

Glossary of Educational Terms

Accommodations

Practices and procedures that allow students with disabilities to learn, have access to, and be tested on the same curriculum as students without disabilities. Accommodations do not change what the student is expected to learn but rather how he or she learns the curriculum. Providing accommodations during instruction and assessment may also promote equal access to the general curriculum.

ACT

The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science.

Advanced Placement (AP)

The **AP** curriculum, administered by The College Board, consists of standardized high school **courses** that are roughly equivalent to undergraduate college **courses**. Students may earn college credit by passing AP assessments.

Annual Measurable Objective (AMO)

Under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Texas Education Agency is required to establish Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) for the English language acquisition and academic achievement of limited English proficient (LEP) students.

ARD Committee (Admission, Review and Dismissal)

In Texas, the name for the IEP Team made up of a student's parents and school staff who meet at least annually to:

- decide whether or not the student has an eligible disability,
- determine what special education and related services will be provided, and
- develop an individual education program (IEP).

ARD Meeting (Admission, Review and Dismissal)

Annual review of a student's special education program that includes an update of the student's progress, a review of the current Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and development of a new IEP for the upcoming year.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A written plan to address behavioral concerns impeding the child's learning or that of others. It is part of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that includes positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies to address the behavior.

Center for Academic and Reading Skills (CARS)

Located at The University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston, CARS conducts research to improve academic and reading development in a variety of student populations. CARS is currently partnering with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to implement the Texas Reading First Initiative to improve reading skills in students in kindergarten through third grade.

Child Find

State-developed policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in Texas, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated.

Child with a Disability

A student, ages 3-21, who has a “disability” according to one of the 13 disability categories defined under the IDEA, and who is in need of special education and related services.

Content Standards

Texas standards have been created to represent the skills and knowledge needed for students to succeed throughout and after school.

Cooperative Learning

A teaching method in which students of differing abilities work together on an assignment. Each student has a specific responsibility within the group. Students complete assignments together and receive a common grade.

Core Academics

The required subjects in middle and high schools—usually English (literature), history (social studies), math, and science.

Curriculum

The courses of study offered by a school or district. The final decisions about school curriculum are the responsibility of the local school board.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)

Disciplinary settings for students who have committed an offense of the state law or the student code of conduct. AEPs operated by the school district are called Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP). Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEP) are operated by the juvenile justice system. Students with disabilities who are placed in AEPs are entitled to special education supports and services. Established under the Safe Schools Act to serve students who have committed disciplinary offenses. A DAEP provides for the educational and behavioral needs of students in a setting other than a student’s regular classroom, either on- or off-campus.

Dyslexia

Texas Education Code defines dyslexia as a disorder manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and socio-cultural opportunity.

Early Childhood Intervention

Programs and services provided to infants and toddlers with developmental delays from birth through age two administered under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Texas, ECI is administered by the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Education Service Center (ESC 17)

Texas has 20 ESCs that cover the state. ESCs provide leadership, training and technical assistance to school districts, parents, and other community stakeholders.

Eligibility

The determination that a student is a “child with a disability” as defined by IDEA; and as a result of the disability, the child needs special education services to benefit from education.

English as a Second Language

Classes or support programs for students whose native language is not English.

English Language Learner (ELL)

Children who do not speak English in the home and who are in the process of learning English, also referred to as Limited English Proficient students (LEP). The No Child Left Behind Act provides funding to states for the development of better assessments (tests) and accommodations for LEP students in the areas of language acquisition and academic achievement.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The federal law that protects the confidentiality of a student's records in all public schools and local education agencies.

Formative Assessment

Any form of assessment used by an educator to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of particular content and then to adjust instructional practices accordingly toward improving student achievement in that area. (Ed Source)

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Special education and related services that have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge; meet the standards of the Texas Education Agency (TEA); include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and are provided in conformity with the individualized education program (IEP).

Full and Individual Initial Evaluation(FIE)

The evaluation that is performed, at no cost to a parent, to ensure that a student has a disability and to identify all the special education or related service needs of a student. The evaluation is not a single test; and should cover all areas of suspected disability.

Functional Behavioral Assessment

A process for collecting information that will help determine the underlying purpose or motivation of a student's challenging behavior (examples: seeking attention, peer acceptance, avoiding, etc.). Once the cause of the behavior has been determined, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee develops a behavior intervention plan (BIP) to teach the student appropriate alternatives to the behavior.

Gifted and Talented Education

A program that offers supplemental, differentiated, challenging curriculum and instruction for students identified as being intellectually gifted or talented. (Ed Source)

Highly Qualified Teachers

Under the No Child Left Behind Act and IDEA 2004, all teachers of core academic subjects must 1) hold at least a bachelor's degree, 2) have full state certification, and 3) demonstrate knowledge in the core academic subjects they teach. The law emphasizes development and recruitment of "highly qualified teachers", especially in low-performing and disadvantaged schools and in special education.

Inclusion

The practice of placing students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Individual Education Program (IEP)

A written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the ARD committee, of which parents are active members. The IEP includes the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, participation in State and district-wide assessments, transition services, annual goals, special factors, special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, extended school year services, and least restrictive environment.

Intellectual Disability

In Oct. 2010, references in federal law were changed from *mental retardation* to *intellectual disability*, and references to *a mentally retarded individual* to *an individual with an intellectual disability*. A determination of Intellectual Disability must comply with criteria set forth in federal and state law as described in the Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability framework of the Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process.

Istation

A comprehensive computer-based reading program that maximizes students' reading fluency, comprehension and retention, and academic success. Computer-adaptive assessments and curriculum present reading and writing in a fun, interactive way that motivates students to participate. Istation.com

Intervention

Additional instruction and teaching strategies that enable a struggling student to improve his or her academic performance in the area that he or she is having learning difficulties.

Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)

A campus-based team that oversees the academic progress of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and makes sure that TAKS-exempt LEP students are given the TAKS test at the earliest practical date.

Language Arts

Another term for English curriculum. The focus is on reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills.

Learning Disability (LD)

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. It does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage..

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Manipulatives

Three-dimensional teaching aids and visuals that teachers use to help students with math concepts. Typical tools include counting beads or bars, base ten blocks, shapes, fraction parts, and rulers.

Measurable Annual Goals

IEP goals that a student can reasonably accomplish within a year. The goals must address the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum. The goals must be broken down into short-term objectives, or benchmarks, only if a student is taking an alternate assessment. Goals may be academic, address social or behavioral needs, relate to physical needs, or address other educational needs. The IEP must indicate how the goals will be measured to show if the student is making progress toward them.

Modifications

A change in what the student is expected to learn that is different from the general education curriculum (TEKS). Modifications are only used for students with an IEP; however, not all students with IEPs require a modified curriculum.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Signed into law by President Bush in 2002, No Child Left Behind sets performance guidelines for all schools and also stipulates what must be included in accountability reports to parents. It mandates annual student testing, includes guidelines for underperforming schools, and requires states to train all teachers and assistants to be "highly qualified".

Norm-Referenced Assessment

An assessment in which an individual or group's performance is compared with a larger group. Usually the larger group is representative of a cross-section of all US students.

Notice of Procedural Safeguards

Written document containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards, written in the native language of the parents (unless it clearly is not feasible to do so) and written in an easily understandable manner, available under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and under regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Education. A copy of the procedural safeguards must be given to the parents of a child with a disability only 1 time a year, Exceptions to this are that a copy also must be given to the parents upon:

- initial referral or parental request for evaluation;
- upon receipt of the first special education complaint filed with TEA;
- upon receipt of the first due process hearing complaint in a school year;
- when a decision is made to take disciplinary action that constitutes a change in placement; or
- request by a parent.

Phonics

An instructional strategy used to teach reading. It helps beginning readers by teaching them letter-sound relationships and having them sound out words.

Primary Language

A student's first language or the language spoken at home. Refers to a grading or scoring system. A rubric is a scoring tool that lists the criteria to be met in a piece of work. A rubric also describes levels of quality for each of the criteria. These levels of performance may be written as different ratings (e.g., Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement) or as numerical scores (e.g., 4, 3, 2, 1).

Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)

A data collection system that encompasses all data requested and received by TEA about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information.

Response to Intervention

An early intervention model for addressing the learning needs of all students through a continuum of services which provide:

- high quality instruction and scientific, research-based, tiered intervention strategies aligned with individual student need;
- frequent monitoring of student progress to make results based academic or behavioral decisions;
- data-based school improvement; and
- the application of student response data to important educational decisions (such as those regarding placement, intervention, curriculum, and instructional goals and methodologies).

Under IDEA 2004, at-risk students should receive RtI interventions before a referral to special education can be considered. This change in the law is designed to cut down on the number of students being referred to special education as a result of having not received adequate instruction in the general education classroom.

School Report Card

As required by federal law, the Texas Education Agency publishes a school report card for every campus in the state. The SRC provides a small subset of the information available in the AEIS reports. Schools are required to provide a copy of their school report card to the parent or guardian of every student attending school in Texas.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The law applies to public elementary and secondary schools, as well as to other entities. Under Section 504, students may receive accommodations and modifications.

Special Education

Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

STAAR is the acronym for The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness that replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

Generally there are two types of standardized tests, norm-referenced and criterion referenced. Norm-referenced tests compare an individual student's results with other students' performance. It is often reported in terms of performing above average, on average or below average as compared to other students. Criterion-referenced exams compare a student's performance against a standard. Students are held accountable of meeting a performance standard and results are reported as such. STAAR is a criterion-referenced test that measures a student's performance in comparison to the curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for a subject area and grade level.

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

The state department of education or state educational agency (SEA), which is responsible for the public education of all students in Texas. The Texas Education Agency works with local school districts to ensure that all public education laws, rules, and regulations are followed.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

An assessment program for students in Texas public schools who have limited English proficiency. Under No Child Left Behind, Texas must assess English language learners annually in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Student learning the English language begin participating in TELPAS in kindergarten and stop participating when their language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) determines that they are proficient in the English language.

Title I

The place in the law (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) that supports students who are considered "disadvantaged" by ensuring that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and to reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments.