



TEXAS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIANS



Chair Report

The TPED Board of Registry's Spring meeting was held on September 30, 2022. Those in attendance included:

Jennifer Vasquez, Chairperson
Michele Hall, Vice Chair & Professional Visibility Chair
Melissa Politz, Treasurer
Jacie VandenBoom, Secretary
Stephanie Lee, Continuing Education Chair
Cynthia Edwards, Legislative Chair
Dr. Jeanine Risken, Credentials
Deb Hawkins, Administrative Assistant

Greetings and Happy Fall! On behalf of the Board of Registry, we hope you are doing well and enjoying the start of fall weather!

Last month the board held its fall meeting in Dallas. We were honored to have the current TEDA President, Georgene Moon, attend the meeting.

We completed our board election for 2022 via Google and are excited about the new members joining the Board in January 2023, as Stephanie Lee and I rotate off. Thank you, Stephanie, for your tireless work during the day for our families of kids with disabilities and staff who serve them and the time you have carved out these 6 years to serve the TPED organization. Your skills and expertise have been invaluable, and we thank you!

Beginning in January, your new Board members will be:

Chair- Melissa Politz

Vice Chair/Professional Visibility- Cynthia Edwards

Treasurer- Jacie VandenBoom
Continuing Ed- Michelle Hall
Credentials- Jeanine Birdwell
Secretary- Alice Colvin
Legislative- LaShanda Jones

We hope you are taking part in the virtual continuing education opportunities advertised, the *Beyond The Score* webinars, and benefiting from *This Just In* by Jim Walsh. The Board is excited to again host our Symposium in conjunction with TEDA's Annual Conference in March 2023. We are still working through the Symposium details so be sure to watch your email and our Facebook page for updates. Current TPED members, while required to register, may attend for free while non-members can register and pay a fee.

And finally, as my term on the TPED Board of Registry comes to an end, I look back on these six years with admiration. As with all things in our profession, our Board has been presented with many new and challenging opportunities and have tackled each one of them with professionalism and grace. It has been my joy to serve you and I am grateful to each of you for the role you play in your school districts, as we strive to live our motto, "Not Just Competence... Excellence".

All the best,
Jennifer
Board of Registry Chair

New Board Members

Please welcome our new TPED Board Members!

Alice Colvin - Secretary

I have been a general education teacher, special education teacher, diagnostician, transition coordinator and ECI coordinator for a district. To help a struggling student and their families understand why they are having difficulties in school is the most meaningful part of my job. I am from Houston and graduated from Texas Christian University (undergraduate degree), University of Houston (2nd undergraduate degree) and Houston Baptist University (two master's degrees). I am an avid learner and constantly growing in my profession.



LaShanda Jones - Legislative Chair

I have had the privilege to be an educator for more than 20 years. I value the gifts of students with learning differences and I take my responsibilities seriously to remind parents, teachers and stakeholders that all students have the capacity to learn and make progress. I have been married to a wonderful guy who supports me in every way for 20 years. I have 2 exceptional daughters who are the very best parts of me and whom I learn from each day. I enjoy reading, gardening, and cooking. I would describe myself as optimistic, organized, professional, flexible and genuine. I have been a Diagnostician, Lead Educational Diagnostician, Coordinator, and Director.

Symposium



Calling all Educational Diagnosticians

**TPED will hold a Symposium
during TEDA's 50 Year Annual Conference
(March 27-28, 2023)**

More information to come.

NCED Questionnaire

Want to join NCED?

—NO test required

say
what! " "

Through discussions with the National Certification for Educational Diagnosticians (NCED), TPED members have the opportunity to become NCED members without taking the exam. Likewise, NCED members, who are in Texas, have the opportunity become TPED members.

⇒ No exam (\$320 value)

⇒ \$55 yearly membership

⇒ 150 CEUs over 5 years

This arrangement would boost membership for both organizations. As you know, membership is where the money to run the organizations comes from. More income means TPED can do more across the board.

We want to know your opinion. Click the link to complete the google form.

*Click the Google Form button or
copy and paste the link in your browser*
<https://forms.gle/EkhkboxNGoLiSs1f37>

Google Form

Top 10 Things to Remember When Planning for Hard ARDs

1. Be Prepared - Pre-staff with the ARD team prior to the ARD meeting and make sure that everyone is on the same page and is able to articulate their information for the ARD committee.
2. Draft the ARD 2-3 days in advance-This helps the diag and sped teacher to anticipate any questions about completing the paperwork correctly and be able to ask questions.
3. Anticipate Problems- Is the student making progress on goals? Passing all classes? Any discipline referrals? What do gen ed teachers have to say about the student? Have timelines been met?
4. Allow Extra Time for the ARD- These ARDs typically run longer than most. Plan for an adequate amount of time but ensure that teachers and service providers are able to return to class/therapy. Two hours is a good rule of thumb.
5. Plan Seating- Parents should not be seated at the head of the table. Leave that position for the principal. Seat parents where they are able to see the ARD documents if you are projecting the meeting.
6. Provide Parents/Advocate with Paper Copies- Consider providing parents/advocate with paper copies of previously updated goals, new goals, accommodations, or anything else that is sometimes easier to view in print.
7. Use an Agenda- Always good to stay on task and keep the meeting moving. It's easy to go down a rabbit hole and add unnecessary time to the meeting.
8. Deliberations- Make sure that the person taking deliberations is skilled enough to keep up and knowledgeable of how to state things appropriately.
9. Note Agreement/Disagreement of Items in the ARD-As the ARD moves through the agenda, make a note of things that the parent and ARD committee are in agreement or disagreement about...i.e. FIE, eligibilities, goals, schedule of services, etc..
10. Be Kind and Respectful- Be kind and respectful, but **DO NOT** allow parents to become personal or abusive! If needed, take a break to allow tempers to cool down. If they can't cool down, recess the ARD and set a date to return to complete the ARD. Insist that everyone is treated with respect, even if the committee is in disagreement.

Spelling Assistance on STAAR

Spelling assistance is an often-underutilized accommodation on STAAR

testing and can benefit many students who struggle with spelling and writing. With writing and reading STAAR now combined into Reading Language Arts (RLA), short answer format questions are inevitable. Spelling assistance can be utilized for STAAR grades 3-8 RLA, English I, and English II. It can also be used on STAAR grades 5 and 8 science and Biology, as well as grade 8 social studies and U.S. History. Students do not necessarily have to be Dyslexic or Dysgraphic to utilize this support. If they are able to develop ideas and understand the use of sentence structure but struggle with applying basic spelling rules or word patterns, then the ARD committee should consider spelling assistance for an accommodation. Students should be able to routinely, independently, and effectively use this support during classroom instruction and testing. Spelling assistance can include the following: visual sound cards, frequently misspelled word list, spellcheck function on a word processor or as an online embedded support, pocket spellchecker, word prediction software, text-to-speech software, and speech-to-text software as an online embedded support. Because assistive technology is a service as well as a support, the use of spelling assistance can also be included in IEP goals to support students in learning these vital skills that will benefit them into college and into their adult lives.

Multisensory Teaching Approach

Confessions of a diagnostician teaching MTA

I've been a diagnostician for 14 years... and I admit I am beginning to get a little stir-crazy. I am at one of those crossroads in my life where I feel like I need a bit of a change. Dyslexia has been such a hot topic over the last few years and is now a part of our day-to-day life in special education. After speaking with my special ed director, I decided to dip my toe into the world of Dyslexia. My district was incredibly supportive and decided to allow me to be trained along with our special education teachers over the summer on teaching the MTA (Multisensory Teaching Approach) program. I went to a week-long training explaining the overview of the program, along with direct training on using Kit #1 with students. I am continuing to do my normal diagnostician duties while I also work with one group of students using MTA from 7:40-8:10 each morning.

Here is my take-away from the experience so far:

1. I love being able to develop relationships with students. After leaving the classroom this is one of the adjustments that was most challenging for me. As a diagnostician you are not around any group of students daily for a period of time that allows for the growth of those relationships; so, this has been a huge bonus for me!
2. Due to the scripted nature of the program, I am not needing to spend a ton of excess time preparing for these lessons. This is allowing me to continue to be fully present in my diagnostician duties.
3. Prior to teaching this program, I thought I had a good understanding of how to write recommendations for students with Dyslexia in my FIE's. Now that I am living the teaching side of the program, my understanding of what is being taught and how impactful it is has multiplied exponentially. My recommendations within my FIE are going to be much more targeted moving forward.

4. Although I am enjoying many aspects of teaching MTA, I already know that moving toward teaching MTA full-time is not something I desire to do. I enjoy the diagnostics of our field entirely too much to completely walk away from it. So, I will continue to challenge myself to learn and grow in the field as our knowledge continues to expand in so many ways.

Learning to teach MTA has been an area of growth for me this year. Growth is always a little uncomfortable and scary in the beginning, but it has so many rewards for you down the road. If you feel yourself getting complacent, I challenge you to seek out new knowledge as it applies to the field. It will only make you a stronger Educational Diagnostician!

Board of Registry

Chair

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