

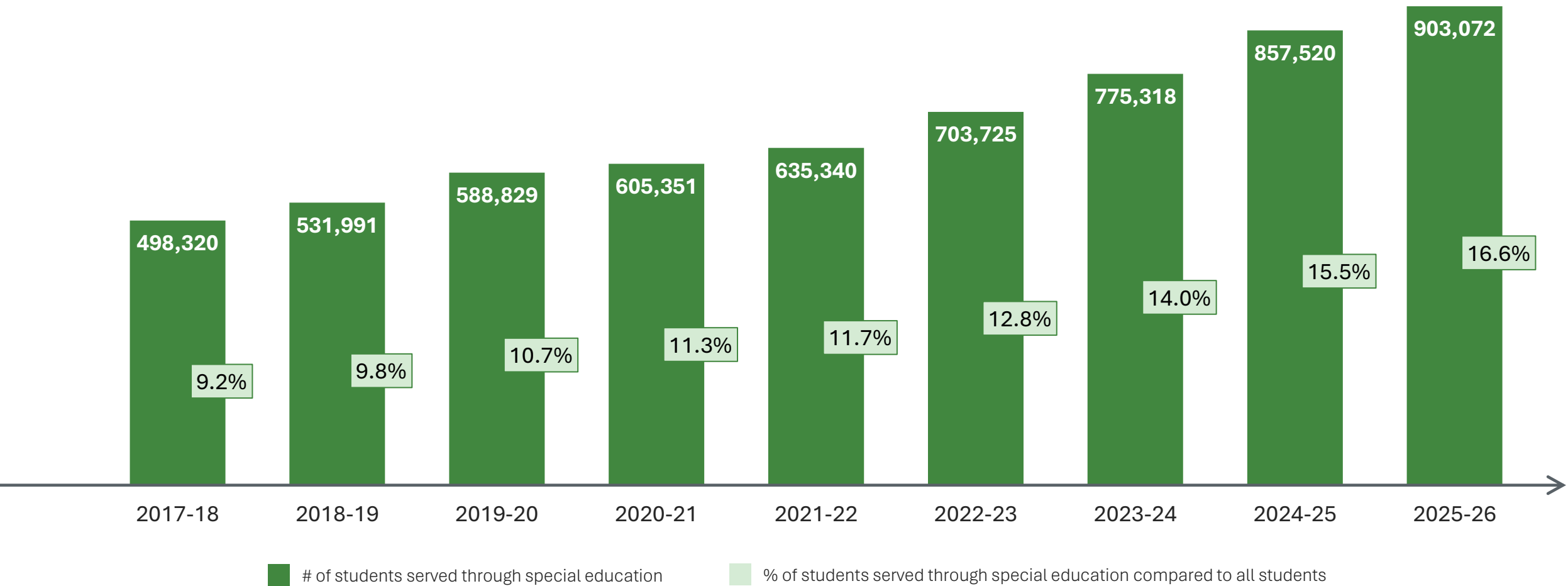


# House Public Education Committee: Investments in Special Education

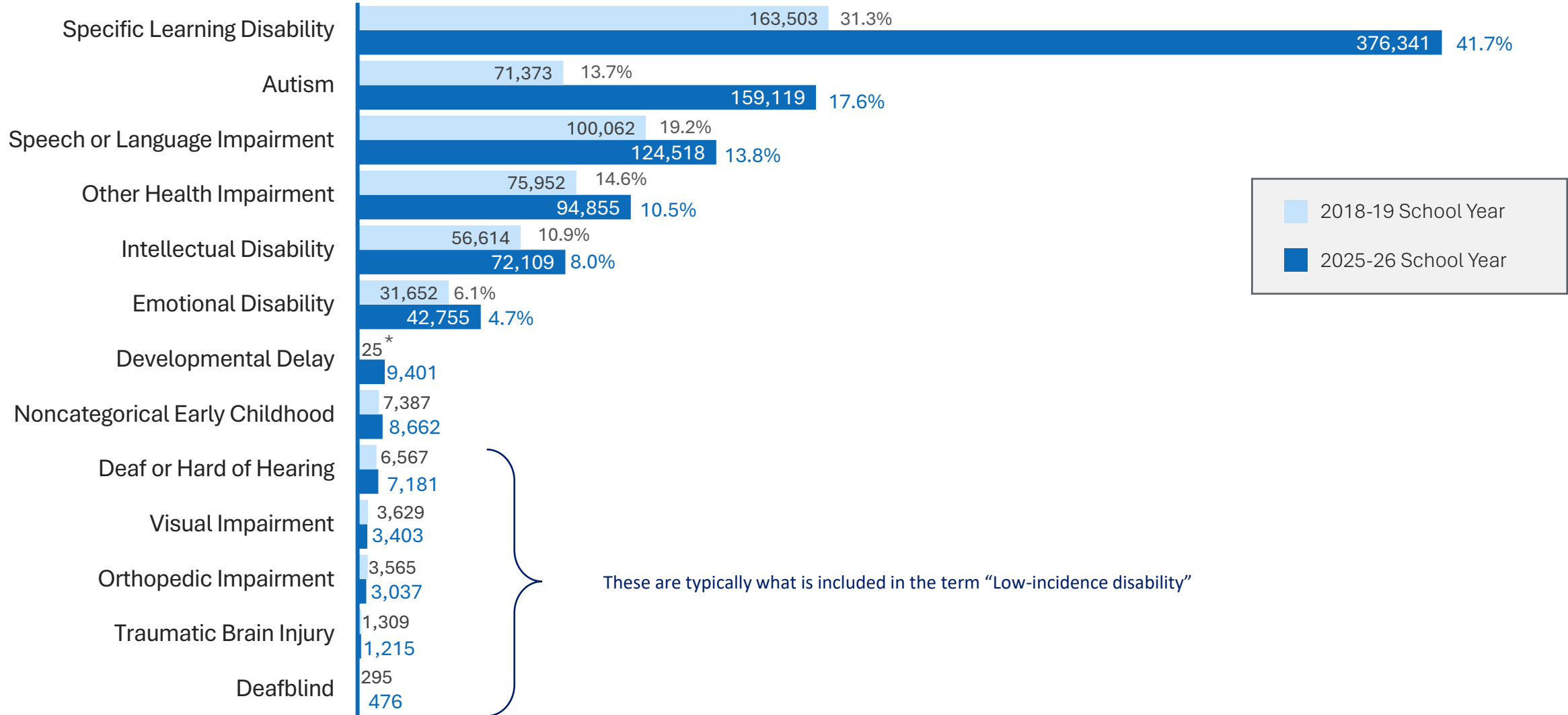


# Special Education Participation

# Students Served Through Special Education



# Primary Disabilities of Students Served Through Special Education

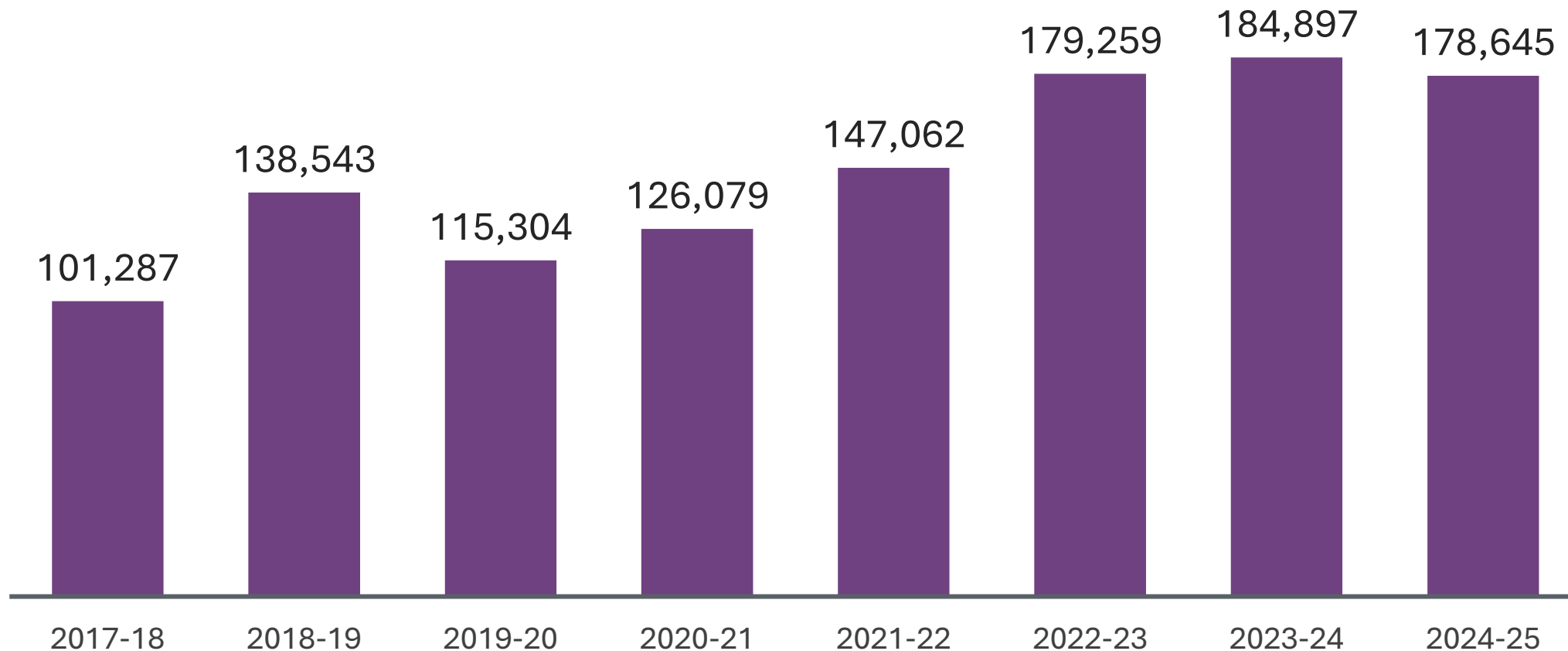


Data source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Fall Submission 1 for SY 2025-26 and SY 2018-19 and supplemental data submitted by the Windham School District; data are as of the final Friday in October (10/31/2025).

\*Texas switched to developmental delay with the 2024-2025 school year and is phasing out the noncategorical early childhood identification. The 2018-19 number is indicative of students who transferred from out of state with this identification and were identified as this until an identification was made under Texas requirements.

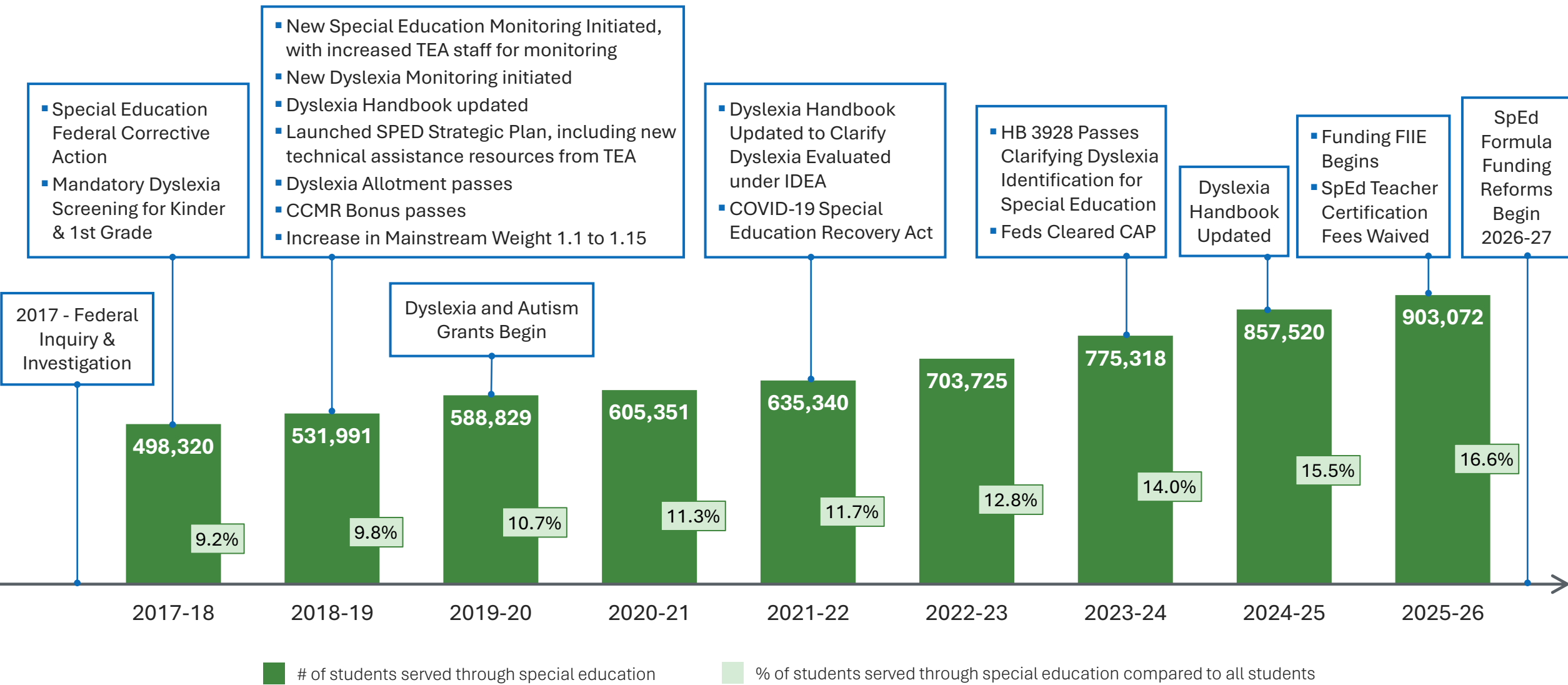
# Full Initial Individual Evaluations conducted by year

Under HB 2, initial evaluations generate \$1000 each in funding from the FSP to school systems starting in 2025-26



Data for 2025-26 will be known by Fall of 2026

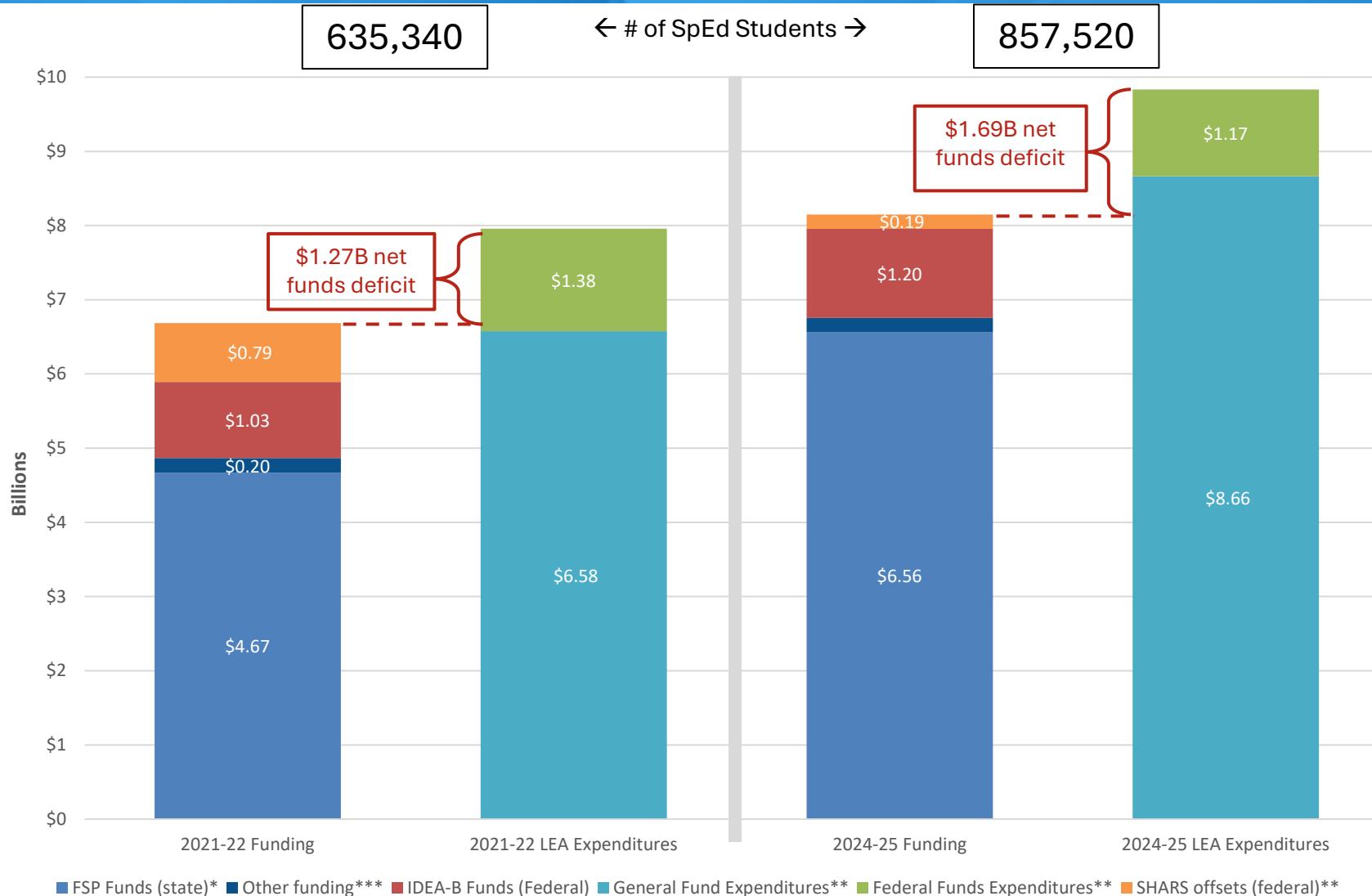
# Major Policy Milestones Potentially Impacting Identification





# Special Education Funding

# Special Education Funding & Expenditures



## Increased State Funding

- Overall FSP (state formula funding) for special education has **increased by \$1.9B per year** from the 2021-22 SY to the 2024-25 SY
- FSP per student funding has also **increased by \$310 / sped student** from 2021-22 to 2024-25
- HB 2 also increases FSP funding by \$1000 per eval starting 2025-26 SY (estimated to increase \$201 / sped student)
- HB 2 also increases FSP funding by at least \$250M over prior formulas starting 2026-27 SY (estimated to increase \$274 / sped student)

## Decreased Federal Funding

- IDEA funding has increased overall, but as student counts have increased, IDEA funding has **decreased by \$219 / sped student**
- SHARS funding has **decreased by \$600M per year overall**

\*FSP, or Foundation School Program, funds include entitlements from the Special Education Allotment, Transportation – Special Education Allotment, the component of the College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) Outcomes Bonus tied to outcomes for students with disabilities and the portion of the dyslexia allotment apportioned to students with disabilities.

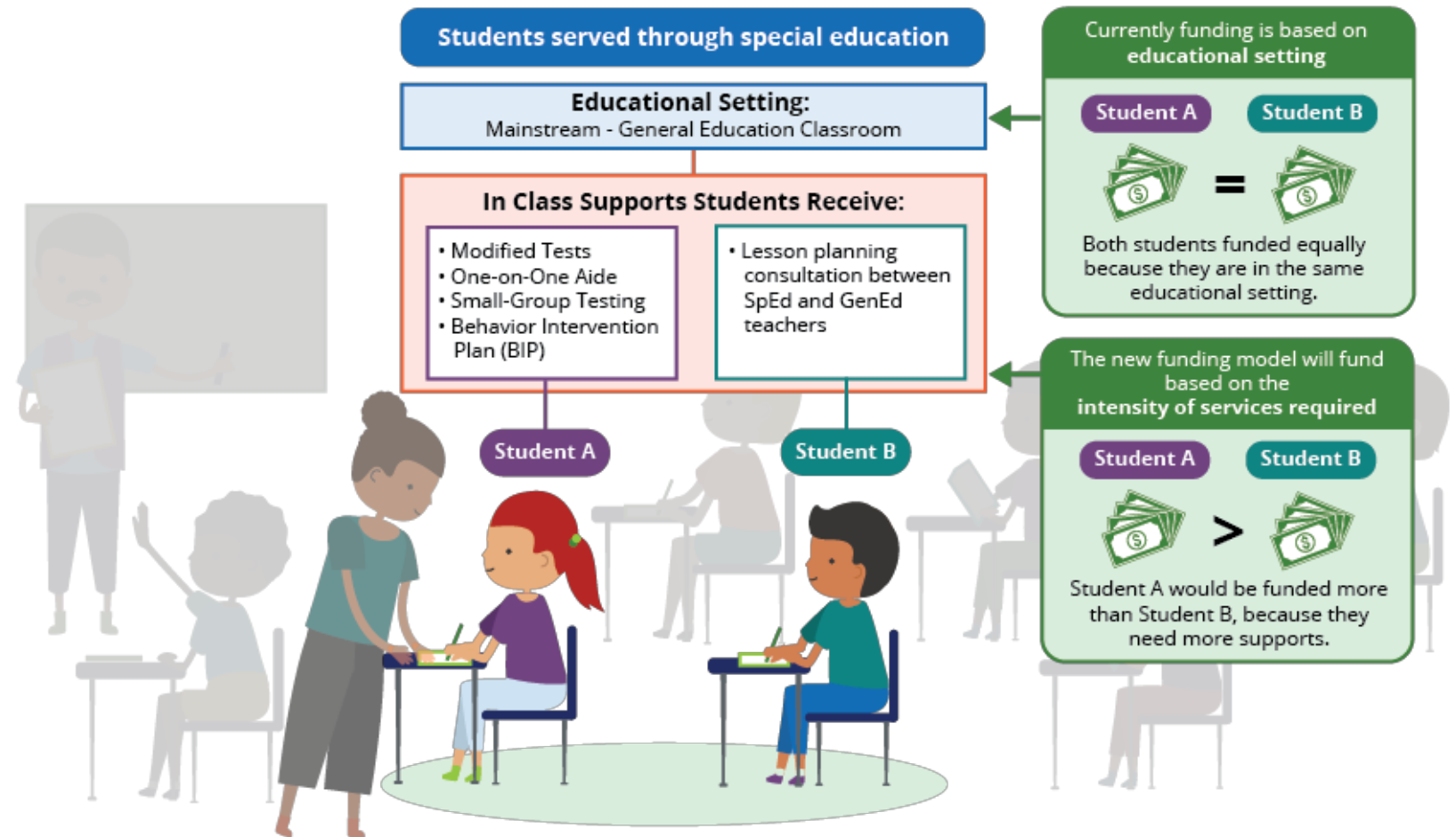
\*\*School Health and Related Services (SHARS) Revenue, General Fund Expenditures and Federal Funds Expenditures are district-reported amounts from TEA’s Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

\*\*\*Other Funding includes High-Cost Funds and Non-Public Residential Programs, Autism grants, any other special education grants.

# Special Education Funding: Shifting from Instructional Arrangement to Intensity of Services

Historically, special education has been funded based on the instructional setting, not the relative cost of services required.

Starting in 2026-27, HB 2 changes funding to be based on intensity of services, alongside a \$250M overall funding increase.



- Statute requires 8 tiers of intensity – TEC 48.102
  - bookends are established by statute –
  - Tier 1 = students who receive speech therapy as their ONLY instructional service;
  - Tier 8 = residential placement by ARD committee
- Statute requires at least 4 service groups – TEC 48.1021
  - add-on ancillary funding;
  - flat dollar amounts;
  - lower dollar amount (service group 1) to higher dollar amount
- General education (regular program) offset – TEC 48.051
  - time spent outside of general education setting
  - TSDS/PEIMS data element added for 2026-2027 for minutes of instructional day spent in special education classroom/setting; that will be used to calculate offset
- When accounting for all of these changes, total spending on special education must be \$250M higher statewide in 2026-27 than under the prior system

Example

# Current System (Instructional Arrangement)

vs.

# New System (Intensity of Services)



## Current Law Inputs for Example Student

- BA = \$6,215, Small-Mid Adjusted BA = \$6,420
- 170 days present (0.944 ADA)
- **Instructional Arrangement = Resource Room (2.89 contact hours, FTE weight 3.0)**
- **FTE 0.45, weighted FTE 1.35**

Total Sped Funding  
\$8,668



Reg Pgm Allotment  
\$3,070



Total FSP Tier I  
Entitlement \$11,738

## New Law Inputs for Example Student

- BA = \$6,215, Small-Mid Adjusted BA = \$6,420
- 170 days present (0.944 ADA)
- **Tier Weight\* = 1.5**
- **21% of the day in sped (average daily minutes = 75 / 360 minutes)**
- **Service Group Dollar Amount\* = \$400**

Total Sped Funding  
\$9,491



Reg Pgm Allotment  
\$4,635



Total FSP Tier I  
Entitlement \$14,126

\*NOTE: Tier Weights and Service group dollar amounts have not been determined because data is not yet available. Any data presented here is illustrative, for example purposes only.

# Intensity of Funding Formula Shift Implementation Status

- On April 16, 2026, TEA communicated implementation requirements, timelines, and proposed rule.
- TEA has established a [webpage](#) and made the following resources available to allow school systems to start learning about this transition and to offer extensive collaboration and calibration activities ahead of and during the 2026-2027 SY.

Overview

Resources

FAQs by Topic Areas

Contact and Supports

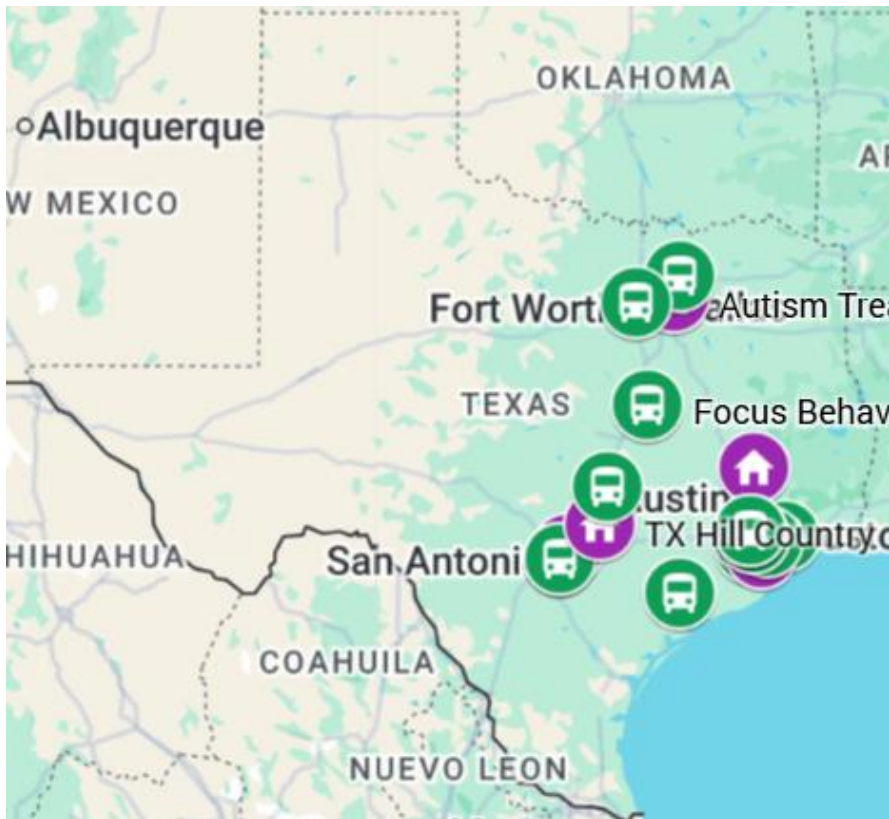
The screenshot displays the Texas SPED Support website. The navigation menu on the left includes: Intensity of Services, Special Education Funding Model Resources, Understanding the Funding Model, Intensity Tiers, Service Groups, Resources and Guidance, Funding Tool, Funding Framework, Frequently Asked Questions, 1. Funding Basics, 2. Impact and Timeline, 3. How Funding Works, 4. Data and Reporting, 5. Using the Tool, 6. Roles and Support, and Contact, Training Dates and Other Supports. The main content area features the title 'Intensity of Services Special Education Funding Model Resources' and a 'State Guidance, ARD/IEP Supports' link. Below this is a 'Special Education Funding Tool' section with a form titled 'TIER INTENSITY' containing dropdown menus for 'Factor A: Type/Frequency/Nature of Required Supports', 'Factor B: Required Provider Credentials', 'Factor C: Required Grouping/Provider-to-Student Ratio', and 'Factor D: Required Equipment/Technology'. To the right, there is a 'New Intensity of Services Funding Model' announcement dated April 2026, and a 'How To Guide: Special Education Funding Tool' section dated April 2026.

- NEW as of 5/28: Implementing a \$10M stipend support grant with federal funds to assist with off-contract or extra duty pay;
- NEW as of 5/28: Requiring only 50% of the student-level data in the new format during the first six-weeks data submission; remaining students must be reported second with six-weeks submission;
- Establishing an implementation working group with a group of school systems with varying demographics – large and small; and
- Holding weekly office hours for the field and weekly touchpoints with ESCs.



# Additional Special Education Supports

## Current Availability of Day Placement Supports



 Day - 19     Residential - 5

## HB 2 & SB 568 added TEC §48.304: Day Placement & Co-op Funding

- Day placement programs provide services to students placed by an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee that demonstrate intensive support needs that cannot be met within the standard continuum of services available on a regular school campus.
- Day placement programs deliver highly specialized, evidence-based services, including the use of specialized providers, low student-to-staff ratios, and purpose-built instructional environments, to ensure students can access a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
- A school system can launch a new day placement program to provide support for all students in the county.
- 48.304 establishes \$250k in launch funding + \$100-\$250k to sustain the program thereafter. This funding is provided in addition to the funding per pupil under the new Intensity of Services FSP funding model.
- One program is allowed per county. *Statute currently limits to 20 counties per year to start new programs.*
- TEA announced applications opened for the first programs 5/15/26.



- Provides a one-time **\$1,500 spending account** for any special education student in public education, to spend on services via an online marketplace.
- Applications are submitted by parents of eligible students through the PDSES Parent Portal during an annual application window.
- \$30M in annual funds are appropriated to support these families. If more applications are received than funds available, eligible applications are placed on a waitlist according to submission order and program prioritization.
- Allowable purchases include instructional materials and technology, tutoring and academic supports, and therapy or related services aligned to educational goals.

## To be eligible for PDSES, a student must:

- Be enrolled in a Texas public school (EE–12),
- Receive special education services under an IEP, and
- Not have previously received an SSES or PDSES grant (one-time award).

## Program History:

- The program began in 2021 as the Supplemental Special Education Services (SSES) program with Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, and was formally codified through SB 1716 in the 87th legislature and funded through state general appropriations.
- Renamed Parent-Directed Special Education Services (PDSES) in 2025 by HB 2 in the 89th session, with certain parental protections added.

Application Window		Applications	Accounts Awarded
Year 1	Jan–Dec 2021 (initial eligibility limited) – open year-round	50,616	19,987
Year 2	Jan–Dec 2022 – open year-round	65,230	46,226
Year 3	Jan–Dec 2023 – open year-round	36,917	62,466
Year 4	Jan–Mar 15, 2024 - application closed March 15, 2024	31,443	34,957
Year 5	Feb 3–Mar 31, 2025	83,333	72,690
Year 6	April 1–30, 2026	63,560	Ongoing
<b>Total</b>		<b>331,099</b>	<b>236,326 + ongoing</b>

## Parent Satisfaction:

- 96% report overall satisfaction
- 98% report PDSES helped their child meet learning goals.
- Commonly cited outcomes include:
  - Increased student engagement and confidence
  - Improved access to specialized instructional materials
  - Ability to reinforce IEP goals outside the school day

**Over 38k applications currently waitlisted**

## Purchasing activity includes:

- 690,000+ approved educational orders
- 2.7 million+ individual educational items
- 24,000+ services purchased or invoiced

# Prekindergarten Eligibility Criteria & Special Education

3 or 4 years old as of 9/1 of a given year, and at least one of the following applies:

- is unable to speak and comprehend the English language
- is educationally disadvantaged
- is homeless, as defined by [42 USC, §11434a](#)
- is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States
- is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States who was injured or killed while serving on active duty
- is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) or has been in foster care in another state or territory, but currently lives in Texas
- is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award; or
- is the child of a person employed as a classroom teacher in the school district that offers a prekindergarten class

**Statute:** [TEC §29.153 \(b\)](#)

- receives special education services in a prek setting as designated in an IEP and receives instruction from a teacher certified in special education for at least 4 hours a day (or 2 hours a day for half funding)\*

**Statute:** [TEC §29.003 \(b\)](#)

\* These Special Education students are reported separately as Early Childhood Education enrolled in membership, not Pre-Kindergarten enrolled in membership. **ECE students do not generate the Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Distribution (48.1081).**

Early childhood students who receive special education services but who do not meet the 29.003(b) threshold (e.g., speech therapy only) do not generate any FSP sped allotment funding under current rule.

- In special education, transition can refer to (a) the transition from early childhood intervention (ECI) to public school supports and (b) the transition from high school to postsecondary and independent living supports.
- Transition and Employment Designee (TED):
  - Each school system is required to designate at least one employee to serve as the TED for students enrolled in special education programs.
  - Minimum training guidelines for the TED are being revised through proposed amendments to 19 TAC §89.1075.
  - Updated training requirements will be published in school year 2026-27. Any employee serving as the TED must meet the revised requirements, which includes completing two specific 1-hour online courses.



# Appendix

# Special Education Process

Parents have a right to request a special education evaluation at any time. Schools are required to refer a student for an evaluation when a disability is suspected that might require special education services.

Special education is a service, not a place.

## Steps to Begin Special Education:

- 1**  
Referral
- 2**  
Consent to Evaluate
- 3**  
Evaluation
- 4**  
Determine Eligibility (ARD)
- 5**  
Develop the IEP

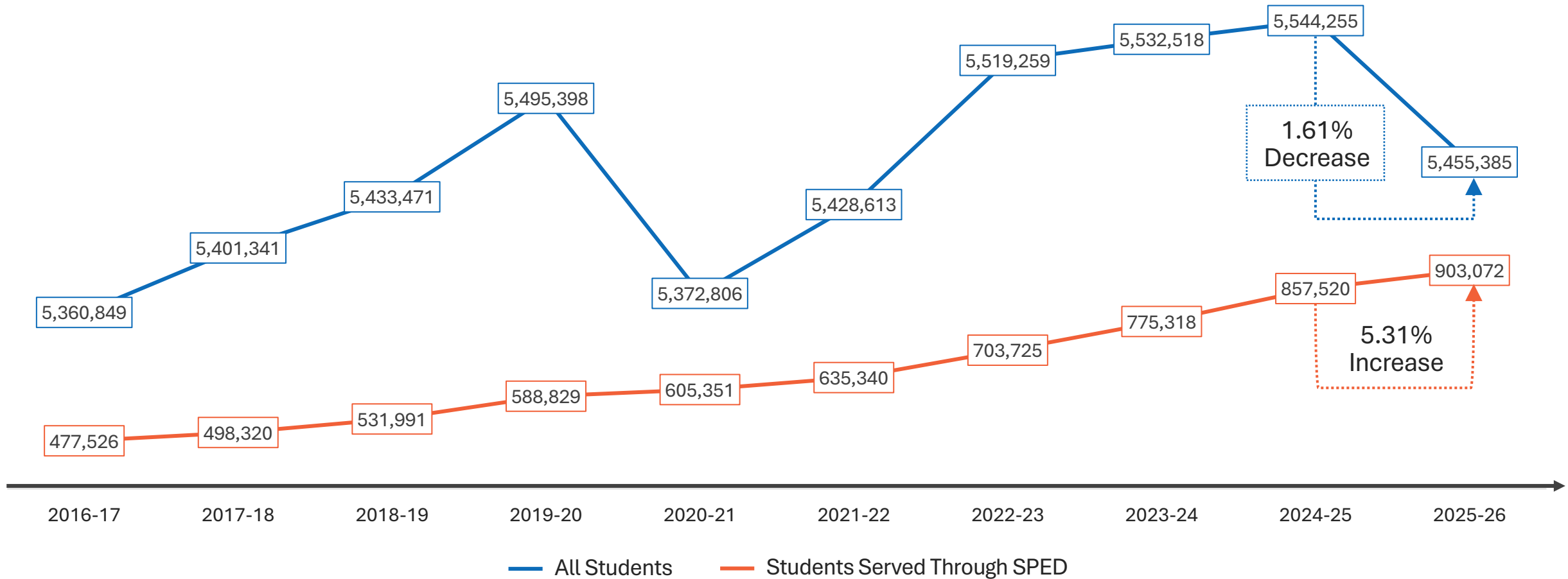
## Receiving Special Education Services:



Implement the IEP

# Increase in special education identification

**Special Education identification continues to increase**, while the student population in Texas actually decreased over the last year.



Note: Graphs are not on the same scale this is to show the change in student populations year over year.

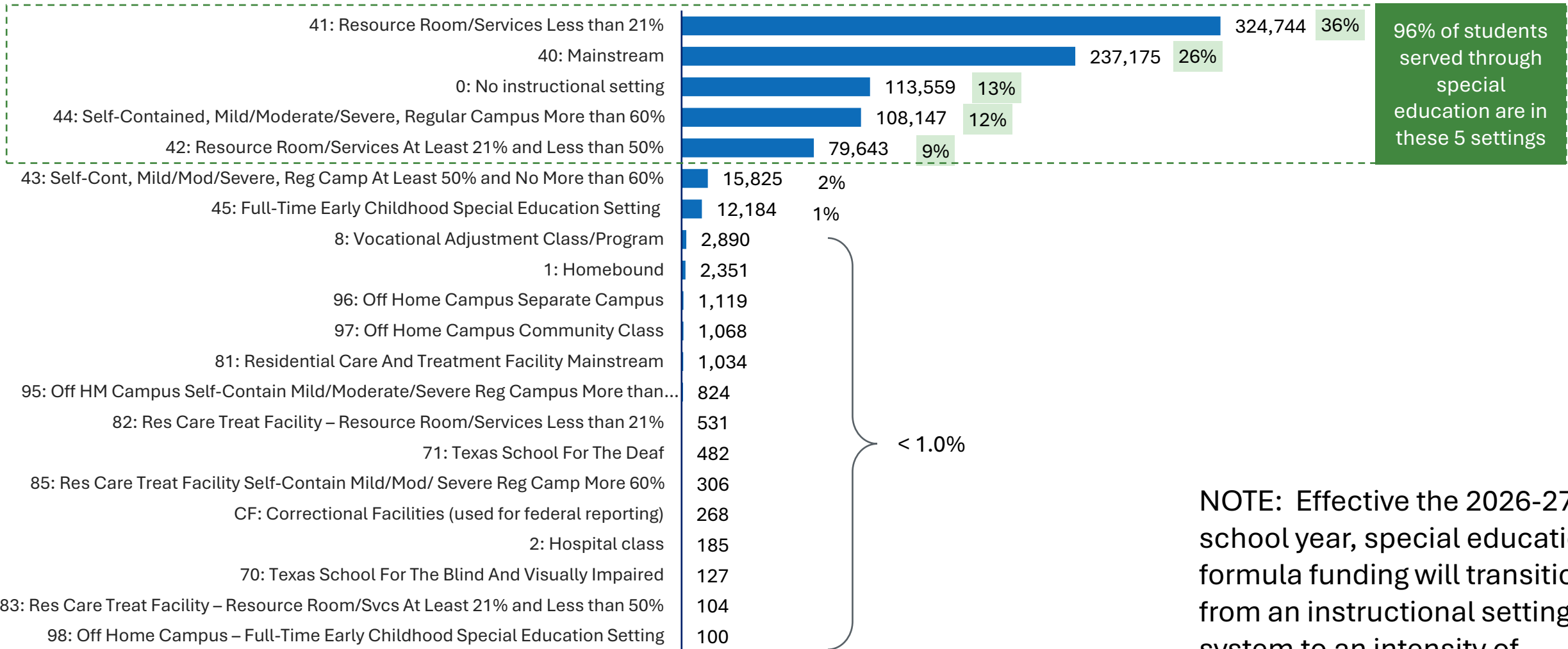
Data source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Fall Submission 1 for SY 2025-26 and supplemental data submitted by the Windham School District; data are as of the final Friday in October (10/31/2025).

# Instructional Settings of Students Served Through Special Education

(settings with 100 or more students)



Data from the 2025-2026 School Year



NOTE: Effective the 2026-27 school year, special education formula funding will transition from an instructional setting system to an intensity of services system.

# Special Education–Related Staff in Texas (with Degree Requirements)

Type	Role	Licensure/Certification	Licensing Entity	Typical Degree Level
<b>Instructional &amp; Core Special Education Staff</b>	Special Education Teacher	Special Education Certification (can be initial certificate or as a supplemental certificate)	SBEC	Bachelor's
	Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) / Licensed Dyslexia Therapist (LDT)	Certification / License	Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) / Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) (same education & requirements)	Master's
	Educational Diagnostician	Certification	SBEC	Master's (required) + 3 years teaching experience
	School Psychologist (LSSP)	License	Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists (TSBEP)	Master's + specialist training (often ≥ 60 hrs.)
	School Counselor	Certificate	SBEC	Master's (required)
	Certified Academic Language Practitioner (CALP) / Licensed Dyslexia Practitioner (LDP)	Certification / License	ALTA / TDLR	Bachelor's (LDP can only work in educational setting)
	Teacher of Deafblind	Deafblind supplemental AND either DHH or TVI	SBEC	Bachelor's
	Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)	TVI Certification (this is a supplemental certificate)	SBEC	Bachelor's
	Teacher of Deaf/Hard of Hearing (TDHH)	DHH Certification (if sign is used predominantly in classroom assigned, must also pass Texas Assessment of Sign Communication (TASC) or TASC-American Sign Language (ASL))	SBEC	Bachelor's

# Special Education–Related Staff in Texas (with Degree Requirements)

Type	Role	Licensure/Certification	Licensing Entity	Typical Degree Level
<b>Behavioral &amp; Mental Health Supports</b>	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) / Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA)	BCBA Certification / LBA License	Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) (national) TDLR (state)	Master’s (also BCBA-Doctoral)
	Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) / Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst (LABA)	BCaBA certification / LABA license	BACB (national) TDLR (state)	Bachelor’s + coursework and field supervision
	Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)	RBT Certification	BACB	High school diploma + training + supervised by BCaBA or BCBA
<b>Health &amp; Medical-Related Staff</b>	School Nurse (RN)	RN License	Texas Board of Nursing	Associate’s or Bachelor’s
	Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)	LVN License	Texas Board of Nursing	Certificate (postsecondary)
<b>Paraprofessionals &amp; Support Roles</b>	Special Education Paraprofessional	District requirements	Local district	High school diploma (some college preferred)
	Educational Aide	Educational Aide I, II, or III	SBEC	High school diploma
	Intervener (Deafblind)	Specialized training	National credential	High school diploma → Associate’s (varies)

# Current capacity efforts to increase access to staff for students with low incidence disabilities – federal funds

- **Deafblind Certificate Reimbursement via Texas Tech University**

- The deafblind Graduate Certificate Initiative will provide funding assistance to qualified candidates through a grant from TEA to cover tuition and fees for online courses needed for the deafblind Graduate Certificate.

- **Project Code**

- In collaboration with TEA/ESC17/Texas Woman's University (TWU), a Texas grant is offered to train presently certified teachers to become Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TODHH). The express goal is to increase the number of certified TODHH.

- **University of Houston alternative certification program (ACP) for TODHH**

- A fully online DHH program equips currently certified educators with the knowledge and tools to support students who are DHH. This is a reimbursement program via a grant through TEA.

- **Interpreter Mentor Project**

- The Educational Sign Language Interpreter Mentor Project supports pre-certified interpreters working in schools as they prepare for certification. Each participant is paired with an experienced interpreter who helps set professional goals and develops the skills needed to achieve them. Through targeted guidance and regular feedback, mentees strengthen their readiness for the Board of Evaluation of Interpreters' (BEI) performance test and improve their overall interpreting practice. The project also enhances interpreters' ability to provide clear, effective language modeling for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, ultimately improving communication access in educational settings.

## **Strategic Plan to Improve Early Learning Opportunities for Young Children with Disabilities**

- HB 2310 requires a four-year, multi-agency strategic plan to improve early learning and educational opportunities for young children with disabilities.
- Interagency coordination across Texas Education Agency, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to align early learning, intervention, and school entry pathways.
- Development of strategies outlined in statute, including:
  - Provider staffing and workforce development
  - Training and effectiveness of early childhood educators
  - Streamlined transitions (ECI → ECSE → Special Education)
- Strategic plan publication by September 1, 2026.

# Data on Transition Success After Graduation

**State Performance Plan Indicator (SPPI) 14 is based on a survey sent to those who have left high school and asks questions to find out the following:**

SPPI 14A: Was the person enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school?

SPPI 14B: Was the person enrolled in higher education **or** competitively employed within one year of leaving high school?

SPPI 14C: Was the person enrolled in higher education **or** in some other postsecondary education or training program; **or** competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school?

