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## **TEA completes work on comprehensive strategic action plan for special education**

AUSTIN – Following an extensive statewide outreach effort that included more than 100 meetings statewide, Commissioner of Education Mike Morath announced today that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has posted a final strategic action plan for special education.

The plan, posted on the TEA website (<https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED>), incorporates valuable input from parents, students, teachers and education stakeholders received over the past several months regarding the delivery of special education services in school districts statewide.

“The Texas Education Agency is committed to providing the quality of support needed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities,” said Commissioner Morath. “This strategic action plan provides a solid foundation for our state to make meaningful, lasting change in how we educate and support children with special needs.”

At the direction of Governor Greg Abbott, TEA drafted an initial strategic action plan in January, which also addressed all issues identified in a federal monitoring report from the U.S. Department of Education. The report identified areas of deficiency for the state, including the proper identification of special education students and assuring access to appropriate services at the local level.

“I am pleased with the urgency and commitment from the Texas Education Agency and Commissioner Morath to take significant steps to reform the special education system in Texas,” said Governor Abbott. “Going forward, we will continue to work with parents and educators to ensure our students with special needs receive the services they deserve.”

Over the past several months, TEA launched a comprehensive outreach effort to solicit feedback before finalizing the strategic plan and submitting a final corrective action response to federal officials. The outreach efforts have included:

- More than 100 focus group meetings in all 20 education service center regions across the state;
- More than 4,000 responses from special education teachers and district administrators to a needs assessment survey;

- More than 7,000 responses to TEA's online survey regarding the special education strategic action plan draft; and
- More than 1,000 emails sent to [TexasSPED@tea.texas.gov](mailto:TexasSPED@tea.texas.gov), an email established to receive direct stakeholder feedback.

A copy of the final plan was shared with the Governor's Office and made publicly available today on the TEA website (<https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED>). Significant actions that are part of the final plan include:

- TEA will roll out a large scale statewide special education professional development system, including multiple opportunities for follow-up support for all educators (general education, special education, and others).
- TEA will create a suite of resources intended to be shared with the parents of children suspected of having a disability to help fully inform them of their rights to a free and appropriate public education and accompany those resources with a large outreach effort.
- For students who are found to have needed services that did not receive them, the school system is responsible for providing compensatory services. TEA has identified \$65 million to assist school systems in the effective delivery of services.
- TEA will further strengthen its staffing and resources devoted to special education, allowing for greater oversight as well as additional on-site support to local school districts.

To review the final strategic action plan for special education, as well as the corrective action response submitted to the federal government, visit <https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED>.

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