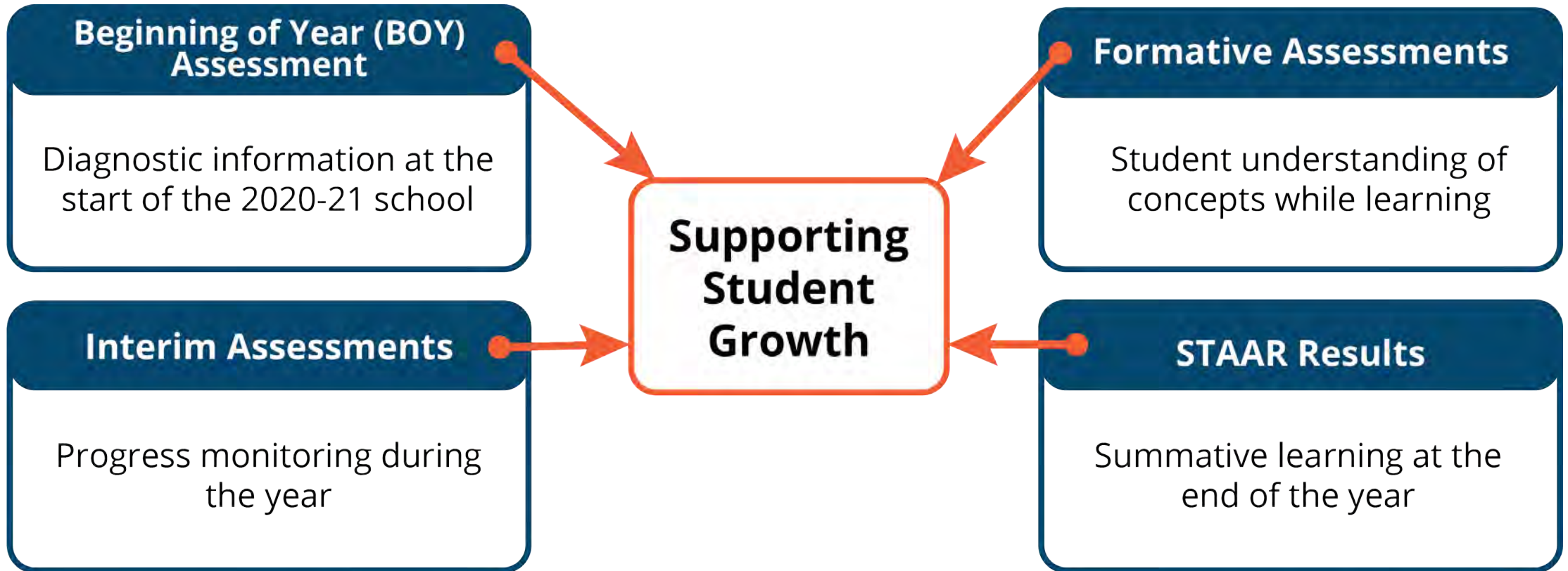




Addressing Learning Loss

To Address Learning Loss, We Must Understand What Texas Students Know



To Address Learning Loss, We Must Act Based on those Assessments

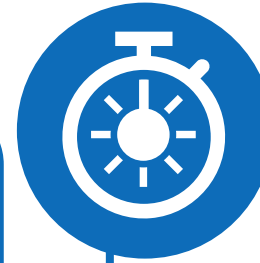
Our kids will need bold action, including many supports.
But chief among them are these three focus areas:



Rigorous **instructional materials** designed to make up ground, and designed to work remotely & on campus



Supported teachers who are equipped to deliver excellence, getting more than 1 year of growth in 1 year



More time for the students most in need, including in the summer

Research on Disruptions: Prepare For a Multi-Year Recovery



- TEA studied the impact on students who came to Texas from the disruption of Hurricane Katrina.
- **After 4 years of intervention**, those students recovered to perform at state average in reading.
- In math, recovery to average levels did not occur during the study period.



We ***cannot*** allow this public health crisis to become a generational education crisis.

Testimony of Crowley ISD Superintendent Michael McFarland, Ed.D.
Texas Senate Committee on Education Hearing
November 13, 2020

Good morning, Chairman Taylor and esteemed members of the Texas Senate Committee on Education. My name is Dr. Michael McFarland, and I am the proud superintendent of the Crowley Independent School District. Thank you for extending this invitation to me and other school leaders from across the state.

I would also like to thank Senator Beverly Powell for representing our students, staff and schools in District 10 and for serving on this important committee. As a longtime school board member of a neighboring district, Senator Powell has been, and continues to be, a strong advocate for public education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to change the way we do everything in education – and these changes are being made at a rapid pace. Within a few short days of receiving guidance from the Tarrant County Public Health Department in March that all schools should remain closed after spring break, our teachers were providing high-quality, virtual instruction to more than 16,000 students in

Crowley ISD. And now in this school year when we are offering both virtual and in-person learning options, we still have approximately 45% of our students learning at home.

What I can testify to today is that in crisis there is an opportunity. In Crowley ISD we have approached this crisis as an opportunity to grow as an organization as we go through this. As an organization Crowley ISD has grown through this crisis and continue to learn new ways to fulfill our mission and charge to educate.

I also would be remiss if failed to mentioned how appreciative I am of the Texas Education Agency and the passion, intentionality and genuine support, guidance and leadership that has been provided by Commissioner Mike Morath and his entire team at TEA. It has been a challenging time but it has been reassuring to know that Educators in the field, in schools across Texas have a friend and colleague that is also looking out for what is best for the children, teachers, and educators throughout the state. Thank you for extending to them the authority to create conditions that have made our day to day operations a little bit less burdensome. I was told a long time ago that when you find yourself in the middle

of war or in the center of a crisis, the first thing you do is to look around to ensure that you are not fighting alone. I just want to say thank you to the agency and our representatives I recognized early that we were not and or not fighting alone.

That being said I must admit that this pandemic was and is still a fight that is far from over.

The shift to remote learning was made necessary, but as I know all of you are aware it was not easy and was not without significant sacrifices.

Remote learning requires technology, and Crowley ISD has invested a significant amount of time, manpower and financial resources during a global pandemic into ensuring that all of our students can log on and learn at home.

In our district, where 73% of students are economically disadvantaged and we would describe them as school dependent, connectivity for many of our students was an issue.

Thankfully, several years prior to the pandemic, our Board of Trustees had the vision and insight to purchase Chromebook laptop computers for all 9th – 12th grade high school students to take home each night.

But, when the stay at home orders were issued, our elementary and middle school students were at home without devices. Our team rushed to collect Chromebooks that were part of classroom sets that normally stayed inside each school. We had enough inventory to be able to provide one device per family. As you can imagine, this presented a significant challenge for families with multiple children who had to share a device.

When we realized the stay-at-home orders and the pandemic would last longer than any of us first expected, we knew that one Chromebook per family would not be adequate. Over the summer as we made plans to start this school year 100% virtually, we leased an additional 5,000 Chromebooks. This allowed us to provide a device to every student. Crowley ISD is now a one-to-one district. One

device for every student. Leasing these additional devices costs just over \$241,000 per year for four years – for a grand total of \$965,000.

The other major challenge we encountered in the spring was internet connectivity **in our students' homes. Before the pandemic, we had approximately 400** internet hotspot devices in our district that students could check out from their school libraries. When remote learning began, we distributed those devices, one per household, to our families with the highest need. But, we needed a lot more. Crowley ISD has since purchased an additional 2,500 hotspots with unlimited high-speed internet connectivity. We are proud to say that all of our students who lacked connectivity in their homes now have access to a device. This has required a significant, unbudgeted, expense of \$603,000 for 12-month agreement with T-Mobile. And when our current agreement ends, it will cost our district an estimated \$50,000 per month, based on current rates, to continue providing hotspots for our students to be able to connect to school from home.

In closing, Crowley ISD has made significant investments in helping our students keep learning, and thriving, during this pandemic. The grand total that we have invested in connectivity alone to ensure our students continue learning and thriving is just over \$1.5 million. We are working with the Texas Division of Emergency Management to be reimbursed for \$162,000 of this, based on the original appropriation of Coronavirus Relief Funds from the federal government.

I do not have enough remaining time today to discuss the many other unbudgeted expenses associated with the pandemic. The training for our **educators to become virtual teachers, the additional nurses we've hired for school clinics, the PPE, the thermometers** – the list is long.

I would like to take one final opportunity to emphasize the growing costs as well as, the additional financial challenges that school districts are facing with regards to personnel. Already, limited resources continue to be stretched very thin as we work to meet the needs that are now present as a direct result of the pandemic.

Additional Medical Professionals and Mental Health Professionals, contact tracers and classroom substitute teachers are needed now more than ever.

Contract tracing has placed a significant burden on an already stretched system.

Each of these expenses, though unexpected, have been crucial to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our students, staff and community. They are necessary as safety and student learning remains as a top priority. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity, and thank you for your commitment to supporting public education and for ensuring that we are not in this fight alone.



Senate Hearing Testimony

11/12/2020

Andrew Kim



100% remote

May 28

24,907

Students enrolled in Comal ISD



75% on-campus

August 25



80% on-campus

October 21

25,588

Students enrolled in Comal ISD

November 11

Attendance

(as compared to '19-'20 school year)

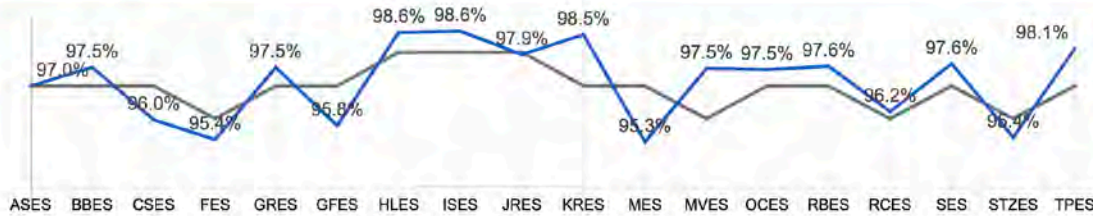
96.8%

Current District ADA

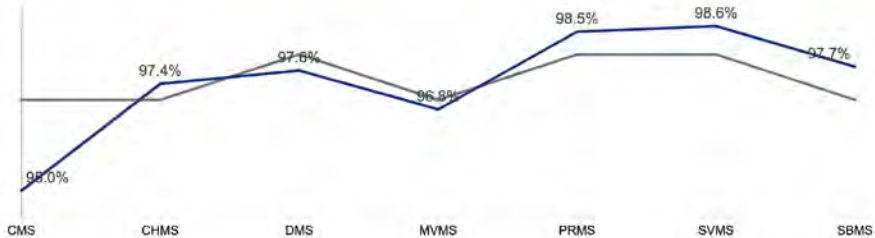
96.5%

Previous District ADA

Elementary Average Attendance

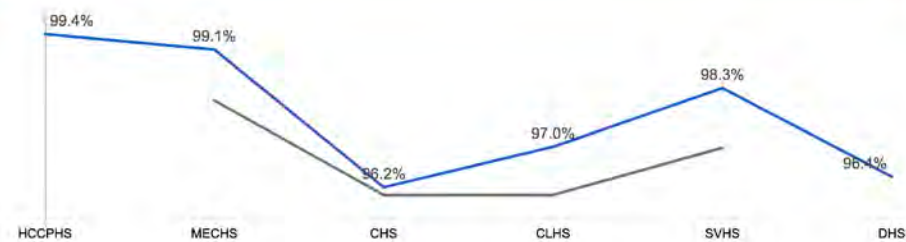


Middle School Average Attendance



Current Year Average

High School Average Attendance



Previous Year Average

Academic Issues



- Teachers are becoming more innovative
- Mask compliance
- Increased use of technology
- More widespread use of platforms to enhance learning experience for bilingual and dual language students



- Failure rate of remote students
- Engaging remote students
- Parents are over-participating in remote learning
- Combo teaching

Recommendations

- Cross-content certification opportunities
- Foreign language taught online asynchronously
- PBL/ Blended learning
- Flexibility to create a virtual school

Thank You



Comal ISD
1404 IH 35 N
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-221-2000
www.comalisd.org



To: Texas Senate Education Committee
From: Andrew Kim, Superintendent, Comal ISD
CC: Brigitt Hartin
Date: 11/12/2020
Re: Texas Senate Education Committee Hearing

Comal Independent School District - Memo

Consideration of information related best practice response during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Enrollment

At the end of the 2019-2020 academic school year, 100% of our 24,907 students were learning remotely. A task force was created and continual reviews were conducted in the spring and summer months to assess the efficacy of remote learning and determine how we would go forward as a school district as the pandemic continued. Upon the recommendations of our curriculum experts and the task force members, it was decided that while we would offer a robust remote learning option, families would also have the option for their children to return to in-person school. Upon starting school on our scheduled start date of August 25, 75% of our students chose to return to school on-campus. At the beginning of the second grading period, that number had increased to 80%. Currently, our enrollment is 25,588 students – just 255 students short of our demographic projections for this year.

Attendance

The average daily attendance for the 2019-2020 school year was 96.5%. This year, students are able to earn attendance by several methods. They may physically be present during class time, or they can engage in coursework asynchronously outside of school hours, but within the same day. As a result, our ADA has risen to 96.8% overall.

Academic Issues

While there have certainly been challenges we have faced as a school district through the pandemic, there have also been some positive outcomes. Among others, we have found that teachers have become more innovative, our students have been compliant with our mask policy, the use of technology has, and our bilingual and dual language programs have been enhanced by programs that previously had low buy-in from teachers. In contrast, the failure rate and engagement of our remote students is concerning, the over-participation by the parents of remote learners has posed some challenges, and some of our teachers struggle with bandwidth when teaching combination classes.

Recommendations for the Texas Legislature

As the Texas enters its 87th Legislative session, I would like to make the following recommendations for consideration with regard to education. More cross-content certification opportunities for teachers, asynchronous foreign language opportunities, increased focus on project-based learning (PBL) and/ or blended learning, and the option for school districts to develop their own virtual school, even after the need for virtual learning due to COVID-19 has passed.

Attachments: Comal ISD Texas Senate Education Committee Hearing presentation



Special Education

Matt Montaña – Deputy Commissioner Special Education Review and Support
Senate Education
November 13, 2020

Agenda

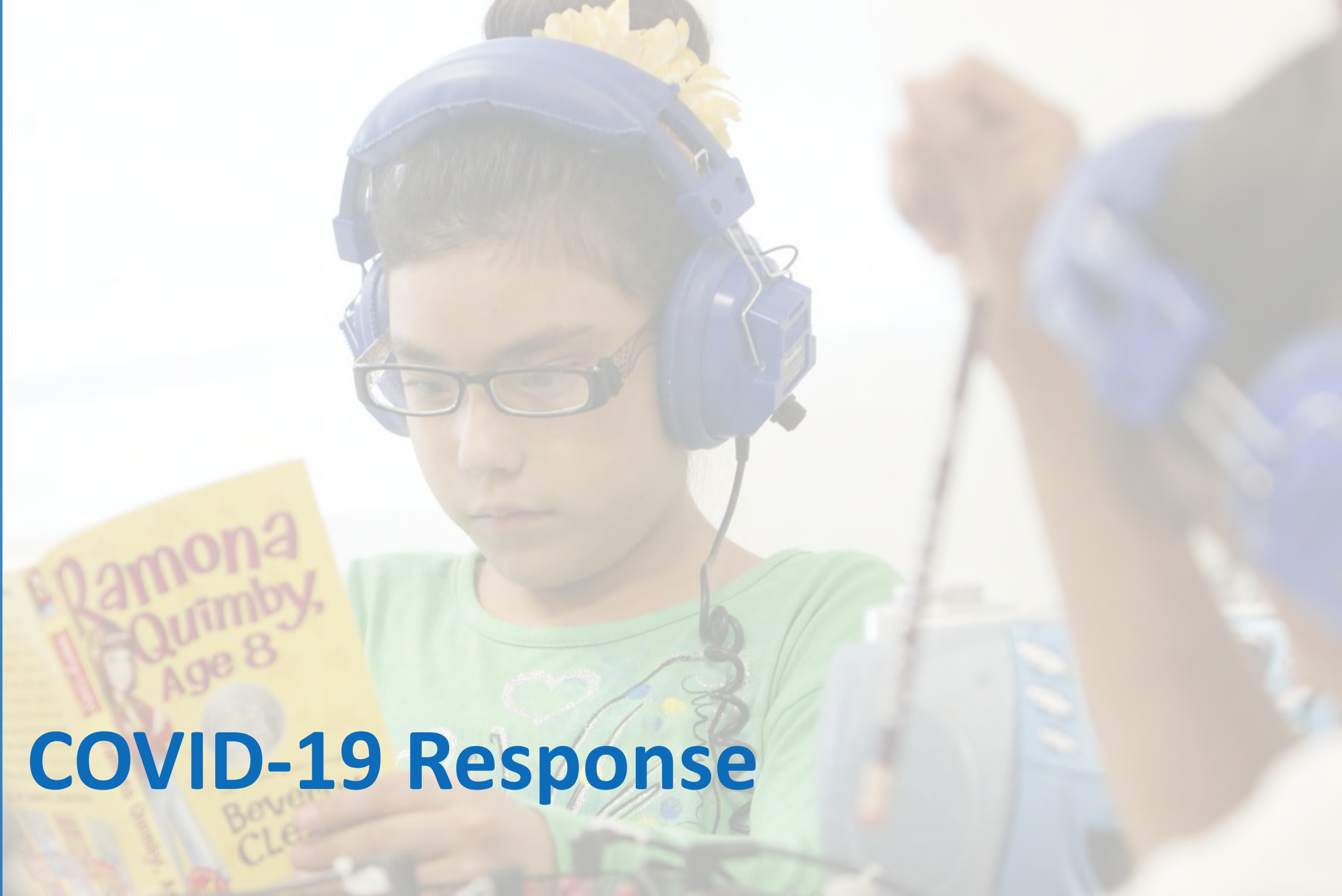
COVID-19 Response

Corrective Action Response Status

Certain Highlights

Appendix: Strategic Plan Update

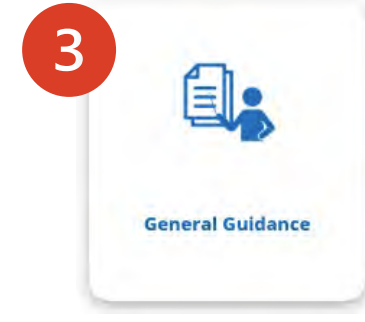




COVID-19 Response

Special Education Guidance during COVID


Stood up guidance in three main categories on the Coronavirus website:





Tips for Managing Behaviors for at Home Learning 

Things You Can Do to Manage Your Child's Behavior at Home

- Give your child positive reinforcement.** ex. TV time, call a friend, social media break, drawing breaks, toy time. Additional idea: direct.to/dsdl
- Praise good and appropriate behavior.** Link to replacement behavior video: direct.to/dsdt
- Respond calmly if challenging behaviors occur.** Strategies for responding calmly: direct.to/dsdt
- Choose a couple strategies to prevent challenging behaviors.** Strategies for preventing challenging behaviors: direct.to/dsdt
- Help your child by breaking up their assignments into smaller sections.** This provides your child with small, frequent, and attainable goals. Ways to break up assignments: direct.to/dsdt
- Help your child understand their emotions and to self-calm.** Self-regulation tips: direct.to/dstrg







Students with Disabilities Planning Supports Guidebook

Special Education Guidance:

At Home Learning for Students with Disabilities

TEA SY 20-21 Special Education FAQ 

October 23, 2020

(12) 464-1600 @txedinfo@tea.texas.gov tea.texas.gov/specialeducation

- When we are providing remote instruction or implementing a contingency plan do we need to change PEMS reporting code if those services represent a temporary change?** *Posted August 27, 2020*
No. TEA understands that LEAs may at times have to implement contingency plans for a limited duration due to circumstances like COVID-19 or other severe weather events. LEAs should list instructional codes in PEMS as the code in which the student would be served as defined by the IEP under normal circumstances. LEAs do not need to change coding in PEMS while providing services defined in contingency plans.
- How should LEAs count contact hours for virtual instruction for ESY reimbursement submissions?** *Posted August 27, 2020*
Daily hours of synchronous communication between school staff and eligible students may be counted as ESY contact hours for purposes of reimbursement.
- Do we need to submit Homebound waivers for students during the 4-week period of remote instruction?** *Posted August 27, 2020*
Please refer to our specific guidance [here](http://tea.texas.gov) on homebound waivers.
- Can we use IDEA funds to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) or other pandemic related specialty equipment for students served by special education?** *Posted August 27, 2020*
IDEA funds may be used for expenditures directly tied to specific needs identified in an individual student's Individual Education Program (IEP).
- Will the timeline for the emergency rule requiring rising first grade students to participate in the required reading assessment within the first 20 school days be extended due to issues related to at home learning in the 20-21 school year?** *Posted August 27, 2020*
No. Incoming 1st graders in the school year 2020-2021, who were not assessed for distance at the end of the 2019-2020 school year as kindergarten, must be assessed with a literacy assessment tool (not a full dyslexia screener), as per TEC 29.006, within the first 20 school days. Administering a literacy assessment within this crucial window will ensure that teachers have accurate, timely information to inform and individualize instruction. This data will be used to determine the Early Reading Indicator Code for Fall Submission. Information about assessments LEAs may use to fulfill this requirement is direct.to. The assessments listed here include remote administration options for students receiving instruction virtually.

TEA  webinar

TEA Guidance: Compensatory Services – Summer of 2020

TEA  webinar

ARD Guidance and Contingency Plans During Remote Learning – Summer of 2020

TEA  webinar

Progress Monitoring During Remote Learning

Special Education Remote Learning Interventions



TEA made available tools to ensure that students who need access to **speech pathology** therapies have access to these services, even in a remote setting.

Month	Number of students in therapy	Number of sessions
April	1,224	2,170
May	2,892	12,968
June	2,895	15,009
July	1,596	8,491
August	855	1,784
September	4,410	17,933
October	4,934	21,288

The first 10,000 sessions were paid for by TEA, using \$1M of CARES funding.

Each subsequent session is paid for by the LEA, at discounted rates negotiated by TEA for the state.



TEA is currently developing tooling to ensure students who are receiving remote instruction can also receive **dyslexia interventions**, delivered remotely.

COMING SOON

Supplemental Special Education Services: Overview

Supplemental Special Education Services (SSES) are online accounts made available to families of eligible students with disabilities that have been impacted by COVID-19 school closures.



Who qualifies?

- Students with significant cognitive disabilities who have complex needs accessing the general curriculum.
 - Ex: Down syndrome, cerebral Palsy, Autism
- Low-income families will have priority access to these online accounts.
- Students must have been enrolled in TX public school in 2019-20 and 2020-21



What is it?

- Online accounts that families can use to obtain goods and services up to the dollar value in the account (~ \$1500) which will supplement and bolster services a child is already receiving in school.



What can you buy?

- Tutoring
- Educationally related services (OT, PT, BCBA, SLP)
- Textbook, curriculum, or other instructional material
- Computer hardware, software, or other technological devices that are used for educational needs

Coming Soon



Certain Highlights

House Bill 3 86th Texas Legislature increased funding for students with disabilities in these three specific areas.



\$970

per student to schools

Students with disabilities served in mainstream classes will generate an additional \$970 per year.



\$616

per student to schools

Students with Dyslexia will generate an additional \$616 per year.



\$2,000

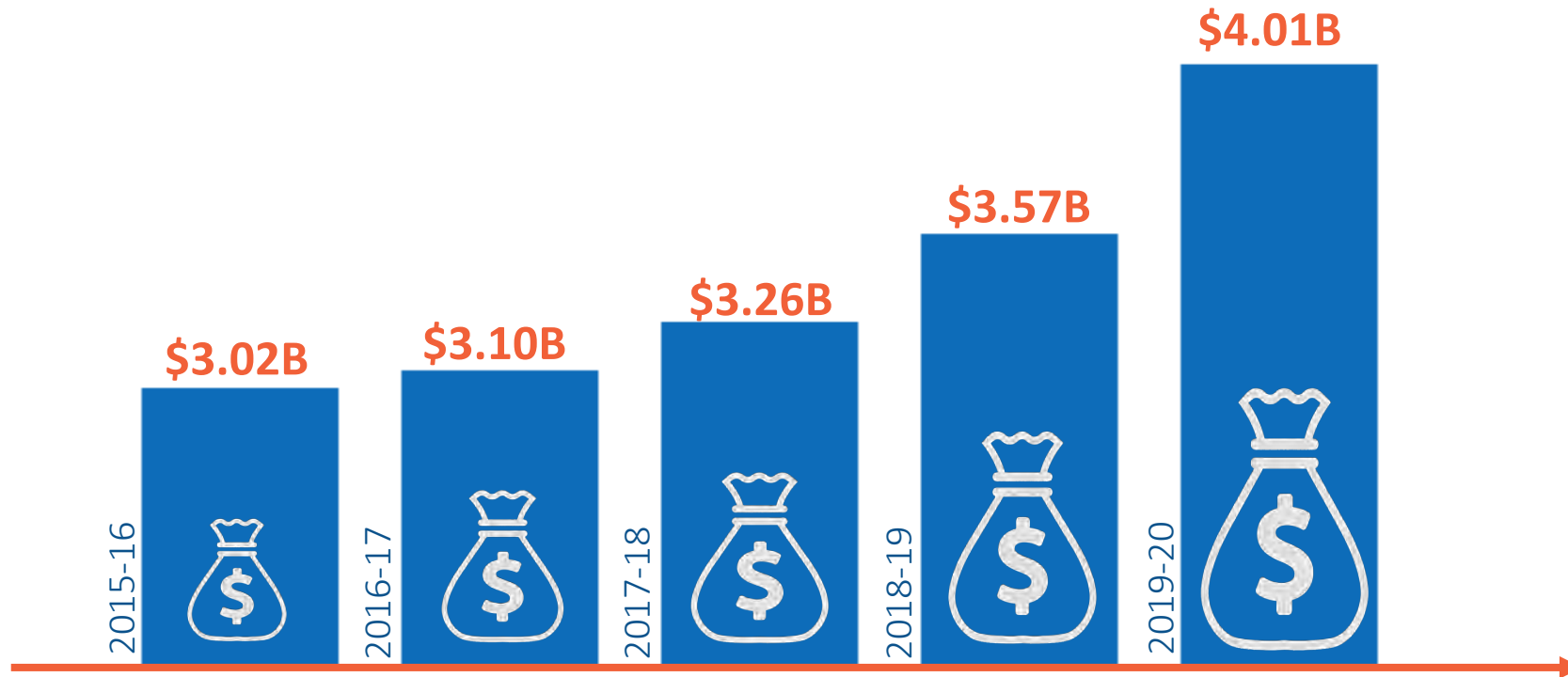
per student to schools

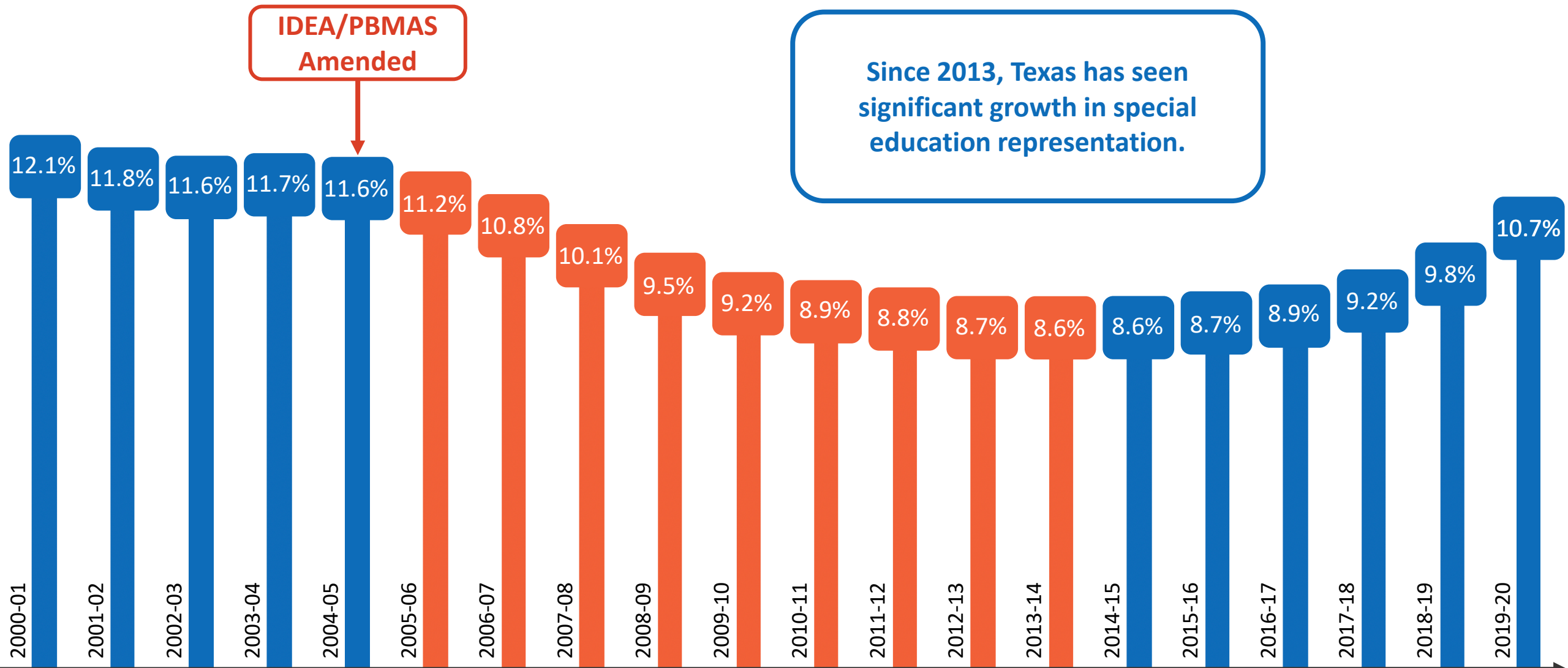
Students with disabilities who meet CCMR (College, Career, Military Ready) standards will generate an additional \$2,000 per year.



There has been an almost **1 billion dollar** increase in Special Education Spending.

27% increase in Special Education Funding in four years.



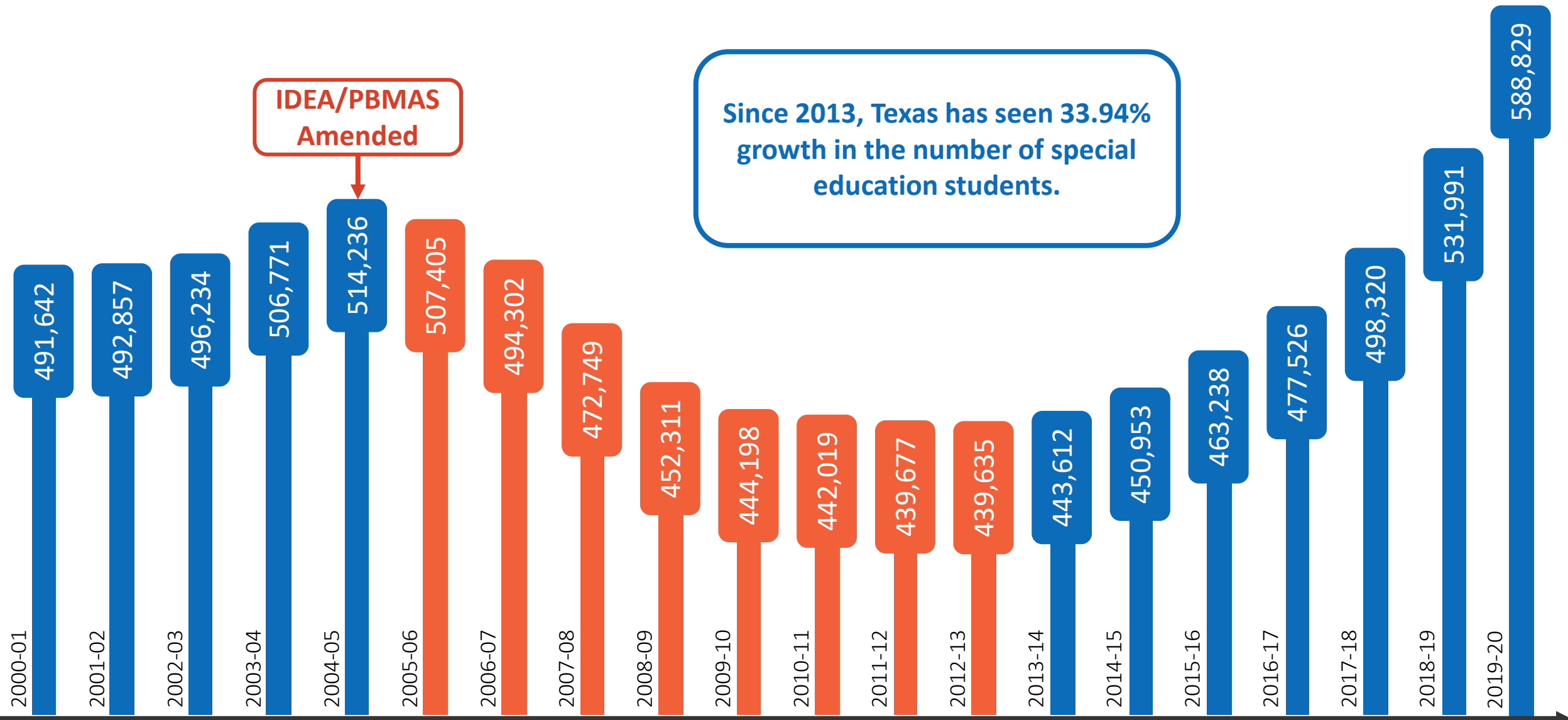


**IDEA/PBMA
Amended**

Since 2013, Texas has seen significant growth in special education representation.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Digest of Education Statistics, 2015 (NCES 2016-014), Chapter 2. and <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64> (* represents not yet published)





SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Digest of Education Statistics, 2015 (NCES 2016-014), Chapter 2. and <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>

