allows staff to specialize rather than wear every hat
  - Increases compliance and expertise
- Dyslexia program treated as a protected, focused position
  - Schedule built around dyslexia minutes
  - Third grade gen ed teachers see direct benefit
- MTSS/grade-level data meetings catching students earlier
  - Less "why wasn't this kid identified before fifth grade?"
- SPED leadership praised for continuity, legal knowledge, and trust-building
- District-level SPED communications seen as supportive, not burdensome
  - New staff noted easy onboarding with clear guidance
- Co-teaching PD eventually landed well, though rolled out before training was ready

Gaps in the Continuum of Services

- No "middle tier" between gen ed/resource and life skills at elementary level
  - Students with intellectual disabilities who function independently but are 5+ grade levels behind academically have nowhere to go
  - ALE (Alternative Learning Environment) exists at middle school but not elementary
- Students in this gap get pulled out heavily (reading, math, social skills daily), missing tier 1 instruction entirely
- Transfer students frequently downgraded on arrival
  - IEP services offered at prior district not available here
  - Students placed in support facilitation (SF) or dyslexia as the only options
  - One fifth grader failed STAAR after services were reduced at transfer meeting
- ARD committee decisions overridden by leadership at end-of-year meetings
  - Services revised down to fit scheduling/staffing constraints, not student need
  - Concern this is legally questionable: IEPs should be written based on need, not available bodies

Dyslexia Program: Fidelity and Fit

- Read by Design designed for average-to-high IQ students who can sustain 45-minute, fast-paced instruction
  - District expects one lesson/day, exit in 2 to 2.5 years
- Growing number of identified students have co-occurring conditions (autism, ADHD, apraxia, selective mutism)
  - Program not designed for this profile; fidelity breaks down
  - Groups exceeding six students, pacing compromised
- No slower-pace or modified dyslexia pathway exists
  - Proposal: a SPED-certified Read by Design teacher for smaller, slower-paced groups
  - District previously had SPED teachers trained in the program; that model faded
- Students exited before middle school to preserve electives, then struggle without embedded supports
  - 504 accommodations don't replicate dyslexia program structure
  - Families requesting re-entry after exit
- Texas is unique: dyslexia does not automatically qualify as a learning disability, limiting SPED protections
- Alternatives mentioned: Lexia, BLS, Take Flight, High Roads

Behavior Support Gaps

- No campus-level behavior programming for students who don't rise to SIDS placement but need more than gen ed
  - Only 2 gen ed behavior specialists and 3 SPED behavior specialists district-wide, stretched thin
  - Non-SIDS campuses have very limited options

- Identification and intervention process is slow
  - One case: data collection method changed twice over a full year, delaying support
  - By the time a student is placed correctly, a new school year begins with a new high-need student
- High-need behavior students consume disproportionate IA and admin time
  - One IA effectively dedicated full-time to one student, removing support from all grade levels
- Request: a fast-track or tiered escalation process for extreme behavior cases

Staffing, Scheduling, and Collaboration Time

- Staffing allocations based on prior year-end numbers, not accounting for mid-year transfers or private school evaluation surges
  - Creates patchwork of staff reassigned across campuses
- Speech therapist turnover at some campuses every year
  - Students must re-adjust annually; teachers lose continuity with their SLP
  - Full year lost re-establishing systems each time
- No dedicated collaboration time built into schedules
  - Extra planning period (once/week) consumed by PLCs and ARDs
  - One teacher reported only one planning period in an entire week
  - Para coordination happens in passing, not structured planning
- No AT specialist in the district
  - Staff expected to conduct assistive technology evaluations with little to no training
- LD identification rate is high district-wide
  - Attributed partly to lack of early interventionists
  - Concern: cutting interventionists will drive identification higher without adding SPED staff
- Para training needed, but teacher training on how to utilize paras is equally lacking
  - Paras sometimes standing at the back of the room with no direction
  - SF model often ineffective: wrong timing, wrong task, minimal impact

Budget Priorities and Campus Security

- Concern that financial cuts are targeting front-facing staff closest to high-need students
  - "They're choosing to cut the people most front-facing with the most at-risk students versus people two to three points removed."
- Campus security raised as a potential cost-saving area
  - Current model relies on NBPD, who are not on campus all day
  - Private security cited as 25% cheaper, potentially providing all-day presence
  - Example: private security at an Austin private school flagged a registered sex offender contractor that others missed
  - Several private security companies operate locally in New Braunfels

Focus Group 9

Thursday, September 24, 2026

What's Working

- Additional staff allocations approved before the school year, with projections "pretty spot on" using the step tool
- Reading by Design (RBD) showing strong results at middle school
  - No students sent to high school in two years; kids exiting within middle school
  - Goal: exit students before middle school if identified early enough

- Diagnostician team more stable than in prior years
  - Reduced turnover building trust, collaboration, and campus relationships
  - District no longer contracting school psychologists, a major improvement over inconsistent "drive-by" contract evals
- More diags added over the past two years, helping absorb increased referral volume
- Central office conducting more targeted classroom walkthroughs (resource, co-teach, SF settings)
- Half-day subs provided to case managers for compliance relief

Caseload and Staffing Pressures

- Dyslexia interventionist at middle school carrying 59 students across 6 classes
  - RBD fidelity cap: 8 students max (secondary); out of fidelity in 4 of 6 classes
  - Substitute coverage gaps cause class sizes to spike (14-15 students on some days)
  - Numbers have grown every year despite earlier assurances it was "an anomaly"
- Six feeder elementary schools sending increasing numbers of dyslexia-identified students
- Elementary RBD groups averaging only 22 lessons taught per 38 available days
  - Barrier: reteaching, attention/behavioral needs, mixed ability levels within groups
  - SPED teachers not trained in RBD, limiting who can deliver the intervention
- Speech caseloads described as very high; behavior units at elementary level "rapidly exploding"
  - One elementary unit: 11 students, no additional staff, unsustainable
  - One behavior specialist completed 26 BIPs this year; faded over 150 last year
- Special education identification rate at 17% (state average ~16%), with dyslexia included

ARD Scheduling and Paperwork Overload

- Front-loaded ARD calendar creating significant stress for case managers in the first weeks of school
  - 280+ students receiving special ed services at one middle school; 50+ ARD hours projected in one nine-week period
  - Many ARDs scheduled in fall are annual reviews that will repeat again in spring
  - Transfer ARDs especially burdensome: case managers and gen ed teachers have no background on students yet
- Prior year decision to compress all evaluations due by May 1 (instead of June 30) described as "the worst possible decision"
  - Diagnosticians working 80-hour weeks, including evenings with young children at home
- District push to raise IEP and evaluation quality is valued but adds significant time to documentation
- Case manager vacancy mid-year compounding caseload stress

Systemic Concerns and Emerging Risks

- Interventionist positions being eliminated district-wide
  - Interventionists currently serve as gatekeepers before referrals reach diagnosticians
  - Without them, referral quality expected to drop sharply, driving up evaluations, PWNs, and initial IEPs
  - One principal shared her campus lost its interventionist 3 years ago and "survived," but volume impact is expected to be significant
- RBD not being taught to SPED teachers, limiting reach of a proven program
  - Gen ed teachers on campus actively asking to get certified in RBD
  - Argument made that embedding structured literacy into Tier 1 could reduce referral volume overall
- Tier 1 behavior gaps driving FBA/BIP volume; mental health needs increasing at all levels
- Contracting for specialized staff (e.g., speech) remains a challenge; quality and continuity issues persist

Focus Group 10

Thursday, September 24, 2026

What's Working

- Streamlined systems: data-driven LOS tool replacing ad hoc templates; updated IEP templates with sentence stems
  - Separate templates for life skills vs. resource; developed with Region 20 and district director post-cyclical CAP
  - Standards-based IEP training front-loaded this year, proactively ahead of next cyclical review
- Strong mutual support among case managers when staff are out
- Smart use of assessment staff: psychologists focused on behavior, diagnosticians on learning challenges
- SLP assistants expanded significantly: tripled this year from three previously
  - Assistants handle direct service minutes, freeing SLPs for evals, paperwork, and meetings
- Two full-time facilitators now at New Braunfels Middle School (~180 students in special ed)
- Weekly facilitator meetings to cascade department information to campuses
- Evaluation and speech staff receive a work-from-home day, a recruitment advantage most neighboring districts don't offer
- District responsive to staffing requests: provided subs for case managers drowning after a teacher quit

Staffing Shortages and Retention

- District at 17% special ed prevalence (state avg: 15.5%); growing transfer population adding eval burden
- Open OT position unfilled for nearly a year
- SLP pay gap: district avg ~$66K vs. state avg ~$72K; Comal ISD pays ~$75K
  - Stipends partially offset gap but hard to compare across districts
  - SLPs on admin pay scale may miss teacher pay raises; no perfect solution
- Speech staff hard to recruit and retain: private practice, hospitals, home health all compete
  - Service record verification issues: lost one SLP who couldn't prove 8 years of private experience (company closed, no letterhead)
  - Teacher assistant years not always credited toward salary on hire
- Heavy reliance on contract school psychologists last year; hired full-time this year but growth is a concern
- Caseloads uneven: life skills classrooms range from 6 to 10 students; FCC vs. functional academics distinctions not factored into overall counts

Evaluation and Eligibility Pressures

- High volume of referrals, especially at middle school; new diag from DFW noted campus referrals starting week four vs. week six norm
- READs conducted inside ARDs for every reevaluation, creating unnecessary meetings
  - Not required; other districts do not follow this practice; actively working to change it
- DP-4 used broadly in early childhood evals; new policy this year requires full reevaluation at next triennial if originally assessed with DP-4
  - Concern: kids tested in kinder with significant speech impairments may be misclassified (e.g., one student possibly not ID, doing fourth-grade math)
- SLD definition change in Texas (no cognitive weakness required) opened floodgates; district has high SLD prevalence
- Tier 1 instruction quality flagged repeatedly as root cause of referral volume
  - District recognizes the issue; instructional framework in place but results will take time
  - Intervention data often weak or absent, making quality referrals harder to justify
- "Sticky note referrals" pattern noted: evals requested without supporting data

- Dyslexia referrals surging, especially at middle school; mostly parent-initiated; no formal "no" policy
  - Concern about continuity into high school (e.g., student tested in 8th grade needing two years of services)

Service Delivery and Scheduling Gaps

- "Advanced supports" (10 min/month) questioned as not constituting specially designed instruction
  - Some students held in this category for years; creates paperwork burden with no meaningful benefit
  - Possible motivation: keeping students labeled to boost STAAR passing rates (flagged as inappropriate rationale)
- Continuum of services exists in theory but lacks flexibility in practice
  - Minutes prescribed by model (e.g., 30 min only), not individualized to student need
  - "Bubble kids" between life skills and gen ed have no flexible middle option
- Master scheduling does not prioritize special ed: dyslexia teachers, resource, and life skills scheduled last
  - Life skills students sometimes placed in mismatched grade-level PE or specials (e.g., 4th grader in kinder PE)
  - Life skills teachers building workarounds independently with no systemic support
- Gap in autism continuum: high-functioning students with autism who can't access gen ed have no structured bridge program
  - Previous district experience: structured visual environment with gradual gen ed integration; nothing equivalent here
- Behavior referrals driving FBA volume; LSSPs overwhelmed
  - FBAs not legally required to be done by LSSP or BCBA; less formal observation process could be used more broadly
  - Gen ed staff undertrained on behavior; no consistent training offered (after-hours training poorly attended once CEU hours removed)
- SIBS (severe behaviors) concentrated on one small campus for years: disrupted campus culture, instruction, and scores
  - Moved to larger campuses this year; significant positive impact on the originating campus
  - Concern about impact on receiving campuses

Out-of-District Placements and Transitions

- No clear process for out-of-state transfers placed in life skills when their home state used self-contained gen ed curriculum
  - One student spent a full year in life skills incorrectly; teacher flagged it repeatedly but was not heard until this year
- Students aging out of life skills into gen ed: positive trend, but transition process needs to start earlier (kinder/1st, not 3rd/4th)
- Dismissal process slow: ARD timing misaligned with eval capacity; students linger in services an extra year when evals can't be completed in time

Focus Group 11

Thursday, September 24, 2026

What's Working

- Lamar added new special ed positions this year; scheduling now allows two 45-minute dyslexia groups per grade level
- Facilitator-led weekly meetings at Lamar improving coordination
  - Evaluation staff meeting covers upcoming ARDs, triannuals, and calendar alignment
  - Weekly case manager meeting keeps sped teachers informed and on the same page
- Lone Star Early Childhood Center fully staffed teacher-wise; inclusion classrooms have two assistants

- District approved "Project Lead" for two dyslexia teachers: master's in sped + CALT certification via Texas State
  - Grant-funded for one teacher; another self-funding a separate program
  - Signals a shift toward a continuum of dyslexia services rather than one-size-fits-all
- Facilitator peer reviews twice monthly: IEP review sessions cited as highly valuable for newer facilitators
- Region 20 contacts serve as a reliable resource for dyslexia questions

Inclusion and Placement Challenges

- Pre-K inclusion ratio at 49/51 (sped/gen ed) vs. the recommended 75/25
  - Three adults in room, but gen ed kids neglected when staff consumed by behaviors
  - Gen ed parents often unaware of what they're enrolling their child into
- No SIPPS program at Lone Star; students with extreme behaviors not identified until March or April
  - Harm to other children occurs in the interim
  - Revolving door of sped teachers: blindsided by workload, paperwork, and behavior demands
- No middle placement option between full inclusion and life skills
  - Kids placed in gen ed who aren't ready; then immediately moved to life skills
  - Continuity breaks when students transition from Lone Star to kindergarten
- Dyslexia service appropriateness: roughly 5% of students qualify but can't access the program meaningfully
  - Example: student unable to attend 45-minute sessions 5x/week made no growth
  - District mandates program completion even when students no longer need it, crowding out math support
- Dyslexia definition changing at the state level (not federal); Texas already treats it differently from other states
  - Federal bill in progress that would make dyslexia the 13th recognized learning disability

Paperwork, Accountability, and Compliance Gaps

- Gen ed teachers not completing required paperwork (teacher input forms, accommodation acknowledgments)
  - Facilitators emailing principals with no accountability follow-through
  - Sped staff bear compliance risk for gen ed teachers' inaction
- Accommodations not implemented with fidelity; some teachers unaware of what accommodations mean
  - MAP test: some sped students didn't receive their accommodations
  - Accommodation lists too long to be practical; teachers checking boxes without reading
- No dyslexia-certified staff in NBISD; sped teachers writing IEP goals for students they don't know
  - Dyslexia teachers doing PLAF and goals for "diss-only" kids despite no case management role
- Speech minutes owed to students district-wide due to prior-year staffing gap (therapist left mid-year)
  - Make-up minutes delivered in bulk, not spread out; compliance-driven, not therapeutically sound
- Loss of interventionists shifting data-entry and progress monitoring burden to classroom teachers
  - Interventionists previously helped hold teachers accountable for data; that support is gone

Sensory Rooms, OT/PT, and Leadership Concerns

- Life skills unit has a strong sensory room; general ed and inclusion students lack access
  - Sensory rooms shown to benefit kids with autism and unidentified sensory needs
  - Grant funding available; education foundation could pursue this
- OT/PT stretched thin: two OTs (one contract), one OTA, one PT district-wide
  - Typical schedule: 30 minutes, 3x per nine weeks per student
  - Programmatic OT support (not student-specific) cited as a model from prior experience
- Jill West (BI) and adaptive PE teacher noted positively
- Leadership uncertainty at one campus: principal leaving in October, AP out first week of November
  - Staff in limbo; no communication about transition plans
  - ARD scheduling affected; unclear who to invite to upcoming meetings

Focus Group 12

Thursday, September 24, 2026

What's Working

- Admin trust and professional autonomy
  - AP at New Braunfels High gave resource teacher full permission to slow curriculum and write her own pacing guide
  - Results: resource 1-2 students scored 64% higher; several reached "approaches" level; students competing to read aloud
  - Kate Watson (curriculum specialist) also granted pacing guide flexibility
- District-level dyslexia intervention
  - Read by Design program strong at elementary and middle level
  - Fewer high school students needing dyslexia intervention as a result
- Admin accountability for gen ed participation in IEPs
  - Principals holding gen ed teachers to attending ARDs, submitting input forms, releasing students for transition data
- SIPS team operating proactively at middle school
  - Pushing into all classes, not just responding to crises
  - Cohorted students; one previously violent student has had zero incidents this year
- Co-teach model gaining traction at high school
  - Admin recognizing value of true co-teach vs. push-in minutes model
  - Working toward co-teacher for every subject
- Looping and relationship continuity
  - One campus allowed co-teach teacher to loop with same cohort from 4th to 5th grade
  - Students started the year with an established relationship; teacher focused exclusively on that grade level

Staffing and Caseload Challenges

- SPED teacher workload unsustainable, especially for new staff
  - Five preps + 28-student caseload + full case management responsibilities
  - New teacher currently writing 4th IEP in 3 weeks, with no prior paperwork experience
  - Planning periods consumed entirely by caseload tasks
- Para shortages cascading into teacher burnout
  - Schools started the year without full para staffing
  - One teacher on extended leave with no consistent sub; students shuffled into already-strained classrooms
- High attrition rate
  - Most tenured SPED teacher at one campus is only in her third year
  - Primary reason cited: excessive caseloads with no relief
- Co-teach assignments rotating annually by subject
  - SPED teachers reassigned to new subjects each year, breaking relationships with gen ed teachers and students
  - Recommendation: stable subject assignments; dedicated resource science and social studies at high school
- Class composition masking true inclusion load
  - SPED and 504 students counted separately but taught together
  - Classes of 16-20 combined SPED/504 students, often in 6th-7th period when medication has worn off
- Preference for hiring SPED-certified teachers over paras
  - Paras cheaper but harder to recruit and retain
  - Participants advocated for funding actual SPED teacher positions

Curriculum, Placement, and Continuum Gaps

- Students placed in co-teach based on single data point, then failing
  - Example: student at 15th percentile on STAR, placed in co-teach, cannot locate a word in a dictionary
  - Placement decisions driven by one test score, overriding teacher knowledge and longitudinal data
  - Teachers then must revise placements mid-year, disrupting students
- No adequate middle ground in the placement continuum
  - Students cognitively far below peers in resource, but not meeting life skills eligibility criteria (e.g., can use the restroom independently)
  - One 5th-grade student functioning at kindergarten level, taking time from peers, receiving no meaningful instruction
  - Life skills threshold tied to STAAR Alt eligibility, creating a perverse incentive against appropriate placement
- Middle-to-high school transition too abrupt for SPED students
  - Students moving from life skills to on-level co-teach with no bridge program
  - High school is already a major jump for all students; SPED students need more structured transition support
- District curriculum not sufficiently differentiated for SPED settings
  - Admin walkthroughs check for district curriculum use, even in resource settings
  - Intervention materials bundled with curriculum deemed insufficient
  - Teachers modifying independently but risk admin pushback for not using vetted resources
  - New teachers especially vulnerable: no training on how to differentiate within district curriculum
- No work-release or vocational transition program at high school
  - Life skills students in junior/senior year have no structured pathway to workforce experience
  - Texas Workforce Commission present but only plans post-graduation; no in-school work placement
  - Participants called for a curriculum-based vocational program (referenced “VAC” model from prior districts)

Systems, Data, and Administrative Burden

- Minute-tracking requirement seen as redundant and inefficient
  - Resource, co-teach, and dyslexia minutes are fixed in student schedules
  - Teachers manually entering “45 minutes” across five platforms daily
  - Bulk-entry button exists but still considered excessive given scheduled nature of services
- Too many disconnected platforms
  - Data spread across: Eduphoria, Frontline/Samegoal, Actionable Insights, Xello, and others
  - Actionable Insights intended to pull from all sources but still a work in progress
  - One teacher bypasses Eduphoria entirely, pulling STAAR data directly from family portal
- Gen ed input forms for ARDs need redesign
  - Current forms too long and laborious; gen ed teachers struggle to complete meaningfully
  - Transition form takes ~90 minutes and involves pulling students from class for two days
  - Recommendation: shorter, more targeted templates with clear expectations (e.g., reading skills with/without accommodations)
- New SPED teachers lack structured onboarding
  - Three weeks of general training with no dedicated IEP paperwork practice
  - Participants asked for hands-on, sit-down training with real or practice IEPs
- Competing district priorities creating overload
  - Teachers receiving new directives weekly with no guidance on what to deprioritize
  - SPED staff often either over-targeted by multiple departments or forgotten entirely in planning
- UIL eligibility windows colliding with assessment calendars
  - CAs administered too close to UIL eligibility cutoffs
  - Students losing eligibility for 3-4 weeks, removing a key motivator for high school engagement



Appendix C

Faculty Survey Summary

STETSON
& ASSOCIATES, INC.

New Braunfels Independent School District

Faculty Survey Results

Overview

New Braunfels ISD faculty and staff responded to **15 statements related to special education staffing, deployment, and student support** using a four-point scale: **Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree**. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide an open-ended comment.

This report presents the frequency (f) and percentage of responses for all **202 respondents**, followed by results by position and campus level. It also includes a thematic summary of the **110 open-ended comments**.

To protect confidentiality, results are reported only at the district and campus-level groupings. Individual campus results are not presented, and names, campus names, and other identifying information have been removed from the comment summary.

Table 1. Respondents by Position

Position	Frequency	Percent	Reporting Group
General Education Teacher	87	43%	—
Special Education Teacher	51	25%	—
Paraprofessional	23	11%	—
Related Service	18	9%	Related Service & Support
Diagnostician/LSSP	6	3%	Related Service & Support
Speech/Language Pathologist	4	2%	Related Service & Support
Counselor	3	1%	Related Service & Support
Administrator	10	5%	—
Total	**202**	**100%**	

Table 2. Respondents by Level

Level	Frequency	Percent
Early Childhood & Elementary	121	60%
Middle School	38	19%
High School	43	21%
Total	**202**	**100%**

Early Childhood responses are combined with Elementary because the Early Childhood level represents a single campus.

Key Findings

- **The process for responding to unexpected enrollment growth emerged as the strongest concern.** Only 27% of respondents agreed that the district has an appropriate review process for requesting additional staff when special education enrollment increases unexpectedly. Thirty-seven percent strongly disagreed, the highest Strongly Disagree rate on the survey.
- **Collaboration time, resources, and staffing support were rated less positively.** Fewer than half of respondents agreed that adequate time is provided for general and special education collaboration (37%), that teachers and paraeducators have the resources needed to implement services (39%), that staffing supports appropriate ratios in inclusive settings (41%), or that staffing is sufficient in specialized settings (45%).

- **Non-stigmatizing support was the strongest area.** Eighty-two percent of respondents agreed that personal support is provided in ways that do not stigmatize students. Approximately two-thirds also agreed that general and special education teachers collaborate on decisions (69%), that diverse strategies and flexible grouping are used (68%), that STAAR/EOC performance reflects access to the curriculum (68%), and that paraeducators are not assigned responsibility for teaching key content (68%).
- **Administrators reported more positive perceptions than teachers.** Administrators had higher agreement rates than general education teachers on 14 of 15 items. The largest difference was related to staffing ratios in inclusive settings, with 90% of administrators agreeing compared with 31% of general education teachers. General education teachers also reported the lowest agreement with the process for addressing unexpected staffing growth (18%).
- **Middle school respondents were least positive about collaboration and resources.** Agreement among middle school respondents was 24% for collaboration time, 26% for available resources, 42% for professional learning, and 53% for collaborative decision-making, the lowest rates across the three campus levels for each of these items.
- **Open-ended comments focused primarily on workload and staffing.** Of the 102 substantive comments, 35% described concerns related to caseloads, paperwork, and work completed outside contract hours, including ARDs, IEPs, and documentation. An additional 31% referenced staffing shortages, vacancies, turnover, or uncovered absences. Other recurring themes included the continuum of placement options, collaboration time, student behavior needs, and paraprofessional training.

District Results

Frequency and percentage of each response for all 202 respondents. % Agree combines Strongly Agree and Agree.

Table 3. Response Frequencies and Percentages, All Respondents

Item	Strongly Agree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Strongly Disagree f (%)	% Agree
1. Our campus has sufficient staffing allocations for teachers and paraeducators to provide appropriate staff-to-student ratios in inclusive settings.	15 (7%)	68 (34%)	75 (37%)	44 (22%)	**83 (41%)**
2. Our campus has sufficient staffing allocations to provide support in specialized settings.	14 (7%)	76 (38%)	74 (37%)	38 (19%)	**90 (45%)**
3. Our campus has sufficient staffing allocations to meet child-find requirements.	12 (6%)	95 (47%)	71 (35%)	24 (12%)	**107 (53%)**
4. There are sufficient related service providers and speech-language pathologists to meet ARD/IEP requirements.	22 (11%)	108 (53%)	51 (25%)	21 (10%)	**130 (64%)**
5. The staffing process for special education services is data-driven and based on individual student needs and learning preferences rather than disability labels.	30 (15%)	105 (52%)	46 (23%)	21 (10%)	**135 (67%)**
6. General education and special education teachers collaborate in making decisions about student needs.	31 (15%)	108 (53%)	44 (22%)	19 (9%)	**139 (69%)**

Item	Strongly Agree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Strongly Disagree f (%)	% Agree
7. Special education instructional services on our campus are treated as “singletons” and entered first on the master schedule.	23 (11%)	99 (49%)	62 (31%)	18 (9%)	**122 (60%)**
8. When the number of students receiving special education services unexpectedly grows, the district has an appropriate review process for requesting additional staff.	6 (3%)	49 (24%)	73 (36%)	74 (37%)	**55 (27%)**
9. Scores on the STAAR and EOC reflect access to the general education curriculum.	7 (3%)	131 (65%)	47 (23%)	17 (8%)	**138 (68%)**
10. Diverse instructional strategies and flexible grouping are used to engage all students.	25 (12%)	112 (55%)	51 (25%)	14 (7%)	**137 (68%)**
11. The necessary skills of each staff position are supported through effective professional learning opportunities.	15 (7%)	103 (51%)	55 (27%)	29 (14%)	**118 (58%)**
12. Teachers and paraeducators have the necessary resources to implement services.	13 (6%)	66 (33%)	83 (41%)	40 (20%)	**79 (39%)**
13. Time for collaboration between general education and special education teachers is provided.	9 (4%)	66 (33%)	79 (39%)	48 (24%)	**75 (37%)**
14. Paraeducators are not assigned to provide instruction regarding key concepts or content.	30 (15%)	107 (53%)	50 (25%)	15 (7%)	**137 (68%)**
15. Personal support is provided in ways that do not stigmatize individual students or groups of students.	30 (15%)	135 (67%)	31 (15%)	6 (3%)	**165 (82%)**

n = 202 for every item (no missing responses). Shading: teal ≥ 80% agree; gold 50–79%; orange < 50%.

Results by Position

Number and percentage of respondents in each group who agreed (Strongly Agree or Agree) with each item.

Table 4. Agreement by Position

Item	GE Teacher (n=87)	SE Teacher (n=51)	Para-professional (n=23)	Related Service & Support (n=31)	Admin-istrator (n=10)
1. Staffing allocations for appropriate ratios in inclusive settings	27 (31%)	26 (51%)	9 (39%)	12 (39%)	9 (90%)
2. Staffing allocations for support in specialized settings	29 (33%)	34 (67%)	8 (35%)	12 (39%)	7 (70%)
3. Staffing allocations to meet child-find requirements	38 (44%)	37 (73%)	11 (48%)	14 (45%)	7 (70%)
4. Sufficient related service providers and SLPs for ARD/IEP requirements	57 (66%)	36 (71%)	11 (48%)	18 (58%)	8 (80%)

Item	GE Teacher (n=87)	SE Teacher (n=51)	Para-professional (n=23)	Related Service & Support (n=31)	Admin-istrator (n=10)
5. Staffing process is data-driven and based on individual student needs	53 (61%)	39 (76%)	15 (65%)	19 (61%)	9 (90%)
6. GE and SE teachers collaborate on decisions about student needs	58 (67%)	32 (63%)	17 (74%)	25 (81%)	7 (70%)
7. SE services treated as "singletons," entered first on master schedule	53 (61%)	28 (55%)	12 (52%)	21 (68%)	8 (80%)
8. Appropriate review process when SE enrollment unexpectedly grows	16 (18%)	17 (33%)	8 (35%)	9 (29%)	5 (50%)
9. STAAR/EOC scores reflect access to general education curriculum	58 (67%)	39 (76%)	15 (65%)	18 (58%)	8 (80%)
10. Diverse strategies and flexible grouping used to engage all students	59 (68%)	37 (73%)	16 (70%)	17 (55%)	8 (80%)
11. Staff skills supported through effective professional learning	47 (54%)	31 (61%)	14 (61%)	20 (65%)	6 (60%)
12. Teachers and paraeducators have necessary resources to implement services	26 (30%)	25 (49%)	9 (39%)	13 (42%)	6 (60%)
13. Time for GE–SE teacher collaboration is provided	25 (29%)	22 (43%)	12 (52%)	12 (39%)	4 (40%)
14. Paraeducators not assigned to teach key concepts or content	62 (71%)	33 (65%)	14 (61%)	21 (68%)	7 (70%)
15. Personal support provided in non-stigmatizing ways	70 (80%)	44 (86%)	16 (70%)	25 (81%)	10 (100%)

Shading: teal ≥ 80% agree; gold 50–79%; orange < 50%. Administrator results are based on 10 respondents and should be interpreted with caution.

Results by Level

Number and percentage of respondents at each level who agreed (Strongly Agree or Agree) with each item.

Table 5. Agreement by Level

Item	EC & Elementary (n=121)	Middle School (n=38)	High School (n=43)	All (n=202)
1. Staffing allocations for appropriate ratios in inclusive settings	53 (44%)	13 (34%)	17 (40%)	**83 (41%)**
2. Staffing allocations for support in specialized settings	59 (49%)	16 (42%)	15 (35%)	**90 (45%)**
3. Staffing allocations to meet child-find requirements	67 (55%)	18 (47%)	22 (51%)	**107 (53%)**

Item	EC & Elementary (n=121)	Middle School (n=38)	High School (n=43)	All (n=202)
4. Sufficient related service providers and SLPs for ARD/IEP requirements	76 (63%)	25 (66%)	29 (67%)	**130 (64%)**
5. Staffing process is data-driven and based on individual student needs	85 (70%)	22 (58%)	28 (65%)	**135 (67%)**
6. GE and SE teachers collaborate on decisions about student needs	88 (73%)	20 (53%)	31 (72%)	**139 (69%)**
7. SE services treated as "singletons," entered first on master schedule	76 (63%)	22 (58%)	24 (56%)	**122 (60%)**
8. Appropriate review process when SE enrollment unexpectedly grows	31 (26%)	13 (34%)	11 (26%)	**55 (27%)**
9. STAAR/EOC scores reflect access to general education curriculum	82 (68%)	25 (66%)	31 (72%)	**138 (68%)**
10. Diverse strategies and flexible grouping used to engage all students	86 (71%)	24 (63%)	27 (63%)	**137 (68%)**
11. Staff skills supported through effective professional learning	74 (61%)	16 (42%)	28 (65%)	**118 (58%)**
12. Teachers and paraeducators have necessary resources to implement services	55 (45%)	10 (26%)	14 (33%)	**79 (39%)**
13. Time for GE–SE teacher collaboration is provided	51 (42%)	9 (24%)	15 (35%)	**75 (37%)**
14. Paraeducators not assigned to teach key concepts or content	77 (64%)	27 (71%)	33 (77%)	**137 (68%)**
15. Personal support provided in non-stigmatizing ways	101 (83%)	28 (74%)	36 (84%)	**165 (82%)**

EC = Early Childhood. Shading: teal ≥ 80% agree; gold 50–79%; orange < 50%.

Open-Ended Responses

Respondents were asked:

"Is there anything else regarding special education staffing deployment, workload, or student support on your campus that was not covered in this survey that you believe leadership should know?"

A total of **110 respondents** provided comments. Of these, **102 were substantive**, while the remaining responses indicated "no," "N/A," or similar.

Comments were reviewed and coded by theme. Because individual responses could address more than one topic, a single comment may be reflected in multiple thematic categories.

Selected excerpts have been lightly edited for clarity. Names, campus names, and other identifying information have been removed to protect confidentiality.

Table 6. Open-Ended Comment Themes

Theme	Frequency	% of Comments
Workload, caseloads and paperwork (ARDs, IEPs, documentation)	36	35%
Staffing shortages, vacancies, turnover and coverage	32	31%
Service delivery model and continuum of placement options	20	20%

Theme	Frequency	% of Comments
Time for general and special education collaboration and planning	17	17%
Student behavior and significant needs in the classroom	16	16%
Paraprofessional training, roles and use	15	15%
Professional development, training and onboarding	14	14%
District decision-making, communication and central office structure	10	10%
Eligibility, identification and placement decisions based on limited data	10	10%
Intervention and dyslexia service capacity	9	9%
Positive feedback and improvements noted	9	9%
Support for electives/non-core classes and class composition	9	9%
Resources and curriculum materials	8	8%
Compensation and stipends	6	6%
IEP service minutes not consistently met or tracked	5	5%
Other (ARD participation, campus-based coordinator, transportation, survey item clarifications)	5	5%

Percentages are based on 102 substantive comments. Because comments could be coded to more than one theme, percentages sum to more than 100%.

Summary of Themes

Workload, caseloads and paperwork (36 comments)

The most common theme. Special education teachers and case managers described caseloads near or above 25–30 students, IEP preparation of several hours per student, and ARD meetings scheduled during conference and case-management periods. Many reported regularly working evenings and weekends to meet legal timelines. General education teachers also described lengthy ARD input forms and heavy accommodation documentation without added planning time. Several respondents asked that caseloads be weighted by student need rather than headcount, and that paperwork be streamlined.

> *"Case managers are working after school and weekends for hours trying to get caught up."* — Special Education Teacher
>
> *"The number of students on a caseload should not determine staffing decisions. It should be specifically looking at the needs of the students on the caseload."* — Related Service Provider

Staffing shortages, vacancies, turnover and coverage (32 comments)

Respondents described unfilled special education positions whose caseloads are redistributed to remaining staff, repeated year-to-year turnover in speech and early childhood positions, and paraprofessionals pulled to cover for absent staff when substitutes are unavailable. Several noted that these gaps result in IEP minutes not being met. Some respondents contrasted limited campus-level staffing with the size of the district-level special education office.

> *"When a special education position goes unfilled or a resignation occurs, those students are simply divided among the remaining case managers."* — Special Education Teacher
>
> *"Minutes are not being met due to shortage in staff. When our paras are being pulled to sub or we are not fully staffed, it is affecting the kids' needs."* — General Education Teacher

Service delivery model and continuum of placement options (20 comments)

Many respondents, especially at the elementary level, described students who are several years below grade level but do not qualify for Life Skills or SIBS, and asked for an intermediate option such as small-group specialized

reading and math instruction or a communication- and regulation-focused setting for students with autism. Several felt that support facilitation and push-in minutes are too limited to close gaps. One respondent offered a contrasting view, asking for fewer pull-out services and more support within the classroom.

> *"We need something between gen ed and life skills to support students that are in the middle."* — Special Education Teacher
>
> *"It should be ok for students to leave for instruction on their level and be in the classroom for instruction they can do."* — General Education Teacher

Time for collaboration and planning (17 comments)

General and special education staff consistently reported having no protected time to plan together. Co-teachers and support facilitators assigned across multiple grades and subjects often enter classrooms without knowing the lesson, and conference periods are absorbed by ARDs and meetings. Respondents asked for protected collaborative planning time and for support staff to be assigned to fewer subjects or grade levels.

> *"There is no time to meet with the sped teacher to talk about the students we service. We have to talk in passing, which is not the best."* — General Education Teacher

Student behavior and significant needs (16 comments)

Respondents described students with intensive behavioral or regulation needs in general education and Life Skills settings, with disruptions affecting instruction for all students and, in some cases, raising safety concerns. Special education staff noted being pulled from instruction and case management to respond to behavior, and several requested a dedicated behavior or social-skills setting and more classroom-management training.

> *"We currently have multiple students who, while they are receiving SPED services, continue to have significant challenges in the classroom causing consistent and major learning disruptions."* — Administrator

Paraprofessional training, roles and use (15 comments)

General education teachers reported that paraprofessionals in support facilitation classes often lack content knowledge, scaffolding strategies or clear expectations, and that teachers end up training them. Some described support staff who are present but not engaged with students. Paraprofessionals, in turn, described heavy and often unseen responsibilities, limited breaks and planning time, and frequent reassignment to cover absences.

> *"Push-in staff do not appear to receive adequate training or preparation for the classrooms and students they are assigned to support."* — General Education Teacher

Professional development, training and onboarding (14 comments)

Respondents called for hands-on onboarding for new special education staff (rather than video-based training), follow-up support on the IEP system, co-teaching training for general and special education teachers together, guidance on implementing accommodations, and modeling of specially designed instruction and progress monitoring.

> *"The district requires lengthy, rigid scripts to complete IEPs, yet expects employees to train themselves via a video rather than providing hands-on instruction."* — Special Education Teacher

District decision-making, eligibility and placement (19 comments)

Respondents described a disconnect between campus staff and district-level decision-makers and asked that teachers have a voice in decisions that affect their students. Several were concerned that service and placement decisions rely heavily on single data points (MAP or STAAR) rather than the full body of evidence and the input of staff who work with the student. Others described long identification timelines and inconsistent eligibility practices. (19 unique comments across the two related themes; see Table 7.)

> *"Data should absolutely inform decisions, but it should never replace professional judgment, campus-level knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of the individual child."* — General Education Teacher

Other themes (34 comments)

Smaller groups of comments addressed (1) dyslexia and intervention capacity, including dyslexia groups too large to implement the program with fidelity and concern about losing campus interventionists; (2) little or no support in elective and non-core classes and core classes with a high share of students with IEPs; (3) a lack of appropriate curriculum and materials for students working well below grade level and for Life Skills; (4) stipends or additional compensation for special education staff, paraprofessionals and related service providers; and (5) difficulty tracking and meeting IEP service minutes. (34 unique comments across these five themes; see Table 7.)

Positive feedback (9 comments)

Respondents frequently praised the dedication of campus special education teams. Several noted that the special education department has improved its processes in recent years, that this year's professional development was strong, and that added staff made a meaningful difference where positions were filled.

> *"The SPED department has improved processes greatly over the past few years, and the PD provided to staff this year was excellent."* — Administrator



Appendix D

Classroom Observation Summary

STETSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

New Braunfels Independent School District

Classroom Observation Summary Report

Overview

This report summarizes **32 classroom observations across six New Braunfels ISD campuses** using the Stetson & Associates Classroom Observation Form. Results are presented as frequencies (f) and percentages for each indicator. Percentages are calculated using only **Yes** and **No** responses; **N/O (No Opportunity to Observe)** and blank responses are excluded. As a result, the number of classrooms represented may vary by indicator. Because several campus samples are small, with only **4–7 classrooms observed**, campus-level percentages should be interpreted alongside the corresponding frequencies.

Table 1. Observations by Campus

Campus	Level	# Obs.	Tier 1 / In-Class / Specialized	GE Students	SE Students
New Braunfels HS	High	6	0 / 4 / 2	64	37
Long Creek HS	High	4	1 / 2 / 1	57	22
New Braunfels MS	Middle	6	0 / 4 / 2	72	32
Lamar ES	Elementary	5	0 / 2 / 3	32	20
Walnut Springs	Elementary	4	0 / 1 / 3	5	36
LPE	Elementary	7	0 / 4 / 3	50	39
District Total	—	**32**	**1 / 17 / 14**	**280**	**186**

GE = general education; SE = special education. Student counts are as recorded at the time of observation; see Data Notes.

Table 2. Instructional Arrangements Observed

Instructional Arrangement	Frequency	Percent
In-Class Support - Support Facilitation	9	28%
In-Class Support - Collaborative Teaching	8	25%
Specialized Support - Self-Contained	7	22%
Specialized Support - Resource	7	22%
Tier 1 General Education - No Support	1	3%

Table 3. Primary Student Grouping Observed

Student Grouping (Activity 1)	Frequency	Percent
Whole group	17	53%
Individual	12	38%
Small group	3	9%

Key Findings

- **Respectful, well-managed classrooms.** Respectful teacher–student interactions were observed in 31 of 31 classrooms rated (100%), and respectful student-to-student interactions in 17 of 17 (100%). Students met behavior expectations in 30 of 31 classrooms (97%), off-task behavior was redirected quickly in 29 of 30 (97%), and fewer than 10% of instructional minutes were lost to non-instructional issues in 27 of 29 classrooms (93%).

- **Engagement varies by campus.** At least 85% of students were engaged in 22 of 30 classrooms rated (73%). All seven LPE classrooms met this benchmark, compared with none of the four Long Creek HS classrooms observed.
- **Differentiation emerged as a significant area for improvement.** Differentiated instruction was observed in 7 of 21 classrooms rated (33%). It was not observed in any classrooms rated at New Braunfels HS (0 of 6) or Long Creek HS (0 of 4), while LPE (4 of 5) and Lamar ES (2 of 2) accounted for most positive ratings.
- **Rigor was less consistently observed in specialized settings.** Curriculum and instruction reflected rigor and higher-order thinking in 15 of 25 classrooms rated (60%). This included 12 of 15 general education classrooms (80%) compared with 3 of 10 specialized support classrooms (30%). A similar pattern was evident for growth mindset, with positive ratings in 9 of 9 general education classrooms and 2 of 5 specialized settings.
- **Supports for students with disabilities were more consistently observed in specialized settings.** Scaffolds or accommodations for students with disabilities were evident in 20 of 27 classrooms rated (74%), including 11 of 12 specialized settings (92%) and 9 of 15 general education classrooms (60%). When supports were observed, they were non-stigmatizing and supportive of grade-level rigor in 17 of 20 classrooms (85%).
- **Posted schedules and student-friendly lesson objectives were inconsistent.** A schedule of class activities was posted in 18 of 32 classrooms (56%), and lesson objectives were visible in student-friendly language in 19 of 26 classrooms rated (73%). At New Braunfels HS, a posted schedule was observed in 1 of 6 classrooms.
- **Co-teaching was most often implemented as One Teach, One Assist.** This approach was recorded in 7 of the 9 co-taught classrooms where an approach was identified. Both teachers were actively involved and demonstrated content proficiency in 3 of 9 classrooms rated (33%), although students directed questions to both teachers in 9 of 10 classrooms (90%).
- **Observations in specialized settings suggest opportunities to revisit LRE.** In 8 of 13 specialized support classrooms (62%), observers identified one or more students who might be candidates for receiving services in the general education classroom. Teachers were simultaneously addressing multiple subjects or grade levels in 8 of 13 classrooms, while the related indicator was rated positively in only 38%. Standards-based general education content framed instruction in 9 of 13 specialized classrooms (69%).

District Results

Frequency and percentage of Yes and No ratings for each indicator across all 32 classrooms.

Table 4. District Indicator Results

Indicator	Yes (f)	Yes (%)	No (f)	No (%)	Total Rated
Time Maximized for Learning					
a) Less than 10% of observed time spent on non-instructional issues.	27	**93%**	2	7%	29
b) 85% of students appear engaged in assigned activities.	22	**73%**	8	27%	30
c) Off-task behavior is quickly redirected or not needed.	29	**97%**	1	3%	30
d) Classroom routines (access to materials, homework submission, movement in and out of groups, etc.) minimize lost time.	15	**100%**	0	0%	15
Instructional Practices					
a) Lesson objective is visible and in student friendly language.	19	**73%**	7	27%	26

Indicator	Yes (f)	Yes (%)	No (f)	No (%)	Total Rated
b) The pace and design of the lesson support student engagement.	15	**71%**	6	29%	21
c) Instruction is differentiated in content presentation, student interaction with content, and in student choice for product to show what they know.	7	**33%**	14	67%	21
d) Formative assessment present?	12	**71%**	5	29%	17
e) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for students without disabilities?	13	**81%**	3	19%	16
f) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for SWD?	20	**74%**	7	26%	27
g) Are supports non-stigmatizing and supportive of grade level material and rigor?	17	**85%**	3	15%	20
h) Curriculum content and instructional methodology maintains rigor and student higher order thinking. Curriculum materials are aligned to district curriculum.	15	**60%**	10	40%	25
i) Use of instructional technology.	26	**93%**	2	7%	28
Positive Learning Environment (Tier One)					
a) Evidence of growth mindset.	11	**79%**	3	21%	14
b) Interactions between teacher and student are characterized by kindness and respect.	31	**100%**	0	0%	31
c) Student-to-student interaction is characterized by kindness and respect.	17	**100%**	0	0%	17
d) Expectations for behavior are described clearly and posted prominently.	25	**78%**	7	22%	32
e) Students comply with behavior expectations.	30	**97%**	1	3%	31
f) A schedule of class activities is posted prominently.	18	**56%**	14	44%	32
g) Room arrangement supports positive behavior, accommodates various groupings, and reduces wasted time.	25	**93%**	2	7%	27
Collaborative Teaching (Gen Ed Classroom)					
a) Both teachers participate and appear to be content proficient in the presentation of the lesson.	3	**33%**	6	67%	9
b) Students ask questions of both teachers.	9	**90%**	1	10%	10
c) Teachers are not identified as assigned to specific students.	10	**91%**	1	9%	11
d) Both teachers are engaged in classroom management.	8	**89%**	1	11%	9
e) Teachers jointly share and use classroom space.	7	**70%**	3	30%	10
Use of Paraprofessionals (Gen Ed Classroom)					
a) The role(s) of paraprofessionals appear to be appropriate for the class/needs of the student (paraprofessional role versus certified teacher role).	4	**100%**	0	0%	4

Indicator	Yes (f)	Yes (%)	No (f)	No (%)	Total Rated
b) Students with disabilities are seated among peers and paraprofessional supports are provided unobtrusively.	3	**75%**	1	25%	4
c) Paraprofessional assistance does not appear to be linked to lower teacher involvement/responsibility.	2	**67%**	1	33%	3
d) Paraprofessional proximity does not limit student-to-student interactions.	2	**67%**	1	33%	3
Specialized Support Classroom					
a) Standards-based general education is the framework for instructional delivery.	9	**69%**	4	31%	13
b) Teacher does not address multiple subjects or grade levels at the same time.	5	**38%**	8	62%	13
c) Age-appropriate materials and activities characterize instruction.	13	**100%**	0	0%	13
d) Paraprofessionals have clear roles and responsibilities for providing student support.	7	**100%**	0	0%	7
e) One or more students might be candidates for services in the general education classroom.	8	**62%**	5	38%	13

f = frequency. Percentages are calculated from Yes and No responses only; N/O (no opportunity to observe) and blank responses are excluded, so Total Rated varies by indicator. Shading: teal ≥ 80% Yes; gold 50–79%; orange < 50%. The item "students might be candidates for services in the general education classroom" is not shaded because a Yes indicates an opportunity rather than a strength.

Table 5. Co-Teaching Approaches Recorded

Co-Teaching Approach	Frequency	Percent
One Teach, One Assist (OTOA)	7	78%
Alternative Teaching (AT)	2	22%
Team Teaching (TT)	1	11%
Station Teaching (ST)	1	11%

Results by Level

Table 6. Observations by Level

Level	Campuses	Obs. (f)	Obs. (%)	Tier 1 / In-Class / Specialized	GE Students	SE Students
Elementary	3	16	50%	0 / 7 / 9	87	95
Middle School	1	6	19%	0 / 4 / 2	72	32
High School	2	10	31%	1 / 6 / 3	121	59
Total	**6**	**32**	**100%**	**1 / 17 / 14**	**280**	**186**

GE = general education; SE = special education. The Middle School level includes one campus, so its results are identical to that campus's results in the district report.

Table 7. Instructional Arrangements by Level

Instructional Arrangement	Elementary (n=16)	Middle School (n=6)	High School (n=10)	All (n=32)
Tier 1 General Education - No Support	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	**1 (3%)**
In-Class Support - Support Facilitation	2 (13%)	3 (50%)	4 (40%)	**9 (28%)**
In-Class Support - Collaborative Teaching	5 (31%)	1 (17%)	2 (20%)	**8 (25%)**
Specialized Support - Resource	4 (25%)	1 (17%)	2 (20%)	**7 (22%)**
Specialized Support - Self-Contained	5 (31%)	1 (17%)	1 (10%)	**7 (22%)**

Table 8. Primary Student Grouping by Level

Student Grouping (Activity 1)	Elementary (n=16)	Middle School (n=6)	High School (n=10)	All (n=32)
Whole group	5 (31%)	3 (50%)	9 (90%)	**17 (53%)**
Small group	3 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**3 (9%)**
Individual	8 (50%)	3 (50%)	1 (10%)	**12 (38%)**

Cells show frequency (percent of classrooms observed at that level).

Table 9. Indicator Results by Level

Indicator	Elementary (n=16)	Middle School (n=6)	High School (n=10)	District (n=32)
Time Maximized for Learning				
a) Less than 10% of observed time spent on non-instructional issues.	15/15 (100%)	3/4 (75%)	9/10 (90%)	**27/29 (93%)**
b) 85% of students appear engaged in assigned activities.	13/15 (87%)	5/5 (100%)	4/10 (40%)	**22/30 (73%)**
c) Off-task behavior is quickly redirected, or not needed.	14/15 (93%)	5/5 (100%)	10/10 (100%)	**29/30 (97%)**
d) Classroom routines (access to materials, homework submission, movement in and out of groups, etc.) minimize lost time.	10/10 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**15/15 (100%)**
Instructional Practices				
a) Lesson objective is visible and in student friendly language.	10/11 (91%)	5/6 (83%)	4/9 (44%)	**19/26 (73%)**
b) The pace and design of the lesson support student engagement.	9/9 (100%)	2/4 (50%)	4/8 (50%)	**15/21 (71%)**
c) Instruction is differentiated in content presentation, student interaction with content, and in student choice for product to show what they know.	6/8 (75%)	1/3 (33%)	0/10 (0%)	**7/21 (33%)**
d) Formative assessment present?	8/9 (89%)	1/2 (50%)	3/6 (50%)	**12/17 (71%)**
e) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for students without disabilities?	7/7 (100%)	3/4 (75%)	3/5 (60%)	**13/16 (81%)**
f) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for SWD?	14/14 (100%)	2/3 (67%)	4/10 (40%)	**20/27 (74%)**

Indicator	Elementary (n=16)	Middle School (n=6)	High School (n=10)	District (n=32)
g) Are supports non-stigmatizing and supportive of grade level material and rigor?	13/14 (93%)	2/2 (100%)	2/4 (50%)	**17/20 (85%)**
h) Curriculum content and instructional methodology maintains rigor and student higher order thinking. Curriculum materials are aligned to district curriculum.	9/12 (75%)	1/5 (20%)	5/8 (63%)	**15/25 (60%)**
i) Use of instructional technology.	12/12 (100%)	5/6 (83%)	9/10 (90%)	**26/28 (93%)**
Positive Learning Environment (Tier One)				
a) Evidence of growth mindset.	8/9 (89%)	2/3 (67%)	1/2 (50%)	**11/14 (79%)**
b) Interactions between teacher and student are characterized by kindness and respect.	16/16 (100%)	5/5 (100%)	10/10 (100%)	**31/31 (100%)**
c) Student-to-student interaction is characterized by kindness and respect.	10/10 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	**17/17 (100%)**
d) Expectations for behavior are described clearly and posted prominently.	15/16 (94%)	6/6 (100%)	4/10 (40%)	**25/32 (78%)**
e) Students comply with behavior expectations.	15/15 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	9/10 (90%)	**30/31 (97%)**
f) A schedule of class activities is posted prominently.	13/16 (81%)	3/6 (50%)	2/10 (20%)	**18/32 (56%)**
g) Room arrangement supports positive behavior, accommodates various groupings, and reduces wasted time.	15/15 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	6/8 (75%)	**25/27 (93%)**
Collaborative Teaching (Gen Ed Classroom)				
a) Both teachers participate and appear to be content proficient in the presentation of the lesson.	3/4 (75%)	0/3 (0%)	0/2 (0%)	**3/9 (33%)**
b) Students ask questions of both teachers.	5/5 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	2/3 (67%)	**9/10 (90%)**
c) Teachers are not identified as assigned to specific students.	4/5 (80%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**10/11 (91%)**
d) Both teachers are engaged in classroom management.	4/5 (80%)	2/2 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	**8/9 (89%)**
e) Teachers jointly share and use classroom space.	4/5 (80%)	2/3 (67%)	1/2 (50%)	**7/10 (70%)**
Use of Paraprofessionals (Gen Ed Classroom)				
a) The role(s) of paraprofessionals appear to be appropriate for the class/needs of the student (paraprofessional role versus certified teacher role).	2/2 (100%)	—	2/2 (100%)	**4/4 (100%)**
b) Students with disabilities are seated among peers and paraprofessional supports are provided unobtrusively.	2/2 (100%)	—	1/2 (50%)	**3/4 (75%)**
c) Paraprofessional assistance does not appear to be linked to lower teacher involvement/responsibility.	1/2 (50%)	—	1/1 (100%)	**2/3 (67%)**

Indicator	Elementary (n=16)	Middle School (n=6)	High School (n=10)	District (n=32)
d) Paraprofessional proximity does not limit student-to-student interactions.	1/2 (50%)	—	1/1 (100%)	**2/3 (67%)**
Specialized Support Classroom				
a) Standards-based general education is the framework for instructional delivery.	6/8 (75%)	1/2 (50%)	2/3 (67%)	**9/13 (69%)**
b) Teacher does not address multiple subjects or grade levels at the same time.	2/8 (25%)	1/2 (50%)	2/3 (67%)	**5/13 (38%)**
c) Age-appropriate materials and activities characterize instruction.	9/9 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**13/13 (100%)**
d) Paraprofessionals have clear roles and responsibilities for providing student support.	5/5 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	**7/7 (100%)**
e) One or more students might be candidates for services in the general education classroom.	4/8 (50%)	2/2 (100%)	2/3 (67%)	**8/13 (62%)**

Results by School

Table 10. Indicator Results by School

Indicator	NBHS (n=6)	Long Creek HS (n=4)	NBMS (n=6)	Lamar ES (n=5)	Walnut Springs (n=4)	LPE (n=7)	District
Time Maximized for Learning							
a) Less than 10% of observed time spent on non-instructional issues.	6/6 (100%)	3/4 (75%)	3/4 (75%)	5/5 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	7/7 (100%)	**27/29 (93%)**
b) 85% of students appear engaged in assigned activities.	4/6 (67%)	0/4 (0%)	5/5 (100%)	4/5 (80%)	2/3 (67%)	7/7 (100%)	**22/30 (73%)**
c) Off-task behavior is quickly redirected, or not needed.	6/6 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	5/5 (100%)	4/5 (80%)	3/3 (100%)	7/7 (100%)	**29/30 (97%)**
d) Classroom routines (access to materials, homework submission, movement in and out of groups, etc.) minimize lost time.	3/3 (100%)	—	2/2 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	**15/15 (100%)**
Instructional Practices							
a) Lesson objective is visible and in student friendly language.	3/6 (50%)	1/3 (33%)	5/6 (83%)	2/2 (100%)	1/2 (50%)	7/7 (100%)	**19/26 (73%)**
b) The pace and design of the lesson support student engagement.	3/4 (75%)	1/4 (25%)	2/4 (50%)	2/2 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	**15/21 (71%)**
c) Instruction is differentiated in content presentation, student interaction with content, and in student choice for product to show what they know.	0/6 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	1/3 (33%)	2/2 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	4/5 (80%)	**7/21 (33%)**

Indicator	NBHS (n=6)	Long Creek HS (n=4)	NBMS (n=6)	Lamar ES (n=5)	Walnut Springs (n=4)	LPE (n=7)	District
d) Formative assessment present?	2/2 (100%)	1/4 (25%)	1/2 (50%)	2/2 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	6/6 (100%)	**12/17 (71%)**
e) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for students without disabilities?	1/3 (33%)	2/2 (100%)	3/4 (75%)	2/2 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	**13/16 (81%)**
f) Scaffolds, accommodations, and/or modifications provided for SWD?	3/6 (50%)	1/4 (25%)	2/3 (67%)	5/5 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	**20/27 (74%)**
g) Are supports non-stigmatizing and supportive of grade level material and rigor?	2/3 (67%)	0/1 (0%)	2/2 (100%)	5/5 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	5/6 (83%)	**17/20 (85%)**
h) Curriculum content and instructional methodology maintains rigor and student higher order thinking. Curriculum materials are aligned to district curriculum.	2/4 (50%)	3/4 (75%)	1/5 (20%)	2/4 (50%)	2/2 (100%)	5/6 (83%)	**15/25 (60%)**
i) Use of instructional technology.	6/6 (100%)	3/4 (75%)	5/6 (83%)	4/4 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	5/5 (100%)	**26/28 (93%)**
Positive Learning Environment (Tier One)							
a) Evidence of growth mindset.	1/1 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	2/3 (67%)	2/2 (100%)	1/2 (50%)	5/5 (100%)	**11/14 (79%)**
b) Interactions between teacher and student are characterized by kindness and respect.	6/6 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	5/5 (100%)	5/5 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	7/7 (100%)	**31/31 (100%)**
c) Student-to-student interaction is characterized by kindness and respect.	5/5 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	**17/17 (100%)**
d) Expectations for behavior are described clearly and posted prominently.	3/6 (50%)	1/4 (25%)	6/6 (100%)	4/5 (80%)	4/4 (100%)	7/7 (100%)	**25/32 (78%)**
e) Students comply with behavior expectations.	5/6 (83%)	4/4 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	7/7 (100%)	**30/31 (97%)**
f) A schedule of class activities is posted prominently.	1/6 (17%)	1/4 (25%)	3/6 (50%)	4/5 (80%)	2/4 (50%)	7/7 (100%)	**18/32 (56%)**
g) Room arrangement supports positive behavior, accommodates various groupings, and reduces wasted time.	4/6 (67%)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	4/4 (100%)	7/7 (100%)	**25/27 (93%)**
Collaborative Teaching (Gen Ed Classroom)							

Indicator	NBHS (n=6)	Long Creek HS (n=4)	NBMS (n=6)	Lamar ES (n=5)	Walnut Springs (n=4)	LPE (n=7)	District
a) Both teachers participate and appear to be content proficient in the presentation of the lesson.	0/1 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	0/3 (0%)	1/1 (100%)	—	2/3 (67%)	**3/9 (33%)**
b) Students ask questions of both teachers.	2/2 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	2/2 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**9/10 (90%)**
c) Teachers are not identified as assigned to specific students.	2/2 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**10/11 (91%)**
d) Both teachers are engaged in classroom management.	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**8/9 (89%)**
e) Teachers jointly share and use classroom space.	1/1 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	2/3 (67%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	2/3 (67%)	**7/10 (70%)**
Use of Paraprofessionals (Gen Ed Classroom)							
a) The role(s) of paraprofessionals appear to be appropriate for the class/needs of the student (paraprofessional role versus certified teacher role).	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	—	1/1 (100%)	—	1/1 (100%)	**4/4 (100%)**
b) Students with disabilities are seated among peers and paraprofessional supports are provided unobtrusively.	1/1 (100%)	0/1 (0%)	—	1/1 (100%)	—	1/1 (100%)	**3/4 (75%)**
c) Paraprofessional assistance does not appear to be linked to lower teacher involvement/responsibility.	1/1 (100%)	—	—	0/1 (0%)	—	1/1 (100%)	**2/3 (67%)**
d) Paraprofessional proximity does not limit student-to-student interactions.	1/1 (100%)	—	—	0/1 (0%)	—	1/1 (100%)	**2/3 (67%)**
Specialized Support Classroom							
a) Standards-based general education is the framework for instructional delivery.	1/2 (50%)	1/1 (100%)	1/2 (50%)	1/3 (33%)	2/2 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**9/13 (69%)**
b) Teacher does not address multiple subjects or grade levels at the same time.	1/2 (50%)	1/1 (100%)	1/2 (50%)	0/3 (0%)	1/2 (50%)	1/3 (33%)	**5/13 (38%)**
c) Age-appropriate materials and activities characterize instruction.	2/2 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	**13/13 (100%)**
d) Paraprofessionals have clear roles and responsibilities for providing student support.	1/1 (100%)	—	1/1 (100%)	3/3 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)	**7/7 (100%)**

Indicator	NBHS (n=6)	Long Creek HS (n=4)	NBMS (n=6)	Lamar ES (n=5)	Walnut Springs (n=4)	LPE (n=7)	District
e) One or more students might be candidates for services in the general education classroom.	1/2 (50%)	1/1 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	0/3 (0%)	2/3 (67%)	2/2 (100%)	**8/13 (62%)**