



Special Education Update

Equity Advisory Committee
TEA Correspondence and Updates
September 12, 2023





Austin ISD Vision Statement:

“We are Austin’s home for inclusive learning: high expectations for all children, high outcomes for every student.”

Austin ISD Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Recent Actions Related to TEA

March 2023

April 2023

May 2023

August 2023

September 2023

March 31, 2023

Final report issued with recommendations to the Commissioner to appoint a Conservator or Management Team and require an external audit and associated training.

April 17, 2023

District request for Informal Review seeking a Monitor as opposed to the proposed Conservator or Management Team.

May 10, 2023

District representatives met with Commissioner Morath to request Informal Review.

August 30, 2023

Proposed Agreed Order received from TEA.

September 29, 2023

Deadline for executing the Proposed Agreed Order



AISD Special Education Initiative Priorities

01

**Clear & Inclusive
Vision with Shared
Ownership**



02

**Strong Tier 1
Instruction within a
Multi-Tiered System of
Support**



03

**Evaluations &
Compliance**



Special Education Recovery/Action Plan

Home / Special Education

Welcome

Austin ISD is committed to providing quality services for all students. Special education refers to instruction that is specially designed to meet each student's needs throughout the school day. All students are general education students first, and the provision of special education and related services, or Section 504 accommodations and supplementary aids and services, are provided in addition to general education—not in place of it.

The Special Education team ensures children who receive special education services are provided with access to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. We are committed to ensuring students with disabilities receive maximum access to the general education curriculum through a continuum of services and the use of inclusive evidence-based practices.

SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIRED POSTINGS
Find specific special education requirements and updates via topic links to TEA's website.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY
Austin ISD has been working closely with TEA for more than a year to catch up on our backlog of special education evaluations.

At this time, Austin ISD is not under a conservatorship.

Timeline

- Sept. 7, 2023:
 - Board Public Hearing Recording
 - Special Education and TEA Order Update Powerpoint (Text Version)
 - TEA Proposed Agreed Order
- Aug. 30, 2023:
 - Interim Superintendent Matias Segura Addresses new TEA plan for special education
 - Austin ISD Board of Trustees Addresses new TEA plan for special education
 - New TEA Plan for Special Education
- Aug. 15, 2023: An Update on Special Education / Una actualización sobre educación especial
- May 18, 2023: Board approves special education indicators in district scorecard
- May 15, 2023: Special Education Update / Una actualización sobre educación especial
- April 18, 2023
 - Austin ISD Special Education Action Plan
 - Action Plan Executive Summary
 - Letter from Dr. Frances Stetson
 - Austin ISD District Scorecard
- April 17, 2023
 - Austin ISD to request informal review of Special Education conservatorship
 - Request for Informal Review
- **March 31, 2023: TEA's Special Education Final Report**
- March 31, 2023: Austin ISD Board of Trustees Addresses Special Education Conservatorship
- March 23, 2023: An update on Special Education / Una actualización sobre educación especial



Where We've Focused and Where We're Going

- More Extensive Monitoring and Implementation of the Evaluation Dashboard to Track and Monitor Evaluations and ARD Meetings
- Continuing Work with Stetson and Associates to Strengthen Improved Implementation and Services
- Increased Recruitment and Retention Efforts
- Strengthen School-Community Communication
- Strategic Planning and alignment across Action Plan and LRP, etc.



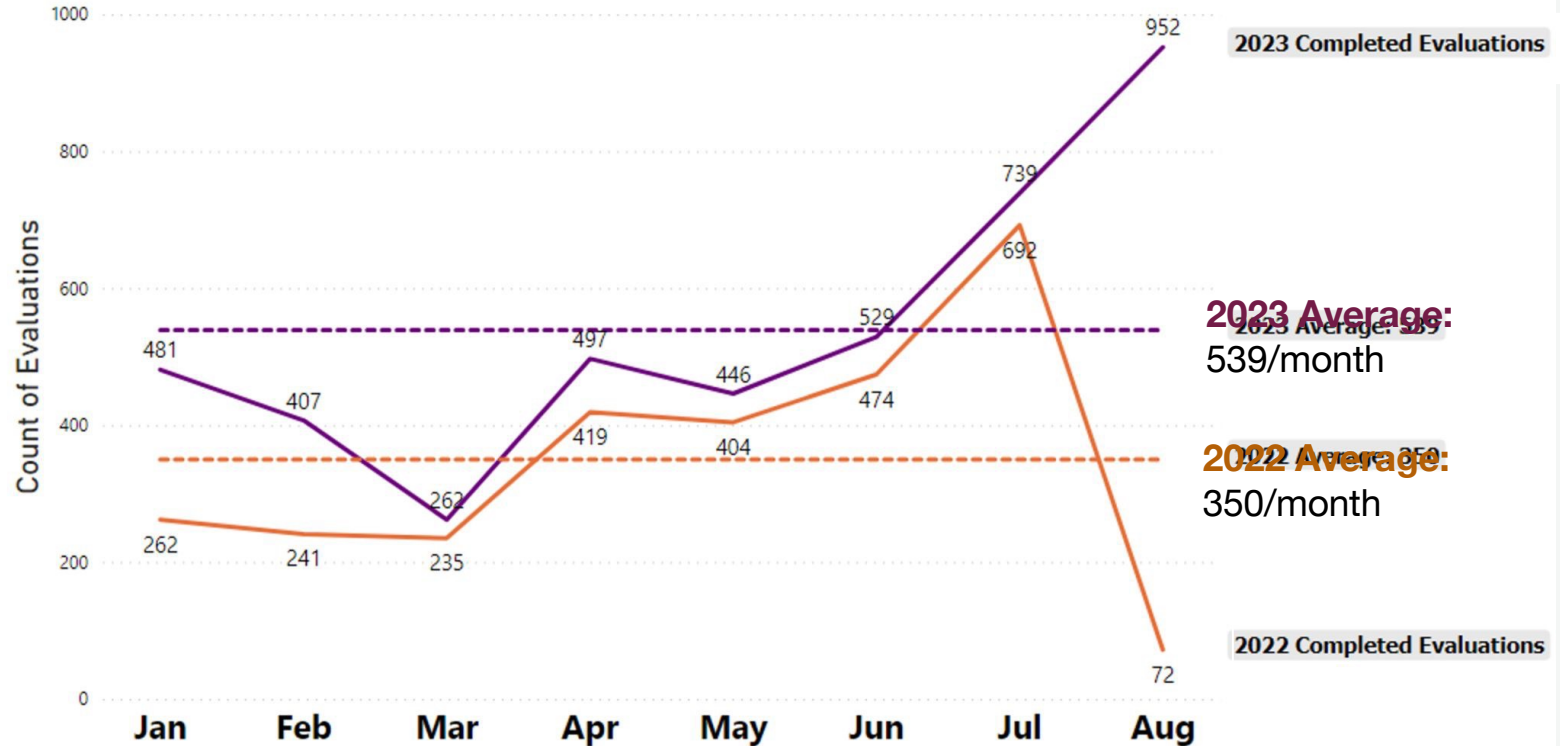
Progress Highlights

- Pending evaluations decreased by over 40% since January 2023.
- Tested approximately 80% more students this summer over Summer 2022.
- More than tripled evaluation staff from 22 to 74 LSSPs and diagnosticians.
- Staff at every school completed two days of Special Education Professional Development last spring in preparation for additional training over the summer to support all learners.
- Added 50 Special Education staff to accommodate the influx of students needing services.
- Increased Special Education budget by \$30.2 million for a total district investment of \$156 million



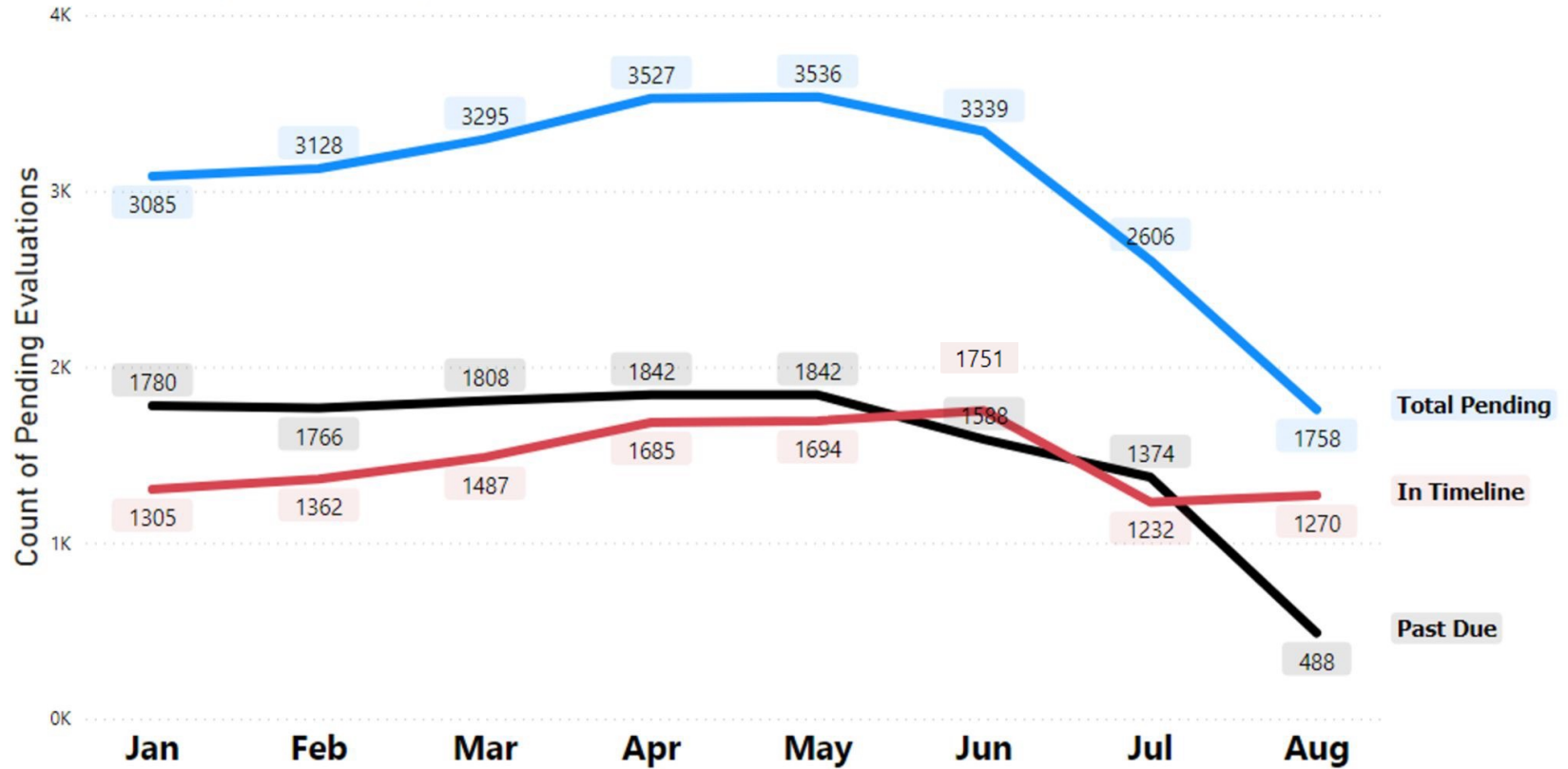
Evaluation Progress Comparison

Evaluation Rate of Completion: Spring/Summer 2022 & 2023



Pending Evaluations Trendline

Existing Pending Evaluations by Month 2023



More than Evaluation Monitoring



Stetson Report Findings

Leadership

Instruction

Staffing

Capacity Building

Family Engagement



Support

Communication

Connection

Collective Capacity



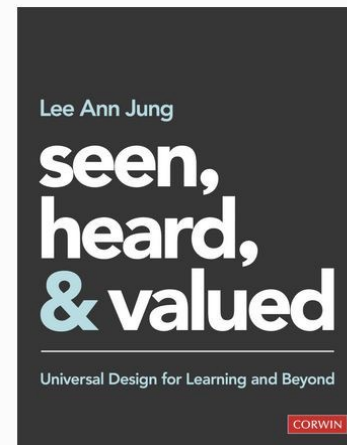
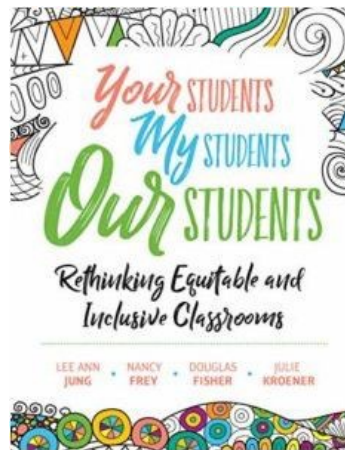
Layers of System Improvement and Transformation



Leadership Institute 2023

8:00 - 9:30 am	Welcome and Kick-Off Session in Auditorium/Theater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing Our Work - Dru McGovern-Robinett, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent Keynote: Building A Culture of Equity & Inclusion, Lee Ann Jung, Ph.D.
9:30 - 10:25 am	Developing and Implementing Meaningful IEPs: What Administrators Need to Know <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jennifer Baker, Ph.D. and Cherry Lee, Ed.D.
10:25 - 10:40 am	Break
10:40 - 11:35 am	Morning Break Out 1
11:35 - 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 - 4:05 pm	Afternoon Break Out Sessions 2-4
4:05-4:30 pm	Closing Activity (Held in Final Break Out Location)

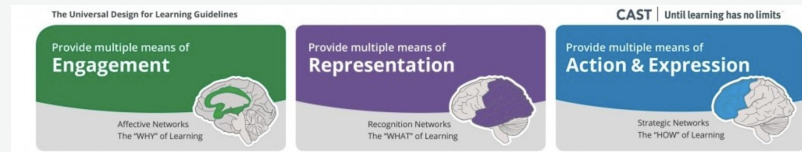
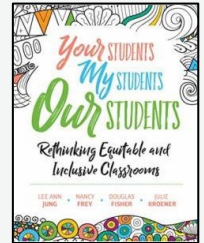
Break Out Sessions for Vertical Team Session Locations	Session 1: 10:40-11:35	Lunch 11:35-1:00 Cafeteria	Session 2: 1:00-1:55	Session 3: 2:05-3:00	Session 4: 3:10-4:30
Ensuring Meaningful Parent Participation through Collaborative ARD Meetings <i>Dance Studio</i>	A		B	C	D
Leading with Collaborative Instruction & Intervention through UDL Implementation Lee Ann Jung, Ph.D. <i>Band Hall</i>	B		C	D	A
Reimagining Special Education Structures and Services <i>Orchestra Room</i>	C		D	A	B
Leveraging the Strengths of All Educators to Support All Students <i>Library</i>	D		A	B	C



Connecting the Dots: LRP Focus

Goal: Every staff member in Austin ISD will be equipped to provide high quality, inclusive instruction.

- **Training and Support**
 - **Step By Step for Inclusive Schools**
 - **Leadership Institute**
 - **Meeting the Needs of All**
- **Inclusion**
 - **Services and Student-Centered Decision Making**
 - **Universal Design Foundations**





Back To the Proposed Agreed Order

Intervention Levels

- **Monitors** make recommendations and report back to TEA.
- **Conservators and Management Teams** issue directives to staff, superintendent, or board.
 - Management teams are usually focused on a specific area—in this case, special education.
- **Board of Managers** after 2 consecutive years of Conservator, have ability to replace Superintendent and assume the role of Board of Trustees.



Key Points in TEA Proposed Agreed Order

- Placement of one of more TEA-appointed *monitor(s)*
- Requirements for the Board
- Requirements for the Administration
- Failure to comply with the requirements, TEA may appoint a Conservator(s) or Management Team.
- Requires district to waive right to appeal



Key points regarding the Board Requirements of the Proposed Agreed Order

- Lone Star Governance Training, including hiring a LSG Coach
- Lone Star Governance Implementation
 - Must achieve “Meets Focus”
 - 50% of Board meeting time must be committed to student outcomes
 - Set new student outcome goals (Scorecard)
- Board Policy Revisions



Proposed Board Policy Revisions

1. **BE (local):** Adopt board operating procedures that contain best governance practices, codify such procedures;
2. Revise **DC (local)** to provide the Superintendent with exclusive hiring authority;
3. Revise **CH (local)** such that board approval is required for contracts related to special education only when the duration of such contracts is three years or longer or the amount of the contract exceeds \$500,000, and to remove the requirement to inform the board of the renewal of such contracts;



Proposed Board Policy Revisions (cont'd)

4. Revise **BP (local)** to ensure administrative regulations related to special education are not subject to board review, board approval, or publication in the Board Policy Manual unless required by law;
5. Revise **DFBB (local)** to add “failure to comply with special education requirements” as a reason for non-renewal;
6. Revise **DGB (local)** such that consultation shall not be required related to special education issues unless required by law;



Proposed Board Policy Revisions (cont'd)

7. Revise **DGBA (local)** to reflect best practices regarding the role of management versus the governing body in order to ensure administrative progress in special education; and
8. Revise **DN (local), DNA (local), and DNB (local)** to require that special education criteria relevant to employee job responsibilities be added to teacher and principal personnel evaluations.



Key points regarding the Administration Requirements of the Proposed Agreed Order

TEA Appendix A: 4 Priority Areas



Right to Appeal

- If the district does not accept the proposed action, the Commissioner could impose sanctions initially recommended in the Final Report issued in March.
- At that point, the district may file an ***administrative appeal*** and request a hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).
 - SOAH must uphold the Commissioner's decision unless there was not substantial evidence for his determination.
 - SOAH's decision may not be appealed.
- The Proposed Agreed Order waives any right to a hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) or action in a state or federal court regarding the appointment of a conservator or management team.



Questions/Discussion

Strong Schools
Stronger Austin