



TEXAS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIANS

UPDATE

September 2021

Chair Report

Happy fall and welcome cooler weather! I hope this finds you well with all of the legislative changes going on this school year.

The Board of Registry met in September with all members present and made plans for this year's Symposium. This year we will be hosting the Symposium Sunday, December 5th in Waco. Dr. Ed Schultz will discuss the split in Glr. Advance registration is recommended as space is limited, information on how to sign-up is included as part of this edition of the Update.

Of the 16 candidates approved to test at our April board meeting, all 16 passed and were able to apply to become TPED members. TPED is now hosting fall and spring exam windows so encourage your fellow diagnosticians to apply.

In June we welcomed Cynthia Edwards to the board as Dr. Angie Elkins relocated to Florida and resigned her position. Cynthia is an experienced diagnostician and currently works in Houston ISD.

While we have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is my hope that you and your loved ones continue to stay safe and healthy. Thank you for what you do by serving the needs of students in your districts.

Jennifer Vasquez
Board of Registry Chair

Symposium Registration

TPED Symposium

GI and The Great Divide:

ASSESSING BOTH STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL

Presented by: Dr. Ed Schultz

December 5th 2021

Courtyard Marriott (across Washington Avenue from the Convention Center)

101 Washington Ave. Waco, Tx 76701

Brazos Rooms A & B

TPED Members-Free

4 PM—6 PM

Nonmembers-\$30

On or before December 3rd

Late registration-\$35

Limited Space Available

Pre-Registration is encouraged.

Walk ups are not guaranteed

Payment Information

Checks (Bring with you)

Credit Card -pay at regped.com

POs are not accepted

Register here

<https://forms.gle/hyc5f9URLZKVxvyk9>

2 CPE Credits

Renew through our website, if needed.

**Providing Appropriate Social Skills Goals
for Students with Autism**

Social skills proficiency predicts long-term emotional and economic success. Students on the Autism spectrum (ASD students) have pervasive impairments in social functioning and need targeted instruction to develop skills similar to their typically developing peers. Designing targeted goals geared towards social skills proficiency certainly promotes the long-term success of ASD students.

Skills such as perspective taking, conflict resolution, conversational turn-taking, and self-regulation are vital for our ASD students. Professionals in the field have encountered several instances when the ARDC did not develop targeted goals in the area of social skills, although the need was identified. Reasons for this misguided error likely include: the emphasis is on academic functioning only; the social functioning deficits are thought of as expected and therefore not in need of intervention; or the special education teacher is unaware as to how to implement such skills. Foundational to the development of any IEP is the review of a student's *Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance*. Part of this section is a review of a student's social skills proficiency as part of their functional performance. In many districts throughout the state of Texas, this practice is satisfied through administering a social skills assessment as a part of each annual ARD. The language in the required Autism supplement stresses the need for the ARDC to consider a plan for "integrated living, work, community and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments" (Texas Education Agency a, 2015, p. 8). This Commissioner's Rule supports the need for educators to consider the long-term needs of ASD students.

ASD students are expected to struggle with pragmatic language, general social skills, and navigating the intricacies of an ever-evolving social world, particularly at the secondary level, when social interactions can become much more complex. "Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and social interaction" (Region 18 Education Service Center, 2017).

Although these deficits are expected, they still require intervention.

To add perspective, it is expected that a student with dyslexia will struggle to read fluently, but the ARD committee puts services and accommodations in place to meet and remediate this need. The same should be true for our ASD students. When a student with Autism receives speech and language therapy for pragmatic language, the ARDC should consider implementation of social skills as a part of the student's services throughout the school day, whether it is served as in-class support or direct services.

Wording in the Autism supplement includes consideration for social skill supports that are based on assessment/curriculum across multiple settings. Nonetheless, teachers commonly express that they do not have the training or the resources to provide social skills instruction for our ASD students. Teachers should be encouraged to seek guidance from the district in regards to social skills curriculum and also training on implementation. Additionally, other special education staff such as Licensed Specialists in School Psychology and Speech-Language Pathologists can provide valuable insight into IEP development. Both open lines of communication between all staff members and a shared philosophy for social skills development for ASD students provide the foundation of this work. If an ASD student is achieving at an academically-high level but does not know how to make and keep a friend, are they: a) truly being successful; and b) will they be prepared for life after high school? Educators and service providers serving ASD students need to think deeply on these questions as they help our students become productive members of the school community and society.

REFERENCES

Region 18 Education Service Center. (2017). *The legal framework for the child-centered special education process*. http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW_Summary.aspx?FID=135&DT=G&LID=en

Texas Education Agency a. (2015). *Commissioner's rule related to autism: Rule/guidance side-by-side*. <https://www.txautism.net/assets/uploads/docs/Commissioners-Rule-Guidance-2.2015.pdf>

Texas Education Agency b. (2020). *Autism*. <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/programs-and-services/autism>

Transition ... Where Are You Going???

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you are going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.

- Stephen R. Covey

Transition planning is about knowing where you want to end up and then making a plan to get there. Schools in conjunction with parents should be preparing special education students for graduation and their future, whatever that might be. This process starts in middle school, by age 14, so that there is time to build skills and make a plan.

People who are limited in one or more major life activity are said to have a disability.

The US Census estimates over 3.2 million Texans -- or 11.5 percent of the population -- had a disability in 2019. These men, women and children are eligible for a range of state and federal services including rehabilitation, medical equipment, help finding a job, medical care and personal attendants to ensure they are provided with services that take into consideration their well-being, dignity and choice. Programs are in place to help individuals with disabilities:

- Live independently in their own homes or communities
- Prepare for and find jobs
- Provide medical equipment and assistive devices
- Determine eligibility for Supplemental Security Income
- Access health care
- Give family caregivers the tools to do their job

Students in public education are **entitled** to services due to their disability. Once they are no longer eligible for services through the school district, they must apply to be considered **eligible** for adult services.

Transition services are defined by IDEA as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that are designed to:

- be within a results-oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability
- facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including
 - postsecondary education
 - vocational education
 - integrated employment (including supported employment)
 - continuing and adult education
 - adult services
 - independent living
 - and/or community participation

Transition services are based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and include:

- Instruction
- Related services

- Community experiences
- Employment and other post-school adult living objectives
- and the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation, if appropriate

There are some myths surrounding Transition.

Myth: Schools can decide who can continue for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) beyond meeting graduation requirements (often called 18+ services) based on whether the student has an “educational need,” which is determined locally.

The Fact is.... Students who meet eligibility are entitled to continue for services as part of FAPE according to Texas Education Code (TEC)§48.003(a). Eligibility is based on meeting graduation requirements through Texas Administrative Code (TAC)§89.1070 (b)(2) or (b)(3). The Admissions Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee makes the recommendation for graduation and continued eligibility.

The following websites provide information regarding transition services:

The Texas Transition Site is a Student-Centered Transitions Network

<https://www.texastransition.org/>

The Texas Project First website provides transition information, resources, support and training for families.

<https://texasprojectfirst.org/node/203>

The image shows the Facebook logo in white on a dark blue background. To the right of the logo, separated by a vertical line, is the text "join our group +" in white.

**Texas Professional Educational Diagnosticians –
Members only Facebook Group**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/tpedmembers>

TPED Members Only

Roadblocks to Growing as a Successful Leader in the Diagnostician Role



As a diagnostician you are the special education leader on your campus. You work with teams of special and general education teachers, along with support staff, and administrators; all with very different personalities and backgrounds.

Below are roadblocks to growing into a **successful leader**:

Stop Solving Every Problem

When you swoop in to fix every problem, you are taking away opportunities for your team to learn, grow, and become accountable. Instead, learn how to delegate and hold people accountable. Provide helpful direction on the expected results, deadlines, and success metrics. Make yourself available to share guidance and coaching, but do not micromanage or try to tell teammates how to do their jobs.

Thinking You Must Always Have an Answer

Don't make the mistake of thinking that as a leader you must always have the answer. Avoid creating a bad culture by giving wrong or half-baked answers. Instead, leaders should create a culture where people feel encouraged to ask for input and information and feel welcomed to share their ideas and solutions.

Discouraging Bad News

The way you react when your team brings bad news will make or break the relationship you will have with your team. If you get angry, overreact, or blame people, you will create a culture where people won't be honest with you. They will delay sharing concerns or bad news because they are afraid of how you will react and issues or risks will turn into crises. By avoiding this bad behavior, you will be rewarded with a precious asset—transparency.

The Person and the Problem are not One and the Same

Business is all about solving problems, but if you see your people as the problem—well, that's a problem. You need to separate the person from the problem. Learn how to be tough on the issues and soft on people. If you can master that behavior, you will be able to address workplace challenges while exhibiting character, integrity, and gaining trust from your team. Remember, you cannot be a leader if nobody is following you.

Assuming People Know How to Interact with You

Each person has preferences on how they like to communicate: how often would you like your team to reach out to you, what is the best mechanism, how much detail do you like to have, do you like to pre-read the material, etc. Instead of assuming your team will magically and instantly know how to interact with you, it's better to first give them an opportunity to get to know you.

Bad Behavior: One Size Fits All Reward System

One of the mistakes new leaders make is to fail to realize that not everyone wants to be recognized or rewarded in the same way. As a leader you need to use creativity to adequately acknowledge successes and contributions. We all feel appreciated in different ways and learning how your team prefers to receive appreciation will go a long way.

Legal Updates

Hot News

Commissioner of Education Rules

The following Texas Administrative Code (TAC) rule action was filed with the Texas Register for publication in the October 1, 2021 issue:



Adopted Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 89, Adaptations for Special Populations, Subchapter AA, Commissioner's Rules Concerning Special Education Services, Division 1, General Provisions; Division 2, Clarification of Provisions in Federal Regulations and State Law; Division 4, Special Education Funding; and Division 5, Special Education and Related Service Personnel

Summary: The adopted amendments make updates related to eligibility determination for specific learning disabilities and provisions for students who are eligible for special education and related services who enroll in local educational agencies during the summer. The adopted amendments also make conforming edits related to funding for special education; update terminology to implement Senate Bill 281, 86th Texas Legislature, 2019; and update cross references. The amendments were adopted with [changes since published as proposed](#).

Effective Date: October 5, 2021

Please see the TEA website to view [adopted commissioner of education rules](#)

Updates to Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders (Dyslexia Handbook)

The sections on evaluation for dyslexia and dysgraphia have moved to a single pathway for identification under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This change means that anytime the LEA suspects that the student has dyslexia or a related disorder and may need dyslexia intervention services, the LEA must seek parental consent for a Full Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE) under the IDEA. LEAs are reminded that the process of seeking informed parental consent under the IDEA must include proper prior written notice and be accompanied by the notice of procedural safeguards. It is critical that parents and guardians are informed of the procedural protections and rights afforded to them and their child under the IDEA.

Using a single pathway for identification of dyslexia and related disorders ensures that LEAs fulfill their child find obligations under the IDEA. LEAs who are not already conducting an FIIE under the IDEA when dyslexia or dysgraphia is suspected, need to prepare their local system for this change. Evaluation staff members may need support such as a plan for absorbing additional evaluations, training (as needed) on identification of dyslexia and dysgraphia within an FIIE, and communication systems to ensure strong collaboration with individuals with expertise in dyslexia and related disorders.

HB 785

- Expands on federal requirements for students with disabilities regarding BIPs, restraint, timeout, and changes of placement.
- BIPs: Must be reviewed annually by the ARDC or more frequently as appropriate.
- This review must consider changes in circumstances that may impact the student's behavior, as well as the safety of the student and others.
- Restraint: Written notice must be provided to the parent of each incident of restraint. A copy of each notice must be included in student's records.
- Time-out: Schools must document each use of time-out and the behaviors that prompted the time-out if a student has a BIP.
- Changes of Placement: Whenever a disciplinary action leads to a change in placement, the district must conduct an FBA if

the current FBA is older than one year or if an FBA has never been conducted for this student. A new BIP must then be developed based on the new FBA within 10 school days of the change in placement.

HB 999

- Exempts any student in grade 12 during the 2020-2021 school year from having their performance on EOC exams considered for graduation eligibility purposes.

HB 4545

- Establishes new requirements for accelerated instruction for students who do not pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Elimination of grade retention and retesting requirements in grades 5 and 8. For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grades 3, 5, or 8 in math or reading, a new LEA requirement to establish an accelerated learning committee to develop an individual educational plan for the student and monitor progress. Any student who did not pass STAAR grades 3-8 or EOC assessments, accelerated instruction must be delivered in the 2021-22 school year (starting in the Fall of 2021). Accelerated instruction entails either 1) assigning a classroom teacher who is a certified master, exemplary, or recognized teacher, or 2) delivering supplemental instruction (i.e., tutoring) before or after school, or embedded in the school day.

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Dyslexia Handbook Changes



Although the 2021 Dyslexia Handbook has yet to be released, changes have been adopted by the SBOE and shared to allow districts to prepare for implementation. The 2021 handbook describes a course for evaluation of both dyslexia and dysgraphia in accordance with Child Find under the IDEA. Because a student suspected of having dyslexia and/or dysgraphia may be a student with a disability, LEA's should follow the procedures for conducting a FIIE. If a student is found to meet eligibility criteria as a student with the condition of dyslexia, the first prong of eligibility under the IDEA for special education has been met. We then must decide if the student needs special education. If a parent refuses evaluation under the IDEA, the district should seek consent under Section 504. In reviewing the TEA Webinar (2021, October 14), some important things to note are....

- The multidisciplinary team that evaluates a student suspected of the condition of dyslexia should include members who have specific knowledge regarding the reading process, dyslexia and related disorders, and dyslexia instruction.
- The standard protocol for dyslexia instruction should be considered and can be part of the specially designed instruction and services provided to meet the student's needs.
- Universal screeners for dyslexia are required in kinder and first grade. The screening instruments should look at phonological awareness at both grade levels. In kinder, it should also assess letter sound knowledge or letter naming fluency. In first grade, the screener should also look at word reading accuracy or fluency. The number of criteria assessed at each level has been reduced.

Guiding questions to determine the identification of dyslexia were included in the 2018 handbook. The 2021 handbook also includes questions to determine the identification of dysgraphia.

1. Do the data show the following characteristics and consequences of dysgraphia?

- Illegible and/or inefficient handwriting with variably shaped and poorly formed letters
- Difficulty with unedited written spelling
- Low volume of written output as well as problems with other aspects of written expression

2. Do these difficulties (typically) result from a deficit in graphomotor function and/or storing and retrieving orthographic codes?
3. Are these difficulties unexpected for the student's age in relation to the student's other abilities, and the provision of effective classroom instruction?

Reeves, Michelle. (2021, October 14). *The Dyslexia Handbook Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders* [Webinar]. Texas Education Agency.
<https://youtu.be/z4AEWoYp5Y4>

Just a Reminder

PROFESSIONAL – TPED members who have completed all professional requirements for Registry and continue to maintain any form of active diagnostician status. *Contract diags need to use this designation, please.*

ASSOCIATE – TPED members who have retired or who are in a position other than Educational Diagnostician. *(No CPEs Required)*

TPED website

TPED Members Only

TPED Facebook
