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Sensory Impairments

TEA coordinates the provision of services to children who are blind or have a visual impairment (VI), deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), or DeafBlind (DB). This coordination is through collaboration with the 20 Education Service Centers (ESCs), the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), and the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD).

- [Services to Students who are Blind or Have a Visual Impairment \(/system/files/guidance-for-tds-tdsbi-dissemination-9922_0.pdf\)](#)
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Services to Students Who Are Blind or have a Visual Impairment

TEA is required to develop and administer a comprehensive statewide plan for the education of children under 21 years old who have a VI (see Texas Education Code (TEC) § [300.002](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.30.htm#30.002) (<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.30.htm#30.002>)). The statewide plan address the diagnosis and evaluation, and educational programs for services to students in their home communities whenever possible. TEA fulfills these and additional responsibilities through collaboration with ESC Region 11 (<http://www.esc11.net/page/3257>) and TSBVI (<http://www.tsbvi.edu/>).

The agency is also a member of the Education of Blind and VI Students Action committee, a statewide stakeholder group that provides suggestions for action to state agencies and groups regarding students who have a VI. In addition, the agency coordinates with the American Printing House for the Blind (<http://www.aph.org/>) (APH) to provide instructional materials for qualifying students.

- [Students with Visual Impairments or who are DeafBlind TEA Forms \(/node/106101\)](#)

Services to Students Who Are DeafBlind

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 04) defines deafblindness as "concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness" (34 CFR §300.8(c)(2)).

When an individualized educational program (IEP) is developed for students who are DeafBlind, an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee require participation from professionals certified in the education of students with VI and auditory impairments (AI) (19 TAC §89.1131(b)(4)). TEA contracts with the Outreach Division of the TSBVI to provide technical assistance to districts serving students with DeafBlindness.

An intervener is an individual who has received specialized training to assist children who are deaf-blind by (a) facilitating access to environmental information, such as who is present, what is being said, and what activities are occurring, (b) supporting their development and use of communication skills, and (c) promoting their social and emotional well-being by maintaining a trusting and interactive relationship (Alsop, Blaha, & Kloos, 2000). For further information regarding interveners see: National Intervener Services Initiative (<https://nationaldb.org/groups/page/9/national-intervener-services-initiative>).

Services to Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

TEA fulfills a requirement for a comprehensive statewide plan for educational services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) through a State DHH Plan (<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/deafstateplan.pdf>) (see Texas Education Code §30.083 (<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.30.htm#30.083>)). TEA works in collaboration with ESC Region 11, (<https://www.esc11.net/>) the Statewide Outreach Center at TSD (<https://www.tsd.state.tx.us/apps/pages/soc>) (SOC at TSD), and stakeholders from an interagency task force referred to as the Texas National Agenda Action Committee (TNAAC).

Responsibilities are divided as follows:

- ESC Region 11 provides statewide leadership (<https://www.txssn.org/domain/250>) in areas related to services to infants and toddlers, communication access, and access to the general curriculum.
- SOC at TSD provides outreach support to schools and families.
- TNAAC provides suggestions for action regarding the alignment of the State DHH Plan with the National Agenda for DHH students

Regional Day School Programs for the Deaf (RDSPD)

The purpose of an RDSPD is to provide centralized support services for students who are DHH or Deafblind (DB). These may include but are not limited to, interpreting, auditory supports, physical therapy, occupational therapy, transportation, communication supports, services from a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing (TODHH), and any other related services necessary for a free appropriate public education (FAPE). To maximize the use of hard-to-staff DHH-certified professionals and to

increase access to peers who use the same language mode as another student who is DHH/DB, an RDSPD can be a useful piece of the continuum of services offered to students. As REQUIRED (<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm#I>) for any educational program for students who are DHH, an RDSPD helps meet the unique communication needs of students, as well as gives them access to students who use the same language mode and to role models who are also DHH.

Admission to an RDSPD

In accordance with the STATE RULE ([https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=2&p_dir=&p_rloc=32127&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=32127&ti=19&pt=2&ch=89&rl=1080&dt=&z_chk=&z_contains=](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=2&p_dir=&p_rloc=32127&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=32127&ti=19&pt=2&ch=89&rl=1080&dt=&z_chk=&z_contains=)), local education agencies (LEAs) have access to RDSPDs operated by school districts at sites previously established by the State Board of Education (SBOE). Any student who has a hearing impairment that severely impairs processing linguistic information through hearing, even with recommended amplification, and which adversely affects educational performance shall be eligible for consideration for the RDSPD subject to the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee decisions.

When determining assessments and placement, an LEA/RDSPD must follow STATE LAW (<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm#I>) specifically for students who are DHH, including the use of procedures and materials in the student's preferred mode of communication.

LEAs who have a student who is DHH/DB and meets the above requirements may choose to participate in an RDSPD as a member or by contract and enroll them through the ARD process. A Texas-certified teacher of the DHH is always a REQUIRED MEMBER ([https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=89&rl=1050](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=89&rl=1050)) [see provision at 19 TAC 89.1050(c)(3)(B) and (C)] of the ARD committee for a student who is suspected or documented as DHH/DB. LEAs may choose not to be a member of an RDSPD based on their ability to provide services to students who are DHH/DB or because they do not have students who are eligible for these services. It is highly recommended for all LEAs to be part of an RDSPD in the event services for a student who is DHH/DB are needed. However, the state will designate access points for nonmember LEAs if access to an RDSPD becomes necessary.

RDSPDs Across Texas

Currently, there are 53 RDSPDs across the state of Texas. Of these 53 RDSPDs, three are Education Service Center (ESC) fiscal agents and 50 are district fiscal agents. Each fiscal agent is required to have a minimum of two districts (which include charter schools) that are members of an RDSPD in addition to the fiscal agent. LEAs, whether a district or charter school, who send qualified students to an RDSPD must remain responsible for the provision of FAPE to these students. To find a local RDSPD, contact your LEA or local ESC (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/education-service-centers#:~:text=Education%20Service%20Centers%20Map>).

Below are links to resources regarding RDSPDs including funding, coding, and the required dissemination of information about the TSD/Texas School for the Blind or Visually Impaired (TSBVI) (under State Guidance).

- RDSPD Funding (/system/files/rdspd_funding_0.pdf)
- Code Guide for the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (/system/files/peims-codes-regional-day-school-for-the-deaf_0.pdf)

State Plans

A comprehensive statewide plan is required for the education of students under 21 years old who are VI and AI.

- State VI Plan (</WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=25769824840&libID=25769824937>)-a tool to identify needs, set priorities, and guide the service development and provision for students with visual impairments.
- State DB Plan (/sites/default/files/FinalDBStatePlanAugust2017%20_.pdf)-a tool to identify needs, set priorities, and guide the service development and provision for students with DeafBlindness.
- State DHH Plan (</sites/default/files/deafstateplan.pdf>) (33KB)-a tool to help identify needs, set priorities, and guide services development and provision to students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

State Guidance

The following guidance is provided for AI and VI students:

- Guidance for TSD TSBVI Dissemination (/system/files/guidance-for-tds-tdsvi-dissemination-10-10-22_0.pdf) (PDF) This guidance provides LEAs who have students who are DHH, DB, or VI from birth through age 21 with the requirements for annual dissemination of information about TSD and TSBVI.
- Guidance for Referral for Residential Services at Texas School for the Deaf (</academics/special-student-populations/special-education/referral-for-residential-services-at-tds.pdf>) (PDF) This guidance provides LEAs who have students who are DHH or DB, from birth through age 21 with the information on the requirements for a referral to Texas School for the Deaf (TSD).
- For more information about students who are DHH, review the additional DHH guides on Services for Emergent Bilingual Students (<https://www.txssn.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=2648&dataid=3030&FileName=DHH%20English%20Learners%20-%20Final.pdf>), Communication Assessment (https://www.txssn.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=2648&dataid=2971&FileName=DHHCommunication2021_accessible.pdf), Considering the Least Restrictive Environment when Determining Placement (https://www.txssn.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=2648&dataid=2970&FileName=DHHPlacement2021_accessible.pdf), and Eligibility for Special Education (https://www.txssn.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=2648&dataid=2969&FileName=DHHEligibility2021_accessible.pdf).
- Educating Students with Visual Impairments in Texas: Guidelines and Standards (<https://www.tsbvi.edu/statewide-resources/professional-development/publications/guidelines-standards>) - The Guidelines and Standards document helps in the development and implement programs and services for students with visual impairments and provides a clear understanding of the unique learning needs of these students.
- Interpreter Certification Guidance (</node/106093>) is in regards to federal requirements for certification of interpreters.
- RDSPD Shared Services Arrangements (SSA) Procedures (/sites/default/files/RDSPD%20SSA%20Procedures%20FINAL_with%20logo_err_MARCOM%20edits.docx) (79.6 KB) provide information regarding RDSPD Shared Services Arrangements.
- House Bill 548 Language Acquisition for DHH/DB students ages 0-8 -- provides information regarding the annual assessment to gather and monitor data on language acquisition for DHH/DB students.
- Memorandum of Understanding Between the TEA, HHSC, and Texas School for the Deaf (/system/files/mou-contract-4220_0.pdf)

1. HB 548 Language Acquisition Assessments Tools (/system/files/hb-548-assessment-table-9-2022_0.pdf)
2. HB 548 FAQ (Updated August 2022) (/system/files/hb-548-faq-2022-2023_0.pdf)
3. HB 548 Language Assessments Scoring Rubric (/sites/default/files/ScoringRubricforHB548LanguageAssessments.pdf)
4. HB 548 List of Assessments (/system/files/updated-list-of-hb548-tea-approved-assessments-august-2022_0.pdf)
5. HB 548 Webinar (<https://youtu.be/0saqtafYfzY>)
6. HB 548 Webinar on 9/1 (PDF) (/sites/default/files/HB%20548_webinar_September%202020_FINAL%28accessible%29.pdf)
7. TSDS SELA New User Training (Part 1) (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/433841307370029827>)
8. Common Steps for Core Collection Training (Part 2) (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/5113512330491364611>)
9. Model Consent Form Letter (/sites/default/files/Model_Consent_Form_Letter.docx)
10. Model Consent Form (PDF) (/sites/default/files/Model_Consent_Form.pdf)
11. Model Consent Form (Word) (/sites/default/files/Model_Consent_Form%28word%29.docx)
12. Model Consent Form in Spanish (PDF) (/sites/default/files/Model_Consent_Form_ESPANOL.pdf)
13. Model Consent Form in Vietnamese (PDF) (/sites/default/files/Model_Consent_Form_VIETNAMESE.pdf)
14. SELA Assessment Guidelines (PDF) (/media/318306)
15. 2022-2027 SELA Assessment Guidance (PDF) (<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/special-education-language-acquisition-assessment-guidance.pdf>)

State Resources

The following resources are provided for AI and VI students:

Statewide Leadership for students with visual impairments (<http://www.esc11.net/page/3257>)- ESC XI provides leadership, staff development, technical assistance, and support to help Texas school districts meet the educational needs of students who have visual impairments.

Statewide Leadership for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (<http://www.esc11.net/domain/118>)- ESC XI provides leadership, staff development, technical assistance and support to help Texas school districts meet the educational needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

TSD (<http://www.tsd.state.tx.us/>)- Serves as a special public school in the continuum of statewide placements for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Statewide Outreach Center at TSD (SOC at TSD) (<https://www.texasdeafed.org/>) is a statewide resource to parents of these children and professionals who serve them.

TSBVI (<http://www.tsbvi.edu/>)- Serves as a special public school in the continuum of statewide placements for students who have a visual impairment. It is also a statewide resource to parents of these children and professionals who serve them.

Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS VRS) (<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>)- Assists individuals with disabilities and their families. VRS envisions a Texas where people with disabilities reach their goals and enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independence and employment.

Health and Human Services Early Childhood Intervention (HHS ECI) (<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services>)- ECI is a statewide program for families with children, birth to three, with disabilities and developmental delays. ECI supports families to help their children reach their potential through developmental services.

Health and Human Services Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)

(<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/deaf-hard-hearing/>)- Works in partnership with people who are deaf or hard of hearing to eliminate societal and communication barriers in order to improve equal access. DHHS advocates for people of all ages who are deaf or hard of hearing to enable them to express their freedoms, participate in society to their individual potential, and reduce their isolation regardless of location, socioeconomic status, or degree of disability.

Texas DeafBlind Project (<https://txdeafblindproject.org/>)- Operates through a federal grant to provide information and training about deafblindness to families and the professionals that work with them. TEA contracts with the DeafBlind Outreach team at the TSBVI to provide technical assistance to meet the unique needs of children, birth through 21 years of age, who have both a vision and hearing impairment.

National Resources

The following resources are provided for AI and VI students:

Deaf Education (aka DeafEd.net) (<http://www.deafed.net/>) is sponsored in part by the Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness (DCDD) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

The National Agenda for the Education of Children and Youths with Visual Impairments, Including Those with Multiple Disabilities, Revised is a historical statement of consensus in the field about how educational programs must change to meet the needs of students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities.

American Printing House for the Blind (<http://www.aph.org/>) is the world's largest nonprofit organization creating educational, workplace, and independent living products and services for people who are visually impaired.

National Consortium on DeafBlindness (<http://nationaldb.org/>) (NCDB) is a national technical assistance and dissemination center for children and youth who are DeafBlind.