



# CEASD

CONFERENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS  
OF SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS FOR THE DEAF, INC.

*Lead • Educate • Advocate*



## **CEASD SELF-STUDY REPORT**

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

1856

November 7-10, 2021



## Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) Self-Study Accreditation Report for the Texas School for the Deaf

### Steering Committee/School Improvement Team

Donna Altuna, Assessment Specialist/Testing  
 Trevor Anderson, HS Teacher/Alumni  
 Debbie Andries, Applied Studies Specialist  
 Rachel Baker, Parent Infant Lead Teacher  
 Nick Bannon, PE/Aquatics Supervisor  
 Malibu Barron, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Coord.  
 Shelley Bergeron, Parent/SOC Family Services Coord.  
 Carl Borsotti, HS Teacher  
 Claire Bugen, Superintendent  
 Tamara Copeland-Samaripa, HS Curriculum Specialist  
 Shalia Cowan, Governing Board Member  
 Emma Crawford, Student Resources Coord./Alumni  
 Julie Dodd, Human Resources Director  
 Stella Egbert, Director of Instruction  
 Stephanie Garrison, CTE Teacher/Alumni  
 Trish Grooms, ECE/Elementary Counselor  
 Holly Hawk, TSDF Director  
 Eric Hogue, Governing Board President  
 Amy Holcomb, Elementary Teacher/PTSO  
 Karl Hummel, High School Principal  
 Barbara Hussey, ECE/Elementary Principal  
 Trey Johnson, HS Student  
 Willie King, Parent/PTSO  
 Mari Liles, Director of Technology

LeAnn Loyola, Budget and Contracting Manager  
 Wilmonda McDevitt, Student Life Director  
 Dina Moore, Governing Board Member  
 Chris Moreland, Governing Board Member  
 Alan Morton, Outreach Specialist  
 Rebecca Mowell, LSSP  
 Connie Potersnak, MS Applied Studies Teacher  
 Ursa Rewolinski, ASL High School Teacher  
 Shawn Saladin, Governing Board Vice President  
 David Saunders, Governing Board Member  
 Megan Scarboro, CTE Supervisor  
 Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Director of Outreach  
 Keith Sibley, Governing Board Member  
 Brian Sipek, Middle School Principal  
 Keri Sluyter, Asst. Director of Student Life  
 Beth Smiley, ACCESS Supervisor  
 Laura Smith, MS Teacher  
 Marcus Sylvester, Student Development Coord.  
 Daniel Veit, CTE Coord.  
 Justin Wedel, Chief Financial Officer  
 Cindy Wiechman, SOC Program Specialist  
 Heather Withrow, Governing Board Member  
 Angie Wolf, Governing Board Secretary

#### CEASD Internal Coordinators (Pre-COVID)

**Claire Bugen**, Superintendent  
**Stella Egbert**, Director of Instruction  
**Donna Altuna**, Instructional Data Analyst

**Lindsey Kang**, Special Assistant to the Superintendent  
 (resigned in March of 2020)

#### CEASD Internal Coordinators (Post-COVID)

Executive Leadership Team  
**Wilmonda McDevitt**, Director of Student Life  
**Claire Bugen**, Superintendent  
**Bobbie Beth Scoggins**, Director of Outreach  
**Julie Dodd**, Human Resources Director

**Elizabeth Sterling**, Special Education Director  
**Stella Egbert**, Director of Instruction  
**Justin Wedel**, Chief Financial Officer  
**Mari Liles**, Director of Technology

## Strategic Goal Teams

### Strategic Goal Team 1: Empowering Student Learning

**Stella Egbert**, Co-Chair, Director of Instruction

**Joey Vaughan**, Co-Chair, Curriculum Support Specialist

Donna Altuna, Instructional Data Analyst

Malibu Barron, Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion

Bethany Borsotti, Elementary Teacher

Carl Borsotti, High School Teacher

Krista Brown, ECE/Elementary Assistant Principal

Sisakoth Chhun, Elementary Teacher

Tamara Copeland-Samaripa, HS Curriculum Specialist

Karen Henry, Career Counselor

Amy Holcomb, ECE/Elementary SEL Coordinator

Leslie Hussey, ECE/Elementary Librarian

Richard Layton, CTE Teacher

Rebecca Lopez, High School Teacher

Rebecca Mowell, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology

Connie Potersnak, Middle School Teacher

Brian Sipek, Middle School Principal

Keri Sluyter, Assistant Director of Student Life

### Strategic Goal Team 2: Nurturing Positive Culture

**Elizabeth Sterling**, Co-Chair, Special Education Director

**Malibu Barron**, Co-Chair, Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion

Stella Egbert, Director of Instruction

Cheryl Warren, Student Resources Specialist

Emma Crawford, Student Resources Specialist

Marcus Sylvester, Student Development Coordinator

Jacqueline Doyle, Residential Supervisor

Amy Holcomb, SEL Coordinator

Seth Washington, Teaching Assistant

Jeremy Saling, Counselor

Amy Sandstrom-Hill, Counselor

Carlos Mendez, Teacher

Ursa Rewolinski, Teacher

Bridget Dryden, Behavior Coordinator

Angela Tadevosyan, Student

Diane Blastic, Interpreter

Terry Robbins, ARD Facilitator

Colleen Drews, Cashier

### Strategic Goal Team 3: Early Language Acquisition and Learning

**Bobbie Beth Scoggins**, Co-Chair, Director of Outreach

**Stella Egbert**, Co-Chair, Director of Instruction

Donna Altuna, Instructional Data Analyst

Rachel Baker, PIP/TLC Lead Teacher

Beth Hamilton, PIP/ECE/Elem. Parent

Mari Hubig, Birth to 3 Outreach Specialist

Barbara Hussey, ECE/Elementary Principal

Heidi MacGlaughlin, MS Parent

Jennifer Prigge, Outreach Project Manager-Family Services

Danon Teeters, ARD Facilitator

### Strategic Goal Team 4: Employee Engagement

**Julie Dodd**, Co-Chair, Human Resources Director

**Megan Scarboro**, Co-Chair, CTE Supervisor

Joey Vaughan, Curriculum Specialist

Meghan Blackmon, Literacy Learning and Resource

Christina Harucki, CTE Teacher

Clint Sadler, Residential Supervisor

Alan Morton, Outreach Specialist

Dee Mills, Day Residential Educator

Michael Winchester, Residential Supervisor

Malibu Barron, Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion

Tyler Milford, Behavior Intervention Specialist

### Strategic Goal Team 5: Family and Community Engagement

**Wilmonda McDevitt**, Co-Chair, Director of Student Life

**Ann Meredith**, Co-Chair, Parent Liaison

**Peggy Ann Wenger**, Co-Chair, Supervisor of Student Development

**Sub-Committee A (Family)**

Trudy Zhang, Homegoing Coordinator/Parent

Lori Taylor, CTE Teacher/Parent

Elizabeth Sterling, Special Education Director

Willie King, PTSO/Parent

Samara Jansen, Spanish Liaison

Jorge Guerra, Parent

Deborah Davison, Former Parent

Shelley Bergeron, SOC Family Service Coordinator

**Sub-Committee B (Community)**

Trevor Anderson, HS Teacher/Alumni

Keena Miller, SOC Program Specialist

Holly Hawk, Community Member

Chris Hamilton, Athletic Director

Taurean Burt, Night RE/Austin Deaf Club President

Gabriel Cardenas, Public Information Officer

Wess Smith, CSW Director/Sign Language Assessment Coord.

## Standard Focus Groups

### Standard 1 Focus Group: Philosophy/Mission

**Claire Bugen**, Superintendent

Committee: Julie Dodd, Stella Egbert, Mari Liles, Wilmonda McDevitt, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Elizabeth Sterling, Justin Wedel

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### Standard 2 Focus Group: Governance and Leadership

**Claire Bugen**, Superintendent

Committee: Julie Dodd, Stella Egbert, Mari Liles, Wilmonda McDevitt, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Elizabeth Sterling, Justin Wedel

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### Standard 3 Focus Group: School Improvement Planning, Outreach and Viability

**Claire Bugen**, Superintendent

Committee: Debbie Andries, Rachel Baker, Nick Bannon, Krista Brown, Gabriel Cardenas, Tamara Copeland-Samaripa, Julie Dodd, Stella Egbert, Karl Hummel, Barbara Hussey, Sandy Kimball, Mari Liles, Wilmonda McDevitt, Alan Morton, Megan Scarboro, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Christina Sicoli, Brian Sipek, Beth Smiley, Elizabeth Sterling, Lisa Svenningsen, Joey Vaughan, Holly Wardell, Justin Wedel

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### Standard 4 Focus Group: Finances

**Justin Wedel**, Chief Financial Officer

Committee: Stella Egbert, Barbara Hussey, LeAnn Loyola, Greg Reyes, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Keri Sluyter

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### Standard 5 Focus Group: Facilities

**Beth Polo**, Support Operations Specialist

Committee: Steve Barbin, David Roes, Nick Sultemeier, Justin Wedel, Matthew Woerndell

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### Standard 6 Focus Group: School Climate and Organization

**Julie Dodd**, Human Resources Director

Committee: Malibu Barron, Cass Bertling, Anne Devine, Jody Hamilton, Zorna Jackson, Greg Reyes, Keri Sluyter, Peggy Ann Wenger, Michael Winchester

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### Standard 7 Focus Group: Health and Safety

**Elizabeth Sterling**, Special Education Director

Committee: Kyra Butler, Christina Baldoni, Erin Cazedessus, Stacy Correa, Julie Dodd, Bridget Dryden, Victoria Flis, Elena Furmansky, Trish Grooms, Courtney Harrell, Rachel Harris, Tara Huber, Erin Moran, Amy Sandstrom-Hill, Cindy Szewczyk

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### Standard 8 Focus Group: Educational

**Stella Egbert**, Director of Instruction

Committee: Donna Altuna, Debbie Andries, Rachel Baker, Nick Bannon, Malibu Barron, Krista Brown, Tim Ervin, Karl Hummel, Barbara Hussey, Megan Scarboro, Brian Sipek, Beth Smiley, Elizabeth Sterling, Lisa Svenningsen, Daniel Veit

## Standard 9 Focus Group: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning

**Donna Altuna**, Assessment Specialist/Testing

**Joey Vaughan**, Curriculum Support Specialist

Committee: Karl Hummel, Amy Holcomb, Leslie Hussey, Connie Potersnak, Tamara Copeland-Samaripa, Megan Scarboro, Christina Sicoli, Dana Stoddard,

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## Standard 10 Focus Group: Student Services

**Stella Egbert**, Director of Instruction

**Elizabeth Sterling**, Special Education Director

**Justin Wedel**, Chief Financial Officer

Committee: Wendie Abramson, Michelle Anderson, Trevor Anderson, Laura Auringer, Claudia Avuncan, Nick Bannon, Malibu Barron, Krista Brown, Alejandro Cabrera, Bobbie Jo Cardenas, Sisakoth Chhun, Deborah Davidson, Carrie Frazier-Weinstock, Karen Henry, Amy Holcomb, Tara Huber, Karl Hummel, Barbara Hussey, Rebekah Kasper, Crystal Kelley Schwartz, Sandy Kimball, Deb Kuglitsch, Mallory Malzkuhn, Wilmonda McDevitt, Erin Moran, Rebecca Mowell, Connie Potersnak, Ursa Rewolinski, Terry Robbins, Clint Sadler, Jeremy Saling, Megan Scarboro, Brian Sipek, Keri Sluyter, Beth Smiley, Lisa Svenningsen, Cindy Szewczyk, Lori Taylor

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## Standard 11 Focus Group: Student Life, Student Activities and Residential Living

**Wilmonda McDevitt**, Director of Student Life

Committee: Stefan Bergan, Beth Chung-King, Emma Crawford, Toby Daniels, Chris Hamilton, Arthur Hess, Stephen, Kuhns, Yana Novikova, Jackson Quiroz, Jeremy Saling, Keri Sluyter, Marcus Sylvester, Caroline Terrant, Cheryl Warren, Peggy Ann Wenger, Michael Winchester, Hei Jin Woodyard

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## Standard 12 Focus Group: Learning Resources and Information Technology

**Mari Liles**, Director of Technology

**Stella Egbert**, Director of Instruction

Committee: Meghan Blackmon, Sonia Bridges, Craig DeBellis, Leslie Hussey, LeAnn Loyola, Linda Miller, Alan Morton

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Context of Texas School for the Deaf</b>	
Accreditation Process .....	9
Community Profile.....	11
School Profile.....	13
Student Profile.....	19
Student Achievement Profile.....	22
Mission/Vision/Belief Statements .....	28
<b>Analysis of Stakeholder Surveys (Parents, Students, Community Members .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>CEASD Standards for Accreditation .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Standard 1: Philosophy/Mission .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Overall Standard Rating	
Significant Strengths	
Significant Areas of Improvement	
Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations	
Narrative for Standard 1	
Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard	
Objective for Standard if applicable	
Evidence	
<b>Standard 2: Governance and Leadership .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Overall Standard Rating	
Significant Strengths	
Significant Areas of Improvement	
Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations	
Narrative for Standard 2	
Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard	
Objective for Standard if applicable	
Evidence	
<b>Standard 3: School Improvement Planning and Viability.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Overall Standard Rating	
Significant Strengths	
Significant Areas of Improvement	
Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations	
Narrative for Standard 3	
Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard	
Objective for Standard if applicable	
Evidence	
Action Plan #1	
Action Plan #2	
Action Plan #3	
Narrative for Development of Action Plans	
<b>Standard 4: Finances.....</b>	<b>73</b>
Overall Standard Rating	
Significant Strengths	
Significant Areas of Improvement	

Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
 Narrative for Standard 4  
 Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
 Objective for Standard if applicable  
 Evidence

**Standard 5: Facilities..... 78**

Overall Standard Rating  
 Significant Strengths  
 Significant Areas of Improvement  
 Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
 Narrative for Standard 5  
 Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
 Objective for Standard if applicable  
 Evidence

**Standard 6: School Climate and Organization..... 82**

Overall Standard Rating  
 Significant Strengths  
 Significant Areas of Improvement  
 Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
 Narrative for Standard 6  
 Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
 Objective for Standard if applicable  
 Evidence

**Standard 7: Health and Safety ..... 91**

Overall Standard Rating  
 Significant Strengths  
 Significant Areas of Improvement  
 Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
 Narrative for Standard 7  
 Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
 Objective for Standard if applicable  
 Evidence

**Standard 8: Educational Program..... 103**

Overall Standard Rating  
 Significant Strengths  
 Significant Areas of Improvement  
 Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
 Narrative for Standard 8  
 Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
 Objective for Standard if applicable  
 Evidence

**Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning ..... 116**

Overall Standard Rating  
 Significant Strengths  
 Significant Areas of Improvement  
 Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
 Narrative for Standard 9

Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
Objective for Standard if applicable  
Evidence

**Standard 10: Student Services ..... 131**

Overall Standard Rating  
Significant Strengths  
Significant Areas of Improvement  
Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
Narrative for Standard 10  
Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
Objective for Standard if applicable  
Evidence

**Standard 11: Student Life, Student Activities and Residential..... 144**

Overall Standard Rating  
Significant Strengths  
Significant Areas of Improvement  
Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
Narrative for Standard 11  
Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
Objective for Standard if applicable  
Evidence

**Standard 12: Learning Resources and Information Technology ..... 151**

Overall Standard Rating  
Significant Strengths  
Significant Areas of Improvement  
Response to Previous CEASD Recommendations  
Narrative for Standard 12  
Analysis and/or chart of Self-assessment for Standard  
Objective for Standard if applicable  
Evidence

**Conclusion..... 167**

**Next Steps ..... 168**





# Introduction: Context of Texas School for the Deaf

## Accreditation Process

### Integrating Accreditation into Strategic Planning

TSD conducts its new Five-Year Strategic planning process in conjunction with its five-year CEASD self-study for re-accreditation. This works well for us as both processes involve many common elements. These include an examination of the school's mission, vision and beliefs, a process of internal and external assessment, surveys of stakeholders, identification of areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, identification of critical issues, and the establishment of priority goals to be included in the school improvement plan. Conducting these processes together lessens the demands placed on the school's human resources and enriches both processes.

### School Community Planning Team

Once all the survey data is compiled and analyzed and the SWOT analyses completed TSD convenes a School Community Planning Team (SCPT) to move into the next phase of the process.

The team consisted of a diverse forty-seven-member group including Board members and the Superintendent, parents, the school Executive Leadership Team, principals, teachers, students, support staff and community members. Members were selected to give the team a comprehensive demographic range including gender, ethnicity, organizational affiliation and role.

The School Community Planning Team's two-day meeting was facilitated by an outside consultant who had served previously as a facilitator for our last strategic planning and accreditation process. The agenda and materials from SCPT are available as evidence for Standard 3.

### Internal and External Scanning

The process of internal and external environmental scanning began with a variety of surveys and research into social, educational, technological, political and economic conditions that were likely to impact the school in the next five years. The surveys administered included Ohio State University School Experience Surveys for Students, Parents, Teachers and Support Staff, the CEASD Standards Surveys, the UT School of Social Work Survey of Employee Engagement and Survey Monkey surveys to review and update our Mission, Vision and Beliefs. This information can be found in the Internal and External Scanning section of the Self-Study.

### Revised Mission, Vision and Beliefs

On February 21, 2020 the School Community Planning Team revised the Mission, Vision and Belief Statements based on input collected via Survey Monkey and discussions among the team. On day two, February 22, 2020 the team reviewed presentations on the internal and external analysis, student performance data, results of the Ohio State survey, the CEASD Standard Surveys and the Survey of Employment Engagement and small groups met to discuss the data and the trends.

### Strategic Priorities Emerge

The results of this two-day meeting were the identification of five critical issues that TSD needed to address in the next five years. Those five critical issues were:

- Empowering Student Learning
- Nurturing Positive Culture
- Early Language Acquisition
- Employee Engagement
- Family and Community Partnerships

At the end of February our facilitator prepared a summary report of the School Community Planning Sessions. (See Standard 3 evidence for that report.)

Note on Interruption of the Accreditation and Self Study process from March to September of 2020 due to mandatory school closure.

## Strategic Goal Teams Engaged

After we went through our re-opening challenges in September and October, post-COVID, we returned our focus to Strategic Planning and Accreditation. TSD assigned each critical issue to a Strategic Goal Team (SGT) and selected co-chairs for each team. On February 4, 2016, the SGT Chairs received training on developing strategic goals and identifying “big ideas” (major programs/objectives) for achieving those goals. The SGT Chairs were asked to choose their membership, craft a completed goal statement, research best practices related to that goal statement, apply information gathered from in the internal/external assessments, and develop a final report to be presented to the Governing Board on April 30, 2021. The completed SGT reports are provided as evidence in Standard 3 and posted on our website.

## Governing Board Approves SGT Reports

On April 30, 2021, the SGT Chairs and/or SGT representatives made presentations to the Board summarizing the work of their SGT. The Governing Board unanimously approved them as written. From there, the SGT Chairs met with the Superintendent and identified strategic objectives that would lead to the achievement of the strategic goals in the next five years.

## 5-Year Strategic Plan Published

That work was finalized in June and the new 5-Year Strategic Plan for 2021-20-26 was published. (See evidence for Standard 3 for a copy of this. Plan.)

## District Improvement Plan Implements Year One Objectives

On June 18, 2021, the SGT Chairs received training on writing the action plans for their SGT goal and objectives. They completed their work during the summer and those year one action plans became our Annual District Improvement Plan (DIP). The District Improvement Plan for 2021-22 is a series of Action Plans detailing our Year One commitment to the implementation of our new Strategic Plan. In addition to these action plans there are two student achievement action plans that focus specifically on student performance.

The DIP is monitored by the SGT Chairs along with the Executive Leadership Team and progress data is recorded and tracked at specified intervals during the school year. The TSD Governing Board and the District Advisory Committee also receive regular updates on our progress on the District Improvement plan at selected Board meetings.

## Re-visit CEASD Standard Surveys in May/June 2021

Due to the loss of one year as a result of the pandemic we thought it would be prudent to re-visit our CEASD Standard Survey Summaries that were completed in the fall of 2019. It had been over a year since we first discussed and analyzed them and we realized that many things had improved in the past eighteen months. Since the opening of the 2020-2021 school year, TSD has been fine-tuning and organizing our Self-Study document. We determined not to change our ratings but only update our strengths and our opportunities for improvement. You will note that the updated Standard summaries are indicated by red text.

## Town Halls

We have also held two Town Hall meetings on Accreditation to review our progress and help our community plan for the upcoming site-visit as well as offered training materials in our new LMS, Ranger Academy. We have also continued the involvement of our Governing Board, by reviewing our progress at each Board meeting.

## Internal Coordinators

The Internal Coordinators that were originally designated to coordinate our process were our Director of Instruction, our Data and Outcomes Coordinator, our Superintendent and the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent. Because COVID-19 required our Director of Instruction and our Data and Assessment person to fully shift their focus to a complete revamping of educational programs and services, their attention to the Self-Study was reduced. Then shortly after the school closed in March the Special Assistant to the Superintendent resigned leaving only the Superintendent as part of the original team. Truthfully all of us have had to shift our mindsets and focus on crisis leadership, organizational resilience and a focus on self-care and mental health of our staff and students. By January of 2021 with a full semester of successful reopening of TSD, we were able to shift some of our energy back to strategic planning and accreditation in January of 2021.

At that time, we also shifted our approach to relying more on our Executive Leadership Team and various administrative assistants to support us through this process. Fortunately for us, most of the very difficult work was already accomplished when the pandemic hit.

Though it has been a challenge to say focused on strategic work during the pandemic, we are proud of the work we have done on expanding the number of stakeholders involved in this process and between the School Community Planning Team, the Strategic Goal Teams and the Standards Review Focus Groups, and we feel very confident about our community's understanding of the process and their opportunities for input. A list of School Community Planning Team Members and Strategic Goal Teams is included as evidence for Standard 3.

### Continuous Improvement

Our self-study process has now been translated into our Strategic Plan and our District Improvement Plan. The entire campus community is responsible for carrying out the work detailed in our Action Plans. We see accreditation as part of the continuous cycle of school improvement planning. Monitoring our progress will help guide us forward and ensure we achieve our intended results.

## Community Profile

At the very center of the Texas School for the Deaf campus sits the Clock Tower and the TSD Heritage Museum. It is a special place chronicling the history of the school with pictures, objects, and stories that reflect 165 years of a school growing in size and effect to arrive at where we are today - a strong and vibrant community that explodes beyond the school as:

- a statewide educational resource center
- a Texas and national leader in Deaf Education
- an active participant in the dynamic city that is Austin, Texas.

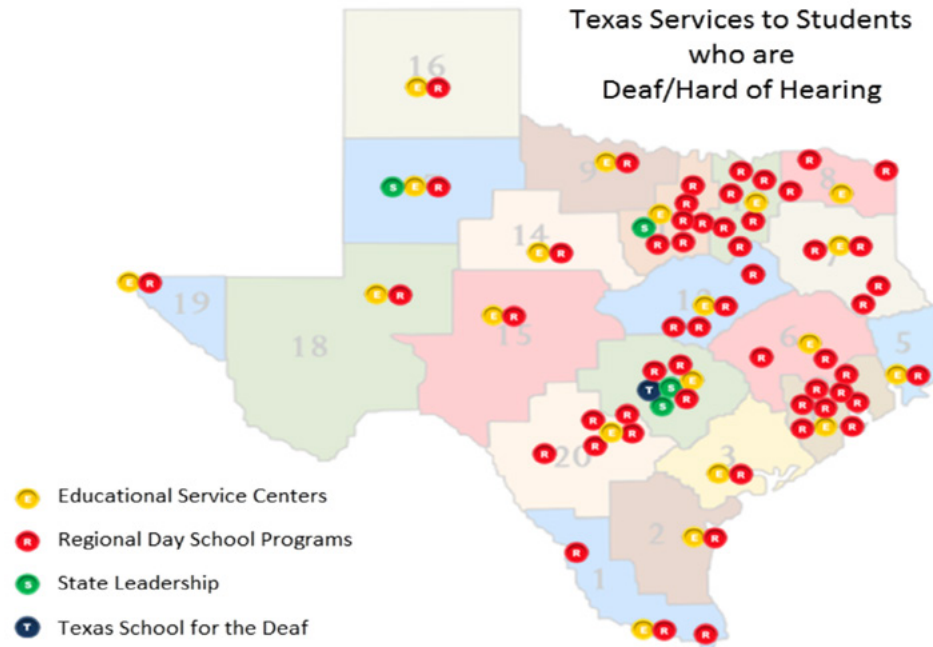
### The TSD Campus Community

TSD is a resource rich environment able to surround students with quality educational opportunities through both in and after-school programming. Student enrollment, parent engagement, alumni devotion and Deaf community relations all testify to the recognition of TSD as a cherished school dedicated to excellence.

This year's theme is "Creating Connections". The more we delve into social-emotional learning, EDI work, and trauma informed and culturally responsive teaching, the more we realize meaning comes from relationships, from feelings of belonging. This year we will come together as a community to find small and large ways for all of us to build deeper connection with students and with each other.

### The Statewide Deaf Education Community

As the map below indicates TSD is one education option among many for deaf and hard of hearing students in Texas. There are 54 Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf, 3 private oral schools, and over 1600 independent school districts in which some students are mainstreamed. However, quantity does not always equal quality as issues of critical mass and lack of resources and expertise impact what some of these programs are able to provide. At the level of the Education Service Centers that serve 20 regions throughout Texas, the person assigned as a resource for deaf and hard of hearing services is often someone without a background in deaf education. To address these kinds of issues, TSD, through its Statewide Outreach Center (SOC) endeavors to provide support to students, families, and professionals statewide through distance learning, online resources, summer programs and camps, workshops, conferences and collaboration with Hands and Voices.



The map above also indicates that TSD is one of four agencies providing state leadership. Through membership in task force and work groups, advisory councils, our biennial statewide conference planning team, board memberships and early hearing detection and intervention efforts, the active participation of TSD/SOC staff lends experience and expertise to statewide groups working to improve all aspects of deaf education. The Texas Education Agency has also designated TSD as the state lead for family involvement for deaf and hard of hearing students and we have developed a variety of programs addressing this need. Through Guides in the Guide by Your Side program, Shared Reading Tutors, and Family Sign Instructors online and across the state, we provide a variety of services and support to families. ERCOD also has two statewide Parent Liaisons and a Liaison to Spanish speaking parents who provide information, resources and support year-round and organize and run our annual Family Weekend Retreats. This and many other ERCOD programs are working towards becoming collaborative efforts involving other state entities that have a role in deaf education.

### TSD and the Austin Community Grow Together

Our school and community are thriving on the energy that is created by our home city. With TSD as the magnet, our city has attracted many deaf people and families from across the nation. The number of deaf-owned businesses in the country is growing and Austin is leading the pack. Not only does the growth stimulate the obvious things such as enrollment, but it also enriches the learning experiences of our students as well as create opportunities for more community partnerships.

When TSD was originally built, the property was on the outskirts of town. Now we are smack dab in the middle of a development boom in Austin's downtown corridor. This has posed both a threat and opportunities. The threat is from the occasional rumblings about the commercial value of 68.5 acres of prime real estate as good for the coffers of state government, good for the development of a new campus, and good for business in the area. In recent years however, legislative leadership has publicly committed to maintaining the school on its current site

### The opportunities presented by the current growth business climate include

- Fertile ground for the TSD staff and Foundation to mine for potential business partnerships. For example, a few blocks from TSD, a Starbucks recently opened that has a number of deaf baristas. We hope for a mutually beneficial partnership with this deaf-friendly business.
- More engagement in our neighborhood. For instance, we are currently in conversations about development of a new park improvement project that will border and involve TSD property.

We are mindful of keeping our community involved in the school. Other state agencies, universities and local public schools, law enforcement agencies and private citizens use our athletic facilities, auditorium and meeting rooms. Austin Sign Language School runs evening year-round instruction in our classrooms. The local and state film, movie, and public relations industries pay to use our campus as a "location" for movie, TV and/or commercial shoots as well as a base camp for filming in the Austin area.

Despite all of these realized opportunities we keenly aware that must constantly strive to develop more partnerships and improve our efforts to make ourselves known by engaging with our Austin community. We have a new strategic goal related to enhancing partnerships and hope to further our city's recognition of our campus and the role that we play in the state landscape

## Community is About Building our Future while Honoring our Past

Every Thursday you can find a group of dedicated alumni working in the Heritage Museum. They volunteer their time and effort to maintain the displays, organize the archives, and develop new exhibits to share the story of TSD. They are the older generation making sure that future generations understand the past and ongoing story of "Creating Connections" that is this very special school, Texas School for the Deaf.

## TSD Profile

Texas School for the Deaf (TSD), located on the edge of the urban center in the capital city of Austin, is a place where students who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those with additional disabilities, have the opportunity to learn, grow and belong in a culture that optimizes individual potential and provides accessible language and communication across the curriculum. As the capital city Austin is the seat of state government with a population of over 2 million. Austin is known as the "Music Capital of the World" and is home to the flagship University of Texas, Formula One's Circuit of the Americas raceway and numerous parks and lakes popular for hiking, biking, swimming and boating.

Our educational philosophy is grounded in the belief that from birth through age 21, all of our students deserve a quality language and communication-driven program provided by language-proficient teachers and staff and where a critical mass of students of appropriate age, cognitive function, and common language use allow for peer group interactions that foster social-emotional growth and the positive identity necessary to becoming a well-rounded individual.

In addition to providing day and residential educational services to our on-site population of students, TSD is also directed by state statute to serve as an educational resource center on deafness, providing a variety of services statewide for deaf and hard of hearing students and their families as well as for the programs and professionals who serve them. Texas Education Code §30.051-30.059.

## Early History

The school was established in 1856 and has been shaped by 165 years of history. With the exception of the Heritage Center and the Clinger Gymnasium, very little of the school's architectural fabric pre-dating 1956 survives today. Nonetheless, particularly among alumni, Austin historians and to the residents of the South Congress neighborhood in which TSD resides, we remain an invaluable treasure to the city and the state at large.

Even before the rich history of the school began, the lands where the Texas School for the Deaf resides have served as a crossroads of early Texas history. The high grounds of the campus are well documented as a former training camp for the Confederate States army and so valuable was the school's hilltop view that it was once considered as the site for the original capitol of Texas.

A favorite story with substantial historical evidence is that of General George Armstrong Custer. Although killed in battle at the young age of 36, General Custer was probably spared an earlier death from Indian attacks because he learned sign language on the TSD campus. Following the Civil War, Custer was sent to Austin to command the federal troops remaining there after the war. He would ride over to the campus almost every day to watch the students signing. Noted to be a handsome man with long curls, it is speculated that he became the "heart-throb" of many young female students. We have a wonderful history book, Texas School for the Deaf Sesquicentennial: A Proud Heritage that provides a rich chronicle of the school's complete history, as does our treasured Heritage Center.

## Growth and Expansion

Since 1856, the Texas School for the Deaf has offered its students an exceptional education designed to meet their individual needs and a unique opportunity to form an identity based on their personal strengths and talents, rather than their disabilities. When TSD opened its doors, the entire student body of three boys was taught in a repurposed smokehouse on a farm rented by the state. The farmland was later purchased for \$5,500 and was the first parcel of the school property that TSD still occupies just south of downtown Austin. From these meager beginnings TSD has grown into a leading-edge institution of learning with a national reputation for excellence in deaf education.

We have grown with Austin. In 1998 we were the fifth largest school for the deaf in the nation with 440 students on campus. Today we have grown to be the nation's largest school for the deaf and we now educate almost 600 students on-site and through outreach, serve thousands of students, families, and professionals statewide. Like generations of deaf and hard of hearing students before them, current TSD students achieve personal excellence among the school's vibrant community of diverse learners, families, educators, and staff.

**TSD Admits Students Referred by Local Districts and Parents**

Students are admitted to TSD following a referral by a local school district, or a referral by a parent or adult student when the parent or adult student chooses TSD rather than the program offered locally.

**A Nine-Member Board Governs TSD**

A nine-member board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate governs TSD. The board is directed to organize and conduct itself like the board of a local school district and thus, in addition to overseeing the provision of all TSD services, has specific responsibilities related to budget preparation, policy adoption and appointment of TSD's Superintendent. Board members are not salaried. The Board must consist of 51% deaf individuals and include parents, alumni and professionals in deafness. Today, the Board and the Superintendent of TSD are a cohesive leadership team.

**TSD Hires Professional Educational Staff by Contract**

TSD, like many local school districts, hires professionally certified educators and support staff under one-year term contracts. By statute, contract professionals must be paid in accordance with the salary schedule of the Austin Independent School District. With the exception of the Superintendent, whose position is listed in the General Appropriations Act, all other employees are hired into positions in the state employee classification system and paid according to the state of Texas salary schedule.

**TSD Funding Comes from Various Sources**

TSD's funding consists of legislative appropriations, required contributions from local school districts, gifts and bequests, and funds, such as federal grant funds, appropriated receipts and interagency contracts. TSD is fortunate to have the support of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the TSD Foundation. The TSDF has its own Board of Directors and is a completely separate entity from TSD.

**Historical Milestones**

**Oldest Continuously Operating Public School in Texas ..... 1856**

The Texas School for the Deaf's campus in Austin is older than the State Capitol just up Congress Avenue. Founded in 1856 by the Sixth Legislature, TSD is the oldest continuously operating public school in the state. Though the school's current 68.5 acres includes the original smaller campus, much about TSD has changed dramatically over the years. Back then, it was called the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum, was appropriated \$10,000 for the biennium. Today we are an independent state agency continually improved facilities thanks to the support of the state legislature.

**State Printing Office Established and Continues Today ..... 1876**

Significant historical events include the 1876 establishment of a state printing office at the school, the first ten-year course of study for graduation in 1887, and the construction of a new vocational and education building in 1900. The school's enrollment and building projects continued to grow from 1900 to 1945. During this time, science and library facilities were built and the number of teachers increased from 14 to 44. Today, the school's printing is done on an industry standard, state of the art digital printer. Student curricula have also expanded to include web design, digital animation and graphics including dual credit offerings in Graphic Design. Students still print the school's historic Lone Star magazine and many other school publications in our Ranger Press, a school-based enterprise that provides printing services for both TSD and the Austin community.

**Recognition as Educational Institution ..... 1949**

In 1949, the School was placed under the newly created Board for Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools, and the official name of the School was changed to the Texas School for the Deaf. In 1951, after almost a century of effort to identify TSD as an educational institution, the Legislature directed that the State Board of Education would govern the school, an arrangement that would continue for the next 30 years.

## **East Campus Begins ..... 1965**

In 1965, the state schools for the blind and the deaf were combined under a Directors of Special Schools for the State of Texas. Also in 1965, the Texas Deaf and Blind and Orphan School for Colored Youths on Airport Boulevard integrated its students with the special schools. This facility became TSD's East Campus, which was occupied by TSD's early childhood, elementary, and special needs students through the 2000-2001 school year. At that time, East Campus was sold to the City of Austin and all students moved back to the original campus on South Congress that was, at the time, referred to as the South Campus.

## **Regional Day Schools Established ..... 1973**

In 1973, Senate Bill 803 established the Regional Day Programs for the Deaf in Texas. These programs were under the Texas Education Agency and were designed to serve deaf and hard of hearing students within local public-school districts. The original design of the RDSPDs included five area-wide Superintendents with the TSD Superintendent being responsible for the Central Texas Region. Texas was far ahead of its time recognizing that deafness, as a low incidence disability, really required consolidated services, with a critical mass of students served by specialized staff trained to meet their unique needs. For many years these programs provided quality services. However, as local control took root in Texas, and miss-interpretations of Least Restrictive Environment guided decision making, these programs were gradually eroded and more and more students were referred to inclusive environments. Today the RDSPDs are very different versions of their original design but in many places in the state they remain a viable option for students and families.

## **Changes in TSD Oversight..... 1979**

In 1979, the Legislature transferred the responsibility of governing TSD from the State Board of Education to a Governor appointed nine-member Board that was then confirmed by the Senate. In 1981 the School for the Deaf was removed from the control of the Texas Education Agency, becoming a separate state agency and also an Independent School District.

## **Major Facility Construction ..... 1990- 2001**

In the late 1980's, a decision was made to consolidate TSD's two campuses and a new construction plan began resulting in 458,000 square feet of new building space. One reason for the \$65-million-dollar appropriation by the state Legislature was a sense that the School for the Deaf facilities were both outdated and inefficient. Another reason was the hope that consolidating the campuses would save money on duplicated services such as the health center, security department, maintenance, and cafeteria.

Barnes Architects of Austin was hired to design the campus, and in 1999, their design was one of five top winning designs in the state. TSD continues to plan for major facility improvements with the master planning process that is currently underway

## **Sesquicentennial Milestone .....2006**

In 2006, TSD celebrated its Sesquicentennial marking 150 years of quality service to Texas deaf and hard of hearing students, their families and the professionals who serve them. A series of celebrations were held across the campus, and a historic landmark marker was placed at the entrance to the campus on South Congress Avenue.

## **Transfer of Facilities ..... 2014-2016**

Measures enacted during the 83rd and 84th regular sessions of the Texas Legislature transferred responsibilities for facility management from TSD to the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC). Currently the TFC is responsible for all day-to-day maintenance, custodial services, grounds services and deferred maintenance and facility construction.

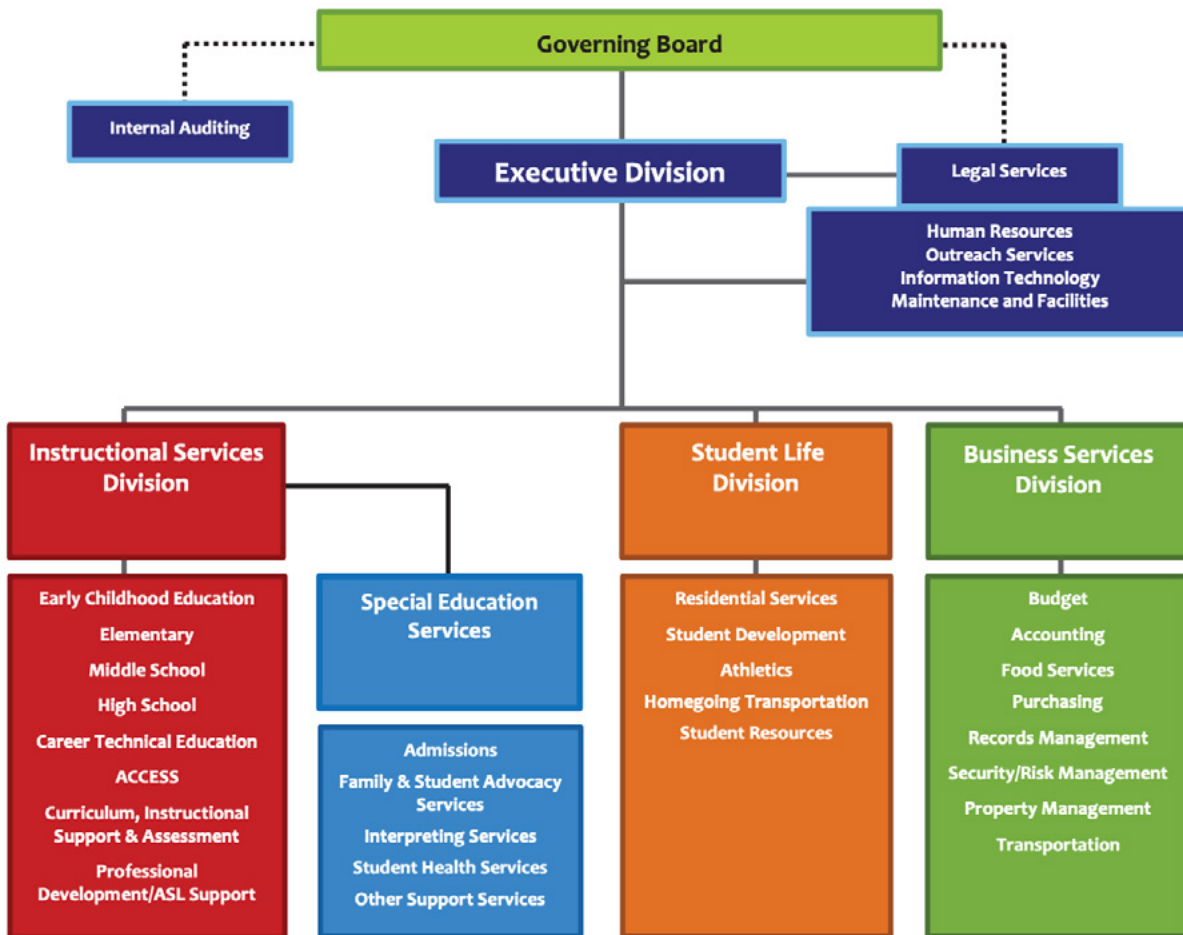
## **New Master Plan for Facilities.....2017**

In 2017 a new Master Plan for Facilities and deferred maintenance construction was begun. The plan included four Phases of Expansion to accommodate enrollment, provide campus age zoning, deaf space design, and increase educational space. Measures enacted during the 83rd and 84th regular sessions of the Texas Legislature transferred responsibilities for facility management from TSD to the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC).

### TSD is Organized into Four Divisions:

#### Executive, Instruction, Student Life, and Financial Operations, with the Superintendent overseeing all.

- The **Executive Division** is administered by the Superintendent and includes Legal, Human Resources, Statewide Outreach Center (SOC), Information Technology, and the Public Information Office.
- The **Instructional Division** is administered by the Director of Instruction and includes responsibility for all academic school programs including Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle, High School, Career Technology Education, and Transitional Services as well as curriculum and assessment services. The Director with the assistance of the Special Education Director is also responsible for Related and Support services, Admissions, Interpreting and the Health Center.
- The **Student Life Division** is administered by the Director of Student Life and the Assistant Director and includes responsibility for dorm programs for students in Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Special Needs. The division includes programs for students who need more structured services, such as the 18+ transitional program (ACCESS). The Student Life division includes Student Development, and Athletics.
- The **Financial Operations Division** is administered by the Chief Financial Officer and includes Accounting, Budgeting, Purchasing, Records Management, Internal Auditing Liaison, and Facilities/Property Management. The Division also includes Security and Risk Management services as well as Food Services and Transportation.





## Profile of the TSD Workforce

### Size, Composition and Diversity of Workforce

The Legislature establishes an FTE (Full-time Equivalent) cap for TSD. TSD's current cap is 445.1 full time equivalent employees. State agencies are permitted to exceed the FTE cap by 10% and TSD currently has 448.8 budgeted FTEs. Of this number, 149.7 are professional contract positions requiring certification and the remaining 299.1 are classified staff. The following is a snapshot of the composition and diversity of TSD's workforce:

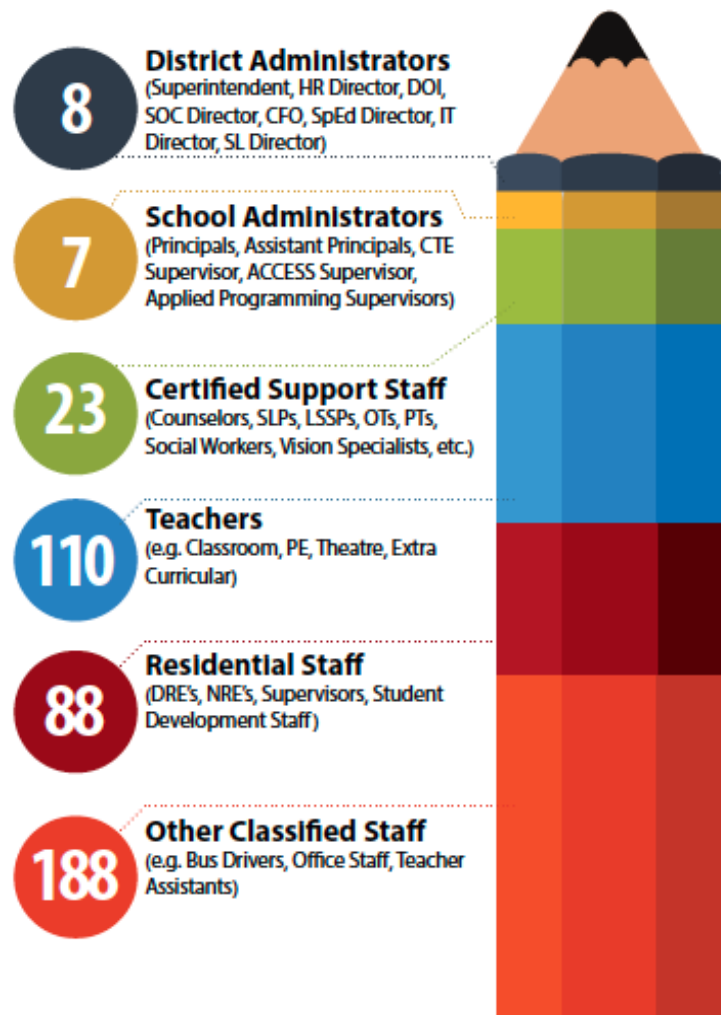
- Employee ethnicity: 72.1% White, 13.9% Hispanic, 9.4% African American, 2.4% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Other 1.8%.
- Approximately 69% of TSD workforce is female and 31% is male.
- Approximately 63% of TSD employees are deaf or hard of hearing, 37% are hearing.
- Employees over the age of 40 comprise roughly 63% of the staff.
- Approximately 38% of TSD's workforce has worked at TSD for fewer than five years and 15% for at least twenty years.

### Staffing Strengths and Weaknesses

#### Highly Competent Staff

TSD has worked hard to hire and maintain a talented staff dedicated to the School's mission. TSD employees not only have to be competent in their assigned areas, but must also be skilled in sign language in order to meet the needs of our students. The most recent results from the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) yielded an overall score of 369, one point higher than the top of the range for state agencies. 75% of our employees responded to the survey indicating that employees have a high investment in the organization and high expectations that TSD will act on the survey results. Our three highest scores were for 1) strategic planning 2) workgroup satisfaction and 3) employee engagement. Our lowest scores were for 1) pay, and 2) benefits and 3) Only the issue of pay was statistically significant enough to warrant attention.

### DISTRICT EMPLOYEES BREAKDOWN



## Highly Qualified Teachers

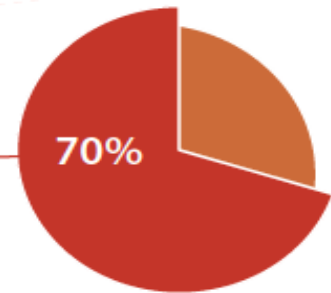
Hiring teachers and professionals who meet the state’s certification and licensure requirements is another challenge. Deaf education teacher training programs often do not provide the endorsements in content and subject areas required to perform well on the state’s teacher certification testing. Our state regulations on reciprocity are also not very accommodating which creates hardships for out-of-state teachers hired to work at TSD. Because our teacher and professional contract salaries are tied to the Austin ISD salary schedule, they are not competitive enough to attract the national pool of candidates we wish to recruit. Since our last accreditation visit, we have implemented a new compensation program called Professional Pathways for Teachers (PPFT). PPFT determines salaries with a combined formula of years of experience, evaluation points, professional development and leadership badges/pathways. It has allowed us to offer additional compensation for teachers.

Our staff is by far our greatest resource. Students are fortunate to have inspired, creative, and talented teachers - many of whom optimize technology, create hands-on, collaborative project-based learning experiences, adapt and accommodate for diverse learners, and set the bar high for academic rigor. Students also benefit from many devoted residential educators who make sure that students get a well-rounded education focused on a rich array of extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities.

TSD students are also fortunate to have an abundance of deaf role models with the highest percentages of deaf staff in Student Life and Academic Affairs.

Teachers	
Total Certified Staff .....	110
Average Years of Teaching Experience .....	10
Average Experience with TSD (Years).....	7.7
Beginning Teacher Salary .....	\$51,000

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WITH A MASTER’S DEGREE



## Bilingual Education

As a bilingual school, TSD strives to maintain a fully language-accessible environment at all times. It is our belief that all students benefit from early language acquisition in English and American Sign Language. TSD believes that there are significant cognitive advantages for deaf children in a classroom where the teacher values ASL to ensure comprehensible input. This, in turn, supports the acquisition of English, in its printed form as well as spoken English where appropriate.

We were pioneers in ASL/English bilingual education as one of the original member schools of the Star Schools project, later called the AEBPD, ASL/English Bilingual Professional Development program. At one time almost 90% of our faculty was trained in AEBPD. About five years ago TSD decided to shift its focus from AEBPD to a Professional Learning Community in collaboration with Boston University focused on Bilingual Language Arts (BLA). We have implemented the BLA program in Elementary and have plans to expand into the secondary grades.

This year as part of Strategic Planning and Self-Study for Accreditation, we made a commitment to create a stronger focus on early language acquisition and learning. Our Strategic Goal Team (SGT) on Early Language Acquisition is committed to working with Early Childhood Providers statewide in an effort to improve language outcomes for all DHH students in the state.

This past school year our state began to collect data on the language acquisition of DHH students ages 0-8 as part of the Texas version of LEAD-K called HB 548. There were many lessons learned from this first year, most notably that the menu of language assessment tools is far too varied to result in any strong data. It is more than likely that the state advisory committee will reconvene to address this problem as we move forward into year 2.

Another focus area for our Strategic Goal Team on early language acquisition and learning is to implement more second language learning approaches with our older students who arrive to TSD in later years and lack the foundation for language. Unfortunately, many of these students have experienced some degree of language deprivation during their lives and often have delayed language skills in English. Around 25% of deaf children in the United States are multilingual, and many have a home language other than English. An estimated 50% of deaf individuals have an additional disability. Additional disabilities also often have an impact on language development. English is the primary language of instruction in the United States, so deaf students may benefit from services and support that focus on English language development.

## Change in the Continuum of Services

While previously identified as a separate department during the last accreditation visit known as Special Needs, all students, regardless of individual learning needs, are now identified by their grade level, and the department leadership has become more focused on the curriculum accommodations and specialized interventions that are needed. During the 2019-2020 school year, the term, "Special Needs" was renamed to "Applied Studies". Each individual student is assessed and placed in appropriately challenging curriculum courses based on their academic needs. This provides the opportunity for both mainstreaming of students into more academically-challenging courses, as well as reverse mainstreaming of students into applied courses when more functional skills need to be taught or more academic support is needed.

Applied studies is a unique program that works in close collaboration with any student from Early Childhood to High School to provide more intensive academic, behavioral and social emotional support. Quite often these are students who have specialized learning needs associated with language deprivation, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders, deaf-blindness and other disabilities. These students typically greater levels of instructional intervention, focus on developmental skills, structure, self-determination, modification, and adaptation experience courses that target the specific needs of the individual student. Teachers apply state standards aligned instruction and alternate standards with modification at levels that are challenging and meaningful across all content areas.

Initial implementation of this program had both a variety of challenges and successes. We continue to address the special needs of students in age-appropriate grades and departments.

## Profile of the Students

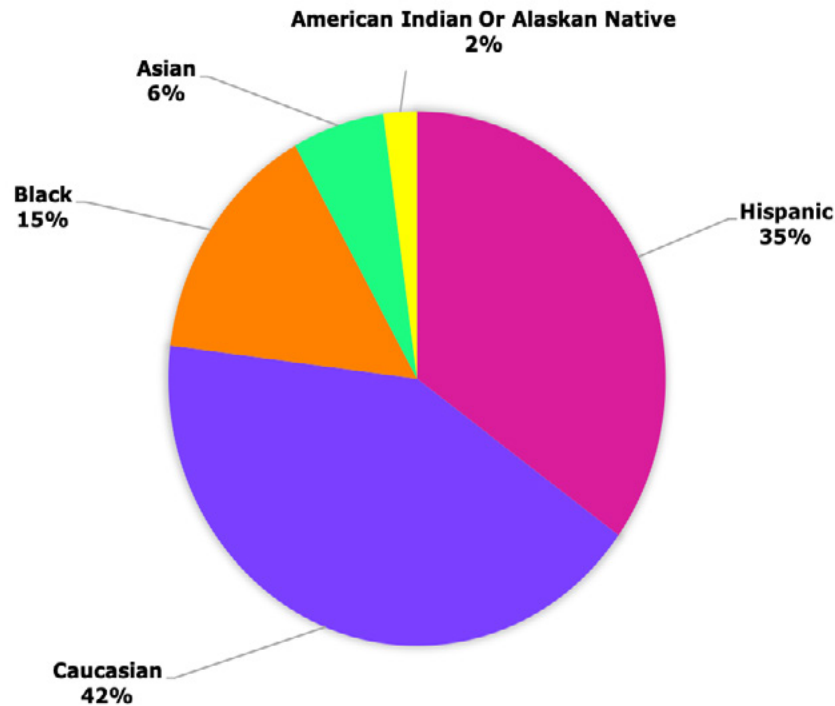
### Student Enrollment

TSD served 552 students in on-campus programs last school year and an additional 482 students in summer and short-term programs, for a total of 1,034 students served. Our largest enrollment increase occurred between the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 school years when we increased by 40 students. For the past three years our enrollment has been pretty stable fluctuating by only 4-5 students in on-campus programs and 10-20 in summer and short-term programs, typically influenced by whether or not we offer Gallaudet sports camps in addition to our traditional summer and short-term offerings. It should be noted, however, that recent enrollment studies done as part of master planning predict enrollment to continue to increase to 700 students by 2025. With the rising cost of living in Austin we do not anticipate seeing that projection come to fruition.

Student Enrollment in Regular School Year and Short Term Programs					
REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Parent Infant	23	21	22	22	20
Pre-School	22	26		24	14
Pre-Kindergarten	18	18	11	26	18
K-5 Elementary	110	118	140	142	143
Special Needs	57	72	75		
Middle School	96	101	84	96	95
High School	192	201	185	225	204
ACCESS	44	44	40	62	58
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>552</b>
<i>Residential Enrollment</i>	214	247	226	223	220
SUMMER PROGRAMS	2016-2017	2017 - 2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Extended Year Services Program	16	29	62	106	83
Summer Camps and Programs		67	69	0	44
Summer Camps and Programs Non-TSD		53	82	4	68
Early Childhood Education		16	9	6	6
Parent Infant Program	10	14	15	15	16
Accelerated Instruction	17	7	27	0	33
Other Short-Term Programs	162	180	248	843	232
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>482</b>
<b>TOTAL SERVED</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>1034</b>

### TSD Student Ethnicity

TSD's student ethnicity mirrors that of the state. 58% are from ethnic minority groups as shown in the percent distributions in the chart below

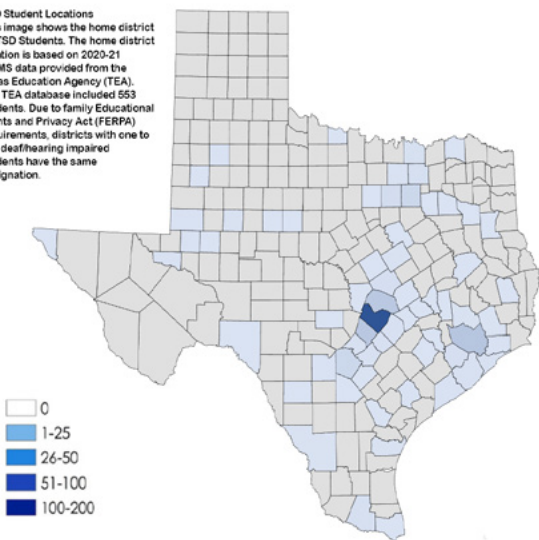


### Deaf Students in Texas

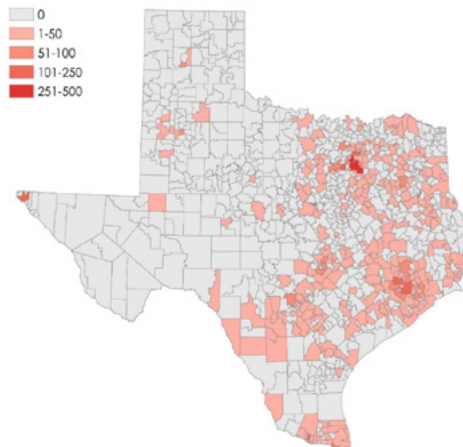
There are approximately 7,000 students in Texas with hearing loss. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) estimates that about 4,000 of these students are receiving services from Regional programs in a variety of instructional settings. TSD's on-site population of 552 (based on 2020-2021 database from the TEA) is about 8% of the 7,000. In many instances, TSD is serving students whose needs cannot be met in the local school districts. An exception to this is the large number of families who relocate to Austin from within Texas or outside the state to allow their students to attend TSD.

The maps below provide a snapshot of the home districts of both TSD and non-TSD students.

**TSD Student Locations**  
 This image shows the home district of TSD Students. The home district location is based on 2020-21 PEIMS data provided from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The TEA database included 553 students. Due to family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements, districts with one to five deaf/hearing impaired students have the same designation.

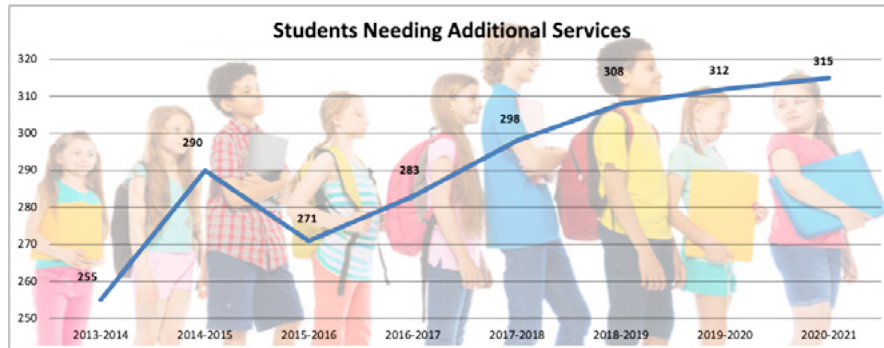


**Non-TSD Deaf & Hearing Impaired Student Locations**  
 The image below shows the home district of students designated deaf or hearing impaired in the Texas Education Agency (TEA) 2015-16 PEIMS database. Due to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements, districts with one to five deaf/hearing impaired students have the same designation. The TEA database includes more than 7,000 deaf/hearing impaired students



## TSD's student population is influenced by several trends

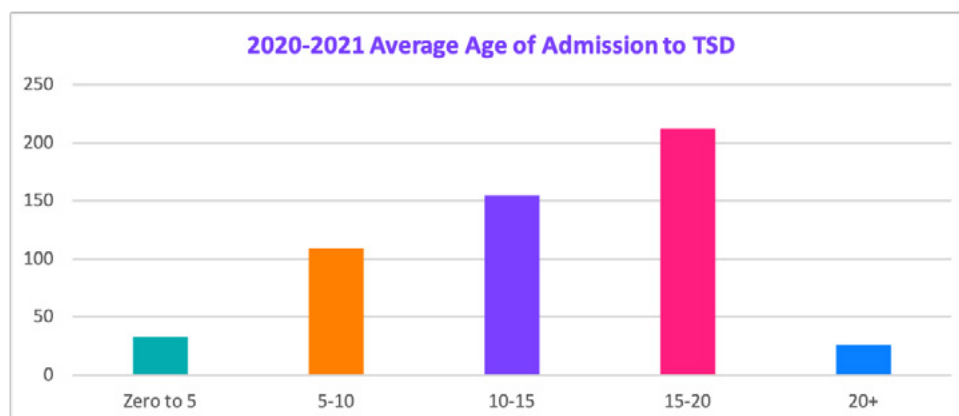
**Trend 1:** We are experiencing an increase in referral of students with complex medical, behavioral and educational needs. The impact of these high-needs students on the budget is exponential, and we find ourselves struggling with limited resources and funding to provide the related and support services necessary for these students to access the general curriculum and receive a quality education. We must continue to identify additional support if we are to meet the needs of this growing population.



**Trend 2:** Many families are relocating to Austin so their children can attend TSD. The families who move for this purpose tend to be very involved in their children's education, and for the most part, if these children have had early and appropriate intervention, they are making typical academic progress. However, we face different kinds of challenges as these students add to our day student population. Ten years ago, 70% of our students were residential and 30% were day students. Now, day students outnumber our residential students 60% to 40%. Not only do we find ourselves needing more vehicles but the need for additional drivers and bus monitors is also increasing. Growing numbers of day students also present challenges for after-school athletics and other extracurricular programs. Often these students have difficulty experiencing the total program offerings that TSD provides due to transportation limitations. As a result, we continue to seek vehicle replacements every biennium. In the past several years, we have restructured and expanded our afterschool programs to include day students.

**Trend 3:** Fewer and fewer students who come to TSD have experienced educational settings in which they have a critical mass of other deaf learners, a trained teacher of the deaf, quality communication access or an environment where they have full participation. This significant trend of students in placements away from deaf education services has contributed to the problems associated with Trend 4.

**Trend 4:** In 2011 the average age of admission to TSD was 14-16 and in 2016 this had shifted downward to an average admission age of 13.2 (we are hopeful that some of our outreach support has influenced this small but positive shift). Though we consider this lower age for admission a positive, it is still late. Additionally, masked by this averaged number are those young adults who are entering TSD through self-referral to our high school or transition programs. Students arriving as teens or young adults typically have had a history of unsuccessful placements in public schools and are seeking a peer group with communication access. Having been previously denied an appropriate level of language and communication access, students who enter in Middle and High School years tend to have significant linguistic and academic delays though they may make excellent progress in social, emotional, and cultural domains.



## Student Achievement Profile

### Texas High Stakes State Assessment

All students in grades 3 – 8 and High School participate in the state assessment program known as STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness). The STAAR assessments measure students' understanding of grade level content area standards known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students in high school take STAAR End of Course (EOC) state assessments.

Since the inception of STAAR during the 2011–2012 school year, the program has undergone many changes, including six different testing versions. STAAR versions administered here at Texas School for the Deaf during the last decade include: STAAR, STAAR-Modified, STAAR-Accommodated, STAAR-Alternate, and STAAR-Alternate 2. Starting with spring 2017 test administrations, only two versions of STAAR were made available: STAAR (for students receiving instruction in the general or modified curriculum) and STAAR-Alternate 2 (for students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving instruction under a significantly modified or alternate curriculum.) TSD students are required to participate in the state assessment at their enrolled grade level and for specific content areas.

### ARD (IEP) Committee Decides

The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee, typically referred to as the IEP Committee in other states, determines which assessment each student will take, depending on whether the student receives instruction in the general, modified, significantly modified or alternate curriculum for each tested content area, as well as other specific criteria set by the state.

## A Two-Year Comparison of State and End of Course Assessments

Below are the two-year comparative data for TSD students participating in STAAR and STAAR Alt. 2 for grades 3 – 8 and EOC Assessments. These data for 2018 – 2019 include two additional Reading and Mathematics retesting opportunities for students in grades 5 and 8, in accordance with the state's Student Success Initiative (SSI). Due to COVID, The Texas Education Agency (TEA) canceled STAAR in 2019-2020, and waived SSI retests for Reading and Mathematics in grades 5 and 8 for 2020 – 2021.

GRADE	2018– 2019 Reading/ELA STAAR	2018 – 2019 Mathematics STAAR	2020 – 2021 Reading/ELA STAAR	2020 – 2021 Mathematics STAAR
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	25%	40%	21%	8%
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	14%	11%	5%	0%
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11%	16%	17%	22%
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	17%	52%	33%	36%
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	20%	41%	11%	21%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	32%	63%	32%	32%
GRADE	2018– 2019 Reading/ELA STAAR Alt. 2	2018 – 2019 Mathematics STAAR Alt. 2	2020 – 2021 Reading/ELA STAAR Alt. 2	2020 – 2021 Mathematics STAAR Alt. 2
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	100%	100%	50%	100%
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	100%	100%	NA	NA
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	100%	100%	100%	100%
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	100%	100%	100%	100%
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	83%	100%	NA	NA
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	100%	100%	100%	100%
End of Course High School	2018– 2019 English I STAAR	2018– 2019 Algebra I STAAR	2020 – 2021 English I STAAR	2020 – 2021 Algebra I STAAR
% of Students who Passed	9%	41%	9%	25%
End of Course High School	2018– 2019 English I STAAR Alt. 2	2018– 2019 Algebra I STAAR Alt. 2	2020 – 2021 English I STAAR Alt. 2	2020 – 2021 Algebra I STAAR Alt. 2
% of Students who Passed	100%	100%	100%	100%
End of Course High School	2018– 2019 English II STAAR		2020 – 2021 English II STAAR	
% of Students who Passed	11%		7%	
End of Course High School	2018– 2019 English II STAAR Alt. 2		2020 – 2021 English II STAAR Alt. 2	
% of Students who Passed	86%		100%	

Reading/ELA		Mathematics	
Overall percentage of TSD students who passed (gr. 3 – 12)		Overall percentage of TSD students who passed (gr. 3 – 12)	
2018– 2019	2020 – 2021	2018– 2019	2020 – 2021
STAAR & STAAR Alt. 2 26%	STAAR & STAAR Alt. 2 18%	STAAR & STAAR Alt. 2 51%	STAAR & STAAR Alt. 2 27%

## Accountability Ratings for TSD

Accountability ratings for most Texas public schools are based on a performance index framework that combines results from STAAR assessments, graduation rates, rates of students completing the various graduation plans, and other indicators.

TSD's accountability is assessed via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Our MOU is based on a set of performance indicators using the NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessment. All students in grades 3-12, are tested using the MAP in Reading and Mathematics, with the exception of those students with significant cognitive disabilities. According to the MOU with TEA, this group is evaluated on mastery of individual student IEP objectives, as documented in their report cards, for both of these content areas, as well. We also report attendance as our non-academic indicator for all students.

We evaluate the performance of the group taking MAP by comparing projected growth scores set by NWEA after fall testing with actual observed growth scores in Reading and Mathematics after spring testing. Due to COVID-19 and logistical testing challenges associated with large numbers of students participating through off-campus virtual learning last fall, our MOU student performance results for 2020 – 2021 are based on winter to spring testing events. Projected growth scores for each academic school year are set, by in large, for students without disabilities. Department administrators set department indicators (goals) for each school year based on their projections of how many students they anticipate will meet their projected growth. Regarding normative growth, NWEA states that:

*“Since each student’s growth goal is the mean (or average) normative growth, in a very general sense, one could reasonably expect that about 50% of students meet their growth goals.”*

MAP was not developed specifically for students who meet eligibilities for Special Education nor specifically for deaf students, however we at TSD glean a great deal of valuable student data, based on the state standards (TEKS), which guides daily instruction. Because MAP assesses students on their functioning levels, TSD does not allow for sign accommodations for students taking MAP.

## 2020 - 2021 Memorandum of Understanding

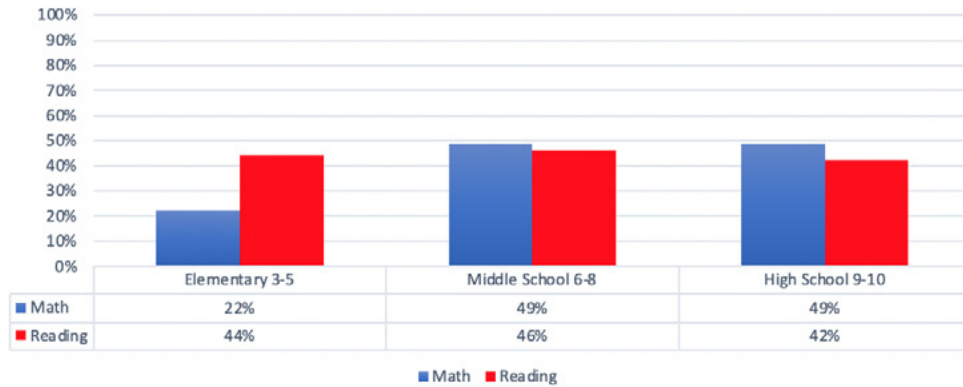
Department	Projected Indicators	Achieved Indicators
Elementary School	25%	35%
Middle School	30%	52%
High School	30%	51%

The above chart reflects student performance in both Reading and Math according to the criteria established in our Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas Education Agency. All student population groups are combined within each department.

The graphs below show the percentage of mastery in each department by Projected Growth (MAP) and Report Card Averages (based on IEP mastery) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.



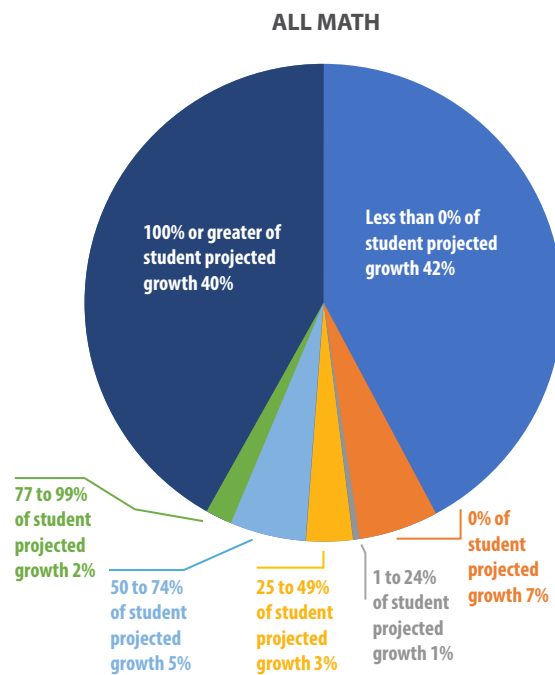
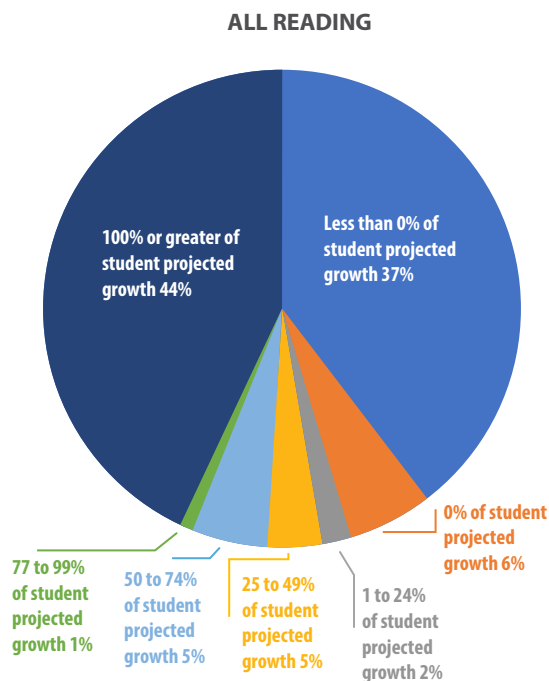
### % of Students Meeting Projected Growth by Department 2020-2021



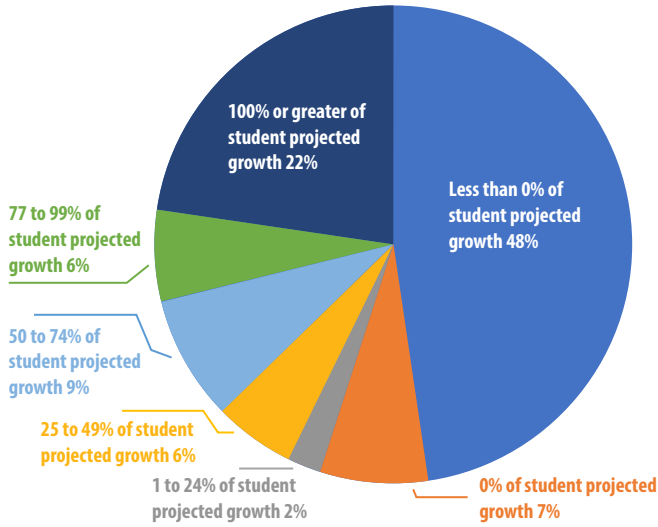
Typically, TSD MOU Indicators are based in part on the percentage of students who attain their MAP projected growth RIT scores from fall to spring. Due to COVID-19, the projected RIT scores this year are based on winter to spring data. In order to provide another way to look at student growth data, we developed the charts on the next page to show student projected MAP growth by percentages.

#### Students Attained:

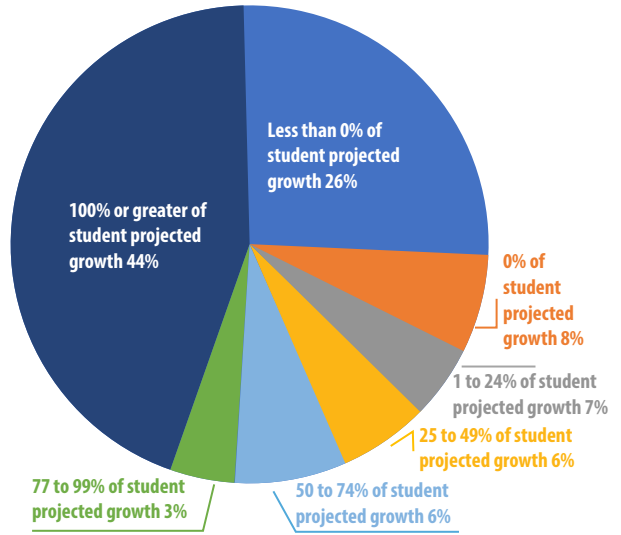
< 0% of student projected growth	50 - 74% of student projected growth RIT
0% of student projected growth	75 - 99% of student projected growth RIT
1 - 24% of student projected growth RIT	100% or > of student projected growth RIT
25 - 49% of student projected growth RIT	



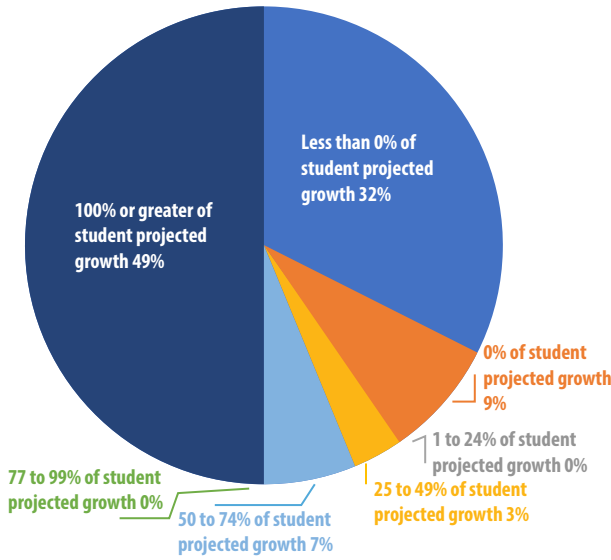
**ELEMENTARY 3-5 MATH 20-21**



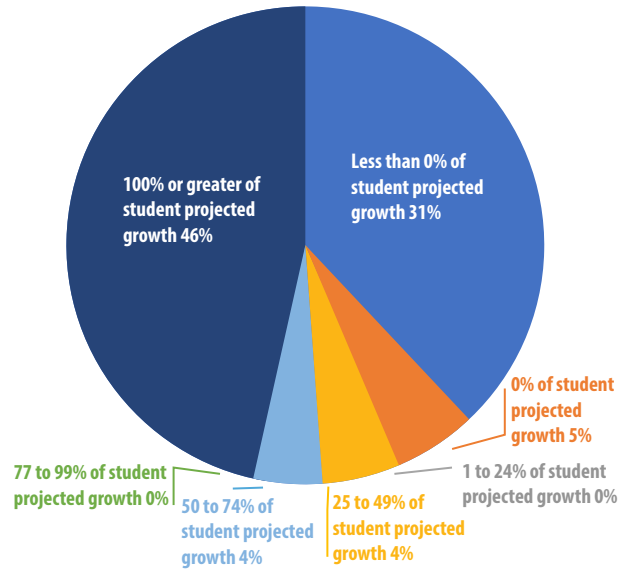
**ELEMENTARY 3-5 READING 20-21**



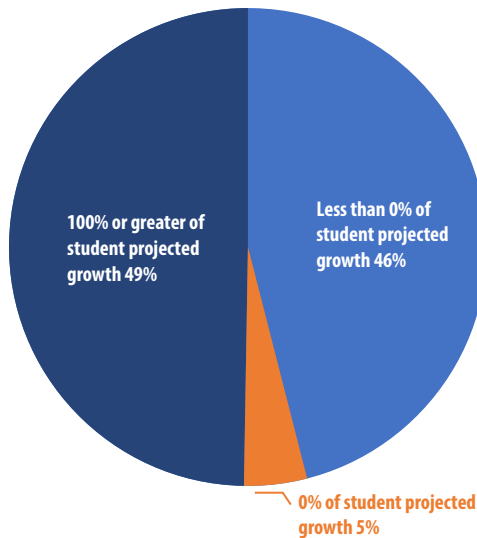
**MIDDLE SCHOOL 6-8 MATH 20-21**



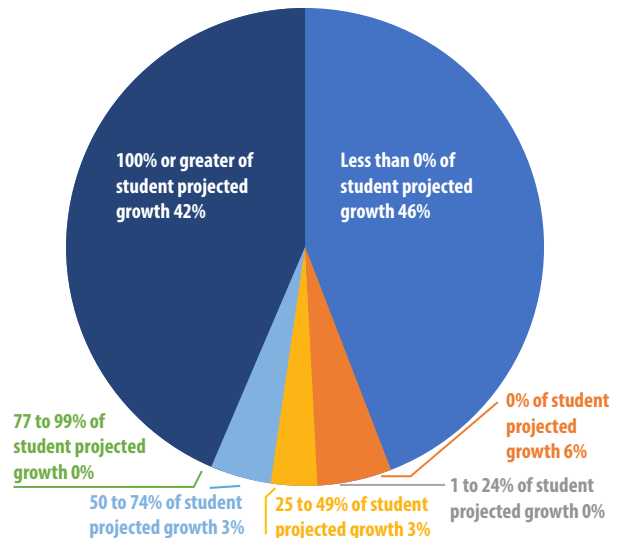
**MIDDLE SCHOOL 6-8 READING 20-21**



**HIGH SCHOOL 9-10 MATH 20-21**

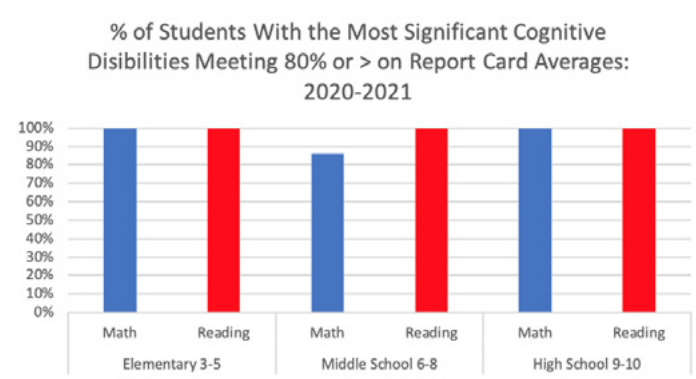


**HIGH SCHOOL 9-10 READING 20-21**



## State Agency Performance Measures

TSD, as a state agency, also reports progress on performance measures quarterly to the Legislative Budget Board (LBB). Definitions of these measures can be found in the appendix of our Agency Strategic Plan in our Evidence Room. Of the various measures we report, several are based on academic achievement. For this report to the LBB, TSD reported state assessment results (STAAR), percent of graduates accepted into post-secondary education, percent of students passing courses in academic, work and life skill areas, and graduation rates.



TSD Legislative Academic Performance Measures	FY 2021
Percent of all statewide assessments where statewide passing standard is met or exceeded.	23%
Percent of academic courses in which students obtain a passing course grade	76%
Percent of graduates accepted in post-secondary education	36%
Percent of career and work courses in which students obtain a passing course grade	92%
Percent of life skills courses in which students obtain a passing course grade	91%

## Difficult Comparisons

As stated previously, in addition to COVID-19 and the canceling of statewide testing for the 2019 – 2020 school year, and SSI retests for Reading and Mathematics for students in grades 5 and 8, the STAAR assessment has undergone several changes in the past several years through phasing in new testing versions and phasing out others. In many cases, this has made comparing STAAR growth between assessments and assessment years a challenge.

In addition, TSD changed the academic assessment tool from the SAT 10, with deaf norms available through Gallaudet, to the NWEA MAP which does not provide deaf norms. Although both the SAT 10 and the MAP are both normed assessments, the SAT 10 provided percentiles and the MAP provides RIT scores. The RIT score represents a student's achievement level after testing, and helps measure student academic growth over time.

It should be noted that while STAAR results provide individual student "proficiency" data in conjunction with grade level TEKS, projected MAP growth scores and actual attained MAP growth are considered "growth" data.

## Mission/Vision/ Belief Statements

Our Mission, Vision and Beliefs were reviewed and revised in February of 2020 after a campus and community wide survey and meeting of our School Community Planning Team. A detailed explanation of that process can be found in Standard One.

### Our Mission

*Texas School for the Deaf ensures students learn, grow and belong in a language-rich environment that maximizes each individual's potential to become successful life-long learners while supporting students, families, and professionals through statewide outreach services.*

### Our Vision

*Texas School for the Deaf aspires to be a premier leader in bilingual (ASL/English) education that challenges each student to reach their full potential.*

### Our Beliefs

- Education is a partnership between students, family, school, and community.
- Early language acquisition is critical to a deaf child's social, emotional, and cognitive development.
- The development of the whole person socially, physically, intellectually, culturally, and emotionally is imperative to a positive identity, self-worth, and lifelong success.
- American Sign Language and English are woven into the fabric of TSD life building healthy Deaf identities and positive self-worth.
- An interdisciplinary curriculum that integrates technology in academically engaging learning environments prepares students to become critical thinkers, collaborators, and decision-makers.
- Outreach Services provide resources and support to the state's deaf and hard of hearing students, their families, and the professionals that serve them.
- Showing students, families, and staff dignity and respect in an inclusive community that values diverse abilities, needs, and interests is crucial to creating a healthy, safe, and welcoming environment.

## Analysis of Stakeholder Surveys

TSD utilized the following surveys for purposes of gathering stakeholder input for Strategic Planning and Accreditation:

Survey Name	Number of Responses
UT School of Social Work: Survey of Employee Engagement	363
CEASD Standards Survey	980
Statewide Outreach Community Survey	290
TSD Mission, Vision and Beliefs Survey	109
Ohio State: Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys	
Elementary Students	115
Middle and High School Students	278
Teacher and Staff	98
Parent and Caregiver	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,341</b>

### Summary:

The UT Survey of Employee Engagement asks 48 questions across 12 constructs. The constructs are: Workgroup, Strategic, Supervision, Workplace, Community, Information Systems, Pay, Benefits, Employee Development, Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement.

Our response rate was 74.5%. Scores are rated from 200 to 500. Scores above 350 are desirable. Scores below 300 should be cause for concern. Our overall score was 376 with the following Construct Scores:



Even though we had only one construct of concern, we decided to look at our top 3 and our bottom three for purposes of strategic planning.

Strategic, Workplace and Supervision were our top scores. Our lowest scores were Pay, Benefits and Job Satisfaction. Definitions of these constructs may be helpful for interpretation.



We find this survey to be one of the most useful for planning. The results here you will see directly translated into action plans in Strategic Goal Team 4: Employee Engagement.

In the Fall of 2019 stakeholders of the TSD completed CAYCI-School Experience Surveys (SES). Included in these responses were 88 elementary school students, 265 middle and high school students, and 73 Teachers and Staff and 108 Parents. We selected the CAYCI surveys for the first time in this accreditation renewal cycle. Though they appeared to be very relevant and applicable to our school, the matrices for interpretation of the surveys were very complicated.

The full notebook of data will be available in the Evidence Room. We have selected summary pages from the report that we think will give you a snapshot. All questions in the surveys were rated from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

## Community Surveys

Our **Statewide Outreach Center** conducted a **survey** to determine how the state stakeholders viewed our services.

Our strong areas in the scoring were:

1. TSD provides a variety of opportunities for students to learn, grow and belong.
2. At TSD students have access to a variety of resources.
3. Our school grounds are clean and well maintained.
4. Stakeholders are satisfied with TSD outreach services and believe our mission reflects our outreach role.
5. The most recognized and positively rated outreach program was CSW (Communication Skills Workshops)
6. TSD provides communication access by providing interpreters and translators for activities that are open to the public.
7. The highest rated awareness of family outreach programs was Family Weekend Retreat and Communication Skills Workshops with the lowest 0-3 Statewide Services.

Our areas of rated satisfactory or needs improvement were:

1. Community awareness that TSD facilities are available to host meetings, gatherings and events.
2. The local media does not highlight current events at TSD.
3. Community members are not invited to be volunteers in school programs/events
4. Many schools sponsored events are not open to members of the community.
5. Stakeholders were least knowledgeable about 0-3 outreach and technical assistance.

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Statewide\\_Community\\_Survey\\_Results.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Statewide_Community_Survey_Results.pdf)

## CEASD Standards Surveys:

In the Fall of 2019 CEASD Standard Surveys were assigned to Focus Groups of varied stakeholders for review. Since we had a one-year hiatus with COVID-19 we revisited these Standard Surveys in May/June of 2021. You will note in the section of the Self-Study on the Standards that the updated information is noted in red. (We did not re-calculate our numeric scores.) This analysis was used for our Strategic Planning in February of 2020 and only addressed areas for improvement. The Standards Summaries in the next chapter have more in-depth information including strengths and areas for improvement.

### Standard 1: Philosophy/Mission

- Translation of Mission, Vision and Beliefs in Spanish
- More "student" focused Mission

### Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

- Succession Planning needs to be addressed
- Help staff understand better understand the Board's role

### Standard 3: School Improvement Planning, Outreach and Viability

- Increase staff representation in SCPT and SGT's
- Increase community representation on DAC and SHAC
- Determine how TSD will address the impact of the new legislation (0-3 services)
- Better represent outreach to the legislature

### Standard 4: Finances

- More stakeholder involvement in the Budget process
- White paper or something similar on concept of “self-insured”
- More promotion of ASL in Business Services

### Standard 5: Facilities

- More flex storage spaces on campus
- Improve parking
- Improve air quality in buildings

### Standard 6: School Climate and Organization

- More cross department and division collaboration
- More “status” for dorm staff
- Mental Health and emotional safety focus
- Workforce Diversity priorities
- Pay Issues

### Standard 7: Health and Safety

- Card Access for buildings and “buzz in” capabilities
- No outside alerts in large public and athletic areas
- More support and training for students on sexting, cyberbullying, personal safety and the law
- Badges/ID's for students
- Improved communication between Health Center and rest of school

### Standard 8: Educational Program and Student Performance

- Include families more in the learning experience at TSD
- Review our tiered language support for students
- Plan for the merge of PIP and ECE in the new building
- Continue to ensure the continuum of services meets the needs of students and families

### Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning

- Need to examine how we are addressing language deprivation issues in both ASL and English
- Is our student achievement data changing both what and how we teach?
- Do our resource allocations (people) match our caseload of students and their various needs?

### Standard 10: Student Services

- Recruiting and retain licensed support professionals
- Food portions and healthy food options needed in the cafeteria
- Improve procedures on how we are utilizing interpreters
- Parental engagement is limited
- Understanding admission criteria in larger community
- Centralizing and archiving data



### Standard 11: Student Life, Student Activities, and Residential Living

- Improved supervision of students with additional needs
- Dorm/school communication needs to improve
- More recognition and appreciation for Residential staff

### Standard 12: Learning Resources and Information Technology

- Continue cybersecurity implementation
- Expand library role in technology integration and curriculum support
- Continue online resource expansion

## Community and Youth Collaborative Institute (CAYCI) School Experience Surveys (Elementary and Secondary Students, Parents and Caregivers and Teachers and Staff.

Elementary School Student CAYCI-SES Constructs	
The degree to which students...	
<b>Academic Learning Pathway</b>	
Academic Motivation	...Are interested and engaged in school.
Academic Press	... Experience a school-wide emphasis on high expectations and academic success.
Support for Learning	... Perceive that they can get help from their family and teachers/school staff when needed.
<b>Youth Development &amp; School Climate Pathway</b>	
Activities	... Report participating in school and community activities.
Diversity	... Perceive that their school community accepts and supports students from different backgrounds and experiences.
Family/Community Connections	... Feel a sense of belonging and support from their families and communities.
Parental Involvement	... Feel that their parents/caregivers are involved in their learning and school.
Peer Relationships	... Have positive relationships with their peers.
Safety	... Feel that they are safe at school and in their community.
School Connectedness	... Enjoy and feel like they belong to the school.
Social Skills	... Demonstrate effective social and life skills as they engage in pro-social interactions with others.
<b>Health &amp; Social Services Pathway</b>	
Externalizing Behaviors	... Report behaviors that are directed outward toward the external environment, such as poor attention or impulsivity.
Internalizing Behaviors	... Report negative feelings/behaviors that are directed inward towards themselves.

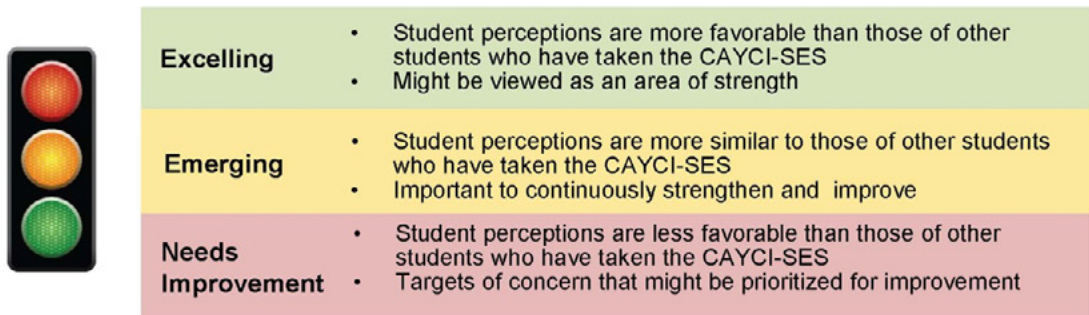
School Year: 2019-2020

## Results at a Glance

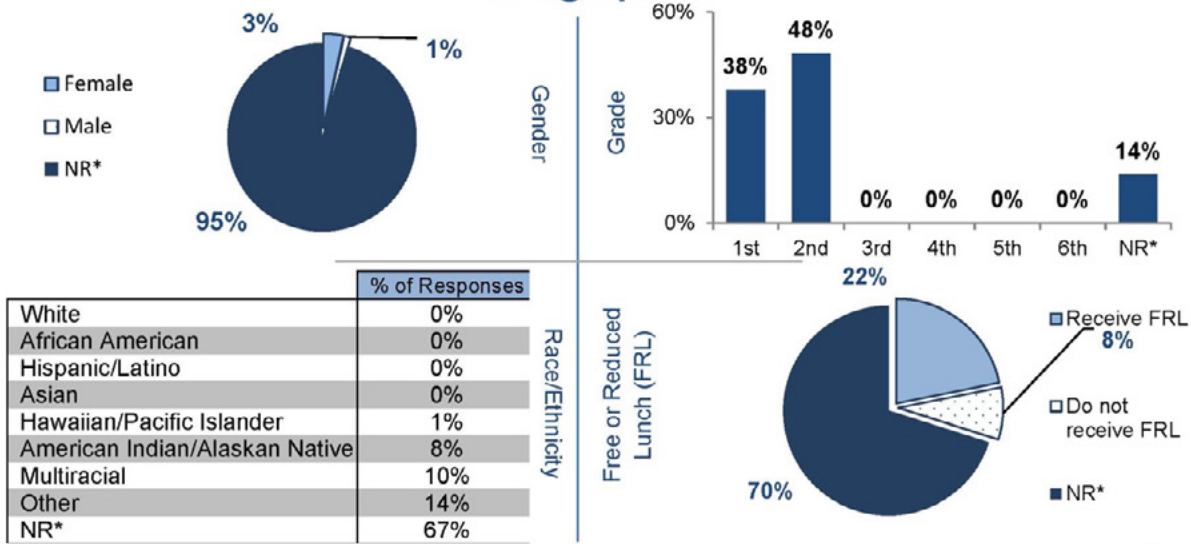
In Fall 2019, 87 students at Texas School for the Deaf completed the Community & Youth Collaborative Institute's School Experience Survey (CAYCI-SES). The results are designed to complement and inform your school and/or community improvement planning efforts. By understanding the perceptions of students and your school and by integrating this information with other local data, you will be able to identify gaps and prioritize steps towards student success.

The graphs in this section depict the perceptions of the students in your district. Response options on the student survey ranged from 1 (NO!) to 4 (YES!). For each survey scale (e.g., academic press, safety, etc.), the average of all individual student responses was calculated to determine your school's overall score.

Averages closer to 4 (YES!) represent areas in which student perceptions were favorable. Low averages suggest areas that may need focused attention. To assist you in interpreting your school scores, student perceptions in your district have been compared to those of all other students who have completed the CAYCI-SES survey. The color of the bar graph is intended to visually depict these comparisons, using the guidelines shown in the figure below.<sup>1</sup>

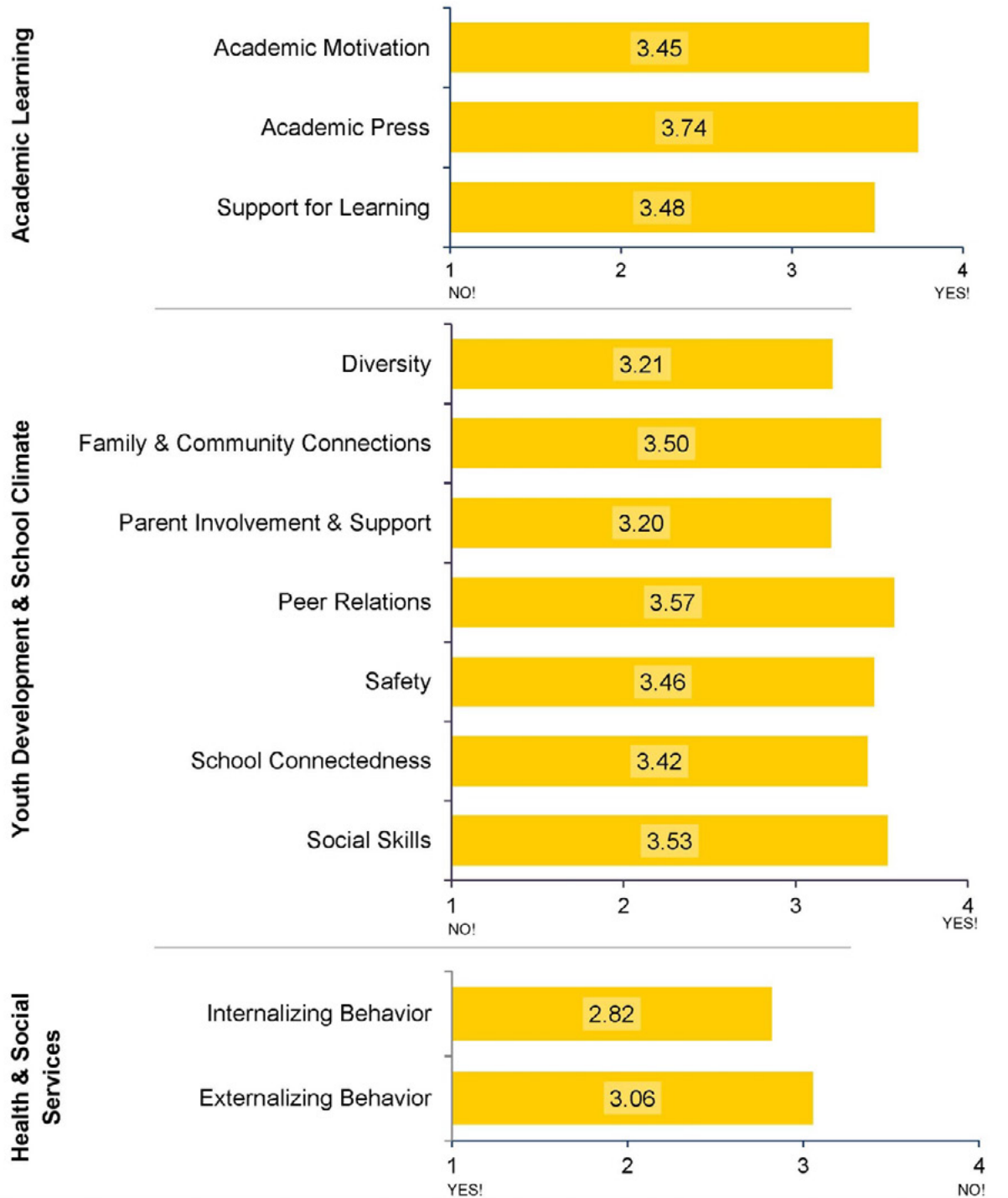


### Demographics



<sup>1</sup> Excelling indicates areas are at least one half standard deviation (SD) above the CAYCI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within 1/2 SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement designates areas in which perceptions were 1/2 SD or more below the norm. \*NR = No Response

## Elementary Student Perceptions at Texas School for the Deaf



■ Excelling     
 ■ Emerging     
 ■ Needs Improvement

Excelling areas are at least ½ standard deviation (SD) above the CAYCI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within ½ SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement areas are at least ½ SD below the norm. Please note that because each scale is normed individually, the same average may receive different designations in different areas.

<b>Middle/High School Student CAYCI-SES Constructs</b>	
The degree to which students...	
<b>Academic Learning Pathway</b>	
Academic Motivation	...Are interested and engaged in school.
Academic Press	...Experience a school-wide emphasis on high expectations and academic success.
Career and College Readiness	...Feel prepared for college and future careers and supported by their school in reaching aspirations.
Support for Learning	...Perceive that they can get help from their family and teachers/school staff when needed.
<b>Youth Development &amp; School Climate Pathway</b>	
Activities	...Report participating in school and community activities.
Diversity	...Perceive that their school community accepts and supports students from different backgrounds and experiences.
Family/Community Connections	...Feel a sense of belonging and support from their families and communities.
Parental Involvement	...Feel that their parents/caregivers are involved in their learning and school.
Peer Relationships	...Have positive relationships with their peers.
Physical Activity	...Report engaging in the recommended level of physical activity.
Safety	...Feel that they are safe at school and in their community.
School Connectedness	...Enjoy and feel like they belong to the school.
Social Skills	...Demonstrate effective social and life skills as they engage in pro-social interactions with others.
<b>Health &amp; Social Services Pathway</b>	
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use	...Report using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
Externalizing Behaviors	...Report behaviors that are directed outward toward the external environment, such as poor attention or impulsivity.
Internalizing Behaviors	...Report negative feelings/behaviors that are directed inward towards themselves.

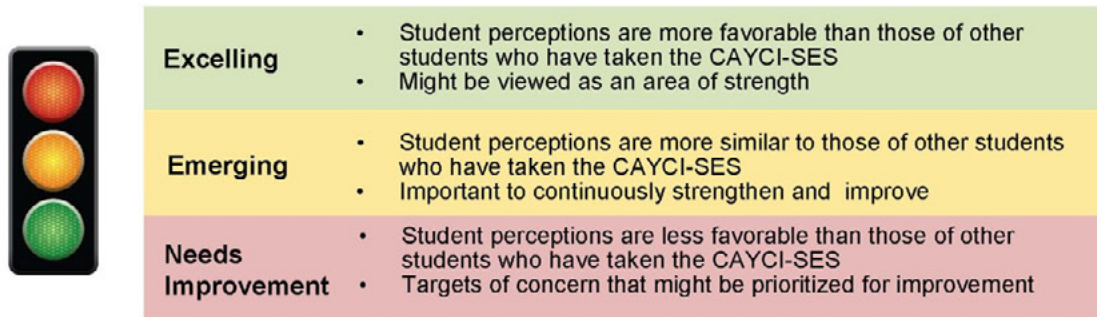
School Year: 2019-2020

## Results at a Glance

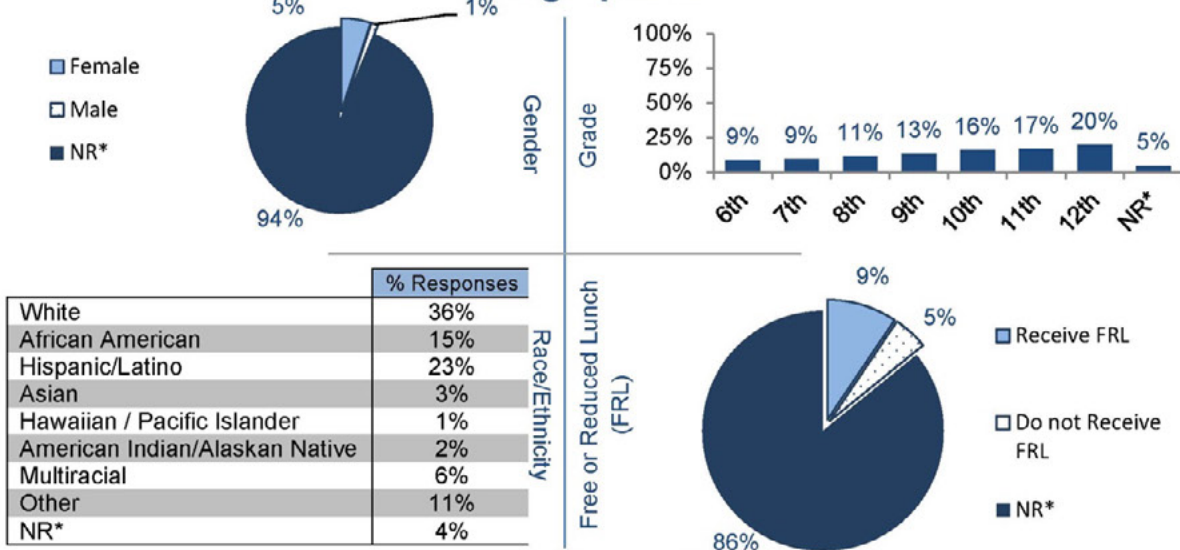
In Fall 2019, 255 students at Texas School for the Deaf completed the Community & Youth Collaborative Institute’s School Experience Survey (CAYCI-SES). The results are designed to complement and inform your school and/or community improvement planning efforts. By understanding the perceptions of students and by integrating this information with other local data, you will be able to identify gaps and prioritize steps towards student success.

The graphs in this section depict the perceptions of the students at your school. Response options on the student survey ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For each survey scale (e.g., academic motivation, etc.), the average of all individual student responses was calculated to determine your school’s overall score.

Averages closer to 5 (Strongly Agree) represent areas in which student perceptions were favorable. Low averages suggest areas that may need focused attention. To assist you in interpreting your school scores, student perceptions at your school have been compared to those of all others who have completed the CAYCI-SES. The color of the bar graph is intended to depict these comparisons, using the guidelines shown in the figure below.<sup>1</sup>

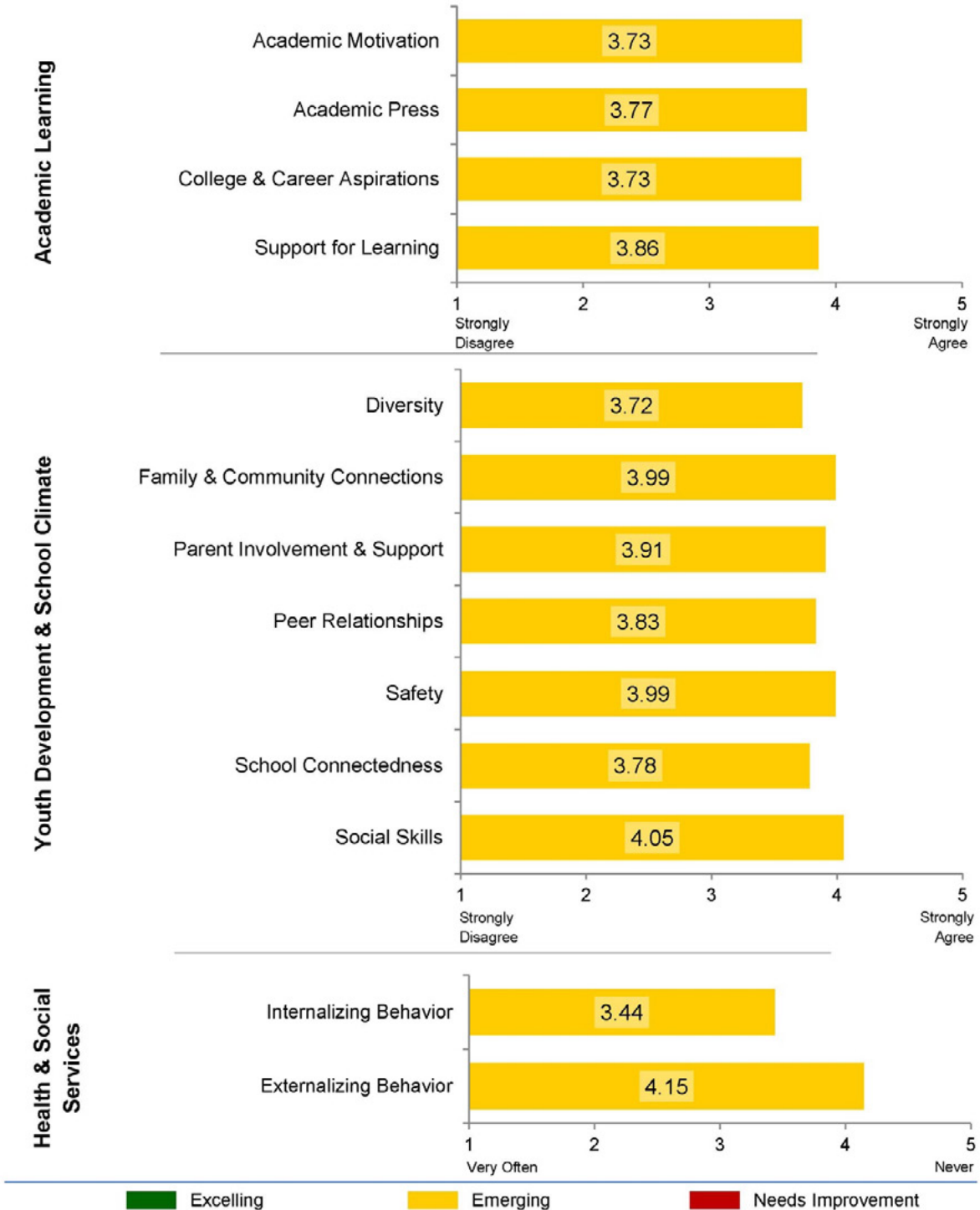


### Demographics



<sup>1</sup> Excelling areas are at least one half standard deviation (SD) above the CAYCI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within 1/2 SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement areas are at least one half SD below the norm. \*NR = No Response

## Middle & High School Student Perceptions at Texas School for the Deaf



Excelling areas are at least 1/2 standard deviation (SD) above the CAYCI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within 1/2 SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement areas are at least 1/2 SD below the norm. Because each scale is normed individually, the same average may receive different designations in different areas. In addition, note the Social Skills scale ranges from "Not at all" to "Very much" and the Internalizing Behavior scale ranges from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

## Parent & Caregiver CAYCI-SES Constructs

The degree to which parents & caregivers report that...

<b>Academic Learning</b>	
Career and College Readiness	... Their children feel prepared for college & future careers and are supported in reaching their academic aspirations
Experiences of Teacher & School Support	... Their children are supported by the teachers and staff at the school.
<b>Health &amp; Social Services</b>	
School & Community Support for Parents & Caregivers	... The school provides parents and caregivers with support and assistance when needed.
<b>Parent &amp; Family Engagement</b>	
Activities	..They are involved in family and community engagement activities offered by the school.
Engagement Efficacy	... They have enough time and energy to be involved in their children's education and school activities.
Overall School Experiences	... They have had an overall positive school experience.
Perceived Parental & Caregiver Support	... They feel supported by other parents & caregivers within the school community.
School Support for Parent/ Caregiver Engagement	... Their children's school provides opportunities for parent/family involvement.

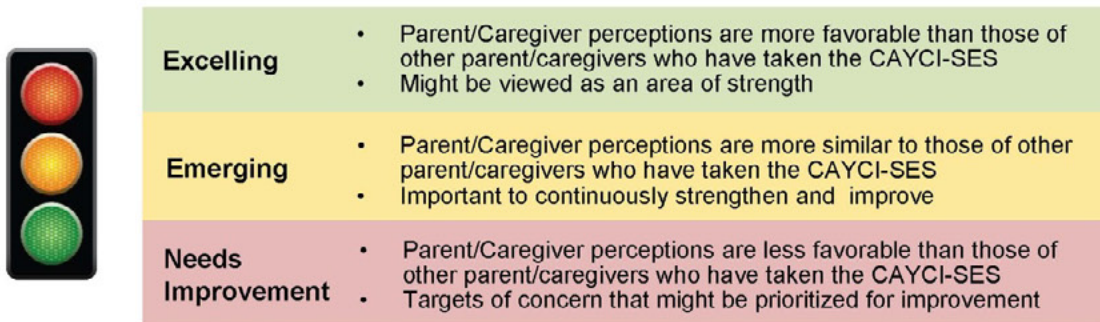
School Year: 2019-2020

## Results at a Glance

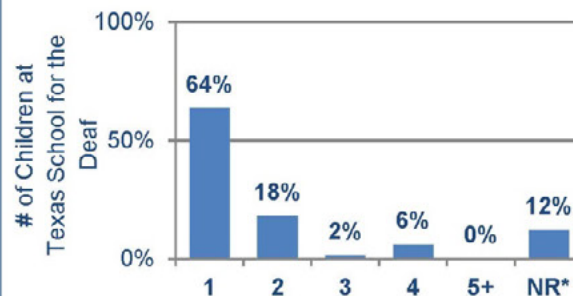
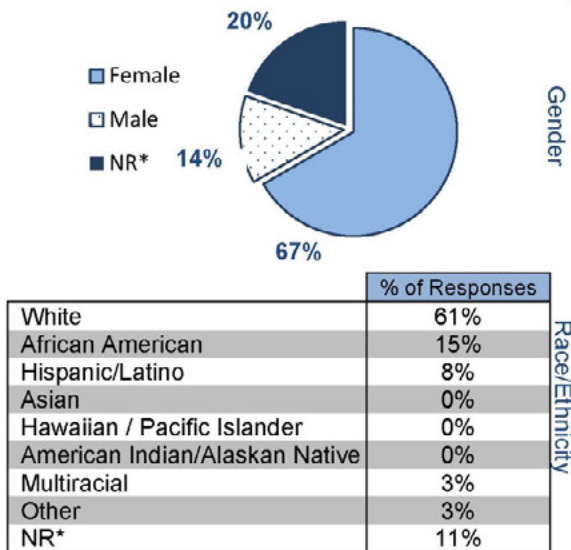
In Fall 2019, 66 parents & caregivers at Texas School for the Deaf completed the Community & Youth Collaborative Institute’s School Experience Survey (CAYCI-SES). The results are designed to complement and inform your school and/or community improvement planning efforts. By understanding the perceptions of parents & caregivers and by integrating this information with other local data, you will be able to identify gaps and prioritize steps towards student success.

The graphs in this section depict the perceptions of the parents/caregivers at your school. Response options on the parent/caregiver survey ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For each survey scale (e.g., engagement efficacy, etc.), the average of all individual parent/caregiver responses was calculated to determine your school’s overall score.

Averages closer to 5 (Strongly Agree) represent areas in which parent/caregiver perceptions were favorable. Low averages suggest areas that may need focused attention. To assist you in interpreting your school scores, parent/caregiver perceptions at your school have been compared to those of all others who have completed the CAYCI-SES. The color of the bar graph is intended to depict these comparisons, using the guidelines shown in the figure below.<sup>1</sup>



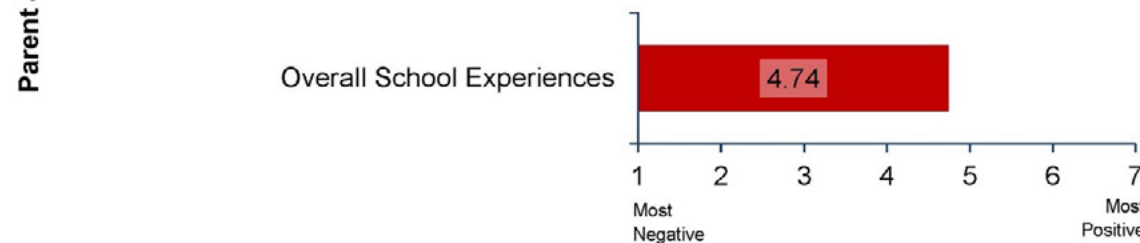
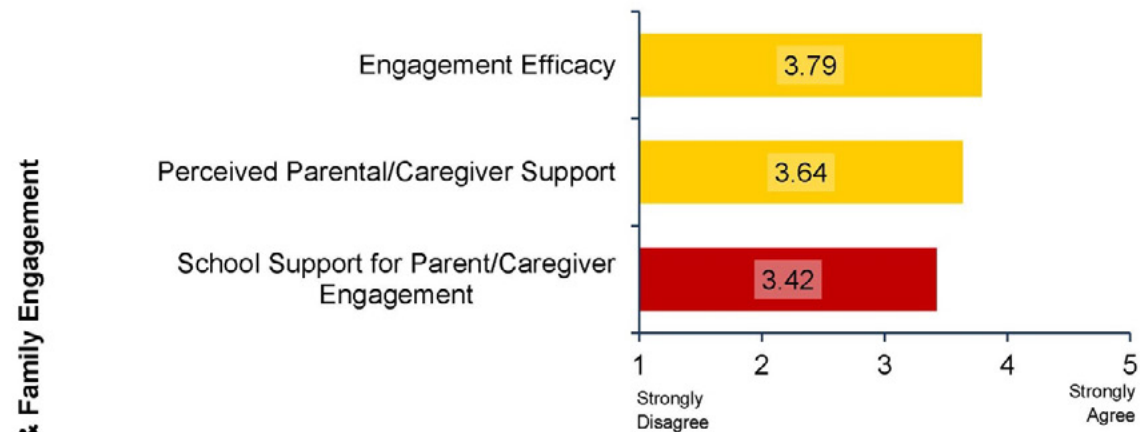
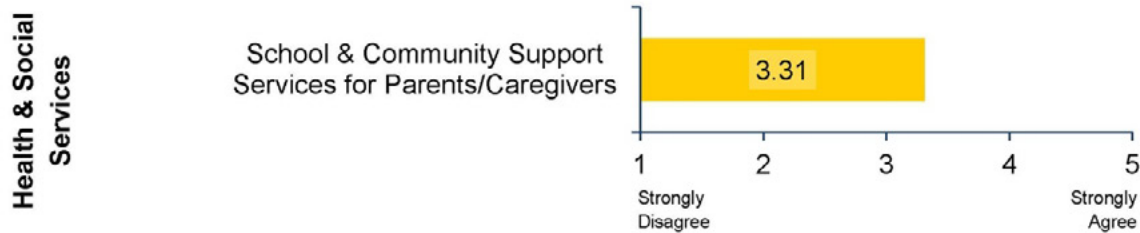
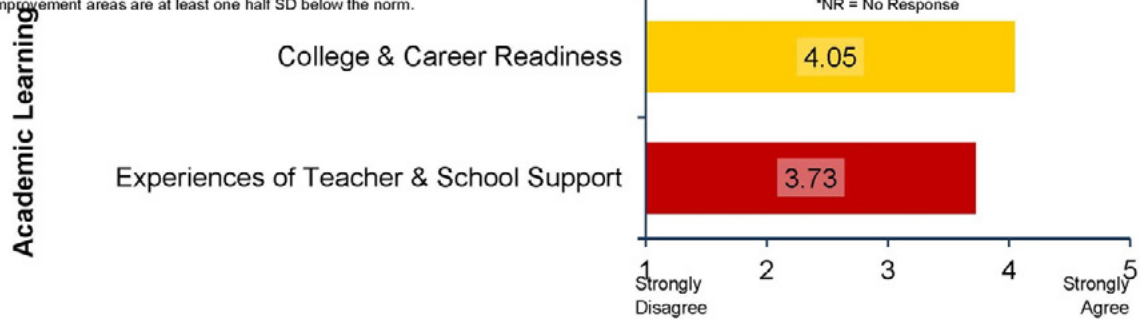
## Demographics





## Parent & Caregiver Perceptions at Texas School for the Deaf

<sup>1</sup> Excelling areas are at least one half standard deviation (SD) above the CACYI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within ¼ SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement areas are at least one half SD below the norm. \*NR = No Response



■ Excelling     
 ■ Emerging     
 ■ Needs Improvement

Excelling areas are at least ½ standard deviation (SD) above the CACYI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within ¼ SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement areas are at least ½ SD below the norm. Please note that because each scale is normed individually, the same average may receive different designations in different areas.

<b>Teacher/Staff CAYCI-SES Constructs</b>	
The degree to which teachers & staff perceive that...	
<b>Academic Learning</b>	
Academic Motivation	...Students are interested and engaged in school.
Academic Press	...Students experience a school-wide emphasis on high expectations and academic success.
Career and College Readiness	...Students feel prepared for college and future careers and are supported in reaching their aspirations.
Family/Caregiver Support for Learning	...Families or caregivers are involved in and supportive of their children's education.
Perceived Learning Support System	...There is a system in place to effectively link students to services which support their learning outside of the traditional classroom.
Teacher/Staff Commitment	...They have an overall bond or experience with the school, including with other teachers/staff.
<b>Youth Development</b>	
Family Support for Pro-Social Activities	...Families or caregivers of students encourage and promote opportunities for their children to participate in pro-social activities.
Perceived School Climate	...Perceive that the school demonstrates consistent, positive norms, values, relationships, and procedures.
School Connectedness	...Students enjoy and feel a sense of belonging to the school.
School Support of Pro-Social Activities	...Students have opportunities and reinforcements for their involvement in positive programs and activities.
Student Safety	...Students experience personal safety at home, at school, and in their communities.
Student Social Skills	...Students demonstrate effective social and life skills as they engage in pro-social interactions with others.
<b>Health &amp; Social Services</b>	
Externalizing Behaviors	...Students engage in behaviors directed outward toward the external environment, such as poor attention or impulsivity.
Internalizing Behaviors	...Students experience negative feelings/behaviors directed inward towards themselves.
Family History	...The families of students experience mental health challenges or engage in other problem behaviors.
Physical Activity & Nutrition	...Students practice healthy behaviors.
Student Psychological Well-being	...Students experience an overall positive sense of self.
Support for Students' Basic Needs	...Families or caregivers of students have essential needs met.
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	
Community Services & Supports	...The families of students have access to needed services and supports within their community.
Community Supports for Positive Youth Development	...The community supports and reinforces student participation in pro-social activities.

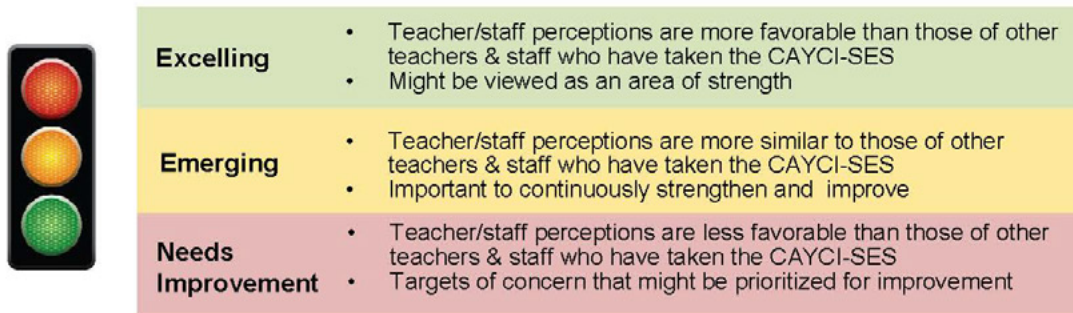
School Year: 2019-2020

## Results at a Glance

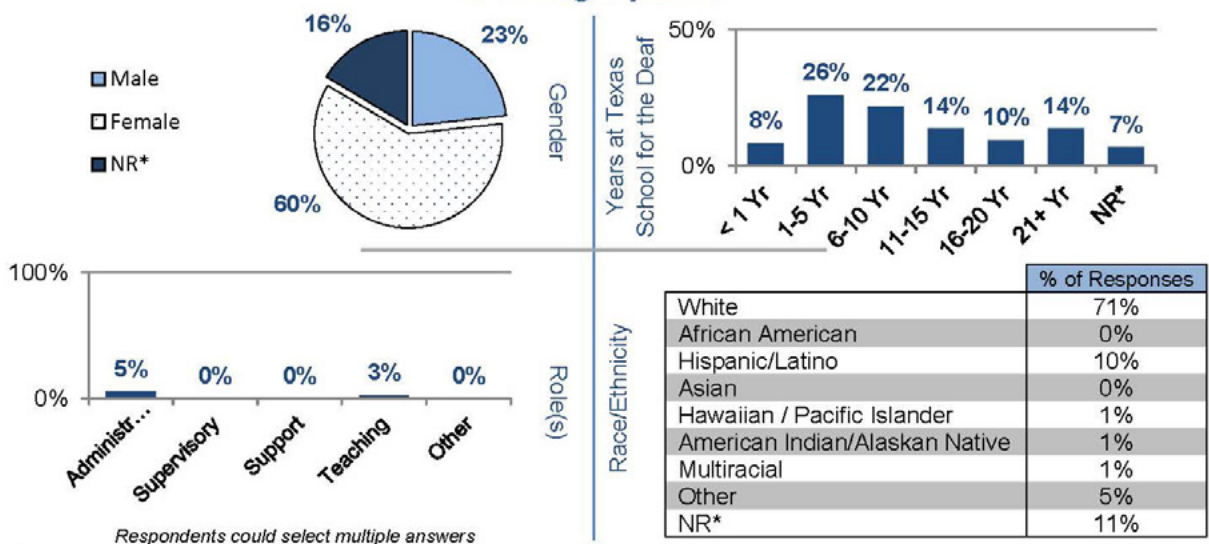
In Fall 2019, 73 teachers and staff at Texas School for the Deaf completed the Community & Youth Collaborative Institute’s School Experience Survey (SES). The results are intended to complement and inform your school and/or community improvement planning efforts. By understanding teacher/staff perceptions and by integrating this information with other local data, you will be able to identify gaps and prioritize steps towards student success.

The graphs in this section depict the perceptions of the teachers/staff at your school. Response options on the teacher/staff survey mostly ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For each survey scale (e.g., engagement efficacy, etc.), the average of all individual teacher/staff responses was calculated to determine your school’s overall score.

Averages closer to 5 (Strongly Agree) represent areas in which teacher/staff perceptions were favorable. Low averages suggest areas that may need focused attention. To assist you in interpreting your school scores, teacher & staff perceptions have been compared to those of others who have completed the CAYCI-SES. The color of the bar graph is intended to depict these comparisons, using the guidelines shown in the figure below.<sup>1</sup>

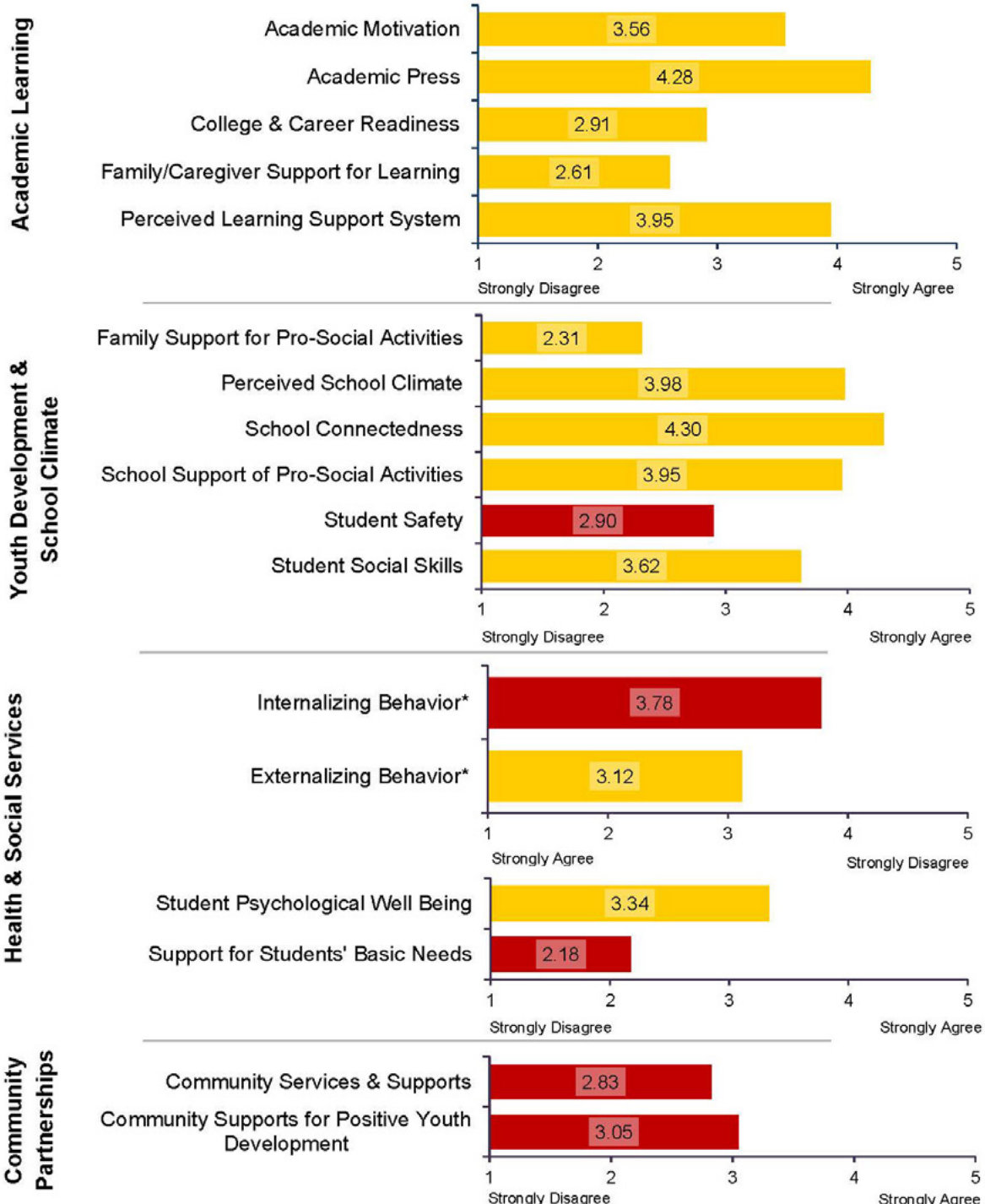


## Demographics



<sup>1</sup> Excelling indicates areas are at least one half standard deviation (SD) above the CAYCI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within ½ SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement designates areas in which perceptions were ½ SD or more below the norm. \*NR = No Response

## Teacher/Staff Perceptions at Texas School for the Deaf



**Excelling**      **Emerging**      **Needs Improvement**

*Excelling areas are at least ½ standard deviation (SD) above the CAYCI-SES norm. Emerging areas are within ½ SD of the norm, and Needs Improvement areas are at least ½ SD below the norm. Because each scale is normed individually, the same average may receive different designations in different areas. \*Reverse Coded*

# External Scan (Demographic, Economical, Educational and Technological Trends)

## Demographic Trends:

Average student enrollment between the school years 2014-2019 is 580.2

Average student enrollment between the school years 2013-2019 is 580.3

The Highest Enrollment was 2017-2018 with 601 enrolled

Current Enrollment as of June 1, 2021 is 554. (Impacted by COVID)

For the past decade or more TSD has benefitted from the economic boom in the southwest, particularly Austin. Things have changed dramatically and Austin is expected to become the least affordable metro for homebuyers outside of California. We are already seeing the impact with fewer families relocating to Austin to send their children to TSD.

## Critical Issues Related to Student Demographics

30.62% of our students have an additional eligibility other than deafness (excludes Speech Impairment)

54% have additional emotional and behavioral issues (Psychological Services, Counseling services or Behavior Intervention Plans) that require specialized support but do not qualify for eligibility.

61.8% of our students are day students (this is our highest percentage in the past ten years)

Non TSD Students served in Summer Camps and Programs continues to increase each year. (Approaching 50%)

The highest percentage increase in enrollment over the past ten years has been in Elementary. (Trends in other departments have been fairly consistent.)

Ethnicity Trends are slightly different from the state demographics. Hispanic Students account for 51% of total Texas enrollment while TSD's percentage is an average of only 34%. Caucasian students remain at about 45% at TSD while statewide they decreased to 29.5%. Our Asian and African American populations are slightly higher than the state percentages and the largest increase in TSD enrollment in the past five years has been Asian students.

National figures indicate the majority of students in Texas (51.1%) were eligible for free & reduced priced meals, 1.5 percentage points higher than the national average (49.6%). TSD's free and reduced eligibility is higher based on automatic eligibility for residential students:

Year	State of TX	TSD
2020-2021	60.19	62.65
2019-2020	60.25	70.9
2018-2019	60.5	75.1
2017-2018	58.7	70.8
2016-2017	59.0	73.4
2015-2016	58.9	67.1
2014-2015	58.7	72

## Economic Trends

### Key Economic Variables.

As of August 2021, the Texas economy has stabilized from the initial shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, with total state revenue (all sources) forecasted at more than \$270 billion for the upcoming 2022-23 biennium. Texas possesses inherent advantages — relatively low living costs, an attractive business climate, a central Sunbelt location and a balanced mix of industries — that have enabled its economy to grow faster than the nations' for many years. During the past 10 years, Texas real Gross State Product rose by an average annual rate of 3.1 percent, while the economy of the nation as a whole grew by an average 1.8 percent annually. The Texas economy should resume growing faster than that of the U.S. in 2022 and 2023, with projected growth rates of 3.7 and 4.6 percent, respectively, compared to 2.3 and 2.5 percent for the U.S.

Unemployment levels are still elevated from historical norms due to a previous federal extension and enhancement of unemployment benefits as states continue to try to move forward from the initial stages of the pandemic, but stock markets continue to trade at all-time highs due to an accommodative low interest rate environment, trillions of dollars in new federal government spending and the continued re-opening of the national economy. Solid population growth in the state and a favorable pro-business environment support forecasts for out-year revenue estimates to remain strong, as Texas is better positioned than most states to absorb any economic downturn due to a more diversified portfolio of employment activities and industries.

The 87th State of Texas Legislative Regular Session recently ended in May 2021, with TSD funding remaining intact and generally stable from the previous biennium. Going into the session there were areas of concern as TSD had been forced to return 5% of its primary funding source to the state due to mandatory budget cuts to many state agencies during the pandemic. Fortunately, TSD was successful in having these funds restored through multiple alternative sources, including the Office of the Governor, and a statutory requirement to exempt TSD from future General Revenue mandatory funding cuts was signed into law. TSD prides itself on being good stewards of the state's tax dollars and will continue to maintain a fiscally conservative approach to managing its financial obligations. We see this strategy as one of responsibility and transparency to ensure the School does not create a reliance on big budgets, big spending or excessive dependence on the State Legislature for future operating funds. To minimize fiscal impact to the State's coffers, TSD has further enhanced procedural and programmatic efficiencies to maximize reimbursements for both Medicaid and School Health and Related Services programs, resulting in a stable cash flow to meet the continuing needs of our students and staff. We are hopeful that education as a whole will continue its trend of recent focus by the Legislature, and that program funding, with specific emphasis on special needs education programs, will continue to be considered for potential increases.

Locally, Austin-area real estate values for residential homes, condominiums, and apartments are at all-time highs, with overall supply being at all-time lows. This continues to pose significant challenges for many families considering a move to the Austin market, as significant cost of living increases over the last ten years have not been accompanied by proportionate increases in local salaries and wages. Despite these headwinds, the local population continues to swell as Austin is known to have one of the highest employment rates in the country and a diverse, performance-based workforce. With this increase in population, roadways have become more congested, natural resources are becoming more susceptible to strain, and tax assessments have risen even higher as property values continue to climb. The local economy is strong, as Texas boasts no state income tax and a cost of living generally lower than the more heavily populated coastal areas of the United States.

Unfortunately, concerns continue regarding the salaries of our valued state employees, as many teachers and related and support staff at TSD have been priced out of the local real estate market. Despite multiple efforts in the last three to four years (both internally and with Legislative exceptional item funding) to increase the salaries of all employees, especially targeting those in lower skill or entry level positions, the affordability challenges have resulted in almost all School employees being forced to seek residence in neighboring counties in the hopes of securing more affordable housing. This results in longer commutes traveling to and from Austin each day, compromising work / life balance and eventually reducing the number of educational professionals considering TSD a viable place of employment in comparison to other deaf and hard of hearing schools across the country that may offer a lower overall cost of living. These challenges persist, as vacancy announcements are remaining open for longer periods of time with fewer qualified candidates applying, especially for para-professional positions with advanced education and experience requirements. In the last year, the shortfall of applicants has even crept into many entry-level positions, including security officers, food service workers and bus drivers and monitors. This creates a continuous staffing challenge as TSD student enrollment remains near all-time record highs.

With Austin being such an attractive city for investment, employment, education, lifestyle, and community events, TSD is continuing to participate in several partnerships with the local business community, our neighbors, other state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. These include a continuing partnership with Austin Community College to host dual credit college courses on the TSD campus as well as an increased number of grants from the Texas Workforce Commission for Outdoor Education, Self-Advocacy, Lifestyle and Pre-Transition Summer Camps, as well as Middle School STEM and College Prep Camps.

TSD remains committed to making classroom instruction our highest priority with the appropriate provision of related and support services. These efforts offer students the best chance at success not only academically, but in life after TSD. With the continued support of the Texas Legislature and other program funding sources, TSD will maintain its commitment to spending the majority of its funding where it matters most - on direct services for deaf and hard of hearing students of the State of Texas.

## Education Trends

Technology - As technology continues to substantially alter the classroom, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are especially targeted for extra support.

Language Deprivation. Young deaf and hard of hearing children continue to experience delayed cognitive and language development in early childhood that leads to academic difficulties and underperformance when they begin schooling. The effects of early language deprivation or limited exposure to language due to not having sufficient access to spoken language or sign language are often so severe as to result in serious health, education and quality of life issues for these children.

Trauma-Informed Teaching – training is required for all instructional staff by SB 11 which also includes Mental Health Training and Threat Assessment Training for schools.

Staffing – there is still a shortage of Special Education Teachers. Texas is looking at different certification options. Districts are frustrated with alternative programs that do not require hands on experience (student teaching).

Compliance – because of OSEP requirement of TEA Corrective Action Plan districts must show that they are appropriately evaluating and serving students.

Mitigating Factors to Consider for Discipline – (self-defense, homelessness, children in foster care) – This is a challenge being faced by more students than you might expect, and under new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirement, increased focus is being placed on monitoring the academic growth of specific At-Risk populations.

Discipline and Student Civil Rights – The use of more restorative practices (Conscious Discipline, Restorative Circles, and Restorative Justice) is recommended prior to removal from instruction, suspensions, and expulsion. The Keep All Students Safe Act (KASSA) prohibits seclusion and seeks to prevent and limit the use of restraint in schools. Limits on how many days younger children can be removed from instruction.

Equity Diversity and Inclusion. Schools across the country are overhauling their curriculums to address systemic racism and seek to make classrooms more equitable. Among these efforts schools are instituting anti-bias training, and restorative justice practices.

Revisiting of Testing Requirements for Graduation - ESSA has clear limits on which/how many students can be classified for assessments (high-stakes exams), and the assessment world is moving toward the growth mindset, which celebrates a growth over final scores.

MTSS (multi-tiered support systems) – multidiscipline teams use data to make decisions including providing supports to students prior to identification before jumping to providing related services (looking at the school environment before diagnosing the child).

Increase in Students with Multiple Disabilities – Autism, Mental Health Disorders, Vision Loss, Other Health Impairment (drugs, neonatal trauma, babies being saved younger and younger).

Transition Focus (College, Career, and Military Ready) – Innovative Courses, Dual Credit, and Career and Technology Education Grants offered to expand these offerings.

Placement and School Choice - The debate about where a student with disabilities is best served is one of the most volatile issues in special education. This includes parents wanting options and the opportunity to choose the campus, district, or charter/private school.

Emphasis on Early Identification and Early Interventions – more funding is available, more students are eligible for free PK.

## Technology Trends

### Top 6 Educational Technology Trends

#### 1. Customized Learning Experiences

With modern tech apps and tools, we can now initiate learning based on individual need, preference and availability and are no longer tied to the one-size-fits-all approach to classroom education.

#### 2. Cloud Computing

Anytime-anywhere accessibility of educational materials stored in the cloud is huge and has solved the problem of storing data.

### **3. Speech-To-Text Options**

Virtual assistants, like Siri and speech-to-text features are changing education and making writing and note-taking effortless.

### **4. Virtual and Augmented Learning Experiences**

VR and AR allows learners to get an immersive learning experience without 'being there'.

### **5. 3D Printing**

Also known as prototyping allows students to learn with a tangible and physical experience and students can give shape to their imagination and unleash their creative ideas through a hands-on approach.


### **6. Learning Analytics**

Learning data is increasingly important to driving instructional decisions and can boost student engagement and Learning Management Systems will play an increased role in the way education is delivered and received.

## **Internal Factors to Be Considered:**

- Will our current instructional technology, network and infrastructure take us through the next 5 years? What changes do we need to be prepared for?
- As our student data continues to increase, how will we meet the challenges of using learning analytics and data assimilation?
- What role will Learning Management Systems play at TSD in the next 5 years?
- Do we have a lack of sufficient and effective professional development opportunities for our teachers and staff which are necessary for effective technology integration and modeling?

## **External Factors to Be Considered:**

- How will cybersecurity attacks and breaches impact TSD and our student and staff data sources?
  - What types of cybersecurity training will our staff and students need to prepare for the future?
- 



# CEASD Standards for Accreditation

## INTRODUCTION

The degree to which the school meets the CEASD Standards for Accreditation provides information and data that portray the school's capacity to produce the levels of student performance the school and its community of stakeholder's desire and expect.

The 12 Standards for Accreditation, adopted from Middle States, reflect research-based best practices for quality in schools. The Standards also represent the organizational "building blocks" that need to be in place to produce high levels of student performance. The school's self-assessment and the team's findings related to the Standards leads to identifying the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

### CEASD Standards for Accreditation for Schools:

*Foundational Standards:* Standards addressing best practices in the components of a school that provide the *foundations* for quality in the education program, services, and results in terms of student learning.

- Standard 1: Philosophy/Mission
- Standard 2: Governance and Leadership
- Standard 3: School Improvement Planning and Viability
- Standard 4: Finances
- Standard 5: Facilities
- Standard 6: School Climate and Organization

*Operational Standards:* Standards addressing best practices in delivering the education program, services, and activities to the students.

- Standard 7: Health and Safety
- Standard 8: Educational Program
- Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning
- Standard 10: Student Services
- Standard 11: Student Life, Student Activities and Residential
- Standard 12: Learning Resources and Information Technology

# Standard 1: Philosophy/Mission

## Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 1: Philosophy/Mission

**3.89 (4.0) Overall Standard Rating**

**The Standard:** The school has a clearly written and actively implemented statement of philosophy/mission that conveys the general and specific purposes of its educational program, expresses expectations for quality, and serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision making as well as long-range planning. Stakeholders give input into the development of the school's philosophy/mission and understand and accept it. This document is aligned with the community served and is reviewed periodically by stakeholder representatives.

This summary report is a compilation of **193** surveys distributed to: **350**

Administration     Faculty and Staff     Students     Board Members  
 Parents     Other:

**Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:**

Standards Survey and ELT Focus Group

<b>Report By:</b>	<u>Executive Leadership Team</u>	<b>Date:</b>	<u>December 22, 2019</u> <u>June 15, 2021</u>
<b>Committee:</b>	<u>Claire Bugen, Stella Egbert, Justin Wedel, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Wilmonda McDevitt, Julie Dodd, Elizabeth Sterling, Mari Liles</u>		

List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Mission/Philosophy**:

- TSD has worked hard over the years to maintain its position of independence as a state agency. (Staff don't always understand that we both a state agency and a school district and occasionally this causes conflict or misunderstandings.)
- TSD does an excellent job in communicating with various tools (email, website, social media) to parents and the public. Since our last accreditation visit, we have developed a *Good News Campus* communication update.
- TSD does a great job of standing behind its vision and mission - particularly in the academic realm.
- We have added information on language, culture and Deaf identity to our New Employee Orientation to ensure better onboarding for employees who may not possess cultural competence in our community.
- Our belief statements support our mission and vision and show respect for diversity and inclusion.

- The School’s mission, vision and beliefs are communicated through all publications, social media and the TSD website.
- **We recently made changes to our mission, vision and beliefs as part of our new Five-Year Plan and our self-study for re-accreditation.**

#### List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Mission/Philosophy**:

- There are many faces of Deafness but we acknowledge that some people think that “Hard of Hearing” should be separate. Some schools have definitions of terms like Deafness or Hard of Hearing. It may be that one way to punctuate this topic is to define what we here at TSD mean by “Deaf.”
- We need to do more work on ensuring that ALL kids belong and that There is a great deal of favoritism and elitism that happens - and prevents a good portion of kids from feeling that positive identity and self-worth.
- **Need to translate the Philosophy/Mission statement into Spanish and ASL.**
- **We have cleared up the ambiguity of the term “bilingual” in our recent mission, vision and beliefs revision.**
- When reading TSD’s Vision & Mission statements - I get the sense that it is vague and more of institution-centered rather than student-centered. There is no clear statement about the desired outcomes for the students except for them reaching their "full potential." **We addressed this in our recent mission revision.**
- **Although improved from 5 years ago we still see occasional comments related to elitism and favoritism. This is something we expect to see improved as SEL and EDI work is implemented**

#### **Philosophy/Mission Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:**

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider ways to make the mission and vision statements as familiar and as much a part of the day-to-day visual landscape and operations of the school as it has done with the “Learn, Grow and Belong” theme and the “Ranger-to-Ranger” campaign.

**TSD Response:** The mission, vision and belief statements have been posted with colorful graphics across the campus, in TSD publications and on the website. Additionally, an ASL student produced video of the Mission, Vision and Beliefs have been prepared for campus viewing.

#### **Narrative**

##### **Mission, Vision and Beliefs**

In late Fall 2019 TSD conducted a school-wide survey to review our Mission, Vision and Beliefs.

Our goal was to review our mission statement against the following three ingredients:

- Our Cause *Who we serve.*
- Our Action *What we do.*
- Our Impact *The difference we make (results or change for the better)*



### **The mission before revisions:**

Texas School for the Deaf ensures students learn, grow and belong in a language-rich environment while supporting students, families and professionals through statewide outreach services.

We determined that our cause, or who the school serves was students, families and professionals. We determined that our action was twofold; ensure students learn, grow and belong in a language-rich environment and support students, families and professionals through statewide outreach services.

We determined our impact was; students learn, grow and belong in a language rich environment and students, families and professionals receive outreach services.

### **Survey Results Revealed:**

97% of our staff felt that our cause is well defined in our mission.

94.5% of our staff felt that our action correctly defined who the school served.

90% of our staff felt that our impact described results or changes for the better.

In the comments some very minor trends emerged:

- The need to clarify student outcomes in the mission.
- The need to add the word bilingual to language rich-environment to further clarify what we do.

### **The final result was one change to the Mission Statement.**

New Mission Statement: Texas School for the Deaf ensures students learn, grow and belong in a language-rich environment **that maximizes each individual's potential to become successful life-long learners while** supporting students, families and professionals through statewide outreach services.

The SCPT then looked at the survey result for our Belief statements.

Our goal was to ensure that our beliefs were:

- Non-negotiable principles
- Represented what we stand for
- Our highest held priorities and driving forces behind carrying out our mission

**Survey responses highlighted several things that might require edits to our belief statements.**

1. Clarify what is meant by “healthy and productive environment” in the following belief statement:
  - Treating students and staff with dignity and respect in an inclusive community that values diverse abilities, needs and interest is critical to creating a healthy and productive environment.
2. Consider adding a new belief statement about the importance of early language acquisition and development.
3. Consider changing the phrase “shared responsibility” to “partnership” in the belief statement:
  - Education is a shared responsibility between students, families, school and community.

Through facilitated group discussion in the SCPT those changes to the Belief statements were made. Healthy and productive environment was clarified and changed to *healthy, safe and welcoming environment*. Shared responsibility was changed to *partnership*.

The final discussion occurred around our current vision statement:

Texas School for the Deaf aspires to be a premier leader in bilingual education that challenges each student to reach their full potential.

The group tested our vision statement to ensure:

- It paints a picture of the future we wish to create
- It is aspirational

The only change made was to clarify that bilingual means ASL and English, not some other language.

New Vision Statement: Texas School for the Deaf aspires to be a premier leader in bilingual (ASL/English) education that challenges each student to reach their full potential.

**Mission, Vision and Beliefs in Action:**

Our strategic planning consultant was instrumental in facilitating an effective review of our Mission, Vision and Beliefs. We have used that as a foundation for the development of our new 5-year strategic plan. The foundational principles in our new five-year plan are a direct result of our mission, vision and beliefs:

- Empowering Student Learning
- Nurturing Positive Culture
- Early Language Acquisition and Learning
- Employee Engagement and
- Family and Community Partnerships

They are also connected to the school's permanent tagline, **LEARN. GROW and BELONG**. Our mission, vision and beliefs are clearly stated and communicated in publications and representations across the campus, including the school's website ([www.tsd.state.tx.us](http://www.tsd.state.tx.us)). Whenever the mission, vision and beliefs are revised a video is produced to clarify the meaning in ASL.

### Self-assessment survey results – Standard 1

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_1\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_1_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Copies of the school's philosophy/mission/belief statements	HC
Samples of publications that communicate the mission/philosophy to the school's community of stakeholders	HC
Marketing, recruitment, and admissions materials	HC
Policies related to the philosophy/mission/beliefs	E
Website	E
Student Handbook	E
Activity Calendars, fliers, and daily announcements	E
Mission/Vision/Beliefs Video	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 2: Governance and Leadership

**3.86 (4.0) Overall Standard Rating**

**The Standard:** The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or authority that operates in the public interest. The governance and leadership ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school through the establishment of policy, provision of resources, and assurance of a quality educational program. The governance and leadership act ethically and consistently to assure an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. School leaders foster a productive environment for teaching and learning, timely and open communication with stakeholders, and the vision necessary for day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

This summary report is a compilation of 40 surveys distributed to: **58**

<u>14</u>	<b>Administration</b>	<u>43</u>	<b>Faculty and Staff</b>	<u>0</u>	<b>Students</b>	<u>0</u>	<b>Board Members</b>
<u>0</u>	<b>Parents</b>		<b>Other:</b>				
		<u>0</u>					

**Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:**

ELT Focus Group

**Report Completed By:** Executive Leadership Team. **Date:** 12/22/19 & 6-2-21

**Committee:** Claire Bugen, Stella Egbert, Justin Wedel, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Wilmonda McDevitt, Julie Dodd, Elizabeth Sterling, Mari Liles

#### List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Governance and Leadership**

- TSD enabling legislation is well established in the Texas Education Code 30.051-30.059
- Governance and Leadership have recognized and are diligently working on the fact the policies and procedures have not always been clear, well-defined, and/or enforced consistently across the district. It has been very encouraging to see the amount of work going into this area over the past year or two.
- Our Governing Board and Superintendent recognize staff accomplishments at every meeting.
- Claire emphasizes the value of family and relationships.
- The Superintendent has a comprehensive formative and summative evaluation process, including a Performance Goal setting component.
- We have a very supportive Board and a strong Board/Superintendent Leadership Team.
- A nine-member Board governs TSD. Our Board is appointed by the Governor and established in statute to be 51% deaf and include parents, professionals and alumni of the school.

- Our Superintendent has extensive professional experience at the local, state and national level.
- There is strong leadership at all levels of the organization.
- Our Board completes 12 hours of training annually with new board members requiring 20 hours.
- Our Board and Leadership Team recently completed a training on Leading for Equity.
- The Board adopted a new policy on Equity.
- Almost 100% of our Board participated in our School Community Planning Team for strategic planning.
- There are multiple leadership teams at TSD that keep communication and information flowing. (ELT, SLC, ILC, SSSPT, etc.)

#### List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Governance and Leadership**

- Some policies are outdated but we are working together to get them updated.
- There needs to be more attention to succession planning. Perhaps each department needs to have a working document on succession in addition to focusing on the Superintendent, perhaps even an SGT devoted to this.
- We need to revisit the work the HR has already done with succession planning and use it as a foundation to move forward.
- There were many neutral responses to this Standard on Governance and we may need to do more to make the staff aware of the Board's role.
- Our Board does not have a self-evaluation process in place.
- We need to update our Board pages on the website.

#### **Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:**

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider requesting the Governor's Office to review Senate Bill 478 (72<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature, Regular Session) regarding the requirements of the composition of the Board, and using those requirements to inform future appointments.

**TSD Response:** The Governor's appointments office has new leadership since our last accreditation visit and appointments are made on a regular basis, although not always with much prior notice. All of our Board positions are full, which has not been the case historically.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf review its advertising, recruiting and hiring process, looking at all components and participants, to reduce the length of time required to fill positions.

**TSD Response:** Since our last accreditation visit, TSD reviewed its hiring processes and provided training to hiring managers to improve consistency and reduce errors, reducing time in processing hire requests. TSD continues to experience difficulties in recruiting well qualified candidates. This has been a long-standing issue for deaf school across the country. We continue to look for new recruiting avenues and have increased the number of postings placed with niche job boards that cater to deaf education. In addition, we have increased salaries in positions experiencing the greatest amount of turnover such as our residential day and night educators and transportation staff.



## Narrative

Texas School for the Deaf is governed by a nine-member board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Board members, five of whom must be deaf, are either parents of children who are deaf, professionals working with persons who are deaf, or persons who are deaf themselves. Board members serve without salary. The TSD Governing Board is directed in state statute to organize and conduct itself like the board of a local school district and thus, in addition to overseeing the provision of all TSD services, has specific responsibilities related to budget preparation, policy adoption, and appointment and evaluation of TSD's Superintendent.

The Board and the Superintendent are a cohesive team working together to ensure the provision of adequate resources to accomplish the school's mission. The Board has in place a very structured process to conduct a formative and summative evaluation of the Superintendent. At least one of the Superintendent's performance goals relates to expected levels of students' performance.

TSD is an independent state agency established in state statute to provide public education. Our enabling legislation TSD is established as a state agency to provide a continuum of direct educational services to students, ages zero through twenty-one, who are deaf and hard of hearing, and who may have multiple disabilities. TSD is also directed to serve as a statewide outreach center on deafness providing a variety of educational services to families, students, programs and professionals throughout the state working with and for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. Texas Education Code 30.051—30.059.

In enacting our statutory missions TSD provides students a place where they have the opportunity to learn, grow and belong in a culture that optimizes individual potential and provides accessible language and communication across the curriculum. Our educational philosophy is grounded in the belief that all children who are deaf or hard of hearing deserve a quality language and communication driven program that provides education together with a critical mass of communication, age, and cognitive peers, as well as language-proficient teachers and staff who communicate directly in the child's language.

TSD has a strong leadership team across all divisions and departments. The school is organized into four divisions: Executive, Business and Administrative Services, Instructional and Support Services and Student Life. Each of these divisions is administered by a Director and in the case of the Executive Division, the Superintendent.

The Executive Division is administered by the Superintendent and includes Human Resources, Legal, Information Technology, and the Statewide Outreach Center Resource Center (SOC).

The Business Services Division is administered by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and includes Accounting, Purchasing, Risk Management, Transportation, Security and Food Services.

Support Operations includes facilities coordination with the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC), transportation, interpreting services, health services, athletics, security, and food services.

The Division of Instruction and Support Services is administered by the Director of Instruction and the Special Education Director. It includes the five academic departments of Early Childhood Education, Elementary, Middle School, High School, Career and Technology Education (CTE) and ACCESS (18+). This division also includes student support services such as Admissions,

Counseling and Psychology, Social Work, Student Health Services, Speech and Audiology Services, Physical and Occupational Therapy and Interpreting Services. Also included in this division are the Curriculum and the Outcomes Department.

Lastly, the Student Life division is administered by the Director of Student Life and the Assistant Director who oversee residential programming for all the above-mentioned academic departments and includes responsibility for after school activities, student organizations and recreation and student development and Athletics.

We use of a variety of regularly scheduled meetings to keep our information flowing and to ensure that staff members stay well informed about educational and organizational developments. They are as follows:

- The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) includes the four Division Directors, the HR Director, Information Technology Director, the Director of Outreach, the Special Education Director and the School Attorney.
- The School Leadership Council (SLC) includes all of the above, the principals and key department heads from Risk Management, Sign Language and Interpreting, Curriculum and Outcomes, Purchasing, Accounting, Athletics, Residential, PR and Publications, Maintenance and Facilities.
- The Instructional Leadership Council (ILC) includes Principals plus the Curriculum and Outcomes staff and the Special Education Director.

Families and Community members are included in school decision-making through our District Advisory Committee (DAC), and our School Health Advisory Council (SHAC). Guidelines for the operating of these committees are established in the Texas Education Code.

We will have sample agendas and meeting summaries of the above leadership meetings as evidence.

### Analysis of Self-Assessment for Standard 2:

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_2\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_2_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Job descriptions for the head of the school, key administrative personnel, and all staff members	E
Appraisal tool and/or description of the process used to appraise the performance of the head of the school and other staff members	E
Chart of lines of authority/responsibilities (Organizational Chart)	HC/E
Policies related to governance and leadership	E
Agency Strategic Plan	HC/E
Five Year Strategic Plan	HC/E

District Improvement Plan	E
Agendas and Minutes of administrative meetings and other pertinent planning meetings	E
Communication/public relations plan	E
Texas Education Code/Statutory Authority	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 3: School Improvement Planning, Outreach and Viability

4.0

Overall Standard Rating

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary

#### STANDARD 3: School Improvement Planning, Outreach and Viability

**The Standard:** The school uses a collaborative process to develop and implement a written strategic or long-range plan to improve its educational program and services. Plans are aligned with the school's philosophy/mission and its operational plans, and are focused on continuous improvement of student performance, staff professional and organizational growth. The school has in place strategies, services, partnerships, marketing plans, etc. to ensure the viability of the school.

This summary report is a compilation of \_\_\_\_\_ surveys distributed to:

<u>42</u>	Administration	<u>14</u>	Faculty and Staff	<u>0</u>	Students	<u>9</u>	Board Members
<u>0</u>	Parents	<u>0</u>	Other:	Need number from ERCOD			

Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:

Report Completed By: Claire Bugen

Date: 12/22/19 6/17/21

**Committee:** Alan Morton, Barbara Hussey, Beth Smiley, BobbieBeth Scoggins, Brian Sipek, Christina Sicoli, Claire Bugen, Debbie Andries, Elizabeth Sterling, Gabriel Cardenas, Holly Wardell, Joey Vaughan, Julie Dodd, Justin Wedel, Karl Hummel, Krista Brown, Lisa Svennigsen, Mari Liles, Megan Scarboro, Nick Bannon, Rachel Baker, Sandy Kimball, Stella Egbert, Tamara Copeland-Samaripa, Wilmonda McDevitt

List the **significant strengths** in the area of **School Improvement Planning, Outreach and Viability**:

- TSD has a robust process for school improvement planning. **We have two strategic planning processes; one is an Agency Strategic Plan that is designed to support our budget structure and is submitted to the legislature. The other is a Five-Year Strategic Planning process that is conducted parallel with preparation for re-accreditation and annually is translated into our District Improvement Plan. (DIP)**
- Parents report positive learning from District Advisory Committee (DAC) meetings.
- We have been faithful on nine-week progress reporting on our Strategic Goals but sometimes

- that feedback does not get back to the staff.
- We have multiple types of plans for both our stage agency role and our school district role.
  - We capture a lot of outreach and academic data for LBB performance reporting.
  - Our outreach programs are strong and continue to expand with new statewide offerings.
  - We have now expanded on online parent sign courses to TSD parents where previously they were limited to non-TSD parents.
  - School improvement plans include;
    - Five Year Plan (done parallel with CEASD Re-accreditation every five years. Involve the entire school community in focus groups and action planning.
    - Agency Strategic Plan (submitted every two years in conjunction with the budget and legislative cycle. Follows strict state guidelines for development.
    - DIP (The District Improvement Plan is the annual implementation of the Five-Year Strategic Plan and is reviewed every 9 weeks.)
    - District of Innovation (The District of Innovation Concept was passed by the 2015 legislature to allow flexibility for school districts with certain state requirements.)
  - Our publications provide a strong summary of TSD's strengths.
  - We keep a lens focused on viability regarding enrollment, community partnerships, Deaf community involvement and alumni support.
  - We are actively involved in long term Facilities Master Planning.
  - Our 501 3c Foundation provides excellent support to the school and faculty.
  - TSD supports viability by implementing the following model by maintaining a strong lens focused on:
    - Stable enrollment
    - Effective Leadership
    - Strong Outreach programs
    - Adaptability to Changing Demographics
    - Continual School Improvement
    - Collaborations and Partnerships
    - Strong financial Resources
    - Quality Educational Programs

List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **School Improvement Planning, Outreach and Viability**:

Need to find a way to involve more people on the SCPT and the SGTs.

Our school planning teams, specifically SHAC and DAC need more community members. Perhaps we can explore a google form on the web to attract more members.

Based on previous staff feedback we increased to 54 members representing all aspects of the school, and SGTs have 76 members. Teams are more inclusive. Continue to broaden membership. Make sure people know about the opportunity and can join if they want to. Better communication to the entire community on planning roles that are available- SCPT, SGT, Standards Review Team...

Student narratives are important in school planning also. We are continuing to work on including

more students in the planning process? Student Advisory Committee, Students on Racial Equity Task Force, HS students more involved, Students on School Community Planning Team.

- As we become more involved in safety and SEL we will need to find more ways to educate and involve parents.
- Improve the layout and visibility of our planning documents on the web.
- The legislature does not always fully comprehend what statewide outreach is and why it is important. Opportunities to inform legislators about outreach and what we do should be explored.
- We anticipate a big change in our 0-3 services as a result of new legislation. This has already occurred- expand on what we have accomplished, what we anticipate, merger of programs.
- Language Acquisition monitoring will be a happy but complex problem to manage among three state agencies. Continue to participate on the task force as they discuss language acquisition monitoring.
- New 5-year strategic plan will reflect goals and objectives related to 0-3.
- Consider more visual data displays for the legislature on services to TSD and non-TSD students.
- Keep school community more involved in the planning process- video that updates the community as to where we are in the Accreditation and Five-Year process. Good graphic showing the timeline of Accreditation. We have had more signed postings on the web and more signed communications.
- Reorganize our planning documents on the website.
- Have standards for signed communication- concise and clear, keep to a few minutes. Investigate attention catching strategies for communication. (National Deaf Center has good models of this.)

Please list **new items** not indicated on the original list of standards.

- Racial Equity Task Force is new- we are on track and doing that work. Equity work is showing up in all aspects of the school including the task force and in a lot of professional development happening on campus.
- New outreach studio designed to support the delivery of outreach services. Part of the expansion of outreach services.

### Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider developing a more robust database for keeping track of all services, programs, and resources provided statewide through ERCOD.

**TSD Response:** TSD is moving toward a more insightful and complex collection and tracking with a customized, user-friendly database, with on-demand reporting and analysis of multiple data sets.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf explore alternate ways of obtaining more resources or revisit current FTE usage to meet the expanding needs for more specialists so ERCOD can provide quality, specialized services for students, families, and professionals in the state.

**TSD Response:** ERCOD (now SOC) has increased overall funding through additional grant awards from the Texas Department of State Health Services through Tx Early Identification and Intervention, the Texas Workforce Commission with pre-ETS program and a non-profit

foundation, resulting in additional resource allocations to provide specialized, quality services.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider consolidating/centralizing existing social media pages for clear, consistent and effective communication and messaging.

**TSD Response:** We have consolidated and centralized our Social Media information on our TSD website. You will find the link ‘TSD Social Media’ under “About TSD” on the Main page of our website. Under the social media link, you will find a brief summary of our social media presence, guidelines and rules, a social media directory, information about our Social Media Rangers and Web Rangers, and a social media request form to set-up new social media accounts.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf rebuild and strengthen relationships with the universities, especially in the area of teaching preparation programs.

**TSD Response:** We have built partnerships with various universities, both locally and across the country. We have maintained partnerships through research and other professional development and instructional support with universities who also have interns at TSD. Prior to COVID19, we have had numerous interns who have transitioned into full time positions after completing their studies and their internship at TSD. We are now finally back in full swing with our internship program at TSD for 2021-2022 and have a variety of interns: from Texas State University (a deaf occupational therapist student to a deaf PE intern) to Gallaudet University. We have worked with the University of Texas Austin SLP and Audiology programs, having a variety of opportunities from volunteering, interning for a semester, to externships. We have launched a partnership with Lamar University, providing opportunities for individuals across the nation to go into the deaf education field. This allowed us to also support our employees who are interested in pursuing teaching. This partnership is in its second year where we provide space for the cohorts to meet on campus on weekends throughout the year.

## Narrative

### School Improvement Planning:

TSD has always had a very strong school improvement planning process. Our role as both a state agency and a school district affect the manner in which we approach planning. We have both an agency Strategic Plan that is updated every two years as a part of our biennial budget planning process as the first step in the preparation for our Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR) and we have a school district Five Year Strategic Plan that drives our strategic priorities, our actions and our culture for the next five years. Our school district Five Year Plan is translated annually into our District Improvement Plan providing a series of Action Plans to implement the objectives within each strategic priority goal.

Historically, TSD approaches our Five-Year Strategic Plan and our CEASD Self-study as parallel processes. This has worked very well for us. It eliminates a lot of duplicative effort and makes our internal and external assessment and SWOT analysis much richer and deeper. Both

Strategic Planning and the self-study for CEASD Accreditation:

- Are purposeful, systematic processes,
- Involve community engagement, a steering committee, and focus groups,
- Review mission, vision and guiding beliefs or core values,
- Collect survey data, conduct internal and external scans,
- Involve an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities,
- Lead to strategic priorities for both student and organizational growth, and
- Are conducted toward a common goal of advancing excellence at TSD.

As explained in the Overview of the Planning Process, TSD planning processes include broad-based school community participation and input. We have posted information regarding our planning process on the school's website and reported our progress at various school and community forums including Board Meetings, Executive Leadership Team Meetings, School Leadership Meetings, Town Hall Meetings, the District Advisory Committee and the School Health Advisory Committees.

### **State Agency Planning**

Texas law mandates many aspects of school improvement planning at Texas School for the Deaf. To begin with, as a state agency, we are required to develop an Agency Strategic Plan every two years prior to the legislative session. Plans are submitted in July of even-numbered years based on instructions from the Governor's Office of Budget and Planning (GOBP) and the Legislative Budget Board (LBB). The Plan covers five years and is updated every two years to communicate the agency's goals, directions, and outcomes to various audiences. It includes the primary factors affecting an agency and the identification of future issues, problems and opportunities. Above all, it provides a foundation for the agency's appropriations and budget processes. The Agency Strategic Plan also includes a set of performance measures that are used by the state to monitor TSD's implementation of strategic goals. It also includes a Workforce Plan and a Customer Service report.

### **School District Planning**

As a school district, TSD has additional planning requirements. TSD must participate at district level (school-wide) and planning and decision-making. (Our school departments also have Department Site-Based Teams but these are not state mandated since we are considered a single campus school.

Each school district in Texas must develop an annual District Improvement Plan (DIP) based on Strategic Planning. We have just completed our Strategic Planning process in concert with our CEASD Self-Study for Accreditation, which began in August of 2019. The process began with an in-depth internal and external review of relevant and pertinent data related to demographics, enrollment and student achievement, the political and economic climate in Texas, trends in special education and general education, technology and human resource issues. We also sought input through surveys of critical stakeholders such as parents, students, alumni, community, faculty and staff.

In addition to our self-study document, the results of our school district strategic planning efforts are evidenced in our new Five-Year Strategic Plan. This plan outlines the priorities of TSD, serving



as a road map, charting the course of where we want to be in five years along with the goals we have set for our school and community. The plan provides an executive summary, outlines our mission, vision and beliefs as well as our strategic goals and objectives. We have six strategic goal areas reflected in this plan:

1. Empowering Student Learning
2. Nurturing Positive Culture
3. Early Language Acquisition and Learning
4. Employee Engagement and
5. Family and Community Partnerships

Using the Five-Year strategic plan as our foundation, we developed our annual District Improvement Plan (DIP). The DIP is a series of action plans designed to guide us and measure our progress on our six strategic goals.

The School's Executive Leadership Team, the School Leadership Council, and the District Advisory Committee (DAC) and the Strategic Goal Team Chairs monitor these plans. These forums provide continual input into the development of and progress on action plans needed to implement the goals and objectives in the Agency Strategic Plan.

The TSD Governing Board approves the Agency Strategic Plan, the Five-Year Plan and the District Improvement Plan.

## **Outreach**

The educational landscape has more quickly evolved in recent years, partly because of emerging marketing strategies and partly due to the increase in usability of technology, especially with the outreach efforts at Texas School for the Deaf (TSD). Such changes present opportunities for TSD's Statewide Outreach Center to reach 7,000+ students who are deaf or hard of hearing and 900+ deaf education professionals.

## **Increased Visibility with Brand Change**

Formerly known as the Educational Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD), the center underwent a facelift, in which its name was changed and a clearer visual representation of its mission was created. The resource center's name changed from ERCOD to the Statewide Outreach Center (SOC), along with streamlined resources with consistently branded recognition came about in response to changing marketing strategies and the increased use of technology which stakeholders have become used to. With unique and colorful design schemes, students can readily recognize a set of resources or video series. With greater ease, parents and families tap into quality and credible offerings they have come to expect. Professionals find development opportunities and recommendations consistently branded in monthly newsletters and throughout social media platforms. Teachers also find continuing education and development opportunities, as well as tap into new lesson plans in SOC's library loaded with accompanying study guides and classroom activities. With improved visual representation, embedded resources for all stakeholders are highlighted, affirming the center's tagline "Your Trusted Resource for Deaf Education in Texas".

With the increase in usability of technology, more students, families and professionals most often rely on and expect to find the tools and resources they need on their mobile devices. This affirms SOC's increased utilization of learning management software (LMS), video conferencing software and social media platforms to meet consumers where they are.

SOC further transformed outreach strategies to elevate the efficiency and span of reach for resource dissemination and service delivery. Additional seasoned professional staff have joined the center with highly specialized skills and knowledge in:

- Intervention Care
- Family support
- Culture and linguistic competency
- Professional development training
- Content development and marketing coordination
- Project management
- Database management
- Studio and media management

This combination of skill sets has led to improvements to our marketing and publicity efforts. A streamlined content development process, utilizing SOC and TSD staff as subject matter experts and content reviewers, ensures consistency and quality throughout. Across the board, coordination of all assets has increased the center's reach through social media, email and web hits. One example of a successful strategy is the optimization of content and design on the SOC website. Redundant and outdated information has been updated and streamlined from a total of 1,000 pages to now 600 pages. Enhanced graphic design elements, such as buttons and banners, were added to highlight calls to action.

Changing the brand and incorporating marketing strategies have shown to be successful as the number of followers, registrations and inquiries have all increased, giving greater visibility to SOC's new and existing programs.

### **Flagship Programs Maintain Relevancy**

Four SOC flagship programs pull in resources and personnel from both the school and the outreach center. For more than several decades, *Family Weekend Retreat*, *Discovery Retreat*, *Summer Camps and Programs* and *Communication Skills Workshops* bring stakeholders together. *Discovery Retreat* and *Summer Camps and Programs* remain to be programs of high interest to students with opportunities to interact with peers who share the same linguistic and cultural experiences. *Family Weekend Retreat* continues to bring in new and returning families who seek shared experiences and strategies for raising their children. *Communication Skills Workshops* provides sign language training in both professional and everyday communication situations. Each flagship program was uniquely designed around its overarching goal. Though to maintain relevance, some changes were called for.

**Summer Camps and Programs (SCP)** expanded to offer both in-person and virtual offerings. By adopting a dual approach to service delivery, camps and programs were more available to students who could choose to attend camps or programs in person on TSD's campus, or take part from their home district. Additionally, in response to the changes in rehabilitation law, SCP added

summer programs for students ages 14 and up. For these young adults, postsecondary and career readiness opportunities are now included.

**Family Weekend Retreat (FWR)** invited guest presenters to conduct live or pre-recorded sessions for families to access online, some of which provided Continued Professional Education credits for teachers. To encourage greater relationships between professionals and families, professionals were invited to attend *FWR* for the first time. Partnership with Texas Hands and Voices and Texas Education Service Centers (ESC) allowed family events offered at 13 different sites, including some held on ESC campuses. With such success, allowing more families to participate with greater flexibility, *FWR* may continue to adopt this dual approach as part of future programs.

**Discovery Retreat (DR)** has continued to serve high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing for more than 15 years now. With COVID-19, we nearly saw that streak put on pause. However, SOC put every effort into the most recent *DR*, “Going Viral!,” amidst the current pandemic. It took nearly three tries before it was safe to host in person when eleven 9<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> grade campers came for a special *DR* in April that included two quite exceptional guests: Kelly DeRoche, a Senior Materials Program Associate at Pfizer, who was part of the process of developing the recent COVID vaccine; and TSD school board member, Dr. Chris Moreland, who is an associate professor of Internal Medicine at the University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School, and himself a TSD student who attended summer computer camp in 1992. With past *DR*’s held with usually about 30 attendees, even though for safety’s sake, it was quite different to have such a small group.

Researching the topic of drug development was a new step, even for us, as the last few *DR*’s focused on technological based themes- such as autonomous driving cars, robotics and other STEM themes that included introductions to the basics of computer science. Continuing to explore new topics for the future with *DR*’s, the next theme will be “Business Seeding and Planning.”

**Communication Skills Workshops (CSW)** provide professional development and sign language training to interpreters, deaf education professionals, teachers of American Sign Language (ASL), other professionals working in public schools, and parents with deaf children up to age 22, in Texas. *CSW* is primarily an immersion model, providing five days of intensive signed communication training in all areas, including ASL grammar and structure, Deaf culture, facial grammar, fingerspelling, sign vocabulary building, mouth morphemes, conversational strategies, use of space, and more.

*CSW* typically draws about 600 participants to the TSD campus over three separate week-long sessions offered. With the event of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, *CSW* pivoted to a virtual model and was able to provide hybrid learning that included pre-recorded modules and some interactive zoom sessions with instructors. The flexibility of the virtual model increased attendance to over 850 participants who had the entire month of July to complete the workshop for credit.

Moving forward, *CSW* aims to continue with a hybrid model to include the in-person, immersion model held during the summer, and online modules available year-round for families and professional development. SOC has partnered with Texas ESC Region 11 to continue to utilize their Learning Management System for *CSW*, as well as several other virtual events.

## Connecting Statewide Stakeholders Even Further

To respond to the increased needs of students, families and professionals, collaborations with SOC partners are now more dynamic. Partnership structures have evolved to include more accountability and oversight, allowing available state resources to be pulled together. Process improvements to SOC's content and marketing strategies are now shared responsibilities. This shift has allowed us to create three new programs (Intervention Care Coordination, Mentors and Role Models and Mental Health for Deaf Youth) with statewide partners in a five-year time span.

Further strengthening partnerships with Texas Higher Education institutions, SOC participated with the [Texas A&M Colonia's Program](#), working with their promotoras (community care workers) who work with Texas border families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing. SOC assisted promotoras with information and resources when they go into families' homes improving the quality of life for each family. Families with children, birth to age 3, received training and information on available resources utilizing Promotora curriculum. A curriculum that was vetted by the Texas Department of State Health Services to aid community care workers who specifically work with these families. In 2016, 2018 and 2020, SOC provided expertise and resources, and participated on the planning committee for two statewide Texas conferences and a ten session live webinar series, hosted virtually due to the pandemic.

Other collaborative efforts include supporting conferences, such as the Statewide Conference Education of the Deaf (SWCED) and the National Deaf Education Conference. In 2016, 2018 and 2020, SOC provided expertise and resources, and participated on the planning committee for two in-person SWCED and a ten session live webinar series, hosted virtually due to the pandemic. In 2019, Texas School for the Deaf hosted the 2019 National Deaf Education Conference on-campus, through a partnership with the National Association of the Deaf.

Other than academic or professional partnerships, we partner with the community on topics relating to deaf education. Our five-year effort with the Texas Association of the Deaf, the University of Texas law clinic, Texas School for the Deaf and community members resulted in two legislative mandates, HB 2255 relating to intervention care and HB 548, relating to language acquisition. We participated in stakeholder meetings to receive community input and attended legislative hearing, providing testimony when relevant and appropriate to our agency.

HB 2255, relating to hearing screenings and intervention care, lead to the designation of Texas School for the Deaf to provide a resource and program to families. To successfully carry out this action, we implemented Intervention Care Coordination to ensure newborns are screened and families are connected to the resources they need to.

HB 548 mandates three state agencies, TSD being one of them, to identify appropriate language acquisition assessments and/or tools, collect and monitor data on the language acquisition of children eight years of age or younger who are deaf or hard of hearing. Texas School for the Deaf and our outreach staff participate in the language acquisition committee as subject matter experts.

## Mentors and Role Models

An earlier initiative, the Shared Reading Project, allowed us to come alongside families as reading guides while sharing sign language and providing some personal support. As interest grew and a new family support program was available, SOC reallocated its resources to support the launch of the *Mentors and Role Models* program. The program was launched to come alongside families to

provide support, share experiences and connect them to resources. Up to 20 families have been matched with a mentor or role model this past year, with a goal of expanding to 70 families. Mentors and role models can be deaf or hard of hearing. They differentiate in their roles and the populations they serve. Mentors are available to families with children 0-5 years old, and role models are available to families with children 0- 8 years old. Since the program began, 6 mentors have been trained in the [SKI-HI curriculum \(https://deaf-mentor.skihi.org/\)](https://deaf-mentor.skihi.org/). Mentors are also skilled in ASL Instruction, and are currently working with 20 families. Mentors show family members how to use ASL through both informal interactions and more formal ASL instruction. Role models are paired with families to share personal experiences in their daily lives and be a positive influence in the lives of the family's young children. Role models also provide information on communication and language opportunities. Funding for *Mentors and Role Models* was made possible through the Texas Department of State Health Services and Texas Early Hearing and Intervention with a grant from the Health Service and Recovery Administration.

### **Mental Health for Deaf Youth**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and SOC joined forces to form the *Texas Mental Health Initiative for Deaf Youth*. The initiative works to provide training to professionals who work in the mental health field, or with deaf students. The first Mental Health symposium was held with great success in partnership with Texas ESC Region 13 and Texas School for the Blind and Visually-Impaired, featuring pre-recorded and livestream presentations uploaded to online resources on the SOC web. Spanish translations were provided for Spanish-speaking participants. The initiative also includes specialized interpreter training for interpreting in mental health settings. These mental health trainings are made possible with funds from TEA and ESC Region 11. Additional ongoing support for this project is needed so that it may become a permanent offering for professionals in the field.

### **SOC Intervention Care Coordination**

The SOC's birth to age 3 *Intervention Care Coordination* has become the point of entry for babies, infants or toddlers who are deaf and hard of hearing. This program is in partnership with Texas Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (TEHDI), sharing the goal to reduce loss to follow-up and loss to documentation. The *Intervention Care Coordination* team provides a supportive process for families as they navigate early intervention. A care coordinator, along with SOC's Family Services Project Manager, and Family Support Advocates make up the team. Working with statewide [Early Childhood Intervention Services \(https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services\)](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services), the supportive process includes the following:

- Regular review of screening results from the Texas Department of State Health Services
- Outreach calls to connect families to resources and services for successful screening and follow-up care
- Referrals to ECI, local education agencies or other programs
- Support as families connect to services
- Professional development and resources on early intervention to parent advisors or other ECI professionals
- Reporting to TEHDI

Other outreach efforts are in place to increase effectiveness and flow, and lay a foundation for increased capacity to provide more resources and services.

## Family Support Services

### Family Signs

A very successful SOC program, since 2004, connecting with hearing families eager to learn sign language and relate with their children who are deaf or hard of hearing, from birth to age 21. A *Family Signs* instructor connects with families over video on a regular weekly schedule that each family chooses. Currently serving ~70 families statewide, these free, online, interactive classes are offered in ASL or SEE, also with Spanish speaking instructors available to those who need it. Each weekly class is 30 minutes long and is available for up to four semesters per household.

### Texas Hands and Voices and Texas Guide by Your Side

Through a partnership with *Texas Hands and Voices (TXH&V)* since 2010, SOC expands its reach to serve more families statewide. TXH&V is a parent-driven nonprofit organization which supports families with children who are deaf and hard of hearing, favoring no biases around communication modes or methodology. TXH&V's *Texas Guide By Your Side (GBYS)* program matches "guides" who work with individual families in need of the unique support which comes from another who has walked a similar path themselves when it comes to raising a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. The GBYS program has expanded with a greater need for guides who are deaf or hard of hearing and Spanish speaking guides.

TXHV's 2021 PAUSE retreat for moms and female caregivers focused on the importance of parent-to-parent connections. PAUSE stands for: Parents Advocating, Understanding and Supporting Each other. Having to pivot to a virtual retreat, 55 participants still took advantage of the time to share and interact with peers.

TXHV's Advocacy Support Training (ASTra) for families is derived from years of TXHV's direct advocacy experience working with families in schools, attending advocacy trainings by legal experts, providing trainings, and Hands and Voices Educational Advocacy Guidebook. In FY 22, almost 200 family members attended an ASTra training.

### Online Resource Development

Recognizing that stakeholders rely on digital avenues to access information, several revisions and new processes are in place to further coordinate and disseminate SOC resources, and increase awareness for specialized or customized SOC training upon request.

- Updated SOC website and outreach section of TSD's website
- Updated lesson plans with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements, and relevant talent with consideration to cultural competency
- Intentional marketing and public relations communication for ease of cross-sharing
- New professional film studio with dedicated manager and team of content developers
- Coordinated dissemination of information on all electronic platforms, social media, newsletter, email, and calls
- New blog showcasing underutilized information and increased web visibility
- Working to increase and enhance online professional development and become more stakeholder data driven

## Capturing Evidence from Stakeholders

Moving towards more insightful and complex data collection and tracking with a customized, user-friendly database, and on-demand reporting and analysis of multiple data sets, allows reports based on need. SOC reports to the Texas Legislative Budget Board all outreach activities year over year by documenting all outreach and performance measures utilizing a shared database. Five-year summaries are reported on statewide technical assistance, training, and customer satisfaction surveys, per the Compact with Texans. An independent outreach survey for statewide stakeholders was conducted with results indicating a need for more online resources and self-advocacy skills. Improved data collection and analysis with Google Analytics showed a significant increase in views, hits, clicks and shares during the pandemic and afterwards. Customized forms are now in place for evaluations, creating datasets (screening results, technical assistance records, registrations, etc.) now being developed as plug-ins into one single real time database. Specialists now more easily and quickly utilize the information for greater efficiency finding everything in one centralized point of entry for all outreach reporting, positioning the SOC as a one stop for resources related to deaf education.

## Self-assessment survey results – Standard 3

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_3\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_3_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Strategic and/or long-range plan	HC/E
Institutional Advancement Plan (See Foundation website and by-laws)	E
Other Planning Documents/www.tsd.state.tx.us (About Us)	E
Policies related to school improvement planning	E
Marketing plan for viability	E
Community involvement and partnerships	E
Complete planning documents (financial, technology, staff development, staffing, student enrollment, advancement, curriculum review, public relations, etc.)	E
School Improvement/action plans	E
Minutes of planning/school improvement meetings	HC/E
School Community Planning Team Agendas	HC/E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Link to our 2021-2022 District Improvement Action Plans and Student Achievement Action Plans

<https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/apps/pages/planningdocuments/tsddistrictimprovementplan>

### Narrative

#### Development of Action Plans/School Improvement Plans

Data from over 2,341 stakeholder responses to the accreditation surveys was analyzed and presented to the School Community Strategic Planning Team (SCPT) in February of 2020. This also included all the CEASD Standard Surveys. Through a facilitated two day process the SCPT ultimately identified five strategic priorities that we felt needed to be addressed in our school improvement plans. There are two slide decks from the SCPT that provide a great deal of evidence of this process.

The five strategic priorities were

1. Empowering Student Learning
2. Nurturing a Positive Culture
3. Maximizing Early Language Acquisition and Learning
4. Improving Employee Engagement and
5. Fostering a sense of belonging through Family and Community Partnerships

The five strategic priorities were assigned to five Strategic Goal Teams (SGTs), each with Co-Chairs of each team. The chair(s) of each team recruited stakeholders from the TSD community that were interested in joining their SGT. (A list of those teams and members is provided in the Introduction to the Self-Study.)

The responsibility of the SGT was to:

- Analyze their critical issues and come up with a strategic goal statement.
- Review the data gathered related to their strategic priority area.
- Research best practices related to their strategic priority area and
- Develop Objectives to achieve their strategic goal in five years.

The SGT reports were presented to the Governing Board for their review on April 30, 2021. The goals and objectives for each priority area were then published in the school's new Five-Year Strategic Plan.

(<https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/apps/pages/planningdocuments/fiveyearstrategicplan>)

The SGTs were then re-convened in the summer and fall of 2021 to develop our Action Plans for year one of the new Strategic Plan. The action plans were compiled into our annual District Improvement Plan (DIP).

Our Student Achievement Action Plans for Math and Reading were developed by our Instructional Data Specialist and our Instructional Leadership team based on our student achievement data from STAAR and MAP. These plans are Appendix 1 in the DIP.



## Standard 4: Finances

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 4: Finances

**4.03**
**Overall Standard Rating**

**The Standard:** Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school's philosophy/mission. The business practices of the school are ethical. These practices promote confidence in the school's ability to manage fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner and follow prescribed budgeting and accounting principles. The majority of resources raised for school purposes is dedicated to the school's operations.

This summary report is a compilation of 36 surveys distributed to:  
 Administration     Faculty and Staff    0 Students    0 Board Members

0 Parents                       Other:

#### Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:

Focus Group

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**Report Completed By:** Justin Wedel, CFO                      **Date:** 10/2019  
June 10, 2021

**Committee:** Justin Wedel, Keri Sluyter, Bobbie Beth Scoggins, Stella Egbert, Barbara Hussey, Greg Reyes, LeAnn Loyola

#### List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Finances**:

- Financial policies and procedures are in place
- Leadership has proper control over finances and operations
- Cash flow is strong, several million dollars in reserves
- Financial and Business Operations staff are well qualified
- Ratings indicate a strong awareness of policy and procedures
- Stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input into financial plans
- Awareness of fundraising opportunities through 3<sup>rd</sup> party sources, grants, and partnerships
- High number of external audits and reviews
- Financial planning relates to long and short-term strategic plans

#### List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Finances**:

- Communicating with stakeholders the opportunities to participate in future budget planning and the legislative restraints therein
- Explaining the concept of self-insurance at TSD
- Continued need for ASL communication advancements between most Business Operations staff and the TSD community

## Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation team strongly recommends the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) governing board and Superintendent continue to work with the Governor’s office and the Texas Legislature to communicate the need for and seek increased funding in order to provide the services required by these important, future tax- paying citizens of the state that are served by TSD.

**TSD Response:** Our legislative appropriations along with an aggressive approach to SHARS and Medicaid Administrative claims, and various grants and interagency partnerships have resulted in a much stronger financial position than five years ago. In addition to this we have received substantial facilities construction funds from the legislature. We consider our financial position to be very sound.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf study its current insurance practices to evaluate potential liability and identify strategies for addressing/minimizing unforeseen financial obligations in this area.

**TSD Response:** Based upon a Concurrent Resolution drafted within the State of Texas Senate in 1921 stating the, “state shall carry its own insurance...” the State of Texas assumes the cost of any catastrophic losses or liabilities and is therefore self-insured. As TSD is a State of Texas agency, TSD assumes and maintains such risks. In the event of damages, TSD would absorb these costs from within its budget, or seek additional funding from the State Legislature if needed.

## Narrative

### STANDARD 4: Finances

#### Funding from the Texas Legislature

As a state agency, TSD receives its funding from the Texas Legislature on a biennial basis. In July of even numbered years the process begins with the development of an Agency Strategic Plan at the direction of the Governor via the Governor’s Office of Budget, Planning and Policy (GOBPP) in cooperation with the Legislative Budget Board (LBB). Upon completion and submission of that plan we await instructions from the same two entities for the development of the school’s detailed Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR). The LAR is a two-year budget request across all of the school’s strategies and programs. Agencies are then permitted to ask for funding above their base as “exceptional” items. Exceptional items must be detailed in the LAR and justified according to explicit instructions. The LAR is submitted at the end of August in even numbered years.

Each agency has its own assigned LBB and GOBPP analyst who collect information about the agency’s LAR and make recommendations to the Legislative Leadership on both the Senate Finance Committee and House Appropriations Committee. At the same time, the school begins a series of public hearings where we present our budget and our exceptional item requests. This continues from January through April and eventually both the Senate and the House “markup” our budget to their full committees. If there is a difference in the Senate and House versions of our

budget, we move on to the Conference Committee where the differences are eventually ironed out and the final version of the budget is submitted to the State Comptroller and Governor for approval. This usually occurs by the end of May in the even numbered years.

TSD was appropriated \$35,108,592 for FY 2020 and \$30,115,019 for FY 2021. General Revenue provides the majority of TSD's funding.

	<u>FY 2020</u>		<u>FY 2021</u>	
	Legislative Appropriation	Percent of Funds	Legislative Appropriation	Percent of Funds
General Revenue	\$24,347,311	69.3%	\$19,353,738	64.3%
Federal Funds	\$ 1,126,254	3.2%	\$ 1,126,254	3.7%
Appropriated Receipts	\$ 8,414,304	24.0%	\$ 8,414,304	27.9%
Interagency Contracts	<u>\$ 1,220,723</u>	<u>3.5%</u>	<u>\$ 1,220,723</u>	<u>4.1%</u>
Totals	<u>\$35,108,592</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>\$30,115,019</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

### **Fiduciary Compliance and Financial Challenges**

As a state agency, TSD is subject to a great deal of fiduciary compliance and review. Annually we submit a variety of financial reports, among them the Annual Financial Report of TSD's net assets by fund type, which is subject to review by various state oversight entities. TSD is periodically subjected to a number of financial audits including, but not limited to, review of all financial and programmatic activities by internal auditors, the State Comptroller's Office, the State Auditor's Office, and the General Accounting Office. In addition to these various audits, TSD was previously selected for a special LBB School District Performance audit which was extremely comprehensive, touching on all aspects of our agency operations through extensive on-site visits, staff interviews and documentation submissions. Additional periodic audits of TSD operations are initiated by the Texas Education Agency, the State Office of Risk Management, the State Fire Marshal's Office, the National School Lunch Program, and others just to name a few. As allowable under state statute and with State Auditor's Office approval, TSD contracts with a regional accounting firm to provide internal audit services on behalf of the TSD Governing Board.

TSD faces the challenges of increased enrollment, improving student achievement on state assessment tests, expanding technology and career opportunities to enable TSD students to compete in the workforce, and providing a safe and positive living and learning environment. Coupled with the ever-increasing requirements of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), TSD's financial and personnel resources have been occasionally stretched over the years. However, since 2015, with aggressive cost management, strategic review of ongoing staff salary costs, and a push to maximize all available revenue sources, TSD is in a solid financial position, with extensive cash reserves on hand to withstand periodic economic downturns or temporary reductions in fund appropriations.

Direct services to students account for roughly 78% of TSD's total expenses. Central Administration and Other Support Services account for 6% and 6.4 % respectively. Statewide Partnerships for technical assistance and statewide outreach account for 9.5%. There are no

current financial concerns about the potential to meet the current needs of our programs. It is critical that state leadership continue to understand that our services are federally mandated and that if an eligible student applies for admission, we must provide that student with services needed to receive a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE), and that a legal option to deny those services does not exist. Of note, approximately 78.2% of our annual budget is devoted to staff salaries.

### **Other Alternative Methods of Funding**

TSD continues to pursue maximization of all avenues of federal funding including the School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program, the Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) program and the FCC's Schools and Libraries E-Rate program. We have done well with our SHARS reimbursements and have optimized all personal care and transportation services, in addition to categorizing certain operating expenses as "Appendix A" reimbursable whenever practical or possible. This has resulted in an increase in annual SHARS reimbursements from around \$700,000 a year back in 2015 to more than \$4,000,000 most recently in 2020, all while maintaining a firm control on annual operating expenses of the school. These expenses have tracked generally flat to slightly higher over the last five years, and coupled with significant SHARS revenue increases and a more diversified portfolio of funding streams, have resulted in an accumulated surplus of millions of dollars each fiscal year that can be carried forward indefinitely under current state statute.

TSD actively pursues grants and other sources of funding through development activities, grants, foundations, and other partnerships when appropriate. This school year we have several active grants, including a five-year agreement with the Texas Department of State Health Services for early hearing detection and intervention in newborns and infants. Additionally, we have a series of grants from the Texas Workforce Commission which focus on a range of topics, including transitional adult services for individuals participating in our ACCESS program (ages 18-22), Middle School STEM projects and College Preparation activities through our Outreach Department.

The TSD Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization that supports TSD, is another way we attempt to enhance our funding. The TSD Foundation has its own Board and Executive Director separate and apart from TSD. TSD's Superintendent is an Ex Officio member of the Foundation Board. The Foundation has historically engaged in an exciting array of fundraising events including the Annual Diamond Event Dinner, which includes TSD Culinary Arts students, paired with the Hilton's Diamond Chef and staff in the preparation of a five-course wine-paired dinner with a silent auction. This has been a tremendous fundraiser for the Foundation and a great community and career training experience for students. The Foundation also administered a Mini-Grant program for TSD staff, a large fundraiser at Halloween called, "Spooky Skedaddle," an annual Holiday Giving Campaign, and a Spring Alliance with many foundations in Central Texas for the, "I live here, I give here" 24 hours of fundraising initiative. Additionally, the TSD Foundation awards funding to the school in accordance with their annual giving priorities.

### **Self-assessment survey results – Standard 4**

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_4\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_4_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>**HC or E</b>
Current operating budget (for main campus and each branch	E
Certified external audit letter conducted within the last two years (for main campus and each branch)	E
Student tuition and fee schedule (if applicable)	N/A
Long-range financial plan	E
Evidence that the school has no contingent liabilities or on-going litigations that potentially could affect the school's ability to continue operation	E
List of grants and other funding sources obtained in the last calendar year	E
Publications provided to students outlining students' financial	N/A
Summary of the school's insurance coverage (for main campus and each branch)	E
Policies related to finances, financial aid, refunds, personal student accounts and student organization fund raising.	E
Summary of budget planning process	N/A
Job descriptions of business management personnel	N/A

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 5: Facilities

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 5: Facilities

4

Overall Standard Rating

**The Standard:** School facilities are safe, clean, and well maintained. The physical environment supports delivery of the educational program/services as well as optimal student development and achievement. Facilities are appropriate and adequate to implement the philosophy/mission of the school. They are regularly inspected for effective operation and meet all applicable laws including health and safety code requirements.

This summary report is a compilation of **64** surveys distributed to: **100**

Administration     Faculty and Staff     Students     Board Members  
 Parents     Other: TFC Staff

Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:

Report Completed By: Beth Polo

Date: 12/4/19,  
5/7/21

Committee: Beth Polo, Justin Wedel, Steve Barbin, Nick Sultemeier (TFC), David Roes (TFC), Matthew Woerndell (TFC)

#### List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Facilities**:

- \$40M worth of Deferred Maintenance projects over the last 4 years improving efficiency and safety across campus
- Significant decreases in Utility costs due to more efficient water, electrical, and HVAC systems being installed
- Ongoing upgrades of furniture across campus including dorm spaces, office furniture, and new cafeteria tables and chairs
- Positive relationship and partnership with the Texas Facilities Commission
- **Construction and completion of Phase I of our Master Plan which added a new Early Learning Center and Administration and Welcome Center**
- **Football stadium received all new LED light posts**
- **Cottage 570 was updated to become the new permanent home for Human Resources**
- **Auditorium was updated with new dressing rooms, and makeup areas, cameras were installed between the stage, wings, and lighting booth to improve communication, LED**

lights were added to the front of the stage, audio wiring was upgraded, and new curtains and valances have been ordered

List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Facilities**:

- More flex spaces and storage needed on campus which is being addressed in our current Master Plan including a new Central Administration building and Culinary Arts expansion
- Improved lighting needed – as old fixtures wear out, they are replaced with LED lighting
- Parking needed – approximately 50 new parking spaces will be added in the construction of the new building
- Improved air quality- we are continuing to repair roofs and windows to reduce leaks and upgrading HVAC systems in the DM projects
- Upgrade to our camera system software for facial recognition and ease of use- TFC is in the process of organizing this
- Ongoing landscaping projects to recover from the ice storm at the beginning of the year, and intense Texas heat in the summer

### Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf continue its efforts to secure funding for the replacement of furniture and equipment throughout the dormitories and school buildings.

**TSD Response:** The State of Texas Legislature appropriated a total of \$200,000 to TSD in fiscal years 2020 and 2021 during the 86th Legislative Session for dormitory and school building capital furniture replacement initiatives. We will continue to work towards increased legislative appropriations to complete the next phase of the Master Plan.

## Narrative

### STANDARD 5: Facilities

Established in 1856, the current 67-acre site on South Congress Avenue is the original site of the Texas School for the Deaf campus. TSD has been through a number of dramatic changes during our 165-year history and many are outlined in the Chapter on the Profile of the School. In the 1990's, TSD was engaged in a \$65 million dollar facility construction plan to consolidate two campuses (East Campus and South Campus). That was the last major construction improvement project for the campus until 2015.

When the buildings constructed in the 1990's began approaching 20 years old deferred maintenance needs began to surface, which coincided with the untimely deterioration of certain critical underground infrastructure items on campus. Though TSD consistently requested funding over the past decade for deferred maintenance projects, we received appropriations totaling only \$5,464,663 for capital improvements, renovations and repairs. Additionally, requests for maintenance and facilities repairs were in constant competition with immediate student and program needs, as enrollment was soaring simultaneously.

In 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature allocated funds to the Texas Facilities Commission to create a Facilities Master Plan for TSD. TFC commissioned the architecture and engineering firm Parkhill,

Smith & Cooper, Inc. (PSC) to undertake this project. It was decided that the new Campus Master Plan would build upon the previous 1990s plan, as the buildings were structurally sound.

In 2017, the 85th Texas Legislature appropriated the School a total of \$14,600,000 for the construction of a new Administration and Welcome Center and an adjoining Early Learning Center to provide state of the art education for our 0-5 student population. This constituted Phase I of the Master Plan, and after two years of design and engineering phases, groundbreaking occurred in March of 2020 with final building construction completion and occupation scheduled for October 2021.

In 2019, the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature presented us with \$5,066,797 for Phase II of our Master Plan which includes funds for a new state-of-the-art Career and Technology Services Culinary Arts Classroom Kitchen and monies for increased campus traffic circulation and security improvement projects. These projects are currently in the design and planning phase, with work scheduled to begin on campus in Spring 2022.

The effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic had a profound impact on the focus of the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session in 2021, and we elected not to move forward with our request for Phase III funding at that time. However, we plan to resume this process when the 88th Texas Legislature convenes in January 2023.

We are simultaneously in the middle of an extensive **deferred maintenance program** that is being managed by TFC with support from TSD. Since the change in leadership at TFC, TSD and TFC have been working collaboratively on both deferred maintenance and master facility planning projects. The relationship is positive and each agency supports the other to accomplish the work outlined in our MOU.

TFC has been diligent in completing a number of deferred maintenance projects totaling \$53.2 million dollars since assuming responsibility for campus facilities in 2013. Deferred maintenance projects include, but are not limited to:

- Repairs of:
  - campus electrical distribution system
  - water and gas lines
  - landscape sprinkler system (repairs and maintenance)
  - roof (repair and replacement)
  - air conditioning and heating
  
- Installation, reconditioning, and replacement of:
  - fire alarm panels
  - fire suppression systems in server and records rooms
  - security / camera system upgrades
  - boilers and chillers in Central Plant
  - energy efficient residential windows
  - LED Lighting across campus
  - stadium lighting
  - automatic sinks and hand dryers
  - carpet / flooring / foundation
  - manhole sump pumps



**TSD is authorized by statute to lease its facilities.** TSD facilities are used by the community for a variety of functions from local sporting team practices, to filming projects (commercials, TV, movies), and partnerships with several law enforcement agencies for training exercises. We support other state agencies and other public schools by allowing them use of our pool for various functions. Local theater groups and public and private schools use our Auditorium and Gymnasiums for their productions and events.

Parkhill, Smith, and Cooper, and the Texas Facilities Commission continue to collaborate on a five phase Master Plan which addresses administrative, academic, residential, and athletic spaces as well as flex learning spaces for academic, social, and SEL related uses. The plan is a living document which is updated annually and reprioritized as needed to plan for upcoming Legislative sessions and appropriations requests.

### Self-assessment survey results – Standard 5

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_5\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_5_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Floor plan of facilities	E
Long-range facilities plan	E
Maintenance/repair schedules/maintenance budget/annual capital outlay budget	N/A
Plans for any facilities improvements	E
Policies related to facilities	N/A
Health/safety inspections	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence



**List the significant areas of improvement in the area of School Climate and Organization:**

- More collaboration between departments and divisions is needed to ensure support and services for students. Current organization is too siloed and information held by one area is not always shared with other areas. Example – If a student is struggling in classes, Dorm staff are not informed and do not have access to the information in PowerSchool, limiting in their ability to support the student.
- Recognition of efforts and contributions among staff are not equally provided. Example – dorm staff act as parents to students but the profession is “looked down on” by other members of TSD staff.
- Staff receive on-the-job training sufficient to ensure essential functions are addressed but career building training is not provided.
- The school has focused on physical safety but should include emotional, mental safety as well.
- The diversity of the school’s workforce does not match the diversity of our students. Currently the workforce population is 70% white/30% non-white while the student population is 44% white/ 56% non-white. In addition, other characteristics should be considered outside of race and gender to ensure true diversity.
- The school should improve language access by ensuring that all staff members work toward improved sign language skills. The current process for providing sign language instruction to staff should be reviewed and improved to ensure staff with heavy workloads have access.
- Currently, staff do not have sufficient knowledge or personal support related to respond to all persons of all intersectional identities (i.e., gender, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, race, abilities, immigration status, transgender, Deaf, etc.) to allow them to effectively support students and families facing these issues. Providing in-department and in-program support (i.e., staffing, establishing norms of check-ins and accountability), and training (i.e., active listening skills, from top-to-bottom in regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion) in this area for staff will lead to a healthier and supportive climate in this working and learning environment.
- Raise awareness of intentional and unintentional actions that reflect bias against an individual or social group and how it operates on campus and to recognize the importance to practicing cultural responsiveness in all areas of the campus
- Ensure appropriate fair pay across all positions.
- The school should focus on ensuring equitability for both students and staff, ensuring that everyone has equitable opportunities.
- The school should focus resources to ensure all staff have access to IT support to support learning and skill development. As the school introduces more online learning, it is important that each staff has access.
- The school should support residential students by ensuring that their dorm life experience is more like a home environment. This will reduce behavioral problems.
- In addition to awareness of diverse cultures, the TSD environment is currently not a safe and inclusive place for all students, especially those who are identified as BIPOC, AAPI, and LGBTQIA. TSD will need a responsive training and plan that reinforces the practice of inclusivity for all students in all departments.

## Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf streamline and strengthen professional development with existing initiatives among the instructional and Student Life staff and continue to monitor the various initiatives at the department and school-wide level to ensure teachers are provided enough support, training and time to not only implement new goals, but to do so with fidelity and thoroughness.

**TSD Response:** We began this endeavor by designing a training series focused on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) where residential supervisors meet monthly to discuss a variety of topics. This has evolved over the years, increasing student life and instructional personnel to meet and talk about programming (MTSS framework for PBIS) in a variety of ways. To start the 2021-2022 school year, we designed a two-day in-service with both divisions grouped into respective departments (Elementary, Middle, High/CTE, and ACCESS). We focused on the first part of the MANDT training (focusing on healthy relationships), understanding trauma, and understanding program goals in supporting students through SEL and other positive restorative approaches. Our instructional programs have altered a former position of having Behavior Coordinators to SEL Coordinators and the student life program has developed Student Resource Specialists (SRS), which also provide SEL support and other intervention measurements after hours in the residential programs.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) continue and expand the “Ranger-to-Ranger: The Power of We” campaign to revive the school spirit and celebrate accomplishments at TSD. It is important the campaign include all departments and stakeholders in order to promote a feeling of connectedness and communication among the students, families and staff of the shared vision.

**TSD Response:** We continued our Ranger-to-Ranger campaign for five years focusing on themes that supported these efforts:

- 16-17 Ranger to Ranger: Power of We
- 17-18 Ranger to Ranger: Stronger Together
- 18-19 Ranger to Ranger: Kids Matter
- 19-20 Ranger to Ranger: You Belong Here

Though promoting a positive school climate and organization is a never-ending endeavor, the Ranger-to-Ranger campaign really elevated our attention to celebrating and valuing each other. We have continued these efforts and you will note that it continues to be a high priority in our new five-year strategic plan.

## Narrative

### STANDARD 6: School Climate and Organization

#### Overall Culture and Climate

The organizational culture and climate of TSD is one in which staff in all areas of the school are committed and passionate. Staff exhibit true caring and sense of purpose regarding the importance of the TSD mission in serving students and their families.

The TSD culture has a family atmosphere, in which staff generally feel supported as part of the overall TSD community. Our Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) response rate for 2019 was 74.5%, indicating that employees have an investment in the organization and are willing to contribute toward making improvements within the workplace. All of our construct scores were well above 350 (positive perception of issue) with the exception of pay. The three highest were:

- strategic - indicating employees think the organization has a strong mission and planning ethic
- workplace - indicating that the workplace is seen as satisfactory, safe and with adequate tools and resources available
- supervision - speaking to the quality of leadership/staff relationships

The SEE survey as well as other stakeholder surveys revealed staff concerns with agency-wide communication, cross department collaboration, wellness and work life balance, and performance feedback between supervisors and employees. We attacked these concerns directly in our strategic planning and self-study efforts. We have two key strategic goals related to employee engagement and nurturing a positive culture.

#### Creating Connections

This year's theme grew out of our work on Culturally Responsive Teaching, Racial Equity, PBIS, Restorative Practices, Threat Assessments, Increased Employee Engagement, Community and Family Partnerships, Increased Academic Rigor, Enhanced Mental Health and SEL, all of which were reflected in our survey data.

Success with all of this work is predicated on having connections--a sense of trust and belonging in our community. Connections build feelings of acceptance and appreciation—all of us seek the ability to be one's authentic self in a place of comfort.

For our students, these connections are a necessary precondition for learning and well-being. For staff these connections create trusting and caring relationships that promote open communication, transparency and authenticity.

#### Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are under continual review to meet the needs of the school, changes in law, and recommendations of the Texas Association of School Boards' model policies and procedures. All Governing Board policies are available on the web and may be found on our website at [www.tsd.state.tx.us](http://www.tsd.state.tx.us) under the *About Us* menu, *Governing Board Policies*.

Each new employee is provided with instructions for accessing relevant Governing Board policies and procedures and are required to acknowledge that they have received and understand the information at the New Employee Orientation. Division Directors are responsible for updating policies that are relevant to their programs. The Superintendent and the School Attorney then review them before they are presented to the Board.

### **New Employee Orientation (NEO)**

TSD has a strong program of orientation for new employees in which they receive the following training: EEO and Sexual Harassment; Bloodborne Pathogens; Child Abuse, Neglect and Improper Care Detection and Reporting; Risk Management and Emergency Procedures; and Suicide Prevention and Reporting Procedures and the Governor's "Be The One" (identifying and stopping human trafficking).

At NEO, all new staff are provided with a comprehensive supervisor's orientation checklist that is reviewed with the employee's supervisor on the first day of work. Department specific orientation of new staff takes place within each department. New first year teachers participate in the new teacher-mentoring program where they are partnered with a mentor teacher and curriculum specialist for their first two years. As part of the orientation for their new staff, the Residential Services Division provides a virtual tour, a presentation for the handbook, and pictures of the organization of TSD staff.

### **Qualified and Competent Staff**

Administrative, instructional and support staff are qualified and competent for their positions. With the exception of our Elementary and High School Departments, all of our Principals, Assistant Principals and Director of Instruction are new to their positions since our last accreditation. With the departure of our recent Director of Student Support Services and Operations, we reduced our organizational structure from five to four divisions assigning support services, the Health Center and Interpreting Services to our Special Education Director who works within the Instructional Division and moving Athletics to our Director of Student Life. Our CFO assumed responsibility for the Cafeteria, Transportation and Security.

After operating two years with this structure, we are still tweaking it. We believe we still need to re-distribute some of the responsibilities of both the Special Education Director and the Director of Instruction. Our Human Resources Director, CFO, Outreach Director and IT Director are all experienced tenured staff.

Before any vacant position is posted, both the relevant supervisor and the Employment Specialist within HR review the job posting, including the minimum qualifications for the position. All applications are carefully screened to ensure that only those who meet the minimum qualifications are considered for an interview and employment.

Applicants for instructional positions are rigorously screened for compliance with state certification requirements. Through transcript, degree and educational program analysis, each applicant is evaluated for suitability in the applied assignment, and for potential areas of future growth to meet the needs of the educational program.

## Evaluation

In the 2018-2019 school year, TSD implemented a new teacher compensation and evaluation system Professional Pathways for Teachers (PPfT). PPfT was originally developed by the Austin Independent School District and is the basis for the State of Texas teacher evaluation system called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). T-TESS and PPfT strive to capture the holistic nature of teaching – the idea that a constant feedback loop exists between teachers and students, and gauging the effectiveness of teachers requires a consistent focus on how students respond to their teacher’s instructional practices. For those reasons, each of the observable domains in PPfT focuses on teachers and students rather than separating them out into separate domains. Ultimately, PPfT is a process that seeks to develop habits of continuous improvement, and the process itself best leads to that outcome when appraisers and teachers focus on evidence-based feedback and professional development decisions based on that feedback through ongoing dialogue and collaboration. PPfT includes three components:

- Goal-setting and professional development plan
- The evaluation cycle (including: pre-conference, observation, post-conference)
- Student growth measure

To reward teacher performance and incentivize continuous growth, the PPfT program provides base compensation increases for teachers based on years of service, appraisal rating and professional development through a point system. At the higher end teachers can earn up to an additional \$23,000 to their salary.

All non-contract staff is evaluated annually as part of a performance evaluation process based on job descriptions. HR tracks completion and sends reminders to supervisors to complete the annual evaluations. All staff evaluations at TSD include opportunities for input into annual professional development goals.

## Sign Communication

As a bilingual school TSD has, for a long time, required various sign proficiency levels for every employee position at the school. We began using the SCPI twenty years ago (now it is formally known as the SLPI), to assess staff sign language skills. The SLPI assesses the full range of ASL from pure, linguistic descriptions of ASL to English-like contact signing. This full range is characterized by (a) meaning-based sign language vocabulary selection consistent with standardized signs in current use by skilled language communicators, and (b) a variety of grammatical features that are consistent with effective use of gestural/visual language for communication. TSD also provides a full range of sign language classes for every level of signer from novice to advanced. Additionally, through outreach efforts, TSD trains more than 600 interpreters; ASL teachers and parents each summer in our Communication Skills Workshops.

We have a strong culture of Deaf role models on campus, with Deaf individuals comprising 63% of the TSD workforce. As a result of our Strategic Goal Team on Communication, TSD continues to revisit and revise our policy and procedures on Signed Communication in a continuous effort to bring more emphasis and strength to our bilingual identity.

Because of the specialized nature of the TSD workforce, it is not always possible to hire teachers and support staff that are fully certified or licensed on day one. For our teachers in particular, gaining full state certification has never been easy, but in recent years it has gotten more difficult due to changes in testing requirements. TSD's Certification Specialist is responsible for assisting non-certified teachers as they tackle their certification journeys. The Certification Specialist starts the school year connecting with each uncertified teacher to determine the certifications needed, identify and connect with the teacher's educational certification program to support communication, and provides guidance and assistance to teachers in working with the Texas Education Agency to take exams and apply for certifications. Teachers who are struggling to pass exams are connected with TSD staff who provide tutoring services. Principals and Supervisors are provided with periodic status updates for teachers within their departments and work with their staff to ensure each teacher receives sufficient support to successfully attain their certifications.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, TSD implemented Ranger Academy, a digital training platform. Our HR department, in coordination with TSD department and division managers, working to develop trainings and professional development within Ranger Academy to support the agency's mission, department goals and the agency's legal requirements as well as staff development. All staff are required to participate in refresher training on: EEO and Sexual Harassment; Bloodborne Pathogens; Child Abuse, Neglect and Improper Care Detection and Reporting; and Suicide Prevention and Reporting Procedures biannually. Additional topics include threat assessment training and identifying and reducing human trafficking. Ranger Academy tracks employee completion of trainings and prompts supervisors and human resources staff when required training is not completed timely. Ranger Academy permits the agency to ensure 100% compliance.

TSD has implemented a more coordinated approach for the MANDT System® training that we have been using for more than twenty years. This is both our Positive Behavior Support and de-escalation system/curriculum. The MANDT System® is a person-centered, values-based process developed to encourage positive interaction with others. The concepts offered in MANDT training clearly promote respect and dignity for all people. There is significant emphasis on the team approach to ensure well-being and safety in both non-physical and physical interactions. The MANDT System® builds on skill development through a system of gradual and graded alternatives for de-escalating and assisting people, using a combination of interpersonal communication skills, conflict resolution strategies and physical interaction techniques. The goal is to assist others in managing themselves and the safety of all involved through skillful, non-physical means. Physical strategies are also taught to provide additional 'least restrictive' options in the event the person poses a clear threat of substantial harm to self or others if physically unassisted.

TSD has positions in both Instruction and Residential Services that focus on professional development for department staff. Human Resources works with both positions to ensure TSD meets the needs of teachers and residential staff while focusing training on key areas identified in our strategic and five-year plan. TSD also created a professional development form where staff interested in attending professional development must connect the training, they wish to attend with one or more of our 5-year strategic goals. This ensures alignment with our district vision and mission. On occasion our staff has had opportunities to attend statewide and national conferences to expand their knowledge in skills in the area of Deaf Education and Special Education (such as NASP, MHIT, etc.). TSD has also hosted these conferences as well.



## Compensation, Incentives and Rewards

We have made significant progress since our last accreditation visit on compensation for our teachers and our staff.

Salaries for contract staff (teachers, curriculum staff, librarians, counselors, and principals) are set by statute to be commensurate with like positions within the Austin Independent School District (AISD). Through the PPfT evaluation and compensation program, TSD teachers have added \$94,000 and \$94,250 in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years respectively. They will add a total of \$93,750 in the 2021-2022 school year.

For all other staff, salaries are consistent with the State Employee Classification Plan. Because salaries for contract staff have historically risen more rapidly than non-classified staff, some non-contract staff members perceive inequities in salary administration. This is substantiated in Exit Interviews available through the State Auditor's office and comments on the Survey of Employee Engagement. However, in recent years we have been able to implement not only across the board increases for our student life staff but also, we have been able to award \$603,000 in merit pay over the past two years. Though the level of compensation is still an issue for our staff, we are definitely making progress in this area.

Classified staff have detailed job descriptions specific to the individual's position. These are reviewed each year at the time of the employee's annual performance evaluation, or when the position becomes vacant.

While celebrations are part of the TSD culture, we are always looking for additional ways to provide rewards and incentives to staff. Our Strategic Goal Team on Employee Engagement is focusing on more non-monetary incentives, and staff support ideas.

Additional compensation incentives are limited to merits when our budget allows, opportunities for summer employment including working in outreach programs, and stipends for organizational responsibilities, coaching, Technology Mentors, ASL Mentors, and after school tutoring.

TSD teachers who can pass the state certification test in bilingual education are eligible to receive an additional stipend in conjunction with the AISD professional salary scale. Our teachers also receive a stipend for special education.

TSD staff have access to quality staff development primarily through our local Education Service Center (ESC). Region XIII ESC in Austin is one of twenty service centers statewide that provide technical assistance for Texas educational needs. They are a non-regulatory agency and their relationship with school districts is collaborative and supportive. They serve as a liaison between the Texas Education Agency and local schools by disseminating timely and relevant information, providing extensive professional development, and consultation for both federal and state programs. We are fortunate to have access to consistently high-quality professional development at very low cost.

We also receive some state funding expressly allocated for the purpose of assisting teachers in becoming more qualified in their content and grade level assignments.

## Self-assessment survey results – Standard 6

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_6\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_6_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Organizational chart for the school and school system	E -
List of members of the professional and support staffs, job descriptions for staff, appraisal tool for staff	E
Salary schedules and descriptions of benefits packages for teachers, specialists, and support staff	E
Contracts (e.g., union, collective bargaining agreements)	E
Results of any climate survey	E
Instruments used for evaluating the performance of the staff	E
Professional development plan	Professional development plans are created individually for each staff between the staff and supervisor.
Policies related to school climate and organization	E - Governing Board web page
Policy/procedure for handling grievances/complaints	E
Rangers At Work Newsletter	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 7: Health and Safety

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 7: Health and Safety

4

Overall Standard Rating

The Standard: A safe, orderly, and healthy environment for teaching and learning is provided. The school adheres to local, state, and federal government health and safety requirements and provides an environment that addresses the rights of deaf and hard of hearing students to attend safe schools free from violence and exploitation of all kinds. Health, safety, preventive/emergency procedures, and crisis management policies are clearly written, well documented, implemented, and updated regularly. Indicators:

This summary report is a compilation of 68 surveys distributed to:

Administration     Faculty and Staff     Students     Board Members

Parents     Other:

Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings: none

**Report Completed By:** Elizabeth Sterling

**Date:** 11/26/2019  
5/10/21

**Committee:** CEASD Focus Group (#7)

List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Health and Safety**:

- We have become stronger on keeping our campus safe (Alertus, lights, marquis, training, and anonymous reporting/alerts app)
- We have installed locks for external areas (also proxy swipe cards, cameras)
- Installed 16 panic buttons across the campus
- AEDs on campus and Stop the Bleed Kits and training has happened.
- Safety Officers from each department – monthly meetings – monthly fire drills
- Risk manager is more visible
- State Property/No trespassing signs posted now
- School Health Advisory Committee SHAC is active
- Campus lockdown drills campus wide
- Partnering now with DPS – has office on campus – does patrols as needed
- HR newsletter (Rangers at Work – adds EAP topics – offers EAP trainings)
- Supervisor's Academy available
- Are partnering with community places (restaurants, etc. for people to go to escape off campus)
- Middle school and HS have health classes and HS has SAFE Expect Respect Program available
- Have EAP services available to staff

- We have connections with local hospital (Dell Children's Hospital, Integral Care)
- Have Psychiatrist and Physician on campus
- Filtered refill Water stations available on campus
- Nurses do a great job doing medication administration (training and providing)
- We have very knowledgeable counseling and security staff
- **All relevant staff trained in the Threat Assessment Process (Summer 2021)**

List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Health and Safety**:

- Need more signing nurses
- Growing need for cameras outside entries (so Deaf parents can buzz in)
- Need to a procedure on deactivating proxy cards when people leave TSD
- Safety training causes anxiety in our children – how do we help them feel safe and calm – younger children cannot read the marquis about where to go or what to do (maybe have signed messages on TVs). No outside alerts in large areas – still working on where to go if stuck outside
- Limited support for families and staff (interpreters, lack of resources that take Medicaid, etc.) – 62% employees are Deaf and EAP only has 3 signing counselors or there is a conflict of interest because they know them personally (small community). **SGT 4**
- Food delivery is vulnerable – they can go anywhere and stay on campus as long as they want (More delivery services available now – kids order food on their own with their own phones/devices).
- Could consider badges/IDs for students (**Expand to other grades**)
- May need to return to live training on the suicide and screening process
- Need more communication between the health center and the school. Major illness or injury must be reported to the HC so it can be documented in their file.
- SB 11 has extensive safety requirements and requires TSD to create Mental Health Programs, Threat Assessment teams, and Crisis Team (**this is in the beginning stages**)

Please list **new items** not indicated on the original list of standards. (**Updated on 5/10/2021**)

- **Significant progress has been made on implementing SB 11 safety requirements.**
- **Our implementation plans using the DESSA SEL screener have been impacted by COVID-19 priorities.**
- **SGT 2 is working on an updated SEL curriculum on boundaries, self-advocacy, etc. SGT 2.**
- **Improve staff awareness related to suicide screening levels (level 1,2 ) and supervision/escorting SGT 2.**
- **Need new curriculum related to puberty, personal safety, cybertexting, bullying, social media, and the laws – etiquette (This is a SHAC Subcommittee responsibility.)**
- **We are constantly working to fine tune our alerting systems and emergency messages.**
- **We are making good progress on restorative practices SGT 5.**
- **Need to review entire self-harm and threat assessment screening process to include how to cover 24-hour services (SGT 2)**

## Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf review its procedures for allowing persons to enter and exit the campus.

**TSD Response:** Since our last accreditation visit TSD has developed and modified on several occasions both our policy and procedures related to visitors on campus. That evidence will be provided during the site visit.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf review the SCPI level for security officers and consider raising the level of proficiency to ensure effective communication.

**TSD Response:** TSD reviewed the current SCPI levels of security officers and the accessibility of sign language classes and determined that opportunities to attend sign language training for security officers is limited due to workload. The current training is classroom style and requires attendees to attend for 30 minutes at specified times. To improve access, TSD's Sign Language department will add ASL lessons, including micro lessons, to the new Ranger Academy learning management system to provide all staff with access to lessons that can be completed when staff can be available.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf undertake a comprehensive review of its suicide prevention policy and protocol to ensure optimal safety for students.

**TSD Response:** We are currently making additional revisions to our suicide prevention and intervention policy and procedures. Since our last visit the last two legislative sessions have had bills that require modifications to school's suicide prevention and intervention procedures. Evidence will be provided in Standard 7 during the site visit.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf undertake a comprehensive review of its suicide prevention policy and protocol to ensure optimal safety for students. (Elizabeth)

**TSD Response:** TSD currently employs 9 full time counselors as part of the instructional program, 2 full time Student Resource Coordinators (SRCs) as part of the student life program, and a part time psychiatrist. Additionally, our Special Education Director, Assistant Director of Student Life, and all of the Residential Supervisors are trained screeners for suicide and self-harm. TSD takes student safety very seriously. All of our staff is trained biannually on how to recognize the signs of self-harm, suicidal ideation, and the district procedure for reporting this. Our students are also trained to use our anonymous reporting system and to report concerns about their peers to a trusted staff member. In 2018? TSD conducted training in the Safety Response Protocols and a program called Stop the Bleed. This is also taught to our HS students as part of the health curriculum (new state requirement).

## **New Laws/Policies**

In the 2019 Legislative Session there were several new laws regarding training in threat assessments, the role of our School Health Advisory Committee, and anonymous reporting. As a result of SB11, TSD created our School Safety Committee. This committee meets on a regular basis to address all of the new regulations and requirements related to school safety.

In summer 2021 selected staff was trained in conducting threat assessments.

TSD has added several new Board Policies and updated/revised policies currently in place. Changes included adding opioid addiction risks to the health curriculum, allowing self-carry of epipens, and mitigating factors related to discipline of students.

## **Community Partnerships**

During the 2018-2019 school year, the special education director participated in the local mental health task force. Through these discussions, partnerships were developed with the local hospital (Dell Children's Hospital). The hospital shared the screening instrument they utilize and stated that they would prefer schools use the same instrument especially when a school is making a referral to mental health deputies or for hospitalization. In the fall of 2019, the TSD screening team began using the Columbia Rating Scales to assess student self-harm risk.

TSD has a partnership with SAFE (domestic violence and sexual assault organization). TSD provides a space and the counselors refer students to this organization for services. They provide counseling to our students who need this and HS group sessions utilizing their Expect Respect (Healthy Boundaries) curriculum. TSD has assisted this organization in getting grants for their DeafShare Program (including hiring a Deaf Counselor) and they participate on our SHAC committee.

Austin School District and TSD have a Memo of Understanding related to providing mainstreaming opportunities for our students whose IEPs/ARD committees determine this would be beneficial. TSD provides the transportation and interpreting services while AISD provides the teacher and classroom space materials for a fee. TSD has similar partnerships with BYU (Online Courses), TSBVI, and Austin Community College.

Last spring TSD entered into an agreement with Dell Medical Center to participate in the TCHAT Program. TCHAT stands for Texas Child Health Access through Telemedicine. Dell Med, in collaboration with Dell Children's Medical Center, provides telepsychology and telepsychiatry services to children and adolescents in Texas schools through the TCHAT program. Dell Med TCHAT works with school staff members to identify and assess behavioral health needs of students, prioritizing the needs and care of at-risk children and adolescents who lack access to mental health care services in their communities. Children and adolescents in participating school districts may receive up to four free tele-sessions with mental health professionals. Dell Med TCHAT also assists with coordination of follow-up care for students who need ongoing mental health services. We are lucky enough that they now have a psychologist that signs.

## Narrative

### STANDARD 7: Health and Safety

TSD approaches campus health and safety in a comprehensive manner. We believe that there are multiple components of campus safety that contribute to a safe and positive living, working and learning environment. Our state also has a multitude of requirements for school districts and state agencies related to comprehensive school safety. As a result, TSD addresses campus health and safety via mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

In 2001 our state legislature conducted an overall of school safety and discipline and they continue to do so in subsequent legislative sessions. The Texas Education Code, Chapter 37 provides guidance to school districts on issues related to discipline, law and order. The Texas State University established the Texas School Safety Center to support these efforts and it provides a wealth of safety information and training for Texas schools. TSD is also a member of the Central Texas School Safety Consortium (CTSSC). The CTSSC has several goals, which include serving as a resource for emergency management, planning, and training. Several schools have joined the consortium, including the Texas School for Deaf and Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. CTSSC has played important roles in prescribing evacuation and shelter operations plans during many central Texas storms. As a state agency we also work with the State Office of Risk Management (SORM). The mission of SORM is to provide active leadership to enable Texas state agencies to protect their employees, the general public, and the state's physical and financial assets by reducing and controlling risk in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

In our dual role as a state agency and a school district, TSD receives safety audits by both TEA and SORM. TSD implements its comprehensive health and safety program with the assistance of our Risk Manager, Security Staff and Department Safety Officers. Ongoing training is provided on a variety of relevant topics and we conduct systematic drills to practice safety. Reviews of the risk management program are performed to help ensure a comprehensive program. TSD participated in the Texas State Office of Risk Management's Risk Management Program Review (RMPR) and the Texas District Audit Report (DAR), and also used internal auditors. The RMPR included areas such as risk management policies, workers' compensation exposures, employee safety and health program, fire safety, property exposures, emergency procedures and business recovery procedures. The DAR reviewed areas such as emergency operations plan information, and school safety and security practices.



## Deferred Maintenance Supports Health and Safety

As previously mentioned, as part of our deferred maintenance agreement with the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) we have been replacing and upgrading our fire alarm panels and amber light systems in all of the campus buildings. This project was completed in April 2017. Two other recent significant projects were the upgrading of our security cameras from 4 functioning surveillance cameras to 188, and installation of a security access control system to improve badge control access for all campus buildings.

We signal emergencies via an amber light system. The amber lights are activated across the campus in all indoor and outdoor areas. A flashing amber light alerts staff to check for emergency messages that are immediately broadcast on mobile phones and strategically placed overhead marquee reader boards in common spaces. Additionally, an amber alert interrupts campus computers and laptops with an emergency message. These messages also are used to notify the community of dangerous weather situations, lockdown or shelter in place drills, critical emergency messages such as a campus intruder, and major disasters in the community. Staff have Emergency Guides that summarize the required responses.

All TSD employees receive training on health, safety, security and emergency procedures at New Employee Orientation and through annual updates. Current safety and risk management information is routinely shared at the School Leadership Council and by Risk Management (RM). Additional training throughout the year is facilitated by RM, who serve as resident experts in the area of health, safety and emergency procedures.

## Emergency Management

All public schools in the state of Texas are required to have multi-hazard emergency operations plan that addresses mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery and to provide training to their staff. It is the standard for the country that schools be organized consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS). TSD has implemented this structure and developed training and emergency assignments to support the ICS structure.

TSD has taken many steps to prepare for a variety of emergency situations to ensure that students and staff are safe and secure. TSD staff members have received training and guidelines to help them prepare for various emergencies such as fire, tornado, lockdown, and shelter-in-place. Drills are conducted throughout the year to help students and staff become more familiar with what to do and where to go if something happens. Drills are critiqued and reported to the School Leadership Team. Examples of improvements made are:

- The creation of a training tool for the Residential Services Night Shift staff.
- Expanding communication devices with the Residential Services Night Shift staff as well as with Maintenance, Grounds, and Housekeeping staff.
- Assessing emergency communications to identify service delivery issues and to have a mechanism for future communications transitions.

During the past three years, TSD developed and implemented a School Continuity of Operations Plan (SCOOP) that resulted in the creation of Department Recovery Plans and a Technology



Disaster Recovery Plan. The School Continuity of Operations Plan is part of the “recovery” aspect of the emergency management process.

TSD cooperates with the regional emergency operations center through its membership in the Central Texas School Safety Consortium. As part of this membership TSD participates in the Capital Area Shelter Hub Plan and City of Austin-Travis County Winter Weather Emergency Plan. TSD has representation at the Austin-Travis County Emergency Operations Center during crisis situations such as the past H1N1 Flu outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic, Hurricanes Ike and Harvey response and recovery efforts and other inclement weather events.

### **Criminal History Checks**

Government Code § 411.113 authorizes TSD to obtain criminal history record information maintained by the Department of Public Safety, the Federal Bureau of Investigation identification division, or another law enforcement agency which relates to school employees, professional consultants, applicants for permanent, temporary, or consultative employment, student teachers, educational interns, persons who perform ongoing educational projects at the school and volunteer positions whose employment or potential employment with the school involves direct interactions with, or the opportunity to interact and associate with the children or youth attending the school.

TSD Policy DBAA also addresses Criminal History checks and Fingerprinting. Although the Education Code only requires fingerprinting of contract staff and school area staff, we include all TSD employees from all divisions in this process. We also include our contract staff if they will have direct contact with our students. As the Human Resources has continued with the implementation of the fingerprinting process and a criminal history policy and procedures for all hiring even though this procedure exceeds the current State requirements.

### **Safe & Supportive School Program Team**

In response to the 2019 Texas Legislative Session where many safe school bills were enrolled (such as SB 11), TSD created the Safe and Supportive Program Team. This team meets monthly and includes the Executive Leadership Team, TSD administration from both the residential and school program, the Risk Manager, school counselors, the Director of Student Health Services, and members of the law enforcement community. In the past two years TSD has enacted many changes to ensure our community remains safe including training in our SRP (Safety Response Protocols) and our anonymous reporting system. This team has been critical in helping the district make decisions regarding our response to COVID 19.

Students have also been trained in anonymous reporting and have been very good about reporting concerns from both within the school and outside of the school. This year High School students will learn CPR and Stop the Bleed in their PE/Health class and all MS/HS students will have a suicide hotline number/contact on their ID.

### **Threat Assessment Training**

In spring of 2021, selected staff attended training by the Texas Safety Center regarding threat assessments. Since that time the Instructional Leadership team, Director of Student Life, Director of Instruction, Risk Manager, and Special Education Director have met to discuss the creation of

threat assessment teams for each department, a flow chart for our response, and what forms to use when interviewing potential high-risk students. The Special Education Director and Risk Manager have both attended the advanced training related to threat assessments and are leading this project.

### **Positive Behavior Supports**

TSD's positive behavior support system/intervention starts with MANDT. TSD has been fortunate to have a great relationship with this company. We have hosted training onsite and participated in focus groups to assist them in creating training that works with our Deaf students. The premise is that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and that all students and staff feel safe on our campus. This past year we sent our SEL Coordinators, 1 elementary administrator and 1 secondary administrator, and all of our residential supervisors to the trainer of trainer course. We now have 15 trainers on campus. This past August every instructional and residential staff member attended two days of training related to understanding trauma, building relationships, behavior management, and de-escalation interventions.

### **Student Health Care**

The Health Center at Texas School for the Deaf consists of 14 Nurses with various and lengthy pediatric, adolescent nursing, and mental health experiences. The health center is supervised by the Director of Student Health Services who is a Doctorate prepared Nurse (APN), one nurse with a Master's degree, six BSN Nurses, two Registered Nurses, and three Licensed Vocational Nurses. There is also an Administrative Assistant. We are open 24 hours a day, 6 days a week, and special event weekends throughout the year.

*Annual Training is provided on:*

Blood Borne Pathogens

Suicide Prevention

Child Abuse Prevention

Sexual Harassment

Epilepsy

*Every Two years nursing requirements License renewal include:*

Continuing Education Requirements for License

Concussion Protocols

CPR and Defibrillator certification

*Every 5 Years; State requirement*

Vision Screening

Scoliosis Screening

Acanthosis Nigricans Screening

### **Dispensing medication**

Medication administration is carried out according to the Nurse Practice Act and rules are consistently followed. If there is a deviation from these rules, we follow specific procedures. We have a color-coding system for our medicine cups decreasing the chance of giving a med at the wrong time as well as literally counting the medications and matching the count with the Medication Administration Record. Narcotics are counted at the change of every shift, as is per nursing protocol in any health care setting. An off-going and an in-coming nurse count every narcotic and

both sign that the count is correct. If it is not, no one leaves until the issue is investigated and corrected.

Medication is packed for homegoing and field trips/away games on a daily and weekly basis and staff members are trained regarding administering medications per prescription and bottle/packaging recommendations.

### **Clinic Hours**

Students begin coming to the Health Center about 6:00 am for morning routine and non-routine medications and treatments. Each morning we give about half of our approximate 350 routine meds and approximately fifty non-routine medications. Students continue to come throughout the day and into the night. We have 3 shifts for the nursing staff (day shift, evening shift, and overnight shift). The evening shift has two nurses, two pouring and giving medications and the third being responsible for non-routine health issues and routine treatments. The same requirements would apply to this shift. Night shift staffing has changed to one nurse. Our only issue is the shortage of subs to cover time off. There is a nurse on call on the weekends and holidays when the clinic is closed.

TSD contracts with an MD who serves as the Medical Director. She comes 3 days a week from 7am to 8:30am to treat students as needed. She also provides training to the health center staff, is on call for emergency consultation, and is part of the concussion team on campus. Additionally, a psychiatrist comes once a week for psych clinic.

### **Health Center Communication**

We strive to foster constant communication with staff and parents. Confidentiality is sometimes difficult given the design of the main nursing area, which also serves as a student waiting room and the place where meds are dispensed.

If a student has a special need, staff working with that student receives individual training from the nursing staff. We are always available to teach staff and students when requested. We have explained health histories, diabetes, nutrition, women's health, asthma, and seizures and assisted with career exploration and tours. As our population grows and unique or complex medical issues have increased, our staffing ratio has changed to better serve students.

The two nursing supervisors and the Director of Student Health Services share the responsibility of the Student Staffing Teams (SST), Admission, Review, and Dismissals (ARDS), Individual Health Plans (IHP), and other necessary important documentation, which is associated with each student. Two Nurses pour and pass the routine morning medication for all students, whilst the other two nurses treat non-routine health issues and routine treatments. Another Nurse runs Doctor's clinics, which are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Every student who has been seen requires a call to parents informing them of status, nursing notes to be written, and if necessary, meds to be ordered. This typically takes most of the day.

## Positive Innovations

- Last year, the Health Center successfully recruited a new psychiatrist. Every clinic day (Thursday), we have a team meeting prior to seeing students. This has created better communication with counselors and staff.
- We have created a system to discard discontinued controlled substances. They are logged, counted and double locked until they can be properly discarded according to the protocols of the Food and Drug Administration.
- We created a Nurse's conference room where we have meetings, med trainings, and in-service. It is now complete with a television/monitor.
- Improved Medication Administration training for unlicensed staff to dispense meds to students on field trips and weekend events, where a nurse is unavailable. We have approximately 190 staff trained to dispense medication to students. They have also been trained in assessment of emergency situations regarding seizures, asthma, severe allergic reactions, and diabetes management
- Employee retention is excellent. Many of the nurses have been here between five and twenty years. The concern is that several nurses will retire at the same time.

## COVID 19 Response/Health and Safety Protocols:

In response to COVID 19, TSD became a virtual only campus from March 2020 through September 2020. Our staff jumped in and created ways to meet our families' needs. Our teachers provided virtual instruction, created lessons and extension activities in schoology and seesaw. The related service providers did some home OT/PT services and provided teletherapy for counseling and speech.

The leadership team worked all summer to create our Health and Safety protocols and our Superintendent had virtual town halls and sent messages to the community regarding our efforts to reopen the school. For the 2020-2021 school year, TSD offered both virtual and in person instruction. Classrooms were cleaned often, handwashing stations were put around the campus, plastic dividers were put up and PPE was offered to staff.

In the fall TSD applied to become an Abbott BinaxNOW testing site. We have been able to conduct Rapid Screening tests on our students and our staff since last November. This includes mass testing where trained staff ride the charter buses and screen students prior to their return to campus and setting up locations around campus to test students at parent drop off and bus drop off. This program continued throughout the spring of last year through now.

When we get confirmation of a positive case, the core team is convened and contact tracing begins. Students and staff that are considered close contacts are offered testing and parents are notified. We are doing everything we can to ensure that the school can remain open so that students can continue to learn.

## Accountability for Students/Supervision

Student Life uses a student checklist to monitor and track the whereabouts of students during after school hours. Each student is listed on the sheet and staff are required to check students every 30 minutes (15 minutes during overnight shift 12:00 a.m. to 7:50 a.m.). This process begins immediately after school at 3:30 p.m. and continues until 7:50 a.m. the following morning. If day students visit the dorm after school for sports or extracurricular activities then their presence is

documented as well. Medication times and behavior reports are also documented on this sheet. When documentation is completed, staff deliver these forms to the residential service office where student attendance is recorded and the forms are filed. This same process is used by our chaperones on the buses for our weekly home goings.

### **Student Safety - Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Reporting**

The TSD Board Policy addressing Child Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation, “Sexual, Mental, or Physical Misconduct” and Improper Care (AN&E) assures compliance with the Texas Administrative Code, Family Code and Penal Code as they relate to these areas of concern. The TSD Administrative Procedure focuses on prevention of AN&E and Improper Care as well as outlining specific requirements for reporting suspected AN&E and Improper Care of students in accordance with the law and TSD Policy/Procedure. Also outlined in the procedure is the process for TSD investigations of suspected AN&E and Improper Care and referral to outside agencies as appropriate.

TSD social workers provide annual training for all school staff regarding AN&E and Improper Care. Training is also provided to all new hire employees and volunteers. The training includes a review of TSD policy/procedure requirements regarding AN&E and Improper Care. In addition to TSD policy/procedure review, the training includes a review of Texas law with regard to reporting requirements of suspected AN&E and how to make a report.

We are in the process of revising this procedure. Once it is complete, the social workers will create new training for staff to follow.

### **Self-assessment survey results – Standard 7**

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_7\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_7_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

<b>Evidence</b> (Indicate on the following chart if the Evidence will be supplied in hard copy (HC) in an evidence room during the visit or electronically (E) on a flash drive. Add items as necessary.)	<b>**HC or E</b>
Emergency and crisis plan/safety plan	E
Records of most recent health and safety inspections	HC
Posting of fire drill/evacuation plans visible in each classroom and dormitory room. Records of emergency drills	HC
Emergency Procedures section of Faculty Handbook	E
Abuse and neglect policy/ violence/substance abuse/weapons/suicide/reporting policies	E
Emergency Alert Systems	On-site
Missing student procedures	HC
Staff training in CPR/or other such program and First Aid certification	HC

Wellness committee activities	E
Code of conduct/behavior including policies on handling minor and major infractions and data on student discipline including discipline referrals and suspensions.	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 8: Educational Program

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 8: Educational Program

**3.74**
**Overall Standard Rating**

**The Standard:** The educational programs consist of both carefully planned and well-executed curriculum programs that include appropriate content standards, solid instructional pedagogy, and appropriate assessment based on research and best practices. The educational programs are adequately financed, are periodically reviewed, and are mission-appropriate. They are developed to meet and address the needs of students and are designed to produce student learning at all levels. Effective policies and practices are in place, along with instructional materials, technology, and equipment that are appropriate, current, functional, and well maintained. Educational programs are aligned with state, local, and district requirements as necessary and are supported by adequate record keeping and good communication. The educational programs of the school provide appropriate Early Intervention (0-3) to critical stakeholders.

**This summary report is a compilation of 76 surveys distributed to:**

<u>26</u>	<b>Administration</b>	<u>45</u>	<b>Faculty and Staff</b>	<u>0</u>	<b>Students</b>	<u>0</u>	<b>Board Members</b>
<u>5</u>	<b>Parents</b>	<u>18</u>	<b>Other:</b>	Instructional Leadership Council members			

**Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:**

**Report Completed By:** Stella Egbert    **Date:** 12/7/2019  
5/6/21

**Committee:** Instructional Leadership Council Members (ILC)

List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Educational Program**:

- The current strategic plan has offered ways to enhance educational programs and has been done with fidelity.
- MTSS as a mechanism has brought programs to become better at using a variety of data in the areas of behavior/SEL, academics (including ASLAI) to make program decisions. The decisions include staffing and specific allocations, training, and the like. MTSS has enabled programs to become more proactive. MTSS has communicated needs that benefit the district, such as forming the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Team (PBIS Team) that include collaboration among behavior staff and counselors to enhance a more focus on SEL support and the creation and hiring of a new Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion.
- We have increased our focus on supporting district SEL initiatives such as incorporating

Conscious Discipline, starting with the DESSA screening for SEL and working with parents in supporting a variety of areas related to SEL. **SGT 2**

- We have initiated a continuum of services in all educational programs and providing services that benefit individual student needs. **SGT 1**
- The new Professional Pathways for Teachers (PPfT) offers incentives and a focus on professional development and human capital.
- The Bilingual Language Arts (BLA) program is in its second year and have shown considerable difference in language learning and teaching in grades K-3. **SGT 3**
- CTE and Middle School collaboration on the 8th grade rotations have offered students a way to consider future planning, preparing for high school, and considering their endorsements. **SGT 1**
- Educational programs are more focused on streamlining professional development, offering cross-professional development opportunities for our teachers and providers. Educational programs are also increasing curricular PDs and ensuring implementations are with consistent training and dialogue. **SGT 1**
- The Instructional Leadership Council has increased professional development in the areas of leadership, MTSS, and other relevant focuses to best support educational programs. **SGT 1**
- Committees such as the Academic Achievement Record have provided leaders and personnel a way to streamline transition plans and to look at alignment in the continuum of services. **SGT 3**
- District Townhall Sessions have provided more collaboration on a district-level that has been beneficial.

### **Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:**

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf seek opportunities for teachers in the Special Needs Department (SND) to collaborate with similar area content teachers in the general education program. This will enable the SND teachers to have support for content area instruction and for the “general education” teachers to have support for providing appropriate modification for struggling students.

**TSD Response:** We have transitioned to a model that provides a range of optimal services for all students within age and grade level departments and slowly began this transition for all grade levels (Early Childhood Education to ACCESS). We began merging the early childhood education and elementary students into one program and structured self-contained classes with multiple opportunities for content and social interaction, which offered flexibility for all students in 2018. The ECE-Elementary administrative team focused on the continuum of services through data, training, and structured dialogue about modifications to the curriculum and additional accommodations that benefit individual students. The team then enabled teachers to work together through curriculum study days within grade level teams to enable flexibility across grades. After a year of that transition, we then merged the middle and high school programs. The middle school program has recently set grade teams (into the third year of the merge), providing teachers the opportunity to collaborate within grade-specific teams to support all their students and to allow flexibility benefiting individual students and their needs. In our first year transitioning the high school students from the special needs department, we focused on their graduation plans and ensured that they were obtaining what they needed in high school to serve all their students. We had self-contained classes and ensured students were able to take



courses from the Career Technical Education program. The high school program is now, with their being in the third year of this transition, working towards more teacher collaboration within the upper grade level and developed tailored LMS modules to that effect for all their teachers. During the transition for middle and high school programs, we received concerns from parents about how the merge may not have involved them in the process in ways that they wanted assurance that the merge would benefit their individual child and how they were accessing grade level opportunities. We determined a group meeting of concerned parents during the first year of the merge, and to that effect, we determined that the high school level would have a focused position where an administrator would ensure applied programming arrangements continue to be optimal and individualized within the department. We currently have two applied programming supervisors (Elementary (K-5) and High School (9-12)) to ensure we are continuously mindful of specialized needs that benefit students.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider implementing a school-wide language plan as well as a language plan for each department to address language allocation and supports for ASL and English.

**TSD Response:** We began incorporating the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum to begin this work within the Elementary program, obtaining training from Dr. Di Perri and Dr. Cuzbek. We hosted parent group sessions and teacher training series. Throughout the last five years, we have continued our collaboration with Dr. Di Perri and Dr. Cuzbek and have further incorporated the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum into the middle and high school programs this year (2021-2022). The Elementary program adjusted their schedules to allow for more language immersion opportunities during the instructional day, focusing on immersing into ASL in order to transfer skills into English. We also began assessing our students' ASL use through ASLAI in the Elementary program for two years prior to transitioning into the middle school program. For the 2021-2022 school year, we will provide ASLAI for all our students and to continue to glean on the data to help us continue to design and refine our program and its support for language learning in ASL and English.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider providing ASL as a content area of study for students PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

**TSD Response:** The elementary program has an ASL course as an elective for all students in all grade levels. This has provided students the opportunity to play with language, use ASL in its informal and formal register, and make applications to their Bilingual Grammar Curriculum. The middle school program offers ASL as an elective as well. The high school program has offered ASL 1 and ASL 2 as a course for numerous years.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider utilizing ASL assessments for students in grades K-12<sup>th</sup> to monitor language growth and guide instruction.

**TSD Response:** We have committed to ASLAI for the last few years (with a break during the COVID19 pandemic). We have had personnel from ASLAI to provide us data-specific training sessions for the Elementary program while we began our ASLAI assessment for students. The middle school program began assessing their students prior to the pandemic and would have their baseline to compare with when we restart during the 2021-2022 school

year. The high school will begin its' first year using the ASLAI assessment. We will work within the Instructional Leadership Council (ILC) to assess what the data tells us in how we can best strengthen our ASL/English bilingual program for our students.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider creating ASL Specialist positions to work with the SLP in evaluating students' ASL skills.

**TSD Response:** At this time, we do not have an ASL specialist and have not had one for the last 5 years. Instead, we are providing training for our SLPs to ensure they become culturally competent and acquire and learn more about ASL as a language. We have committed membership for all our SLPs to the Language First program and to have them attend training throughout the year. We have a K-5 SLP biweekly session with the Elementary principal to work towards a dialogue that benefit the SLPs and the program with its Bilingual Grammar Curriculum and immersion program. We see that this will be expanded to the middle school grades and we are designing a comprehensive PD strand for our SLPs, OT/PT, and VI teams to work together on not only language skills in ASL, but the use of ASL through these disciplines.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf ensure learning targets and objectives are clearly and consistently displayed in the classrooms and incorporated into lesson plans across departments.

**TSD Response:** Curriculum study days have become regularly scheduled within the K-5 program, where teachers meet to talk about data sets, instructional goals, and how to ensure we see growth in our students' learning. The middle and high school programs have started this, but paused during the pandemic, and are returning to such this year (2021-2022). We have adopted the Schoology LMS, which teachers are to post learning objectives for students in the last two years. This mechanism has increased access, and enabled us to truly specialize some learning objectives for some students, beyond the classroom. Moreover, the LMS has allowed parents to see what their child's objectives are as well.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider providing teachers with curriculum and resources for students who are more than 2 grades behind.

**TSD Response:** As we transitioned into merging the special needs department into grade level departments, we are sharing more resources that can benefit students who may have instructional gaps. For the upcoming 5 years, we have committed to several instructional initiatives that further stress gap recovery through UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) along with Inquiry Based learning.

## Narrative

### STANDARD 8: Educational Programs

TSD provides a continuum of services and instructional approaches for all our students. This does not come without challenges, but the strategies to approach these challenges are articulated in

our current five-year strategic plan. After we have experienced programming changes by the way of transitioning our Special Needs program into age or grade level programs in the last three years, we are moving towards Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as indicated in our current strategic plan. We believe that more research has surfaced as of late in regards to how the brain learns and how language deprivation has an impact on such. We also understand more about students who have significant disabilities that require us to ensure we understand how to support them while they learn. In combination, we are working towards designing programs that address not only academic achievement, but other important factors.

Academic success is viable through multiple means: connecting with our families, sustaining culturally responsive practices with our students and their families and communities, ensuring we support our students through supporting staff who work with students, providing professional development and learning opportunities for our staff, and ensuring our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) communicates our needs on a continuous basis. These means have surfaced in our current strategic plan because not only have we transitioned our district instructional programs, we have become cognizant about current understanding about how individuals learn and how to better support the whole child within a diverse student body.

The MTSS framework allows us to ensure we have a general Tier 1 curriculum and instructional model with Tier 2 to provide supplemental instruction and/or materials. Intensive support and/or materials are within Tier 3. The framework ensures programs look at data pieces, evaluate current curricular resources and instructional approaches, and make appropriate adjustments to best respond to the entire student body within a program and maintain support for individual students. At times, the resources or instructional methods are modified to best allow student access to the standards. Unpacking the standards to focus on the most essential standards along with providing specifically designed modifications will be necessary for some students with significant academic gaps and/or significant disabilities. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that the content is presented to the individual student in the best way s/he/they learn and to be able to participate in the learning with others.

### **Core Curriculum**

Since 2011, we've used the TEKS Resource System (TRS) as our core curriculum. We've enriched the core curriculum with the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum (BGC) for Grades K-2, and furthering the curriculum for students who transition to TSD at a later enrollment level as an immersion approach up to 5th grade. We have just begun incorporating BGC in the upper grades in the Middle and High schools. At this time, BGC is a resource rather than an implementation of ELA classes at this level.

Our core curriculum is derived from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through the use of the TEKS Resource System (TRS). The TEKS are intertwined with other important resources that highlight our specific population, which is to expand and refine our ASL/English practices throughout our students' learning experience. Not only do we use the TEKS and emphasize ASL/English best practices, we also ensure that our students access the curriculum in optimal ways through using Unique Learning Systems (ULS). ULS is a resource we've been using within the Special Needs Department and as we merged programs, we worked on aligning the TRS and the ULS resource on grade levels and this is accessible for our teachers through our Google Drive.

We also provide courses aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) to ensure our students are ready for the workforce or to continue their education to attain specialized certifications and/or degrees in the upper grades.

### **Other Curricular Areas**

While we have the core curriculum centered to address the curricular referenced assessments our students take from Grades 3 through 12, we also find that supporting our ASL/English bilingual population as important. We believe that this ensures that each student can access the core curriculum through a variety of means (currently, through ULS and the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum). The core curriculum addresses standards from K through 12 and because we have students in the Early Learning Center (ELC) as young as 18 months prior to transitioning to the age of 3 up to the age of 5 and students enrolled in the Adult Curriculum for Community, Employment, and Social Skills (ACCESS) program after the age of 18 up to 22, there are curriculums we've developed and/or adopted to best serve these populations.

Our ELC program uses the *Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum*. The curriculum also allows us to note observations made in the classroom or specifically to the lesson or activity the curriculum provides in the 38 developmental areas. The 38 developmental areas are within core focuses in the curriculum: social emotional development, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. These areas support kindergarten readiness and the curriculum is also aligned to our TEKS Prekindergarten standards.

The ACCESS program focuses on centralizing the transition plans of students in order for them to become independent and sustain work after completing their special education services. Specialized courses are designed to prepare students to manage their finances, and/or navigate city resources such as transportation and/or agencies. Students are placed for employment experience within the city of Austin or if appropriate, on campus. The goal of the program is to ensure that students, with very little time they have within the program, to benefit from focusing on independence and sustainability, through employment or if appropriate, agencies or services that allow them to fulfill their future goals.

### **The Instructional Leadership Council**

The Instructional Leadership Council (ILC) holds a large membership of instructional leaders from all six programs on campus, from principals/supervisors, assistant principals/supervisors, coordinators, and other relevant staff from each instructional program on campus. ILC meets weekly for an average of two hours focusing on a variety of curricular and instructional priorities. Once a month, the council meets with our three curriculum specialists and two librarians to bring forward work that promotes spiraled and streamlined curricular and instructional plans. The district staff consist of the Director of Instruction, Special Education Director, Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion, and the MTSS Coordinator. The goal for the council is to work together in providing quality and equitable instruction and services for all our students.

The ILC members use the Professional Pathways for Teachers (PPfT) evaluation system to evaluate our teachers to ensure we support their growth in all areas of the evaluation system. As part of the system, instructional resources are essential. We have a specific process when we have certain adoption periods, when the state gives us the task to identify resources that benefit

our students. During this process, we involve other stakeholders; from teachers to parents in providing feedback on what resources would be optimal for our students.

As a whole, the ILC looks at how we can best support our teachers to strengthen their instructional approaches and ensure the resources and materials they have are optimal and beneficial for their students. Professional development is another important element to maintaining fidelity to decisions we make as a district. The ILC has held cross-departmental professional development opportunities and continues to provide this as a team to our teaching and student service personnel. To further this effort, we have also initiated a cross-division professional development, involving our student life and residential staff with our instructional division staff to obtain shared in-service training that benefit all our students in the area of social emotional learning and restorative practices in August 2021.

In addition to driving growth in our teachers and service personnel when it comes to curriculum and instruction, we find it equally important for our instructional leaders to participate in an evaluative tool that supports growth not only of the individual leader, but the entire program s/he/they are leading. After having held onto the implementation of the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are implementing the system this year (2021-2022) for our principals and supervisors.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development, when implemented consistently and are meaningful, make an impact on student outcomes. TSD has developed a mechanism in the last five years to monitor district professional development funding and processes. We are committed to aligning to current strategic plans and have our personnel reflect about their requests and how that impacts their area of focus that ultimately benefits the campus and the students. Throughout the last three years, we've become more conscious about what type of professional development activities would reinforce current strategic plans. For the new 5-year strategic plan, we noted specific professional development in the instructional areas in the first year of our district improvement plan focusing on instruction.

The TSD Human Resources division has just implemented a Learning Management System (LMS) for our staff to obtain consistent professional development that is not only paced, but also tailored to specific disciplines and focuses. We look forward to having this LMS grow for program specific needs, campus needs, and other relevant training to ensure we are adhering to mandates and/or best practices. We also seek opportunities to not only connect with local educators, but participate in conferences on a national level, which further supports our student population and our goals as a district.

Our staff may attend the Region 13 Education Service Center and other off-site agencies to respond to a unique professional development need. We also invite professionals to our campus to provide on-site training. We see the benefit of our own professionals on campus to provide peer training--for many have specialized interests, studies, and experience in providing mentorship and often department specific or school wide training.

The six instructional programs on campus also provide specific professional development training and dialogues within their programs. We find that the more we align our district training to department focuses, it becomes more applicable and meaningful. Program principals/supervisors

are committed to furthering department specific focuses to support their overall programs on Tuesdays of each month. Out of those Tuesdays, one is committed to either our division professional development or the Superintendent's Town Hall sessions.

### **Early Learning Center (0-5)**

In the last 5 years, we have seen enrollment in the ages of 0-5 increase, thus creating an opportunity for bringing back what was formerly known as the Parent Infant Program (PIP) and the Toddler Learning Center (TLC) into what is now called the Early Learning Center. This creates a stronger focus on early intervention and continuing that sense of family engagement after a child transitions from ECI services to special education/deaf education. We also decided this focus would be in alignment with our state outreach endeavors, where we are focusing on increasing follow through for families whose babies were screened with hearing loss at birth and partnering with interventionists across the state.

The Early Learning Center (ELC) is a unique and inclusive family and child centered program for Deaf and Hard Of Hearing students from birth to prekindergarten. We believe that strong family engagement is central to our students' success. Our family-centered approach builds on each family and child's strengths and provides them with support and resources to advance their child's individual learning and developmental needs. Our ASL-English bilingual program promotes critical thinking skills, literacy development, and social emotional growth through play based collaborative learning. We believe these early critical learning years set the foundation for future academic and personal achievement.

Families may identify our teachers (certified to teach Deaf/Hard of Hearing) who can fulfill the provider's aspect of the Individual and Family Service Plans (IFSP). Our teachers may serve the individual IFSP plans in the home, within the community, and/or at ELC.

ELC as a program also offers early learning experiences on site, offering a full day program for those who turn 3 up to 5. We provide a half day program for those who are 18 months to just before the child transitions into special education/deaf education services at the age of 3 on their birthdays. There is also a transition preschool class for those who transition from IFSP plans to IEP plans and families can choose whether they'd like their child to stay the full day or go home half day.

As many programs have experienced in the past two years during the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, we are seeing enrollment decline in the very youngest ages of our student population. Families are not comfortable sending their children to school because they are vulnerable without being able to be vaccinated against the COVID19. With this, we are working towards bridging partnerships and opportunities with ECI agencies and regional day school programs.

### **Elementary (K-5)**

In the last five years, after having merged the elementary ages from the special needs program to the Elementary program, we have been working towards an approach that is differentiated and beneficial for all students in their developmental and academic readiness. We continued the team-teaching model and added teachers from the special needs program to join our teams. After at least a year and a half, we saw how our program could have a comprehensive continuum of

instruction and services for those placed in Kindergarten through 5th grade. We began this exploration during the COVID pandemic, when we had shifted our work to support families, which in turn helped us see how we can modify some of our practices. We also saw how instrumental students' success during the pandemic from the support of their families, which in turn, prioritized us to focus on our families. This led to several initiatives in the last year and half. This year, we have refined our grade level teams, making the student groups smaller to maximize flexibility and space to learn, incorporating SEL and Conscious Discipline approaches in the classrooms. This led to seeing how we can commit to a more holistic approach to providing family support through the counseling team and how we can support our individual students as well.

We've acquired the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum and began using the ASL Assessment Instrument (ASLAI) to best assess first language proficiency to ensure English learning would be optimal. During this period, we have learned more about the academic and language development of children from Kindergarten through 5th grade. This made room for some innovative approaches to how teachers teach and what strategies should be in place for our ASL/English bilingual students, for whom some may also have additional disabilities. We provide enrichment throughout the grades in the areas of American Sign Language, Fine Arts, STEM, and Physical Education.

We focus on giving time for teachers to meet as a team for what we call our curriculum studies sessions. These sessions are led with the administrative team members, including our librarian and curriculum specialist. The goal of these sessions is to allow grade level teams to meet, offer shared plans for their students using the TEKS standards and the resources we have for all our students in the specific grade level to plan differentiated activities. During these sessions, teachers also discuss data pieces and incorporate ideas from professional development sessions.

Students accessing instruction takes not only motivation but confidence and safety. Conscious Discipline is the approach the K-5 program is committed to; starting with the adults who work with the students. Our counselors and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) coordinator and SEL coaches work together in providing tiered services in the area of social emotional learning. We believe it takes the entire school community to ensure our students are safe. This focus has been in place the last five years and has been instrumental in the reduction of incident reports and more refinement in providing tiered services for those who require wrap-around support. Moreover, Conscious Discipline has helped us move from punitive and restrictive measurements in teaching students about misbehaviors towards a more positive and nurturing approach. We have removed the In School Suspension program as a resource to respond to misbehaviors and focused heavily on the implementation of Conscious Discipline and other strategies.

### **Middle School (6-8)**

The middle school program focuses on how they can support students as they transition into middle school from elementary and preparing those who will transition into high school. During these formidable years, the focus is to instill not only academic readiness, but social emotional growth. Independence, developing confidence, and understanding self is key to determining future plans, especially those who transition to the age of 14 and start discussing their transition plans in the ARD meeting.

The program offers many learning opportunities in and out of the classroom. We've allowed for a block a day to have both, accelerated instruction in a manner that is flexible for the entire program and to address individual student needs along with enrichment opportunities, such as centralizing

learning around students' interests. These interests range from understanding the stock market, appreciating anime/manga, experiencing fantasy sports, being involved in nature such as hiking, developing interests in arts and crafts, and diving further into science. This opportunity allows students who would otherwise have to travel home after school to appreciate enrichment with like-peers during the school day. As we progress into the school year, accelerated instruction surfaces during flex time. This time frame best provides intervention and focused instruction in smaller groups. Students are also encouraged to attend to the Homework Center after school to get tutoring and/or support in specific content areas and we have certified and highly qualified teachers providing this support.

The program has both, grade-specific teams and teachers who work together within their content areas. Teaming teachers together to support specific grades enables them to know their students better, understand their needs, especially their developmental stages within this period of time, and to provide instruction that is flexible and holistic. Teachers also work together, focusing on the content they teach, to develop a strong spiral progression from 6th to 8th grades. This serves two purposes; to ensure we are working together for students in each grade level and to ensure we continue dialoguing about our vertical curriculum and resources in respective content areas. The program provides core content areas such as Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Elective courses range from STEM (I, II and III), American Sign Language (ASL), Health Education, Technology Applications, Career and College Readiness, Deaf Studies, Adobe Photoshop, and Physical Education.

One of the important things that the middle school program does is prepare its 8th grade students for high school. With having students experience CTE courses for a full semester, 8th graders can experience each endorsement area and start refining their transition plan to align with their graduation plan and future plans. In the spring, we have students visit the high school program, orient themselves within the program and what it has to offer as well as students who live on campus would stay in the high school dorm to experience what it's like living in the high school dorms. This year, we are poised to begin working with our student organizations, allowing our 8th graders to join these groups as they see fit--they range from Manos Club, Black Deaf Student Union (BDSU), and People Respect Individuals Diversity Equality (PRIDE).

### **High School (9-12)**

The high school program focuses on preparing for their future by experiencing what TSD has to offer--from the classroom to their daily involvement on campus. In many ways, the high school students shape the program as much as we consistently respond to their changing needs to offer quality learning experiences. High school students have options for a full range of academic programs. College-bound students can take advantage of local honors courses and dual college credit enrollment currently offered through partnership with Austin Community College. We also have courses that students show interest in taking--ranging from the International Study to African American Studies. We also have courses that provide foundational academic learning that benefit students' transition and future plans. For some students, self-contained classes allow students to learn the best and those are designed around core courses and students can take other courses provided through the Career Technical Education (CTE) program on campus. It is our goal to ensure that we can provide what students need to ensure they graduate with the plan that benefits them individually.



High school teachers consistently meet within their content areas to work on instructional plans on a consistent basis and ensure that appropriate accommodations and modifications are designed in their daily lessons. Technology is a natural part of the learning experience for all students in the high school program, for each individual is assigned an iPad and access their learning through Schoology, a web and app-based learning management system. Schoology has allowed teachers and students to manage their learning, provide evidence of their progress, and allows for parents to monitor their child's progress in school.

The last accreditation period was when the establishment of an Academic Intervention Program, managed by the Academic Intervention Specialist. The purpose of this program is to ensure students keep up with their coursework and complete their graduation plan in time. The specialist is responsible to ensure that tutoring takes place, students receive intervention when appropriate, and communicates with the program each students' needs and plans. We have seen an incredible reduction in repeating failed classes and/or students slipping through the cracks. This system has been a success in the last five years and continues to be beneficial for the program and the students.

Centralizing the students to experience high school in ways that maximize their experience is important--we recently started a Student Advisory Committee, where representatives from each Graduating Class and Student Organization would come together and discuss critical issues that need to be addressed via the committee and communicated with the student body. The student representatives, Director of Student Life, Director of Instruction, High School Principal, and CTE Supervisor meet biweekly along with the Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion. We take time to talk about systemic navigation of critical issues within the program and the entire campus. This has been instrumental in providing a platform for students and to improve their experience at TSD as a student.

### **Career and Technical Education (8-12)**

Our Career Technical Education (CTE) program, serving students in the high school and middle school programs, has continuously refined how they serve students that respond best to both, their transition plans and their graduation plans. Emphasizing the transition plan as the mechanism to ensure students are prepared for life after graduation gives way for the program to be creative in providing all students this opportunity that is also equitable and accessible as well.

The Texas' Foundation Graduation Program, implemented in 2017, offered a new and flexible graduation program that allows students to pursue their interests while earning core academic credits. A student can earn an endorsement from one of those following: Arts and Humanities, Business and Industry, Public Service, STEM, or Multidisciplinary Studies. In order to earn an Endorsement along with the high school diploma, a student would need to earn four credits within a specific career cluster. With this graduation program, students are able to develop the technical skills and critical thinking skills, to prepare for either workforce, technical school, or 4-year college after graduating.

Through the last five years, the program has extended beyond the walls of TSD. We've partnered with the Austin Community College in providing Dual Credit courses for Welding, Visual Communication, and Automotive Technology. Forensic Studies is also a Dual Credit course by the way of a partnership with the Rochester Institute of Technology, taught by a high school biology teacher.

The CTE program offers 32 different courses for our students, ranging from satisfying endorsement areas and other electives that benefit individual students. These courses range from video technology to automotive technology. Students have the opportunity to experience some endorsement specific courses, such as welding and culinary arts before they decide to commit to the series of courses that follow. These allow students to experience courses before making a commitment to the specific strand. Students find that this allows them flexibility and experience, thus resulting in a better transition plan for them. Our career counselors meet with students when they determine what course to take and how that applies to not only their graduation plan, but transition and future plans.

We find that it's critical for the CTE program to offer more for our students at TSD, thus our current strategic plan has a focus on expanding the program to 7th grade. Stakeholders involved in this process will contribute to a bigger plan of expanding career awareness much earlier than 8th grade, before they transition into the high school program.

### **Adult Curriculum for Employment, Community and Social Skills (ACCESS) Program (18+)**

In accordance with Special Education law, the ARD committee must consider transition needs for TSD students, by the age of 14 or earlier. A coordinated set of activities, as appropriate, that focus on the three domains of Employment, Social & Recreational/Leisure and Adult Living is recorded on each student's Individual Transition Plan (ITP).

Until students complete high school, the school focuses on providing for these needs within the scope of the student's schedule of services. As graduation nears, other agencies are invited to participate in their transition planning such as the Texas Workforce Commission (Vocational Rehabilitative Services), appropriate state agencies, or other entities needed to provide the necessary services when a student is no longer eligible for school services.

In addition to these embedded transition services, TSD has an ACCESS Program to provide additional community-based instruction, job training, and transition needs for deaf and hard of hearing students who have graduated from public schools throughout the state. Currently, we are experiencing increased interest in the ACCESS program, where our enrollment has steadily increased throughout the last few years. Enrollment in the ACCESS Program is based on these criteria:

- Students must have graduated from high school under the minimum graduation plan or have received a certificate of attendance
- Students must have a documented educational need for employability skills or related self-help skills
- Students must have a willingness and desire to participate in the program
- Students must submit an application and student and parent must complete an interview
- Students must not have significant behavioral, emotional, or health-related conditions that would prevent them from working without ongoing one-on-one support.

The ACCESS Program offers needed educational services related to employment and independent living skills training. The program is designed to give students hands-on job experience and develop practical real-world skills enabling them to live in the community with or without support. The overriding philosophy of the ACCESS Program is helping students develop effective self-advocacy skills so that they can continue to be successful after they leave TSD.

The students in the ACCESS Program live apart from the High School students in apartments or cottages located on campus. The residential component of the program is an essential part of the learning experience. Students gain independent living skills related to home and personal care, community safety, and money management.

### Self-assessment survey results – Standard 8

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_8\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_8_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Program of studies or other overview of the components of the educational program (lesson plans, unit plans, IEPs)	E
Scope and sequence charts showing vertical/horizontal articulation	E
Written curriculum guides for each component of the educational program and review cycle	N/A
Master schedule (staff and student)	E and HC
Policies (criteria for admissions, placement of students) and budget related to educational program	E
Evidence of transition being addressed between each department and at time of graduation	E
Department meeting agendas and minutes	E
Report cards/transcript review	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary

#### STANDARD 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning

**3.74**
**Overall Standard Rating**

**The Standard:** The school systematically collects and rigorously analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of individual learning and growth from multiple valid and reliable sources. Evidence of student learning is used to evaluate and improve curriculum effectiveness, instructional practices, professional development, and support services. Progress in student learning and performance is expected and is accurately, clearly, and systematically reported to the school community.

**This summary report is a compilation of 69 surveys distributed to:**

14 Administration      34 Faculty and Staff      x Students      x Board Members  
20 Parents                      1 Other: ERCOD Director

#### Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:

The surveys were sent using SurveyMonkey

**Report Completed by:** Joey Vaughan and Donna Altuna      **Date:** 12/2/19;  
5/10/21

**Committee:** Donna Altuna, Tamara Copeland-Samaripa, Leslie Hussey, Christina Sicoli, Dana Stoddard, Megan Scarboro, Karl Hummel, Amy Holcomb, Connie Pottersnak, Joey Vaughan

#### List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning**:

- Areas of strength that were identified as needing improvement from last survey:
- Family communication about high-stakes assessments has improved
  - Assessment website is updated frequently and testing information is sent through department emails and/or parent mail outs on a regular basis.
  - Mail out assessment information before and after **high-stakes** assessments (**MAP and STAAR**)
  - Parent portal for STAAR **through** TEA
  - Reports available in Spanish for STAAR data
  - Results are reviewed/clarified with parents at ARD meetings
  - Made and posted a bilingual presentation for parents regarding MAP (ASL and English)

- Elementary, **Middle School**, and High School administrators and curriculum staff work with teachers to review data and identify strengths and areas of need, then address it within instruction. **We would like to continue to refine this process, though.**
- Improvements in helping students monitor their own data/progress:
  - We have improved on providing opportunities for teachers/students to work on MAP goal setting.
  - **High School** students present “About Me” slides during Transition portion of ARDs
  - **This is addressed as an area of focus within SGT #1, Empowering Student Learning.**
- **Planning for 3<sup>rd</sup> year of using an ASLAI assessment in 2021-2022**
- **Administer Visual Communication Sign Language Checklist (VCSL) and ASL Receptive Skills Test (ASL RST) as part of Texas’ Special Education Language Acquisition (SELA) requirements under HB 548**

#### **Areas of strength identified from current survey:**

- **9.1** The leadership and staff commit to, participate in, and share in accountability for student learning. **(4.1)**
  - MTSS teams are working with ILC regarding planning and coordination with teachers and support staff in both Academics and SEL
  - Many teachers, administrators, and staff participate in committees **to support in accountability of student learning**
  - PPFT now includes PGR **and the value-added model; beginning in 2021-2022, the value-added portion will account for 15% of teachers’ overall PPFT score**
  - Staff **members are** striving to meet annual MOU Indicators
  - ILC reviews District Level Summaries (MAP)
  - **Governing Board reviews annual MAP and STAAR data**
  - Homework center staff members are there to support **MS and HS** students.
  - Accelerated Instruction (AI) **provided to students who do not meet standard on the state assessment prior to subsequent testing events**
  - AEP (Alternative Education Placement) provided in HS; it is designed to provide students with support on targeted needs
  - Saturday school **offered in HS (not offered in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions)**
  - Academic Intervention Program (MS & HS) to provide tutoring for students who are failing
  - **Credit Recovery offered for the first time as part of Summer Program in 2021 (HS)**
  - **TSD facilitates testing events for various college-entrance exams, including TSIA2, BYU, ACT, and CLEP**
- **9.2** Assessment of student learning and performance is aligned with curriculum and instruction in a coherent system consistent with the school’s philosophy/mission. **(3.9)**
  - Teachers/admin working to provide opportunities to help align resources to curriculum (BLA, Origo, Empowering Writers, TRS, MAP aligned to TEKS, review of STAAR/EOC/MAP data to support AI)
  - **Elementary bilingual language portfolios implemented in 2020-2021 in order to collect English and ASL samples at the beginning and end of each year**
- **9.9** Records of student’s learning and performance are maintained. General standards for transcript control and use, including those related to confidentiality, are known and observed. **(4.1)**

- Tracking of student academic and behavior progress and frequently review (SST, **Elementary Core Team meetings**, intervention plans, etc.)
- Grade conversion forms are used to track any changes to grades (HS, PowerSchool for grades/IRs/Attendance)
- Personal Graduation Plans are used to track student progress towards meeting endorsements/graduation requirements
- Eduphoria and NWEA are used to track testing data
- TSD transferred ARD paperwork from **FMP** and **Class** to **Frontline**. This helps preserve confidentiality and keeps information in one place. Also helps reduce human error.
- Contact information moved from FMP to PowerSchool (preserve confidentiality/FERPA and ease of use)
- **Committee is actively exploring database options for centralized housing of student data in the areas of academics, SEL, and language (one-stop shop)**
- **9.11** Members of the staff work collaboratively with colleagues and families to review data about learners' progress and to develop appropriate strategies for continued progress. (4.0)
  - Survey Comments:
    - "The district has shown growth in using assessment data to critically examine programming and instruction, to provide additional support to staff and families to understand and use data, and to support teachers in planning."
    - "We have made so many improvements in the area of assessment and evidence of student learning."
  - Elementary: Parent/Teacher conferences before the ARD
  - MS/HS: homeroom/advisory program to support connections between teachers, parents, residential staff, etc.
  - HS PLCs work collaboratively and provide additional showcases for staff/teachers to apply data discussions to actual instructional practices. (Suspended in 20-21 due to COVID)
  - Parent Liaison provides workshops **and support** for parents.
- **9.12** Families are viewed as an important source of information and insights about students. (3.9)
  - Parents are integral to the **ARD**, FBA, and FIE processes.
  - Child Study teams (elementary)
  - Solicit parent feedback
  - PIP and ECE home visits
  - Parent teacher conferences (ECE/elementary)
  - ECE/ELEM/MS/HS/CTE/Dorms host open houses for parents
- **9.16** Communication with families regarding students' progress in learning and performance is regular, productive, and meaningful
  - **ECE/Elementary shares REED Visuals with families of students participating in the REED process. These one-pagers provide a quick, at-a-glance overview of student performance in academic, linguistic, and social-emotional areas.**

List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning**:

**Areas of improvement identified from current survey:**

- **9.4** Assessment results are used to make decisions regarding allocation of resources. **(3.5)**

- Survey Comments:
  - “It is challenging for teachers to be accountable to IPs, TEKS, and the MAP Continuum of Learning. Would be nice if there was a way to streamline our efforts here.
  - “The administration is not looking at the allocation of resources as they are being stretched thin. We are accepting more complicated students that drain our resources.”
  - “We are lacking assessments to track/monitor emergent readers/writers’ progress. MAP testing does not provide helpful information for these students.”
  - “Placement decisions might focus only on English/Math, we may need to consider “Whole Child” data.”
- **9.6** Assessment methods and content address suitable social, emotional, physical, and cognitive/language goals for students. **(3.4)**
  - Strength Response: We began using e-DECA for PIP-PreK and DESSA K-12 in spring 2020.
  - Strength Response: We hired SEL Coordinators for Elementary, Middle School, and High School.
  - Strength Response: ECE/Elementary adopted Conscious Discipline, a trauma-informed strategy to help students develop their SEL skills. SEL lessons are explicitly taught, and SEL routines are embedded in the school day and during transitions, including greetings, morning meetings, breathing strategies, use of Safe Place, etc.
  - Strength Response: MS recently began hosting weekly SEL lessons in PE class. These are based on areas of need identified by DESSA results in addition to staff observations and curriculum expectations.
  - Strength Response: All HS students participate in a course called MAPS, Methods of Academic and Personal Success, which focuses heavily on SEL concepts.
  - Strength Response: We are now using ASLAI in Elementary and MS. HS will be added in 2022.
    - Departments would benefit from increased training related to interpreting ASLAI results and making the data meaningful.
- **9.8** Assessments reflect understanding of the unique needs and backgrounds of each student. **(3.2)**
  - Survey Comment:
    - “Our progress monitoring does not look at the whole child. Our assessments are still very English based. We need to include more ASL and SEL assessment data.”
  - STAAR assessments are grade level assessments; they are not always the best data to reflect our students’ progress and areas of need.
  - Tests often fall close together (STAAR/MAP have similar testing windows), so test fatigue is a legitimate, yet unavoidable, issue.
- **9.13** The school communicates its assessment policies and practices to the total school community (e.g., via parent handbooks, websites, teacher handbooks, policy manuals). **(3.7)**
  - Handbook/Code of Conduct are examples of critical school documents not fully language accessible to some students and families.

Please list **new items** not indicated on the original list of standards.

- Need to improve the idea of Centralized Data (for all departments)
- Need centralized place to store student language samples, significant work, resumes, etc.
  - **Strength Response:** Committee is actively exploring database options for centralized housing of student data in the areas of academics, SEL, and language (one-stop shop)
    - Families and Residential Supervisors can access PowerSchool so they can monitor their students' grades.
    - Families and Residential Supervisors can access Schoology in order to monitor their students' assignments and grades.
- Need to clarify HIPPA vs. FERPA guidelines so that staff members who work directly with students and have a need to know are informed of the pertinent diagnoses and health needs of their students.
- From Written Comments: "We are lacking assessments to track/monitor emergent readers'/writers' progress. MAP and STAAR testing do not provide helpful information for these students."
  - However, we do have the following assessments available:
    - Elementary – BLA, DRA, and language portfolio
    - Middle School – DWA

### Suggested Follow-up Items

- SGT 1 will continue to find meaningful ways for students to monitor their own data/progress.
- Continue to align resources to curriculum (BLA, Origo, Empowering Writers, TRS, MAP aligned to TEKS, review of STAAR/EOC/MAP data to support AI)
- Explore database options for centralized housing of student data in the areas of academics, SEL, and language (one-stop shop)
- Increased training related to interpreting ASLAI results and making the data meaningful
- Make critical school documents such as the Handbook/Code of Conduct more accessible to students and families with diverse linguistic needs (ASL version)
- Explore ways for residential staff who work directly with students to have access to their information in PowerSchool and Schoology
- Clarify HIPPA vs. FERPA guidelines so that staff members who work directly with students and have a need to know are informed of the pertinent diagnoses and mental health needs of their students.
- Identify assessments to track/monitor emergent readers'/writers' progress



## Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf provide training on various formative assessment types for all teachers to enable teachers to utilize data to guide their instruction and meet student-learning needs.

**TSD Response:** The NWEA MAP assessment has resources that are available for teachers to use data and design their instruction and see growth. We have become more systemic with this within our instructional programs, where departments are using data to design curriculum study days and develop instructional plans that benefit students. As we strengthen our district MTSS approach in the area of instruction (our district improvement plan for data), we see that this will allow us to systemize how we can use assessments such as MAP and other formative assessments within the classroom to support overall academic growth.

The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf develop online content to share with parents in their home language to not only provide access to the district wide assessment plan, but also to help parents understand how this information is used to monitor student progress and provide additional support and enrichment at home.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider using ASL summative and formative assessments for students in 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades to measure and monitor language growth.

**TSD Response:** Currently we use VCSL in the early ages. We use VCSL for students who need specific formative data to help us support not only the student at school, but also parents and other service providers. We have a consultative ASL evaluator, from the University of Texas Austin, to assess our students and make recommendations as part of the FIE and to design some interventions and/or supplemental language specific plans. We use ASLAI twice a year as a formal assessment material. We may not have developed a system in how and what formative assessments are appropriate to measure growth. At this time, VCSL seems to be the only reliable assessment tool that can be formative, but does not go beyond the age of 8.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf identify and develop student achievement targets related to student growth for monitoring student progress and as a measure of student accountability as it applies to TSD's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Texas Education Agency (TEA).

**TSD Response:** As we have transitioned from using SATs to MAP, our growth target is tricky at best. MAP is tailored to the learner and tailored to the performance the student who is taking the test. We recognize that there are many variables to student achievement and find that being mindful of these variables (an example would be the recent COVID19 pandemic) in how we expect students to academically grow. We continue to target growth in ways that are responsive to our student population, their needs, and current variables but focusing on individual growth and ensuring we meet our projected growth targets.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf provide ongoing and specialized training to teachers, administrators, and parents in understanding, tracking, analyzing, and using their data to support instruction and develop individual student ARD/IEP goals and objectives.

**TSD Response:** Each instructional department has worked on this area with different results. With the merge of the special needs program, we have increased cognization on how we look at data and how we create instructional plans for the IEP in addition to teaching grade level content. Our instructional leaders (principals and supervisors) along with various personnel such as our Special Education Director, curriculum specialists, and Instructional Data Analyst (now the MTSS Coordinator), offer support in this area. Teams are working towards an MTSS model in assessing various data sets to determine not only instructional and IEP support, but to strengthen teachers in understanding how to track data. This continues to be a work in progress for us.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf provide training and support for teachers and administration to develop student-friendly data reports (utilize the already comprehensive academic and behavior data portfolios) in order for student to take ownership by monitoring their progress, empowering them to set realistic goals, and celebrating their success.

**TSD Response:** This is also our new 5-year plan, centralizing students when it comes to their own data. We have become better in communicating and ensuring our students have access to their data sets starting in Grade 3 to 12. We talk about goals with our students using data (instructional plans for the IEP to course mastery). Students have access to their MAP results and STAAR (state test) results.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf continue its efforts as noted in SGT #4 Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM) objectives.

**TSD Response:** We have achieved numerous objectives in the DDDM strategic goal and have accomplished a lot. Moreover, the focus has given us clarity in how to use data for the next five years.

## Narrative

### History of State Assessment

TSD has a long history of using student assessment to monitor individual growth, progress across groups and content areas, and strengths and areas of growth of our various instructional programs. We continuously work to ensure that the assessments we administer are valid and reliable, that training for our staff includes high standards for consistency and security, that we are providing necessary individual accommodations, and that the results from each assessment contribute to the overall picture of strengths and needs for each individual student.

One of the ongoing challenges we have is the ever-changing landscape of state testing. These changes include more rigorous assessments and increased performance standards, which will reach their highest targets in 2021-2022. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, Texas is doing away with stand-alone writing tests for 4th and 7th grade and will instead move to

combined ELAR assessments for all grade levels, 3rd-8th. These newly formatted assessments will assess both Reading and Writing standards for all tested grades at the elementary and middle school levels. Additionally, the Texas state assessments, known as STAAR, will undergo a redesign process. This will result in even more changes in 2022-2023. As part of this redesign, a maximum of 75% of the state assessments will be in a multiple-choice format, and new item types will be introduced.

At present, STAAR can be taken either online or in a paper/pencil format. This paper/pencil option will soon phase out; beginning in the spring 2023 test administration, STAAR will be conducted online only.

We have noted in the past that when there is a change in the state test design, there tends to be a “dip” in scores here at TSD that requires several years of professional development, teacher support, analysis, and accelerated instruction to rectify.

STAAR assesses students’ achievement and knowledge of the enrolled grade level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), our state standards.

There are two versions of STAAR given at TSD:

- STAAR
- STAAR Alternate 2 (STAAR Alt 2)

The general assessment, STAAR, is administered to the vast majority of students in Texas. It is available with and without accommodations.

STAAR Alt 2 was developed by TEA to assess students in grades 3-8 and high school who have significant cognitive disabilities and are receiving special education services. Performance standards for STAAR Alt. 2 are different from those established for STAAR.

- The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program includes:
- ELAR and Mathematics for grades 3-8
  - Science at grades 5 and 8
  - Social Studies at grade 8
  - End-of-Course (EOC) assessments for English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and US History

## **State Accountability**

As a part of the state accountability system, all Texas schools are required to report their assessment results in a public forum and meet established targets for achievement, including results for students of different ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and those students not proficient in English. However, for a school where all of the students are served within the special education system, reporting based on the standard criteria yields little useful information.

Therefore, for decades, TSD has engaged in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) based on alternative measures of achievement.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines a series of performance measures based on multiple locally developed indicators that are updated annually. The academic indicators include:

- 3rd-11th grade students who participate in the general curriculum or receive modified instruction are held to meeting their MAP projected growth in Reading and Math.
- 3rd-11th grade students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for STAAR Alt. 2 are evaluated based on report card results in Reading and Math.

For the 2020 – 2021 school year, all MOU indicators were achieved. The chart below shows the percentage of mastery in each department as compared to the established goals.

Department	Targeted Performance	Achieved Performance
Elementary School	25%	35%
Middle School	30%	52%
High School	30%	51%

The Achieved Performance scores indicate a combined percentage of students who met their MOU indicator (they met/exceeded their projected MAP growth or had proficient report card scores). It is important to note that according to NWEA, the publishers of MAP, “Since each student’s goal is the mean (or average) normative growth, in a very general sense, one could reasonably expect that about 50% of students meet their growth goals.”

In addition, as part of our MOU, students are also measured on a non-academic objective related to attendance.

### Recent State Testing Results

Although TSD’s state assessment results are not reported for accountability purposes, we are required to participate in statewide testing. Each student’s ARD committee makes recommendations regarding which version of the STAAR test he or she will take based on participation requirements. ARD committees also determine what accommodations each student is eligible to receive.

273: The total number of students tested on STAAR in grades 3-12 in 2020-2021		
State Assessment Taken	Number of Students	Percent of Overall Students
STAAR	255	93%
STAAR Alternate 2	18	7%

### STAAR Passing Rates for 2020-2021

Academic performance standards, set by TEA, represent the level of performance students must meet or exceed to pass a STAAR assessment. Currently, the cut scores needed to earn a “satisfactory” or passing rating in grades 3 – 8 increase annually.

Due to COVID-19, the state assessment was not administered in the 2019-2020 school year. In order to provide a comparison of results for the last two test administrations, TSD’s performance from 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 is summarized on the charts below.

**Percentage of students who passed STAAR (Grades 3 – 8) for the last two test administrations**

	2018-2019 Reading/ELA	2020-2021 Reading/ELA	2018-2019 Math	2020-2021 Math
3rd	25%	21%	40%	8%
4th	14%	5%	11%	0%
5th	11%	17%	16%	22%
6th	17%	33%	52%	36%
7th	20%	11%	41%	21%
8th	32%	32%	63%	32%

**Percentage of students who passed STAAR Alt 2 (Grades 3 – 8) for the last two test administrations**

	2018-2019 Reading/ELA	2020-2021 Reading/ELA	2018-2019 Math	2020-2021 Math
3rd	100%	50%	100%	100%
4th	100%	N/A	100%	N/A
5th	100%	100%	100%	100%
6th	100%	100%	100%	100%
7th	83%	N/A	100%	N/A
8th	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Percentage of students who passed STAAR EOCs for the last two test administrations**

	2018-2019	2020-2021
English I	9%	9%
English II	11%	7%
Algebra I	41%	25%
Biology	42%	41%
US History	38%	29%

**Percentage of students who passed STAAR Alt 2 EOCs for the last two test administrations**

	2018-2019	2020-2021
English I	100%	100%
English II	86%	100%
Algebra I	100%	100%
Biology	100%	N/A
US History	100%	100%

Performance on the state assessment is also used to help determine the level of support and intervention a student need. Texas requires accelerated instruction for students who do not

meet the standard on various assessments. For students in Special Education, this information is documented in an ARD (IEP meeting) and may require adjustments to content area IEPs. Accelerated instruction may be provided during or outside of regular school hours. Instruction must be targeted on the specific area(s) of need and geared toward helping the student pass the state assessment.

### **Special Education Language Acquisition (SELA) Testing**

As a result of HB 548, language acquisition for Deaf and hard of hearing children ages 0 through 8 is now monitored more closely at the state level. Beginning in 2020-2021, programs serving Deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state had to select, from a list of finite options, an assessment to administer to students meeting the participation criteria and for whom parental consent was provided. TSD administered either the Visual Communication Sign Language checklist (VCSL) or ASL Receptive Skills Test (ASL RST) to students in the tested age groups.

The VCSL checklist is the only standardized measure of American Sign Language (ASL) acquisition for young children in the United States, and it aids in documenting developmental milestones in signing children from birth to age 5. In the 2015-2016 school year, TSD started using the VCSL checklist with students in Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten, in collaboration with the research endeavors of Gallaudet University. While the VCSL checklist monitors children's sign language acquisition and helps determine if they are developmentally on track, it also helps in the development of individual student learning goals and provides information that supports how TSD designs professional development sessions.

In 2020-2021, the ASL RST was used for students for whom the VCSL was not age appropriate. This abbreviated assessment measures students' understanding of ASL grammar.

### **Local Assessments**

In addition to state testing, TSD also administers several district and department level tests to give us greater information on student needs in relation to ASL, SEL development, and academic progress.

Beginning in 2018-2019, TSD started administering the American Sign Language Assessment Instrument (ASLAI) to students. Though there was a disruption in testing as a result of COVID-19, our current plan is for elementary, middle school, and high school students to participate in ASLAI testing on an annual basis.

Recognizing the importance of social emotional development, TSD now assesses students in grades K-12 using the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA). It is a nationally normed rating scale that is designed to assess social-emotional competencies of students in elementary and middle school.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an ongoing observational assessment tool for children from birth through kindergarten. The assessment is research-based and evaluates students on multiple objectives aligned to our state's early learning standards in domains such as social-emotional, language, literacy, cognitive, and mathematics. The GOLD assessment is administered on a regular basis, and results are reported to families at the end of each quarter.

The DRA2 provides a standardized method for assessing students' reading development. Administration three times a year for students in grades K-2 and up to two times a year for other select students allows us to monitor student reading progress over time by using carefully selected assessment texts and standardized procedures and forms.

DRA results are used to:

- Help identify student skills and plan for instruction in reading engagement, fluency, and comprehension
- Monitor student growth on a variety of reading skills and strategies
- Prepare students to be successful at meeting classroom and testing expectations
- Provide support and documentation of the level of student reading achievement
- Determine independent reading levels on a range of A – 80 (Pre-primer – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade).

Writing is assessed in various ways across campus. In our Elementary Department, a Language Portfolio was implemented in 2020-2021. Language samples in both ASL and English are collected at the beginning and end of each year for teachers to evaluate. In Middle School, the Developing Writer's Assessment (DWA) is used to evaluate students' progress in written English. Writing is also assessed informally across all grade levels.

Additionally, teachers use a plethora of tools to evaluate students on an informal basis. Through a collection of formative and summative assessments, they are able to develop a more complete understanding of student performance and use that information to guide instruction and better meet individual needs.

### **Using Data in the Classroom**

TSD is working toward providing a variety of effective and balanced assessment techniques that are routinely and systematically implemented by all instructional personnel as part of a comprehensive school-based assessment and evaluation system.

- Diagnostic assessment is a systematic, regular component of the school's overall assessment system, with regular diagnosis of students' acquisition of requisite background knowledge and skills and related instructional interventions.
- Teachers use a variety of formative assessment tasks and tools to monitor student progress over the course of units and to adjust instruction to maximize student achievement relative to the TEKS. Formative assessment provides effective and timely feedback to all students throughout the course of instructional units.
- Teachers use a variety of summative assessment tasks to evaluate student achievement of the TEKS. These assessments complement the state testing system (STAAR), while enhancing student achievement by using a range of assessment tasks and types.

### **Information Management**

In an effort to streamline our information management, TSD is moving away from the use of FileMaker Pro and the multitude of internal databases it previously hosted. Instead, PowerSchool now has a more expanded role at TSD.

Teachers and administrators also access Eduphoria in order to view and analyze student assessment data (STAAR) and teacher evaluation information (PPfT).

## Communicating Assessment Information with Students and Families

Assessment information is communicated in various ways. Our Academic Accountability team developed a webpage that is designed to house all information pertaining to statewide and district level assessments. It can be found [here](#). This website keeps families up to speed in regards to general information pertaining to assessments and the testing calendars in each department. Families also receive regular email communication in ASL, English, and Spanish.

STAAR and MAP test results are shared with families via mail. Additionally, teachers conference with students before and after MAP testing has occurred in order to engage them in the goal-setting and analysis process.

Teachers maintain open communication with families about how students are progressing. This information is shared in different ways. Parents have access to their students' work and grades in Schoology and PowerSchool. Parent/teacher conferences are instrumental to maintaining communication, especially for our families in our Early Learning Center and Elementary Department. ARD meetings provide yet another avenue for families and staff to partner together to ensure everyone is best meeting the needs of each individual student. At the Middle and High School level, students take on more of an ownership role, as they share information about their performance during their annual ARD meetings.

## Graduation Requirements and Records

To graduate and receive a high school diploma in Texas, all students, including students with disabilities receiving special education services, must complete the curriculum and credit requirements for the Foundation Graduation program, as well as participate in the state exit-level assessment, STAAR End-Of-Course exams.

Texas students have the option of earning endorsements and a "Distinguished Level of Achievement." Before entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the student and parent/guardian must sign a Personal Graduation Plan, which identifies a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness, career placement and advancement, and facilitates the students' transition from secondary to post-secondary education. The students may change their plans at any time throughout their high school career. To earn any endorsement, students must successfully complete four credits of math and science, seven electives, and complete the sequence of courses specifically related to the following endorsements:

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
  - Business and Industry
  - Public Services
  - Arts and Humanities
  - Multidisciplinary Studies

All Texas high school graduates are awarded the same type of diploma. The Academic Achievement Record (AAR) or transcript (not the diploma) records a student's accomplishments, achievements, and courses completed, and also displays appropriate graduation seals. The AAR is the official and permanent record, or transcript, of a student's academic performance during high school. Entries on this official state document of actual courses taken, grades earned, credit awarded, and codes denoting special explanations must be consistent with



teachers' records and the student's IEP, when applicable. The terms "Academic Achievement Record" and "transcript" are interchangeable.

## **Assessments and Diagnostics**

Assessments and Diagnostics are critical components in providing students at Texas School for the Deaf with a quality education designed to meet their individual needs. The Assessments and Diagnostics team support both new admissions to TSD as well as the ongoing evaluation needs of TSD students.

## **Evaluation Process at TSD**

A reliable evaluation is one of the essential first steps in the special education process for a child with a disability. Before a child can receive special education and related services for the first time, a full and individual initial evaluation of the child must be conducted to determine if the child has a disability and is eligible for special education and meets the eligibility requirements for admission to TSD. Informed parent consent must be obtained before an evaluation is conducted. TSD collaborates with the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to complete required testing for all initial evaluations, as this is the first step in determining if TSD can appropriately serve a child, as per TSD admission policy.

In order for students to receive direct service from a provider, parent and/or staff concerns are discussed with the provider and a screening is requested. The potential provider will conduct informal assessments and observations of the child to determine if additional, formal evaluations are warranted.

If formal testing is recommended, an ARD (Admission, Review, Dismissal) committee meeting is requested and scheduled. Consent for testing is obtained from the parent/guardian/adult student and a "due date" for the evaluation completion is set. When the testing is completed, another ARD meeting is scheduled so results can be shared with the committee, including the student's parents/guardians. This consent for testing can be revoked at any time by the parents/guardians/adult student.

If the evaluation results and/or the service provider determine the student does not need direct services, accommodations and/or classroom modifications/strategies are addressed during the ARD meeting.

If the evaluation results and/or the service provider determine that direct services are needed for the student to access their education, goals and objectives are created and service minutes are recommended at the ARD. If/when the services are accepted, they are added to the student's "Schedule of Services" page included in the student's IEP.

Every three years, a Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) is conducted to determine if re-testing is needed. A parent/guardian or ARD committee member may request additional testing to be considered by the team. An evaluator must be present at any meeting where evaluations are discussed. At present, TSD has 3 full-time LSSPs and 1 full-time Educational Diagnostician. An additional Educational Diagnostician is supporting this team on a part-time basis.

The evaluation process is guided by requirements in our nation's special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Our current TSD Governing Board Policy EHBA addresses the IDEA requirements on evaluations as well.

### Self-assessment survey results – Standard 9

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_9\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_9_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	**HC or E
Example of student transcript and student report card	E and HC
Samples of Individualized Education Plans	E and HC
Reports of the results of assessments administered to students (disaggregated data by gender, race, socioeconomic status, etc.)	E
Policies related to assessment of student learning and description of the assessment program	E
Schools' participation in the state assessment system	See Narrative
Time schedule of testing and master test listing	E
Examples of assessment tools such as portfolios, projects, etc.	E
Post graduate survey	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

# Standard 10: Student Services

## Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 10: Student Services

4

Overall Standard Rating

**The Standard:** The school implements written policies and procedures, in partnership with families and the community, that provide all students with, or refer them to, services that are age-and developmentally appropriate to optimize transition opportunities for life-long success. Student services are systematic and integral to the educational program. They are provided by qualified personnel, sufficiently financed, periodically evaluated, and philosophy/mission appropriate.

This summary report is a compilation of 148 surveys distributed to:

Administration     Faculty and Staff     Students     Board Members  
 Parents     Other:    Community Members/SHAC & DAC

**Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:**

**Report Completed By:** Elizabeth Sterling, Stella Egbert, & Justin Wedel    **Date:** 11/11/19  
5/20/21

**Committee:** CEASD Focus Group 10

List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Student Services**:

- Expanding our CTE options and having more collaborations with ACC and TWC.
- Communication has improved between departments and admissions/records
- ARD facilitators are starting to do more training, and check our ARDs
- We have NSFO and on-site registration and it is well attended
- **Working on providing online registration to families (goes live in Feb.)**
- Providing more learning spaces (calming, sensory, safe) in elementary/ECE
- Parent Liaison is riding charter buses to make connections with distant families
- Homegoing and day transportation is provided or coordinated
- Provide safe and reliable transportation to students – keep rules simple and easy to follow
- Received support from departments when ask for help with transportation – better communication between transportation and the departments
- All of our interpreters are Advanced or higher. Very strong team.

List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Student Services**:

- Trying to change environment to be more child centered and warm/inviting in terms of staff that works on the buses.
- Still need to work on creating spaces in MS/HS and the dorm.

- Better procedures and better understanding of admission criteria within the larger community.
- Develop programs for the types of students we are receiving now so that support can begin immediately.
- Centralizing information for everyone to access our data more efficiently (looking at student information systems, archival systems).
- Improve/Expand health **services to include students learning about their own health conditions**
- Social Skills and Social Emotional Learning still an area of weakness
- Still struggling with parent engagement (**SGT #5**)
- More targeted ways to increase sign skills of new students
- **Limited food for students who eat later (HS) – need larger portions**
- **More healthy food options – freshly made foods vs frozen**
- Better communication about food limitations of students (allergy, sensitivity, or parent preference)
- It is difficult to prioritize who gets interpreters first when there are not enough.
- More procedures in place for how interpreters are utilized (communication policy).
- Difficulty filling our licensed positions (salary/sign skills is an issue).
- Turnover is a huge issue with our support services.

Please list **new items** not indicated on the original list of standards. **Review Meeting 5/20/2021**

- Improvement items listed in Red have been taken care of by the new cafeteria manager (menu planning, menu posted on website, healthy choices, etc.)
- Online registration has been up and running since last year.
- We need an online application option for families

### Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider expanding its graduate follow up protocol and questionnaires to include Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5, and to use the data to improve its programs and services.  
**TSD Response:** The work on improving graduate follow-up is part of Strategic Goal 1 in our new Five-Year Strategic Plan.
- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf review federal nutrition guidelines focusing on nutrition education and the use of food as a reward in the classroom, and encourage staff and students to consider alternative non-food related rewards.  
**TSD Response:** In 2019 TSD hired a new cafeteria manager. The first thing he did when he was hired was review the nutritional guidelines for schools. He conducted training for his staff, contracted with a nutritionist, and revised the snack options for students. He has added nutritional information and menus on our website for parents to view. He has also created opportunities for students to try new foods during the lunch periods. He is also a member of the School Health Advisory Committee.

The health center and cafeteria programs have worked together to create a form for parents/doctors to sign any time there is an alternate food request or special diet request. This ensures that the cafeteria is following recommendations appropriately. This form is required annually as part of the registration process and is reviewed by both the health center staff and the cafeteria manager.

Food is no longer a part of our behavior program. TSD is using more restorative and trauma informed practices. Students receive feedback and have an opportunity to problem solve rather than earn food items for good behavior. The multidisciplinary teams have also spent time working together to build sensory and calming spaces both in the classroom and out of the classroom for students to learn and practice skills they need to reshape their behavior. For younger children a star card/stickers, small toys, etc. may be used as incentives initially, but are transitioned to preferred activities such as drawing or computer time.

The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf review its behavior management program/strategies to ensure consistency across all departments.

**TSD Response:** In the past 5 years, we have set a PBIS District team where we work towards assessing our multiple behavior management program structures on campus. With the merge of the special needs program and other learning opportunities such as Culturally Responsive Teaching, Racial Equity Task Force, Hammond's Culturally Relevant Teaching and the Brain--we have become more cognizant of how we want our program to look like. We married Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to PBIS and looked at how MTSS could serve as a mechanism in how we can provide tiered services for our students. This led a discussion in how we are looking closely, at the secondary level, how we design our alternate education (behavior) program. We are starting this during the 2021-2022 school year. We have also trained people to practice restorative approaches when misbehaviors or situations arise. We find that this has been healthy and productive for our school community. We are working hard on aligning with our student life program and instructional program staff in how we approach behavior, which led us to have a two-day in-service training focusing on creating healthy relationships, understanding trauma, and how we work together in supporting our students through positive interventions and supports.

## **Narrative**

### **Admission to TSD**

#### **STANDARD 10: Student Services**

When a parent, guardian, adult student or Local Education Agency (LEA) requests an application for admission to TSD, the Admission Assistant or Admission Supervisor explains the process and mails an application packet. The application packet includes a request for the following: student/family information, a copy of the student's social security card and birth certificate, health history, immunization records, and a TB test and physical examination within the past year. The parent must also provide a copy of the current school records or sign a Release of Confidential Information form so that TSD can obtain these records. Upon receipt of a signed release by the parent, guardian, adult student or LEA, school records are requested from the previous school. The application packet is also available on our TSD website.

The Admission Assistant or designated Admission staff periodically reviews the files of prospective students to update the applicant on the admission process. Once all of the application information is received the file is sent to one of the assessment staff to review the file and write a prospective student summary. This summary is initially reviewed by the Application Review Team to determine whether or not the student meets the admission criteria as defined in the TSD Governing Board policy and in the Texas Education Code. If the team does not believe the student qualifies for admission or has concerns, the Superintendent is consulted. An official denial letter is sent to both the LEA and the parent. Once the team determines the criteria are met, this summary is sent to designated members of the appropriate department, including the principal, behavior specialist, counselors, supervising psychologist, residential director, and residential supervisor. The parent is notified that an ARD/IEP meeting will be scheduled.

The Admissions Assistant coordinates the admissions intake process, which lasts about half a day. Upon arrival at TSD, the prospective student is evaluated by a Licensed School Specialist in Psychology while a school counselor or social worker conducts a social history with the parent/guardian to gather relevant background information necessary to supporting the student and to identifying specific areas of need.

When appropriate, TSD seeks permission to contact previous counselors or community service agencies for additional information and to improve coordination of services the student and family may need. After completion of the social history and initial assessments, a health history is conducted at the health center.

When the student and family return from the health center, the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meeting is held. IEPs are transferred from the previous school. At this point, the student is assigned to classes and given a schedule based on consideration of all available information.

### **New Student Family Orientation (NFSO)**

Annually TSD hosts a New Student Family Orientation program in August on the weekend before school starts. We invite all of the newly admitted students and students that were admitted in the spring and their families to join in meeting the other families. Activities are provided by our Student Life staff for the students and their siblings such as swimming, playing pool, watching movies, socializing, and competitive games while the families learn about TSD. Snacks, meals, interpreting services, and overnight accommodations are provided. Parents enjoy getting to experience dorm life with their children before leaving them at TSD.

NFSO includes two half days of workshops and activities for parents/guardians or adult students. TSD is working hard to include parent mentors and student ambassadors into this program. That is a long-term goal of ours.

Previous activities have included:

- Informational sessions about TSD programs including family services and afterschool activities
- A short review of Texas School for the Deaf Code of Conduct and Parent/Student Handbook
- Presentations given by community speakers on Deaf culture and the history of TSD.
- A panel composed of behavior staff, nurses, students, parents to field questions about behavior plans, dorm life, medication distribution, peer pressure, etc.

- Learning how to log in to the parent portal to get attendance and grades.
- A parent reception is held on the last evening to allow parents and guardians to network with other parents and to support them in their decision to send their child to TSD.
- Tours of the campus, Open House at departments, and Meet the Teacher have all been included in NSFO each year.

### **Special Education Services**

All students at TSD receive Special Education services. TSD conducts annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee meetings, typically referred to as the IEP Committee in other states, for each student to review progress, approve/revise goals and objectives, discuss related services and other items as required in Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). TSD also conducts non-annual ARD meetings throughout the school year to address immediate academic and/or behavioral concerns, change of services, evaluations results and so forth. For increased efficiency, we use an IEP software program called eSTAR™ which is a web-based special education management program that allows users, including TSD staff, to access students' IEP paperwork and forms online. This has been a huge timesaver for us. This system also updates their forms every time there is a legal change, so we can ensure compliance with special education laws and regulations.

### **Counseling Services for All Students**

Every student at TSD has an assigned school counselor. All students are able to seek counseling support if they need assistance with stressors or have issues of concern. Parents are also encouraged to, at any time, contact the counselor with questions or concerns about their child. Students who have behavioral or emotional issues that are more significant and that may impact their ability to access education are referred for a counseling evaluation. Parent consent is sought and the process is explained to the student. The counselor gathers history and relevant information from the student, family and TSD staff and makes a determination about the need for counseling as a related service. If counseling services are recommended, IEP goals are developed and reviewed in an ARD, including recommendations about the type of service and amount of time scheduled.

TSD partners with outside agencies to assist families in finding resources. Our parent webpage includes local Mental Health Authority and emergency numbers for every county in Texas. We have a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with SAFE, our local provider for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and sex trafficking. TSD assisted SAFE in securing a grant to hire Deaf Signing therapists to provide counseling services to our students and other Deaf/Hard of Hearing clients. Our counselors can make referrals to SAFE counseling services and TSD provides a space/room for these services to occur. During COVID 19, this has been through teletherapy.

TSD also partners with Dell Medical School to access services through Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHATT). TCHATT is one of the four main programs developed by the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC). In 2019 the Consortium was created by the 86th Texas Legislature to leverage the expertise and capacity of the 13 state-funded health related institutions of higher education in Texas. The goal of the Consortium is to improve mental health and the mental health care system for children and adolescents across the state. Counseling services and telepsychiatry are delivered to youth within public schools. School

personnel are guided in assessing, supporting, and referring youth experiencing mental health challenges. Their multidisciplinary team is made up of licensed professional counselors, licensed clinical social workers, a child psychologist, licensed vocational nurse, child psychiatrists, and community health workers. They work collaboratively with the school counselors and families to effectively assess, refer, and treat students. This is a new program, but seems to be working well for us so far.

Through the last legislative session TSD was added as an agency in the statewide behavioral health coordinating council (SBHCC). Our representative attends special session meetings and board meetings to assist the state in making program and funding decisions for our population of students/families.

### **Psycho-Educational Support**

School counselors work within assigned departments to provide developmentally appropriate social skills lessons to help students learn new concepts and apply them in various classroom and social situations.

**Elementary:** The counselors in the elementary department, collaborate with Social Emotional Learning Coaches and Coordinator, as well as the elementary teachers to implement the research-based, best practice Conscious Discipline program. These strategies and supports are used across all elementary classrooms, to the benefit of all students. Conscious Discipline teaches skills for emotional awareness, self-regulation, pro-social interactions and building connections. The elementary counseling team consists of three counselors. One counselor is our school-based counselor who is the first line of response for new concerns. She focuses on supporting teachers and students in the classroom and building community between TSD families and staff. Her duties also include a monthly Counselor's Corner Newsletter, family workshops, and helping bridge the transitions from Pre-K to Kindergarten and fifth grade to middle school. The additional two counselors are the therapy-focused counselors. They provide therapy services and coordinate psychiatric services. The therapy-focused counselors provide individual therapy, group therapy and family support therapy. Depending on student and family needs groups may include Child Parent Relationship Therapy, yoga, special topic groups such as anxiety or divorce, and groups focused on specific skills such as a friendship. Counselors meet as a team weekly to review interventions, supports and student needs.

**Middle School:** The Middle School counselors have provided Individual counseling for students receiving counseling as a Related Service and as-needed. They provide crisis management support including attending psych clinics on campus, work with parents and teachers to gather information for outside providers, conduct self-harm evaluations and coordinate referrals to psychiatric hospitals in and around Austin as well as attend IEP meetings to make recommendations for school safety and return plans. They do MS orientation for the 5th graders. They have provided group activities through Second Step (topics may include- Empathy and communication, Friends and Allies, Considering Perspectives, Being Assertive vs Passive, etc.). They collaborate with Residential Services providing support when appropriate. They provided teletherapy services through Zoom to support students and families during the COVID Pandemic. They have supervised two counseling interns (One from Texas State University and another from Gallaudet University).



Currently they are working on adding monthly parent workshops (i.e.; Trauma, Healthy Relationships) via zoom and developing a HUB for Texas School for the Deaf families (resources and information). They also have begun to refer students to TCHAT (Dell Children's Hospital) to provide additional support for students and families outside of Texas School for the Deaf

**High School:** The school counselors provide a variety of related counseling services and socio-emotional support on an ongoing basis through individual and group sessions. The counselors participate in a variety of opportunities to provide presentations to groups of students on a variety of topics such as peer pressure, effects of drug/alcohol use, maintaining healthy relationships and other relevant topics as needed. They also assist with freshman orientation.

**ACCESS (18+ Program)** The school counselor provides a variety of related service counseling services and socio-emotional support on an ongoing basis. The focus of the ACCESS Program is to provide 18 - 22-year-old students employment and independent living skills. The school counselor's focus aligns with the goals of the ACCESS Program to support students as they transition into the workplace.

### **Multi-disciplinary Approach**

Behavior support staff, administrators, support staff, Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSP) and school counselors work closely together to coordinate services for students. Students have access to a behavior resource room in the elementary, middle school and high school departments. The behavior resource room is designed to provide identified students with additional support. The goal is to help students better access educational programming and/or to be more successful in their group living situation. The foundation of the behavior resource room is the strong relationship between staff and students. It is in the context of the coaching and mentoring relationship that staff come to understand student behavior and work with students to improve behavior and reach behavioral goals. The behavior program is a data-driven program, and it is critical that the student response to intervention (RtI) is documented, reviewed, and monitored. Behavior staff assist with conflict resolution, help students de-escalate, facilitate communication, teach replacement behavior, and provide staff with feedback about strategies to interact with students compassionately and effectively.

The Student Support Team (SST) or MTSS Team, which consists of multidisciplinary teams (department administrators, evaluators, support staff, etc.) meets on a regular basis to address student concerns using data from incident reports, evaluation reports and observations to determine interventions and support.

Regularly scheduled district meetings related to Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) with the principals, Licensed Specialists in School Psychology, Residential Staff, Social Emotional Learning Coordinators, department counselors, and behavior staff occur to discuss student support within the Response to Intervention framework and include the following goals: review Tier One programming and support; review student trends and needs and provide staff training to address areas of concern; review Tier Two and Tier Three students with a focus on BIP development, implementation, monitoring and data analysis; and pilot new approaches to supporting students, staff and families.

## **Psychiatric Clinic**

This weekly clinic is coordinated by the Director of Student Health Services and the Special Education Director. After parent consent is obtained, students who may benefit from medical management of significant behavior or emotional symptoms are seen by the TSD contract psychiatrist. The school counselor prepares the student for the meeting with the goal of teaching them to be a good self-advocate, to share their concerns, to have questions ready and to discuss their perspectives. For many students, this is a new experience and they may not have skills yet to fully express themselves and their internal states. The school counselor helps each student with this experience in an individualized manner. Once students are established and stable, the school works to transition families to community providers.

## **Suicide Prevention Screening and Evaluation Process**

Any student who makes a self-harm comment or purposefully hurts themselves is seen for a screening (Level 1) or a more comprehensive follow up evaluation (Level 2) to learn more about what has happened and to make recommendations for student safety. If a student is deemed to be a current danger to self or others (Level 3), the school counselor and Special Education Director facilitate hospitalization in coordination with the parent, student, and appropriate community professionals. TSD provides annual mandatory training, as well as training for all new staff, in the area of suicide prevention, and also provides annual training for school counselors and designated residential staff to conduct screenings/evaluations. We are in the process of revising this process to streamline it and expand our number of screeners. Our goal is for all staff to understand mental health/psychological first aid so that anyone can support a student who is struggling.

## **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

All students in grades 8-12 have access to courses in the CTE department. Please see Standard 8 for a description of the CTE program through the means of curriculum and instruction provided at TSD.

TSD CTE programs do not only emphasize college and career readiness for our students, but also the needs of employers, industry and the labor market. Career and Technical Education also sees the value of our Deaf students having an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills through work-based learning opportunities and experience, to minimize the disadvantages faced given their perceived disability as well as the linguistic differences between American Sign Language and English, which is effectively comparable to a second language to native signers. To emphasize, CTE is a crucially important and effective aspect in the education of TSD students, as the four-year window of high school offers a unique (and unavailable elsewhere) opportunity to access diverse career opportunities to learn in a setting of full and effective communication as well as to have hands-on experiences which introduces prospective employees and employers to each other. The sum of such education plus experience equals young people who are ready, willing and able to take the next confident step to the career path of their choosing.

The Texas' Foundation Graduation Program, implemented in 2017 offered a new and flexible graduation program that allows students to pursue their interests while earning core academic credits. A student can earn an endorsement from one of those following: Arts and Humanities, Business and Industry, Public Service, STEM, Multidisciplinary Studies. In order to earn an

Endorsement along with the high school diploma, one has to take and earn 4 credits in total with classes within a specific career cluster. TSD's CTE courses along with some academic electives offer the students to pursue their interests and earn endorsement. Within this new graduation program, students are able to develop the technical skills and critical thinking skills, to prepare for either workforce, technical school or 4-year college after graduating.

CTE department collaborates with a diverse community and business partnerships to support and foster the growth of CTE programs for the students. Our Career Preparation program, which is focused on giving work experience opportunities to juniors and seniors to develop relevant employability skills relies heavily on the community and business partnerships. Currently, 25 seniors are enrolled in the Career Preparation and they will work off-campus this coming spring semester daily at various businesses and organizations that match their interests and skills.

The Welding Technology, Visual Communication, and Automotive Technology program has partnered with the Austin Community College (ACC) to offer dual credit courses for the TSD students on the TSD campus. The partnership between TSD and ACC was supported and funded by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The funds provided by TWC were to upgrade the equipment, software, curriculum resources that are considered current and appropriate to prepare students for the workforce or to further their education and training at ACC. Students are now able to earn both high school and college credits toward industry certificates within the ACC programs.

CTE values student competitions, as they see this as an opportunity for our diverse students to stand out and shine outside of typical sports and academic-related recognitions. The competitions also allow the students to experience an epiphany, an "Aha!" moment, seeing that they are not so much different from their hearing peers in terms of skills. TSD students in the Robotics, Welding Technology, and Culinary Arts programs participate in various student competitions annually.

### **Career Preparation Program**

The CTE program collaborates with our Middle School department by giving our 8<sup>th</sup> graders the opportunity to participate in Career Exploration classes taught by our CTE Teachers. Students are able to touch 8 different career clusters for 10 days each where they explore their interests and strengths within each course. This is to provide students with realistic and hands-on experience to help them determine their endorsement choice prior to entering high school.

Career Preparation 1 (CP1) is the 1st year course for students to gain work experience. The purpose of this program is to provide students with experiences in a work environment, through concurrent classroom instruction that assists students in acquiring the necessary human relations skills, work attitudes, and common knowledge required for successful employment and for selection of a vocation and/or vocational training program. Employment experiences are provided through placement in a job located on the school campus. This helps the student gain workplace competencies through a variety of sheltered learning experiences.

Career Preparation 2 (CP2) is for second year students and is essentially a practicum, which is designed to give students an opportunity to integrate occupational and applied academic learning from their experience in CP 1 and courses that are related to their

endorsement(s). Students are provided with different levels of supervision during their internships, but all students are required to demonstrate an ability to complete some work independently prior to their enrollment in this course. Students are highly encouraged to do a practicum that aligns with their endorsement(s). For example, if a student took Introduction to Culinary Arts, Culinary Arts 1, and Culinary Arts 2 courses - this student would be highly likely to have an internship at a restaurant applying the skills and knowledge learned through those CTE classes.

### **Julius Seeger Career Center**

The Career Center, a component of CTE, has three full-time career counselors who provide guidance counseling, career planning, and transition planning to high school students. The career counselors also work closely with the high school and CTE teachers, focusing on transition-related topics during the advisory and ARD preparations. Workshops are regularly given to students and their parents (i.e., Senior Night, Junior Night, 8th Grade Night, ACT and FAFSA presentations). Students can seek assistance on a drop-in basis or by appointment. The Julius P. Seeger Career Center is one of the primary resources available to assist students with their academic and career planning. The Career Center has an 8-computer lab to allow students to research career and college options, create professional documents and complete various applications (scholarship, employment, and college). The Career Center is also an official site for the Texas Success Initiative test, an assessment to measure students' college readiness in reading, writing, and math, and is accepted at every college in Texas. Texas School for the Deaf loans an office space for a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) specialist to make their services more accessible for our students.

### **Transition Planning Assessments**

In accordance with IDEA, the transition services for each student must be based upon age-appropriate assessment data. We continue to experience challenges with finding career-related assessments that are appropriate for our diverse student population. We are currently using O\*NET (Interest Profiler, Work Importance Locator & Ability Profiler), Holland Code, Career Cluster Assessment, Decision-Making Matrix, and Myers & Briggs Type Indicator assessment tools with our students with varying degrees of success. The majority of assessments are used in one-on-one meetings between students and career counselors, however some classes such as CP1 and CP2 do offer career assessments as a way of reinforcing.

In addition to formal evaluations, we also use other sources of assessment data when developing transition services including report cards, student interviews, parent interviews, teacher/staff input, and worksite and supervisor observation reports for student workers.

### **Career Counseling and Academic Advising**

Students meet a minimum of once per semester with their assigned career counselors to discuss their transition planning and academic progress. Information about transition-related topics is also shared through student emails, bulletin boards, and special workshops and written notices.

For students requiring assistance with college applications, financial aid forms, and writing scholarship essays, our career counselors host a bi-weekly "after school application hour" that is typically attended by 8-15 students each session. If a student chooses to take the ACT college

entrance exam, our career counselors will escort a group of students to and from the Austin-area test site on the weekend.

Career Counselors also provides assistance with arranging the logistics for the dual credit classes at Austin Community College (ACC) for the students. Currently, we have 20+ students enrolled in dual credit courses under ACC (online and classroom). The dual credit courses vary from Anatomy and Physiology, Welding Technology, Automotive Technology, Computer Programming, US History to Visual Communication.

### **Transition Topics during Advisory**

It is critical that transition planning is engaging and meaningful for students so that they can take ownership of the process. We approach this task by introducing the transition-planning concept to our students during the advisory period. The content and lesson plan are developed by the Career Counselors with the intention of having advisory teachers deliver them to the students during the advisory period. The topics focus on varying issues, such as a 4-year graduation plan, increasing career awareness through 17 different career clusters, and updating "All about Me," a slideshow presentation for the ARD meetings.

The "All about Me" slideshow covers all their assessment data, post-secondary goals, and academic progress & goals. During the ARD meeting, students are expected to begin the meeting with a presentation about their academic levels, transition planning, and self-assessment results with the ARD committee, ensuring that the ARD decisions are based on student's post-secondary goals. By having students present, it naturally makes them more empowered and involved with their ARD meeting and most importantly, their transition plan.

### **Community Linkage**

TSD works closely with many outside agencies and business to assist our students with their transition needs. Most prominently, we are fortunate to have a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) assigned to our campus on a part time basis. The VR counselor's office is located in the Career Center along with our three career counselors. The VR counselor works closely with students ages 16-22 to assist with post-secondary education and job placement/support.

The Travis County Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TCSDHH) is another agency partnership that primarily supports our 18–22-year-old population. We have arranged for our students to attend workshops, as needed, at the TCSDHH facility to address a variety of independent living skills topics.

TSD is most proud and grateful of the business partners who have offered work-training opportunities for our students. We have partnered with more than 50 businesses that have provided paid and unpaid work training opportunities for our high school and ACCESS Program students. Each spring, we recognize their involvement with our students with an Employer Appreciation Breakfast.

Students in our ACCESS Program are exposed to various support agencies in Travis County. During their last year, a case manager works closely with students and families in obtaining needed and available hometown community resources. The case manager connects students

with agencies across the state that offer a variety of pre-employment skill classes as well as job placement assistance at no cost to Texas residents. Once our ACCESS Program students leave TSD, they will know how to locate and access this valuable resource.

We also offer Senior Seminar courses for both college-bound and workforce-bound seniors to transition from high school to their post-secondary plans successfully. The students learn about various post-secondary degree options, workforce options, community resources, accommodations, managing stress, financial aid, study strategies, and organizational skills.

### **Career Day**

Career Day for TSD high school age students is hosted on a yearly basis. The Career Day event gives the students an opportunity to learn about various career paths from deaf professionals working in a variety of fields. Each speaker gives an overview of what a typical day looks like, how to get started in the career, and explains the challenges they faced as a deaf individual. Out-of-state college recruiters are also given the opportunity to present and talk with prospective junior and senior students about their offerings.

### **Follow-up Studies**

We have been in 100% compliance in providing student contact information as required for the State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 14 related to transition. We also recently developed a set of comprehensive follow-up study for former students to gather information on their current living situation, if they were working or attending college, and any potential barriers that they had experienced. We also asked for feedback about our career and transition programs. This information will be used to improve programs and services offered at TSD.

### **Transportation Services**

The TSD Transportation Department serves day students living in Austin and the surrounding areas. Some of the districts provide transportation, but the bulk of the responsibility is assumed by TSD. With close to 50% of our enrollment as day students, this is a critical department for TSD. TSD currently provides 12 bus routes when fully staffed. With safety as our primary goal, TSD employs up to 14 qualified drivers and 13 bus monitors to supervise students in their daily travel to and from school.

We currently have a fleet of 16 school buses, which we periodically replace when they have reached their mileage and or age end-of-life cycle. TSD's vehicle fleet also includes 8 vans and two Drivers Education vehicles.

In addition to bus service to and from school transportation is also provided for field trips, work program placements, athletic events, and other school/social/recreational activities. Our services span the school year and summer sessions, as we strive to meet the needs of an increasing and varied population of deaf and hard of hearing students attending TSD.

The Student Life department manages TSD's Weekly Homegoing Program. For residential students, TSD provides weekly transportation to and from the students' homes for those living outside of the Austin area and the surrounding cities. Our modes of travel include, but are not limited to (7) seven charter buses, rental vans and flights that transport students across Texas on

a weekly basis. We meet parents in general locations in the following cities: San Antonio, Pearsall, Laredo, Dallas, Mesquite, Waco, Belton, Hurst, Arlington, Lindale, Corsicana, Harlingen, Lubbock, El Paso, Midland and more! We have a full-time Homegoing Coordinator who handles travel arrangements and communication with staff and parents/guardians.

### Food Services

TSD's Food Service Department is one of the busiest areas on campus as they prepare 3 meals a day, provide snacks for the dorms along with food for special events and students with special dietary needs. The Cafeteria is open during the school year including special events on the weekends, and during summer sessions. To accommodate our student population, we operate five lunch periods. TSD participates in the National School Lunch/Breakfast Programs run by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). All of the food served at TSD either meets or exceeds the strict USDA standards and complies with the Texas Department of Agriculture Nutrition Policy. We follow all the National School Lunch guidelines that require lower cholesterol and healthier choices and we purchase premium ingredients for our healthy, balanced meals and our popular salad bar. Monthly cafeteria menus are posted on the website.

### Self-assessment survey results – Standard10

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_10\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_10_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

<b>Evidence</b> (Indicate on the following chart if the Evidence will be supplied in hard copy (HC) in an evidence room during the visit or electronically (E) on a flash drive. Add items as necessary.)	<b>**HC or E</b>
Guidance and counseling plan	E
Examples of student schedules for support services	HC
Results of follow-up studies of graduates	E or HC
Policies related to student services, including guidance and counseling, admissions, transportation, food services, and special education	E
Admissions policies and criteria (if applicable)	E
Suicide Assessment Procedures	E
MOUs with outside service providers	E
Sample health service forms, student health record, and IEPs.	HC

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Standard 11: Student Life, Student Activities & Residential Living

### Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 11: Student Life, Student Activities and Residential Living

3.8

Overall Standard Rating

**The Standard:** The school provides access to non-discriminatory student activities that are age- and developmentally appropriate to supplement the educational program. A balance of academic, social, athletic, co- or extra-curricular service activities is maintained. Student activities are selected to foster intellectual, cultural, and social growth as well as physical health and wellness. Student activities provide opportunities for student leadership and social interaction and encourage development of student interests. These activities are adequately financed, periodically reviewed by stakeholders, managed by school governance and leadership, and appropriate to the school's philosophy/mission.

This summary report is a compilation of 54 surveys distributed to:

10 Administration      100 Faculty and Staff      15 Students      0 Board Members  
15 Parents      0 Other:

Other Methods used to determine assessment ratings:

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Report Completed By: Wilmonda McDevitt

Date: Dec 2019

4/26/21

**Committee:** Keri Sluyter, Emma Crawford, Cheryl Warren, Peggy Ann Wenger, Chris Hamilton, Arthur Hess, Jeremy Sailing, Yana Novikova, Marcus Sylvester, Michael Winchester, Caroline Terrant, Hei Jin Woodyard, Stefan Bergan, Jackson Quiroz, Toby Daniels, Beth Chung-King, Stephen Kuh



List the **significant strengths** in the area of **Student Life, Student Activities, and Residential Living**:

- A wide range of options for students to participate in after school activities including clubs, organizations, and sports.
- Merge of special needs students in age-appropriate dorms and activities.
- Several merits and pay raises in the past 5 years.
- Use of social media (Instagram) showing Student Life, Athletics, Performing Arts, PRIDE, etc.
- Communication and transparency with Student Life staff through 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Series and group emails
- Additional positions in Student Life (Student Resources Specialists, Student Development Assistant, and Mental Health Counselor).
- New Computer labs for High School dorms with 5 computers each.
- Implementing of Social & Emotional Learning Curriculum and Data gathering.
- Residential Educators take turns eat dinner with students, develop healthy relationship.
- Strong athletic programs with multiple recognitions and awards of our coaches and players.
- Some new furniture in dorms were added the past 5 years.

Reviewed and added on April 26, 2021

- Increase training opportunities for Student Life staff on trauma-informed, anti-bias, anti-racism work, conscious discipline, etc.
- We create opportunities for older students (ACCESS) to work with elementary students (story-telling, plant-potting, and some fun activities).
- We have a good partnership with the community serving our students after school hours (100bikesforkids.org, woom, Blue Santa, Yellow bike project)
- We had a “Student Life job swap” to give staff a better understanding of different programs.
- Student Life responds well to crisis (i.e., snowstorm, we have staff staying on campus to take care of students or come early in morning to cover with supervision when school closes, and responded to different needs during COVID-19)

List the **significant areas of improvement** in the area of **Student Life, Student Activities, and Residential Living**:

- Increase of students with additional needs, more staff (FTE positions) is needed to ensure quality of supervision including residential, athletic department (stipend positions), and homegoing.
- Improve communication between school and dorm staff, still experience some gaps.
- Experience financial hardship, salary range still too low for the demand of the job and Austin COL, some staff have 2-3 jobs.
- Need to continue in providing training for staff with opportunities for professional growth, **need more collaboration with instructional division on training topics and training on Schoology.**
- Need more recognitions for Student Life staff, they still feel under appreciated by the school

Reviewed and added on April 26, 2021

- Student Life staff needs some clarity on their role during summer camps/programs, lacks stability in work schedule.
- Living in dorms is a privilege, because of special education, we do not have much say in whether or not residential program is suitable for behavior challenged students. We have to serve them with least resources available to support students' need.
- May want to consider substitute in place for Student Life to help with coverage

## Student Life, Student Activities, and Residential Living Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider further opportunities for inclusion of special needs students in all programs.

**TSD Response:** In the past, we had a separate dorm living for our students in the special needs program. In 2017, we merged all students in the dorms based on their grade/age groups regardless of which programs they were placed in. Since then, Student Life ensures that all activities are inclusive, giving all students equal opportunities for all after-school programs. We no longer identify students as “special need students”. We found that after merging the programs, the number of behavior reports on students who were placed in the special needs program had declined.

- The CEASD Accreditation Team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf create opportunities for residential staff and supervisors to access student data through the same Student Information System.

**TSD Response:** In response to one of the recommendations in our 2016 accreditation report, we have put extra effort to ensure that both teachers and Student Life staff have the same access to the Student Information System. Student Life staff now can access PowerSchool where they can view and write behavior incidents, parent contact information, and some school assignments. In 2020, High School and Middle School started using a new software, Schoology for academic-related assignments and information. Student Life staff have not been given access, yet because teachers are still being trained to use them. It is a work in process. Our goal for Student Life staff is to be more involved with student's academic progress by monitoring and supporting their schoolwork.

## Narrative

### Overview of Student Life

The Student Life Division at the Texas School for the Deaf continues to commit to making the experience valuable, memorable, and safe for all of our day and residential students. The Student Life division includes Residential Programs, Student Resources, Student Development, Athletics, and Home-Going Transportation. We house 10 buildings on campus for approximately 220 residential students living outside of Austin (currently we have less than 200 residential students due to the COVID-19 pandemic). We serve over 350 students staying for various after-school programs including sports. We offer opportunities for all students to develop Social and Emotional learning outside their classrooms through activities provided by Residential Staff, Student Resources Specialists, and Student Development Coordinators. Students may choose to

participate in athletics, student organizations, and various after-school clubs. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Social and Emotional Learning continued through zoom.

Our commitment to quality is evident in our expectations for staff. In addition to our Employee handbook, our student life staff must follow the Student Life Operations Manual (SLOM) that contains specific departmental information and procedures. Student Life staff are required to attend the monthly “Second Tuesday” series. Often, training is provided during that time. Sometimes, we use this time to share any updated information with our division. Other than school’s mandatory training, we offer at least 10 training a year for our staff. We work with some local agencies to provide presentations on a variety of topics including mental health, behavioral strategies, etc.

### **Program Philosophy**

We strongly believe in developing healthy relationships aligned with the philosophy and strategies as presented through MANDT training. All residential staff attends a series of workshops/training throughout the year including trauma-informed, anti-bias, anti-racism work, restorative practice, conscious discipline, and many more. Each student is assigned to a primary staff. Primary staff is responsible to attend to their students’ personal needs, parental contacts, and working with their independent living goals.

### **Student Life Staff**

It has been a long-standing history that Student Life staff is among the lowest-paying group at TSD. In the past 5 years we have made significant progress in this area and the staff were given several ongoing merits including a big boost to their pay scale in 2020 to promote recruitments and retention.

To keep staff motivated, to help them develop a different perspective, and to understand and appreciate the departments within the Student Life division, we created a “job swap” whereas every staff has the opportunity to be drawn to swap the role for a day with another person including all Student Life administrators. After the day of swapping roles, staff will briefly explain their experience working in a different role or a different department. Staff said their experience was positive and they felt more appreciative of each other. Among all others, we ordered Student Life apparel and wore them on our Second Tuesday Series to form stronger connections among Student Life staff.

Our Student Life staff are exemplary when it comes to providing coverage for weekends or during any emergencies. In 2019, there was a flood in southeast Texas and early in 2021, the state of Texas experienced a severe snowstorm which impacted some travels. Our residential staff stayed on campus to provide comfort for our students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had some students who were required to be isolated and we provided coverage to support those students. Staff who were assigned to work in an isolation room were given PPE (personal protective equipment). Our Student Life staff demonstrate a true definition of “student first”.

## **New dorm furniture**

Since the last accreditation, Student Life was awarded some funding to improve the quality of our dormitory furniture to bring in a more home-like environment. We were able to purchase new living room furniture for all dorm buildings and some nightstands and dressers for specific dorms.

## **Social Media**

We have increased the use of social media to keep up with the current trends. Some programs and student organizations have created Instagram accounts to keep viewers up to date with the events happening within our departments. Student Life has its Instagram, @tsdstudentlife.

## **Student Development and the after-school activities**

Student Development saw myriad possibilities for the after-school programs after experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. We created over 300 Zoom Activities for our students. We were also given the opportunity to partner with the 100bikesforkids.org and woom. They donated 30+ brand new bikes for our students to use after school. We have added a Cycling Club to our 20+ after-school clubs for all departments.

Student Development created a new Student Organizations/Club brochure for students and parents. Student Development is responsible for maintaining information up to date on the Student Life website. We encourage our students to browse through our webpage for current activities. With Social and Emotional Learning in mind, our goal is to teach students how to navigate for information independently and how to sign up for any specific activities. The Student Development team also has implemented two new annual events, Trail-O-Ween and Holiday Open house on campus.

Student Development aims to broaden a wide array of opportunities for our diverse student populations with various clubs and programs to choose from. We encourage them to enhance their learning experience by exploring different opportunities offered at TSD. We have a Student Worker program in which our students can apply for a paid job. The student worker will learn how to operate our snack bar and coordinate after-school activities for the younger students.

We create opportunities for our older students to take the lead and work with younger students. For instance, our ACCESS students have worked collaboratively with our elementary students through story-telling, plant-potting, and some fun activities. Our high school students have hosted a “girl’s night” with middle school girls.

## **Family Involvement**

Family involvement is also a vital part of our residential programming success. The student Development coordinators post all of the activities on the TSD website so the parents can review the upcoming events and activities. Each primary staff contacts the parents weekly to check-in for feedback or concerns, provide an update on their child’s performance, and share upcoming events.

## **Student Safety**

The safety of our students is of utmost importance. In the fast-paced technology world, we are currently moving toward using the scanner to maintain the checklist of students' whereabouts every 15 minutes rather than using a checklist form. The scanning process is connected to the PowerSchool. Residential staff are not accustomed to the new system; however, we continue to work to make this more effective and less time-consuming. We use communication logs to communicate with residential staff and the on-call reports which include absences, list of activities, and any minor infractions are shared to specific people at school daily through group emails.

## **Homegoing**

We continue to serve students from across the state. We transport students in 7 charter buses to different stops. Approximately 17 students fly to/from home. Students are supervised by our part-time chaperones with some additional support from our residential staff. With the dramatic increase in the cost of living in Austin and the surrounding cities, we are getting more requests from parents to place their child(ren) in the residential program. Some school districts outside of Austin will not transport students to TSD. We foresee a large increase in the student population in the residential program in the next few years.

## **Athletics**

The Texas School for the Deaf believes athletics to be an integral part of the school's educational program, providing experiences to help young people grow physically, mentally, and emotionally. At TSD, students have the unique opportunity to participate in athletics with direct communication with their coaches and their teammates.

While winning and the spirit of competition is an immediate objective in all athletic contests, we believe it is not an end in itself. At TSD, the desire to win is also used to pursue more important objectives and lessons like sportsmanship and fair play.

TSD is a full-fledged member of the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), participating in the following sports: cheerleading, cross country, baseball, basketball, football, softball, swim, tennis, track & field, volleyball, and wrestling. Younger students in Elementary and Middle School also have the opportunity to participate in organized sports such as cheerleading, cross country, basketball, flag football, softball, swim, tennis, track & field, volleyball, and wrestling through the local Capital Area Private and Parochial (CAPPS) and Austin Youth League (AYL) leagues. Also, TSD is a member of the Special Olympics of Texas (SOTX). Our SOTX athletes are participating in organized sports such as basketball, bowling, flag football, swim, soccer, and track & field. We have 68 sports programs that serve about 200 athletes from 3rd to 12th grade. The average participation rate is about 75% for all athletic activities.

## **School and Residential Partnership**

Educating our students is seen as a partnership between the school and residential programs. We have several formal avenues such as Student Staffing Team (SST), staff and teacher conferences, and ARDs (IEP meetings) where teachers and staff discuss student education and their social and emotional learning. In the past few years, we had departmental gatherings with the residential staff, teachers, and school staff during in-service to help them to get to know each other. Last August 2021, we developed two-day departmental training for both residential and school staff

together and it was a success. We will continue to bring both divisions to work together through training and gatherings.

## Self-assessment survey results – Standard11

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_11\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_11_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	Visiting Team
Data from Observations and Interviews	E
Samples of student publications—e.g., yearbook, student newspaper, literary magazine (hard copy- need to borrow from yearbook class)	E (HC)
Budget for all athletic activities	E
Budget for all non-athletic activities	E
Policies on academic eligibility (student handbook – see page 33)	E
Policies related to student life and student activities	E
<b><i>For schools with residential programs</i></b>	
Description of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs to develop healthy relationships with adults</li> <li>• Plan for continuous and responsible supervision by responsible adults (in SLOM)</li> </ul>	E
Descriptions of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provisions for student privacy</li> <li>2. Recreational programs</li> <li>3. Provisions for religious practice (if applicable)</li> </ol>	
Staffing Ratios (in SLOM)	E
Supervision Plans (in SLOM)	E
Residential Handbooks, Procedures, etc. (in SLOM)	E
Organization Booklet	E
Student Organization Handbook	E
Infographic 2019-2020	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

# Standard 12: Learning Resources and Information Technology

## Standard Self-Evaluation Summary STANDARD 12: Learning Resources and Information Technology

4.0

Overall Standard Rating

**The Standard:** Information resources, materials, and technology are accessible and of adequate scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate the school's pursuit of its total educational program. These resources encourage all students and staff to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Access to appropriate information resources and technology is provided for students and staff. Appropriate instruction is offered to develop student and staff inquiry, research, and information literacy skills. Information technology equipment is functional and well maintained.

This summary report is a compilation of 123 surveys distributed to 192 recipients.

49 Administration

35 Faculty and Staff

0 Students

3 Board Members

0 Parents

5 Other

### Other methods used to determine assessment ratings:

We used the averages from 123 survey results, plus the meetings and discussions with Focus Group Members for Standard 12. Also, the Outreach Department (ERCOD/ now known as SOC) sent out an **additional** survey with 186 responses to gather more information about questions **12.14 and 12.15**. The results of the additional surveys were very favorable and aligned with the results from the TSD community surveys

**Report Completed By:** Mari Liles and Stella Egbert

**Date:** Original 11.27.19

4.26.21.

**Committee:** Mari Liles, Stella Egbert, Leslie Hussey, Meghan Blackmon, LeAnn Loyola, Craig DeBellis, Linda Miller, Sonia Bridges, and Alan Morton.

- *TSD Libraries and Learning Resources:*
  - Increased access to learning & information resources available and 24/7 access to TSD's online public access catalog (OPAC). **We now have 24/7 access to our catalog and also have 24/7 access to an eBook platform through Sora (Overdrive).**
  - Partnership with Austin Public Library increasing access to learning resources and information outside of TSD. **Ongoing**
  - School librarians are available to collaborate with teachers for student learning and instruction.
- *Statewide (ERCOD) Online Learning and Distance Learning Resources:*
  - ERCOD YouTube Resources and the Crossroads Website resources

- ASL Storytelling Program shared with Deaf Education Programs across the state.
- Distance Learning opportunities and shared online resources and videos.

**The following info was added or updated on 4-26-21:**

- *Statewide Outreach Center (SOC) Online Resources: (Name Changed to SOC from ERCOD)*
  - SOC Resources including technology training for teachers, ASL Stories and scalable lesson plans.
  - Virtual conferences for families and professionals with shared online resources and videos.
  - Upcoming utilization of Salesforce for online registration, tracking of outreach measures.
  - Upcoming installation of state-of-the-art studio build out to replace former Learning Resources Center.
- TSD's Information Technology Resources:
  - Installed a new wireless network across TSD campus increasing speed and reliability.
  - Significantly increased the network bandwidth to meet the demands of concurrent classroom videos and improve the overall internet experience.
  - 1:1 iPads for MS and HS students; classroom sets of iPads across the other instructional areas.
  - Annual computer/technology upgrades on a 4-year replacement cycle keeping IT hardware current.
  - Updated bell and emergency mass notification systems.
  - Anonymous Alerts implementation to encourage students to send messages anonymously about incidents (bullying, threats, etc.).
  - Each Middle and High School classroom were equipped with large LCD TVs with a built-in Apple TV application to allow teachers to present from their laptops to the TV wirelessly with AirPlay.

**The following info was added or updated on 4-26-21:**

*COVID Created MANY Changes in Technology, Learning, and Support*

- TSD received several Federal and State grants to purchase devices to facilitate remote instruction. These funds were spent to increase the number of hotspots, mobile devices (Pads) and online curriculum resources needed to support remote learning.
- *Libraries and Learning Resources:*
  - It is time to revisit current TSD library programs and redefine what role & responsibilities the TSD library programs have related to learning and information resources. *4/26/21- this has not happened yet.*
  - Increase curation and access to ASL resources. *4/26/21 ongoing. Destiny Discover, our OPAC, allows for the growth & curation of ASL resources.*
  - Increase input and involvement from the school community regarding our current & future information resources (i.e.: databases, etc.). *.). – 4/26/21 Meeting scheduled with librarians, curriculum specialists, and IT for 5/21 to work on subscriptions and databases.*
- Revise TSD's AUP to make it relevant to our school, libraries and learning resources. Increase and/or provide access to technology integration training (integrate



- technology (ISTE) within TEKS, use of technology resources & equipment). **4/26/21 – Technology integration training plans and support have not happened yet.**
- *Statewide (ERCOD) Online Learning Resources:*
    - Ongoing research needed for a new Learning Management System (LMS).
    - Expand content variety for ERCOD online resources.
    - Need for advanced computers and video editing systems to create new content and materials.
  
  - *TSD's Information Technology Resources:*
    - The Information Security Guidelines / Policy is under development but not fully implemented yet to meet Texas Senate Bill 820 on cybersecurity for schools. This is a work in progress. **4.26.21 - TSD's Information Security Guidelines and Policies have been revised and approved to support SB 820. Cybersecurity training is now required annually for ALL TSD Staff.**
    - **Additional training is needed within the IT Dept to remain current with emerging technologies for managing mobile devices and providing remote support for users.**
    - IT does not have a training program for teachers and staff on new technologies. We do not have the staff or resources to offer this kind of a training program.
    - IT needs improvement on ensuring the TSD staff are using our HelpDesk ticketing system for tech support requests. Some staff are still calling to leave messages or e-mailing the tech directly instead of opening help desk tickets. **4/26/21 – The IT Staff have placed an emphasis with our users in the community on utilizing our online HelpDesk system to request technical support or service and this system is now widely used as designed.**

Please list **new items** not indicated on the original list of standards.

***Internal Items Discussed During Focus Group Meetings:***

- Clearly define to our TSD community the meaning of Learning Resources (Libraries, Curriculum Support, IT Support, Outreach Resources and Materials provided online, Distance Learning opportunities, etc.). Make sure the community understands the difference in our former Learning Resource Center (which operated as a media center for teachers to get supplies, laminating and check out AV equipment), compared to our current meaning of Learning Resources.
- The results of the Standard 12 survey indicated that our staff would like more training with the integration of instructional technology and applications. We need to figure out where the responsibility for providing this training will be managed. (Instructional Depts, Curriculum Staff, Online Resources)
- How can we generate more resources and funds to keep all the classroom equipment, library resources and outreach resources current and up-to-date? (grants, re-allocation of existing TSD funds, partnerships with service centers and other districts)
- Ongoing research needed at TSD and in **ERCOD (SOC)** to address the need for a new Learning Management System. **4/26/21 – Our HR Dept is currently implementing a new Learning Management System called Bridge.**

## Learning Resources and Information Technology Recommendations from Previous CEASD Accreditation Visit:

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf continue to work collaboratively with all departments to achieve the data-driven decision-making objectives as outlined in TSD's STG #4.

**TSD Response:** For our accountability assessment with TEA, we replaced SAT-10 (which did not assess students on state standards/TEKS) with NWEA's MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) a computerized tool that assesses student TEKS knowledge at their functioning level and provides "next steps" guidance for teachers. Our MOU with TEA has been revised, submitted to TEA, and waiting on final approval. After searching for other possible Student Information Systems, we decided to stay with PowerSchool and merged all possible existing databases such as grading, attendance, behavior, student and teacher scheduling, CRDC (to some degree), PIEMS, admissions, etc. into PowerSchool. Developed behavior data collection archive for extraction and interpretation/use by all departments. eSped training plan fully implemented for new teachers. Selected SHARS (School Health and Related Services) program, participated in RTM (Random Moment Time) studies, and set up training schedules for all staff. Change from T-TESS to PPfT for teacher evaluations and developed Data Entry Tracking Feature for calculating fall and spring teacher evaluation scores. Researched and selected District Archival System (ImageNet/Laserfiche), however the decision has been made to hold on this purchase for the time being. Selected and began using an automated sub system. Researched and selected Schoology as our LMS for use with all students Toddlers - ACCESS at TSD. Instructional Data Analyst meets with principals annually to discuss top-down data results from STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) and MAP, conducted a cohort review and explained how to do this using RIT District Summary scores by year and graduating class. Individual departments (Principals, APs, Curriculum Specialists) leading curriculum studies and using MAP data to drive these discussions and planning sessions. Teachers are working with students to review MAP and STAAR data, and to set individual goals between fall and spring MAP testing. Although this data sharing, analysis and use for planning purposes is a great improvement for our district, we are still in the process of making this systematic districtwide. As such, this is a goal with our new 5-year strategic plan, for SGT #1 Team:

Empowering Student Learning:

Use of Data Goals:

- Develop assessment profiles that identify strengths/needs related to academics, language, and social-emotional development
  - Develop operating procedures to promote consistent use of data
  - Ensure accountability through department-level data teams
- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf consider developing/acquiring a storage system for ASL video files (student work, teacher created materials, student assessment), and investigate how these digital files can be linked to student portfolios and teacher lesson plans.

**TSD Response:** We have not completed the process of putting together a centralized system for ASL videos, however each department and/or teachers have either Google Drive or Schoology to store them. With how the unveiling of Bridges occurred this year, we anticipate that centralizing some of the ASL specific trainings will take place there. This plan will need to be revisited with multiple efforts across campus.

In 2020-2021, the Elementary Department implemented Language Portfolios for all students where we collect beginning and end of the year language samples - in both ASL and English - in Google Slides. These portfolios will expand over time so that we can monitor our students' growth in both languages.

As part of the new 5-year strategic plan, our SGT on Empowering Student Learning has created multiple objectives related to Meaningful Use of Data.

A group of teachers in the Elementary Department created a Bilingual Language Arts website where they have housed all of the resources related to the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum and Bedrock Literacy. This one-stop shop is a treasure trove of instructional materials for our teachers to use with their students. It also results in students having access to materials created by various signers.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf utilize a communication platform to share information related to software updates, system changes, tips, and available support and resources.

**TSD Response:** When there are important announcements/updates pertaining to system wide technology use, the IT Department sends out a Tech Bulletin alert to all staff. These are uniform in appearance and are only sent when truly necessary.

When we adopted Schoology at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, all of our teachers and administrators engaged in various trainings to ensure a successful implementation of our new Learning Management System (LMS). Additionally, the Curriculum Team created a group for teachers within the platform called Schoology for TSD Teachers and Staff. There, we have a collection of well-organized resources to support Schoology users in maximizing their use of the LMS. In addition to this group serving as a way to share best practices, training tidbits, and course design ideas, there is also a discussion board that provides a platform for staff to ask questions and share timely information with all users. This has resulted in increased cross-departmental collaboration. (see screenshots)

Instagram is a powerful tool for sharing information with community stakeholders. In addition to our school and department Instagram accounts, the Elementary Department also has a private Instagram account (@tsdelempd) where we share Professional Development ideas and resources with each other.

- The CEASD Accreditation team recommends the Texas School for the Deaf research funding options to pay instructional staff (i.e., during the school year, summer and school vacations) to create an ASL corpus of instructional materials aligned to instructional standards in order to support student learning in and outside of the classroom.

**TSD Response:** We have not completed this on a district-wide level; however, the Elementary program has this for their Bilingual Grammar Curriculum and it is expanding up to HS this fall (2021-2022). We have, because of Schoology, given opportunities to develop class-specific videos aligned with instruction during the pandemic on an individual teacher basis across the campus.

Teachers have also been able to collaborate with each other and share resources as a result of the new technology available to us. (i.e., Schoology, Seesaw, and Follet Destiny)

Though the COVID-19 pandemic was devastating in countless ways, it also provided us with the opportunity to invest more in our development of instructional materials in ASL. We were able to utilize various staff members in this process. A team of Elementary teachers collaborated on the creation of additional materials to support the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum. A stipend was awarded to the teachers who spearheaded this effort, and a larger team of teachers was provided with time over the summer to further expand on this collection of resources.

We have slowly built our inventory of ASL translated books via ASL Storytelling; <https://www.texasdeafed.org/aslstorytelling>

We updated our online lesson plans to be realigned with TEKS requirements wherever feasible; <https://www.texasdeafed.org/lessonplans>

The Distance Learning Studios are now being constructed to accommodate the push for more online resources to support student learning at TSD and statewide.

All new lesson plans include materials aligned to instructional standards.

With the implementation of Follet Destiny, our school library management system, we have been able to expand our ASL corpus of various children's books, poems, and instructional videos. Our librarians and teachers are able to create collections so that materials can be organized by topic, thus ensuring the resources are more easily accessible.

## Narrative

### STANDARD 12: Information Resources and Technology

**The Standard:** Information resources, materials, and technology are accessible and of adequate scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate the school's pursuit of its total educational program. These resources encourage all students and staff to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Access to appropriate information resources and technology is provided for students and staff. Appropriate instruction is offered to develop student and staff inquiry, research, and information literacy skills. Information technology equipment is functional and well maintained. Indicators:

#### Creating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms, Teachers and Students at TSD

TSD has long been a leader in technology use and integration and we continue to make great strides forward in engaging the digital generation. TSD provides a variety of technology resources for staff and students at all educational levels including but not limited to: shared laptop mobile labs (COWs), digital LCD projectors or, interactive displays (ActivPanels) in each classroom, document cameras, video cameras, iPods/iPads/laptops, student response devices, computer

labs with group working spaces for collaborative learning, web tools, a large variety of mobile Apps, and web-based collaboration software, and online curriculum resources. Over the last 5 years we have increased our use of robotics tools and equipment including 3D printers and interactive robots and have expanded our STEM offerings across all grade levels.

We have been using iPads for about 10 years and have a 1:1 Initiative in high school and middle school. Each of our high school and middle school students are issued an iPad that is available to them in a 24/7 environment. All other instructional areas of our school also have iPads to be used and shared for instructional purposes throughout the school day. We provide desktop and laptop computers in classrooms for students and teachers across all departments. This year our High School Seniors will have the option to be assigned a MacBook Air laptop instead of the iPad, if they chose. The majority of our classrooms are equipped with Promethean Interactive Displays, document cameras, and/or LCD projectors. We have state-of-the-art computer labs for our high school and middle school instructional departments. Our students and staff have access to a wide variety of online web tools, software and various instructional apps for a variety of subjects and grade levels. Some of our classrooms are equipped with Student Response Devices (ACTIVotes and ACTIVexpressions) that are used in conjunction with interactive displays (ActivePanels), and are used in a variety of grade levels for formative assessments. Student iPads are also used to provide quick assessment information for teachers.

We provide specialized alternative communication software, BoardMaker and Proloquo2Go, which are symbol-supported communication Apps to promote language development and increase communication skills to assist our students with significant cognitive difficulties. We have a wide range of other online resources to meet the specific needs of our diverse learners. Many of our online web tools such as Digital Knowledge Central (Encyclopedia Britannica, World Book Online and EBSCO) are differentiated to meet the needs of a wide range of students. We also have BrainPop and BrainPop Jr. which provides rich and engaging videos, lessons, and resources on a variety of content areas. We have Reading A-Z, which personalizes reading practice according to each student's current reading level, Accelerated Reader for comprehension checks and Accelerated Math, which helps differentiate math instruction, addressing each student's individual needs. Our teachers and students utilize a variety of web resources and Apps for daily classroom lessons to support curriculum goals.

## Technology-Related Course Offerings K-12

Technology is integrated throughout the various grades and content areas. Students use technology for research, to collaborate with their community, in using a wide variety of Apps and online tools, to create and share presentations, to communicate with friends, family and peers, to take online testing, and for a variety of other applications.

**Elementary:** Many of our young students come to us as “digital natives”. They are already comfortable with accessing information and creating products in a variety of electronic formats. In keeping with best practices in the field, most of the technology skills taught our K-5 students are done so in combination with other content area objectives. In this way, students acquire not only the knowledge of how to utilize new and exciting technology tools, but when to select a particular tool and why it is beneficial. All 3rd-5th graders have their own iPads, and there are a sufficient number of devices to support students in K-2 as well. Most classrooms are equipped with ACTIVboards or the newer models, ActivPanels; these help promote engagement and interactive learning.

TSD implemented Schoology as our Learning Management System beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. Though this was in the works long before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the timing of our implementation served as a tremendous asset for virtual and in-person learners alike; Schoology was the platform used to share instructional materials with all students/families from PIP through ACCESS. In the Elementary Department, we also use Seesaw, a student-friendly digital portfolio that allows learners to demonstrate their learning in both English and ASL.

TSD adopted Follet Destiny as our Library Management System. This provides our librarians and educators with a way to curate resources pertaining to different topics, and students are able to peruse educational resources in print and ASL. Students have access to various apps to support their learning. Our upper elementary students use Google apps that promote communication and collaboration. They also use Keynote to create presentations and demonstrate their learning. Learning is also tailored to individual needs through the use of apps and platforms such as Epic!, BrainPop, ST Math, IXL, Breakout EDU, and more.

In addition to instruction in the core content areas and Physical Education, students in Elementary rotate between three Electives courses each year - STEM, ASL, and Art. During the 12-week STEM rotation, some of the main areas of focus include the Engineering Design Process, Lego, coding, robotics, Stop Motion, and 3-D printing. Throughout the course of their Elementary career, students develop their coding skills using BeeBot, Dot and Dash, Ozobot, Tynker, Sphero, and Kodable.

In the ASL elective rotation, students learn a variety of digital tools coupled with different aspects of American Sign Language. Students spend a great deal of time using Keynote and creating and editing in iMovie. They also work extensively with Do Ink, a green screen app that allows them to transport their images and videos into various locations and backgrounds for added creativity.

Our 5th graders look forward to the opportunity to share the Elementary News, a weekly video where students highlight different stories and events happening in society and in our school community. Our ASL and STEM teachers support this student-led program.

**Middle School:** Through the study of technology foundations, including related vocabulary, concepts, and types of data input, middle school students learn to make informed decisions about technology applications. Students are taught to acquire information using a variety of search strategies, and to use technology to access, analyze, and evaluate the acquired information. Middle school students learn that technology is a tool that supports the work of individuals and groups in solving problems, and students are required to select the technology most appropriate to the task, synthesize knowledge, create a solution, and evaluate the results. Students communicate information in different formats and to diverse audiences.

The following technology courses are offered in middle school:

- STEM I
- STEM II
- Technology Applications.

These 3 courses are all offered on a 9-week rotating schedule for 6 and 7 grade students. Creative Computing is offered for one semester to all 8 grade students.

**High School and Career Technical Education:** In addition to the technology integration infused across all HS subject areas; we offer a wide selection of computer-related courses for students to choose from as outlined below.

**ANIMATION 1:** Students are expected to develop an understanding of the history and techniques of the animation industry. At the beginning of the course, the students will create animation projects using old traditional techniques and hands-on, along with utilizing iPad apps to create the content. The students will eventually create more current and modern content using various tools and software, including Photoshop, Motion, LiveType, and After Effect.

**ANIMATION 2:** Students are expected to master the technology, techniques, and the 12 principles that are the foundation of animation art. Students will do observational drawings, animation studies, animation projects, and various software tools, including Photoshop, Motion, LiveType, After Effect, Final Cut Pro, and DVD Studio Pro. Students will create a unique collection of work samples.

**VIDEO PRODUCTION 1:** This course provides training for entry-level employment in the television & film industries. Students learn about pre-production, production, and post-production phases and nonlinear editing using Final Cut Pro Studio and Adobe Creative Suite. Assignments include videotaping Newscasts about TSD community events.

**VIDEO PRODUCTION 2:** Students develop advanced understanding and knowledge of the industry, focusing on pre-production, production, and post-production phases and nonlinear editing using Final Cut Pro Studio and Adobe Creative Suite. Assignments include videotaping TSD community events.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION:** This course is a hands-on, lab-based class where students are introduced to various graphic design and illustration applications. Students will study image editing, animation, graphic design, and digital color. Students will also learn about the art of visual communications and advertising through illustration, design, analysis, approach, and technical skills.

**VISUAL COMMUNICATION 1/2/3 (AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DUAL CREDIT COURSES):** Visual Communication courses are dual credit courses in the graphic design field, collaborating with Austin Community College. Students will be enrolled in two separate dual credit courses throughout the year, earning a total of 6 college credits (Digital Imaging 1, Vector Graphics for Production, or Digital Publishing 1). The credits earned will go towards the Occupational Skills Award (OSA) and higher certifications, including associate degree(s).

**ENGINEERING DESIGN & 3D PRINTING:** Students will build on the knowledge and skills necessary for engineering in the development of 2D and 3D design. Students will learn the fundamental principles in the design process by using multiple Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD) software applications and tools necessary to produce and present working drawings, solid model renderings, and prototypes. Students will also explore career opportunities in engineering, technology, and drafting.

**GAME & APP DESIGN:** Students will build on the knowledge and skills necessary for the role of programmer in the development of games and mobile applications. Students will

identify task requirements, plan search strategies and use software development concepts to access, analyze and evaluate information needed to create game and application programs. Students will also explore career opportunities in the computer science and programming field.

**ROBOTICS 1/2/3:** Robotics 1/2/3 is a series of courses with FIRST Technical Challenge (FTC) Focus and students will participate in the FTC Robotics competition team, which meets outside school hours in preparation for competitions. Students will develop and master critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and concepts of engineering and technology with emphasis placed on the FIRST Technical Challenge Robotics competition. This course will provide students with opportunities to research, design, develop, build, test, and evaluate solutions to real-life problems focused around the FTC contest. Laser cutter, 3D printer, waterjet cutter, vertical milling machine with DRO, and computer programming will also be included in this course.

**YEARBOOK:** Students will gain knowledge and skills in one or more of the following areas: page design, advanced publishing techniques, copywriting, editing and photography while producing a creative & innovative yearbook which records school memories and events. Students gain useful, real-world skills in time management, marketing, teamwork, and design principles. The students will also use various software tools, including Photoshop, Canvas, InDesign and other appropriate editing & design software.

## Information Technology Software and Support Tools

The IT tech support team at TSD uses a variety of software management tools to improve efficiency and provide quick and accurate customer service and support. Some of our favorite and most used tech tools are mentioned below.

**SolarWinds Web HelpDesk** offers an intuitive web interface and service desk portal. Web Help Desk software delivers simplicity and automation to streamline help desk ticketing and IT asset management. TSD purchased this software over ten years ago and this tool has been a huge asset to the IT staff in being able to route, track and update users' requests. We also use the 'asset management' section to maintain our technology-related hardware inventory. The software has a built-in 'Knowledge Base Management Tool' so we can provide users with FAQs. Another favorite feature that our techs depend on is the 'Account Management' tool. We often wonder how we ever survived before we purchased this software.

**SolarWinds IP- Monitor:** monitors network-connected devices and alerts IT whenever a device goes down. The device may be a network switch, a server, a marquee, outdoor scrolling signs for mass emergency notification, etc. It is the quickest method for IT to become aware of a network disconnect or outage.

**Apple Remote Desktop / JAMF Remote:** Desktop management system used to manage and support all the Mac computers on our network. Our techs use this software primarily to 'remotely' access a user's computer to help troubleshoot problems. We also use this tool to distribute software, provide real-time online help to end users, create detailed software and hardware reports and automate routine management tasks – all without leaving our desks. We are able to set up and manage work-groups, allow or limit access to specific software, and



monitor student computers, if necessary. This is another tool that helps us be more efficient in serving our users.

**JAMF Pro** by Jamf Software is a tool we have been using for almost 10 years. This software allows our IT system administrators a simple, yet comprehensive way to manage our Mac OSX computers and iOS devices (Apple TV, iPods, iPads, iPhones). With recent increases in the quantity of iOS devices at TSD, we realized a need to have a tool that provides distribution of in-house and app store applications as well as a way to utilize Apple's Volume Purchase Program (VPP). We now have more than 1500 Apple devices spread across our campus and keeping up with the inventory of these devices, imaging them, and distributing software is a huge task. This software makes the task much simpler to manage and provides additional security for our inventory.

**Self Service** is a part of the JAMF Pro suite to allow better access, speed and availability for a stronger end-user experience. Taking the app catalog to a whole new level, Self Service is installed in all of TSD's Apple Mac laptops, desktop computers and iPads. Self Service empowers end users with instant access to resources, content and trusted apps. No helpdesk ticket is needed. When the user needs an application or printer installed, Self Service allows the user to install it without IT assistance.

**JAMF Protect:** JAMF Protect is an endpoint protection for exclusively Mac Devices with Anti-Virus, Malware, Spyware, Ransomware, and other named protection. Provides endpoint protection to maintain compliance, monitor, real-time alerts, extensive reporting and remediate security incidents on macOS. JAMF Protect and JAMF Pro work together to create customized remediation workflows. These installations are managed and monitored through JAMF Cloud and supports the latest Apple software and hardware on the day of release.

**Brocade Network Advisor:** Brocade Network Advisor helps proactively manage end-to-end network health, performance and aids troubleshooting. It monitors our Core and Edge switches.

**Ruckus Wireless SmartZone:** is a high-performance wireless network controller. It manages and monitors all of the Ruckus Wi-Fi access points on campus. Wi-Fi SSIDs, access controls, availability and event logging are handled from one central location through the SmartZone's web interface.

**Palo Alto:** The Palo Alto Firewall is TSD's security shield against the outside world. The Palo Alto Firewall has a malware and maintenance subscription that needs to be renewed annually. The Palo Alto also serves as TSD's VPN server. This hardware device is located in the Pease Server Room with a redundant device in the Elementary School basement. The firewall also is our web filter for TSD.

**Code42 CrashPlan Pro:** Code42 CrashPlan Pro is a backup software that offers the best way to back up and store personal, business and enterprise data securely for both Microsoft Windows and Apple MacOS operating systems. The CrashPlan service is currently backing up data in the Code42 cloud.

**Sophos Cloud:** Sophos Cloud provides TSD with Anti-Virus, Spyware, Malware and other "mysterious" named protection. All Sophos installations are managed and monitored through the Sophos Cloud. Alerts are sent from the Cloud to the IT administrators in case a virus or

malware is detected and cannot be cleaned up. Sophos Cloud will be used mainly by Microsoft Windows devices while we are migrating to the new JAMF Protect for Apple devices.

**VMware ESXi:** VMware ESXi is an enterprise-class, type-1 hypervisor developed for deploying and serving virtual computers. As a type-1 hypervisor, ESXi is not a software application that one installs in an operating system; instead, it includes and integrates vital OS components, such as a kernel. ESXi runs on three TSD host machines in the Pease Server Room and supports 15 virtual machines ranging from audiology applications to network tools to VOIP services.

**Veeam Backup and Replication** backs up TSD's VMware ESXi virtual machines (VM) for disaster recovery. It backs up each VM nightly and allows the VMs to be restored quickly.

**KnowBe4** is an integrated platform for cybersecurity awareness training with simulated phishing attacks. It has a large library of training content including online captioned videos to help TSD's staff become more security aware.

## Recent Technology Highlights

**Robotics Programs:** Our high school robotics program continues to be part of the Austin Metro League under the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology) organization which focuses on competition and promoting STEM awareness within our community. Our robotics team also started participating in the TAPPS competition for the past three years and have won the TAPPS alliance championship once.

The middle school STEM classes allow the students to learn and experience robotics and solve the challenges VEX Robotics Competition presents to the team. They have multiple teams for two different Robotics leagues, VEX IQ and VEX VRC and participate in the local and deaf competitions hosted by NTID Regional STEM Center (NRSC). The middle school robotics teams have won multiple awards at the NRSC competitions for the past two years.

**Statewide Outreach Center (Technology-Related Services):** Growing from one teacher developing online resources to a team of six, the Statewide Outreach Center (SOC) expanded considerably, beefing up an already skilled team with additional resource and content development knowledge and expertise to produce online resources for students and teachers across the state.

These materials, available online, include videos created using American Sign Language along with both English voiceover and closed captions. Videos are accompanied by lesson plans, objectives, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), accompanying individual and classroom activities, and materials for teachers and students to use in a variety of settings.

Developed with technology integration in mind, a library of freely accessible materials is stored online for open sourcing at [TexasDeafEd.org](https://TexasDeafEd.org). The availability of these materials has allowed teachers to spend less of their time creating lessons and more time focused on direct instruction and intervention for students across Texas.

SOC is also responsible for visiting teachers and classrooms all across Texas to provide training on a variety of topics. In the past six years, SOC has reached over 1,000 Texas teachers and school staff through district or state level conference training, and online. SOC also seeks collaborative opportunities to showcase other teachers who are experts in their fields. SOC collaborates with a variety of experts to provide mentorship and lead workshops across the state, as well as match specific skill sets to the needs of Texas' Regional Day School Programs for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

SOC's most often utilized online resources include the *Texas Math Sign Language Dictionary*, *ASL Storytelling Online Library*, the *Kids Sign* series, deaf education lesson plans, a wide variety of video tutorials, *Birth to Three: Parent Video Series on Early Intervention*, videos for parent training, mental health webinars and the *Mental Health Symposium* consisting of virtual, live streamed and pre-recorded video sessions. The *Weird But True* series is available on our website and disseminated over social media @TxDeafEd on Instagram and Facebook to 32,000+ followers.

SOC has dropped the Crossroads name and boosted its' brand to include the resource website, revamped with updated content and streamlined to reduce redundancy. New and engaging lesson plans are added regularly.

Virtual conference options were developed for expanded *Family Weekend Retreat 2020* and *Family **Week** Retreat 2021*, as well as for *Communication Skills Workshops*, and *2021 Summer Camps and Programs*. Additionally, SOC lent its expertise in collaboration for the 2020 Southwest Conference of Educators and Parents through a virtual platform of ten live, engaging sessions. This past year, several SOC programs transitioned to an online environment to accommodate its stakeholders. *Family Weekend Retreat*, the *Mental Health Symposium*, and *Communication Skills Workshops* offered synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities to include virtual sessions, webinars, and livestream videos.

The pandemic forced a major change to enhance SOC programs and make them more accessible anywhere so they can be used by more students, families and professionals for training and in classrooms. "Ally" software helped make web content even more accessible.

Following examples set by SOC's *ASL Storytelling* classes and *Family Signs* instruction, outreach staff is now utilizing the Zoom application more readily to reach even more consumers. Using video conferencing, *Family Signs* is an interactive sign language instruction program available to Texas families with school-age children, designed to learn and improve signed communication.

SOC's live, interactive *ASL Storytelling* classes through distance learning to elementary and middle school-aged children promote language learning and literacy for students across the state of Texas who are deaf and hard of hearing. The *ASL Storytelling* program has tripled the number of students it serves in the past five years, to over 55 Texas schools across Texas participating, pre-pandemic. We expect school participation to bump up with more in-person learning resuming this fall.

To further enhance production and quality of video resources, SOC is undertaking a complete reconstruction of a brand-new studio complete with state-of-the-art technology and equipment. The new studio, located in TSD's former Learning Resource Center, will house three separate production areas to reach more students and classes simultaneously through distance learning,

*ASL Storytelling* and to give specialists production capabilities to produce, film, and edit SOC videos in-house.

An annual Deaf Awareness Week event, SOC highlights talent within the Deaf community with *ASL Expressions*. In partnership with the Central Austin Public Library, storytellers and performers who are both deaf and hard of hearing, can share their choice of live or pre-recorded talent for the world to enjoy.

**Database Information:** TSD uses web-based systems and databases developed in FileMaker Pro for data tracking and as reporting tools. These systems are used campus-wide and supported by our Database Team.

The recent acquisition of new cloud-based systems helps TSD better support students and staff. Our new learning management systems for students and staff are Schoology and Bridge. DESSA is our program of choice for accessing the social and emotional needs of our students.

We have integrated student incident tracking into our SIS. This data was previously tracked in three different systems. We continually evaluate and monitor our existing databases to ensure data integrity across systems, as well as streamlining any redundancies or databases that are no longer utilized.

**PowerSchool (Student Information System) Summary:** Texas School for the Deaf utilizes PowerSchool as our web-based Student Information System (SIS). PowerSchool is used to document daily attendance, incident management and to store and print report card information, sort student data, locate student and teacher class schedules, and provide information to parents about their student's progress. We have integrated pre-registration into PowerSchool to allow parents to enroll their students via the web eliminating many manual processes of the past.

**eSped/eStar/Frontline:** Web-based Special Ed tracking application ARDS, assessments, SpEd Indicator codes, Schedule of services, parent agreements and student permissions.

- Manages the special education process and improve the quality of Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) documents
- Enhances compliance with Texas requirements and district policies
- Identifies, prioritizes and acts on opportunities for Medicaid reimbursement
- Manages complex RTI / MTSS processes (<https://www.frontlineeducation.com/solutions/rti-mtss-program-management/>)
- Improves 504 Plan efficiency and effectiveness (<https://www.frontlineeducation.com/special-ed-software/504-plan/>)
- Ease paperwork, data collection and progress monitoring in your EL/LPAC program
- Easily integrates with your Student Information System and transfer ARD documents between districts

**PrimeroEdge:** PrimeroEdge is a provider of School Nutrition software for TSD. School nutrition all departments in one centralized cloud-based system that tracks nutrition, meal disbursement, student balances and NSLP data for all students.

**MSB School Services:** School Health and Related Services (SHARS) is a Medicaid program designed to allow school districts to seek federal reimbursement for certain health services performed for Special Education Students as defined by their IEP.

The district has partnered with MSB Consulting Group to provide software for documentation of services, X Logs, processing of paper documentation and SHARS claims submission. MSB provides printed materials at all trainings/workshops as well as a dedicated website for staff to get resources on documentation guidance (<https://msbconnect.com/success-center/>).

**Renaissance Learning Including:**

- *STAR Reading, STAR Early Literacy and STAR Math*
- Standardized, computer-adaptive assessments created by Renaissance Learning, Inc., for use in K-12 education. Each is a "Tier 2" assessment of a skill (reading practice, math practice, and early literacy, respectively) that can be used any number of times due to item-bank technology. These assessments fall somewhere between progress monitoring tools ("Tier 1") and high-stakes tests.

**Bridge (Staff Learning Management System):** TSD uses Bridge as our web-based platform for staff training. This is a fairly new system at TSD that will continue to expand and grow in the next couple of years. We are currently using it for all mandatory staff trainings including:

- Medication Administration
- Blood Borne Pathogens
- SORM: Drive Safety Courses
- Annual Mandatory Trainings

Staff can use this platform to participate in live-trainings, e-learning courses and receive certificates after completing training. TSD is able to improve professional development and growth opportunities using Bridge.

**Schoology (Student Learning Management System):** Texas School for the Deaf uses Schoology as our Learning Management System (LMS).

Because it's a PowerSchool product data is easily integrated between it and our PowerSchool SIS. Our teachers use Schoology to manage and share academic content with their students in a digital environment. TSD students are able to submit their work electronically and collaborate on projects and ideas. Parents can track their student's work, as well as communicate with teachers and parents through this platform.

**DESSA (Social-Emotional Learning System):** DESSA is a cloud-based system used by TSD to assess and improve the social and emotional skills of our students. This system is used to track information for students in our Kindergarten through Transition programs.

**Technology Curriculum and Resource Support for Teachers:** The state of Texas includes Technology Application standards, or TEKS, as part of the statewide requirements for students in grades K-8 as well as specific courses at the high school level. Students develop competencies in areas such as creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making, communication and collaboration, digital citizenship, research and information fluency, and basic technology concepts/operations. Students apply these skills in authentic ways, embedded in instruction.

Librarians, Curriculum Specialists, and other colleagues provide support to instructional staff regarding new resources and subscriptions we have access to at TSD. District-level and department-based training sessions are available, and teachers also have the opportunity for 1:1 instruction on an as-needed basis.

The IT team ensures a collaborative approach so that we can work together to best meet the needs of all students and staff. At the height of COVID-19 when all students received virtual instruction, additional changes were made so that we could provide more direct support to families who were struggling to help their students navigate digital resources.

**Internet Safety Curriculum** : Social Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction is at the core of our work; the tenets of SEL are centered around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. As part of SEL development, students learn to demonstrate important skills such as empathy, understanding, and respect for self and others that are essential to making healthy decisions in life, including when navigating a virtual environment. Instruction about internet safety is embedded during instruction. Additionally, our librarians emphasize digital citizenship when working with our teachers and students. Information is included in our Student and Parent Handbook to help parents dialogue with their children about online safety. These efforts help our students learn to use the Internet and mobile devices safely and wisely.

### Self-assessment survey results – Standard12

[https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard\\_12\\_Self\\_Assessment\\_Data.pdf](https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/ceasd/Standard_12_Self_Assessment_Data.pdf)

Evidence	(HC) Or (E)
•The information resources and technology plan(s)	E
•Budget for information resources and technology for past 3 years	E
•Acceptable Use Policy and Data Use Guidelines	E
•Availability of information resources including hardware and software (inventory)	E
•Availability of information technology equipment	N/A
•Policies related to information resources and technology	E
•Job descriptions of learning resources and information technology staff and professional development calendar for staff	E

\*\*HC Hard Copy of Evidence

\*\*E Electronic Copy of Evidence

## Conclusion

The Self-Study process for re-accreditation this cycle has been both challenging and rewarding. Our typical approach to our Self-Study at TSD begins with the end in mind, a new Five-Year Strategic Plan, a Self-Study document that demonstrates the School's compliance with the 12 CEASD Standards and a site visit that demonstrates our educational quality to peers from other CEASD accredited schools.

Conducting strategic planning in conjunction with our Self-Study process for re-accreditation allows us to tell our story of what we have learned from this intense needs assessment process, support it with qualitative and quantitative data, engage our community, identify our strategic priorities for the future, reflect on our mission, vision and beliefs and develop school improvement action plans.

This particular accreditation cycle was disrupted by COVID. The sudden change from traditional classroom teaching and learning to online education and learning did not give educators the time to adjust the teaching material and did not give the school administrators the time to keep focus on the accreditation process. Flexibility, adaptability and emotional support became as important as our traditional roles as teachers and leaders. To this day we are still assessing how the pandemic has impacted academic as well as a social and emotional growth.

COVID also required us to make changes in our internal coordinators, suspend our work for almost six months, and re-visit all our Standards Self-Assessments to ensure they were current. Our staff did an amazing job of keeping this important work front and center while they juggled the many competing personal and professional disruptions of life with COVID.

Some of the positives we have experienced include the impetus to embrace more strongly the balance in the types of instruction and supports we provide to the whole child and taking a hard look at reducing educational inequities. There were times we thought this visit would never happen but we are beyond thrilled that we are approaching this milestone.

## Next Steps

For us, the cycle of school improvement never ends. We will continue to create a culture of continuous improvement. We believe this is a critical factor in keeping TSD viable. Our new Five-Year Strategic Plan that was born of this self-study process is translated annually into our District Improvement Plan (DIP). Our action plans to support our critical issues in the DIP are evaluated every nine-weeks to ensure we are making sufficient progress towards our goals. We see all of our school improvement plans, whether aimed at improving student achievement or organizational success, as living documents which we know will grow and evolve as we review our benchmarks for success.









# CEASD SELF-STUDY REPORT

TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

November 7-10, 2021



[www.tsd.state.tx.us](http://www.tsd.state.tx.us)