

*Humble
Independent School District*

**Special Education
Program Evaluation**

HUMBLE
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Education
Program Evaluation

Letter of Transmittal

June 1, 2014

Dr. Sally LaRue
Educational Support Services
Humble Independent School District
20200 Eastway Village Drive
Humble, Texas 77338

Dear Dr. LaRue:

Enclosed please find the Humble Independent School District (ISD) Special Education Program Evaluation report. School districts that gather, analyze, and use information about their organizations make better decisions about systemic areas of improvement. Districts that understand the needs of their students and schools are more successful in planning and implementing continuous improvement.

Results summarized in this report represent information from demographic, student learning, perceptual, and school process data as gathered through surveys, observations, and interviews on the provision of special education services for Humble ISD.

Region 4 Education Service Center appreciates the opportunity to provide Humble ISD with this Special Education Program Evaluation report. Further, we appreciate the time that you and your staff have dedicated to this evaluation and wish you the best in all your future endeavors as you provide services to students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Ginger E. Gates, Ph.D.
Director, Special Education Solutions

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Humble Independent School District Special Education Program Evaluation

Program Intent

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. IDEA governs how states and public education agencies—districts and charter schools—provide early intervention, special education, and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youths with disabilities (US Department of Education, n.d.). Under this federal mandate, the Texas Education Code, and the Texas Administrative Code, Humble Independent School District (Humble ISD) provides special education and related services to eligible students with disabilities.

Purpose of Evaluation

School districts that gather, analyze, and use information about their organizations make better decisions about systemic areas of improvement. Districts that understand the needs of their students and schools are more successful in planning and implementing continuous improvement. Dr. Sally LaRue, Director of Educational Support Services, Humble ISD, requested that Region 4 Education Service Center (Region 4) conduct a program evaluation of the special education inclusion program to identify areas of improvement as the district works to provide appropriate services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment as compared to the December 2010 program evaluation also conducted by Region 4. Region 4 conducted this current evaluation in April–May 2014.

The special education program evaluation examined the following areas and their impact on students with disabilities in Humble ISD: demographic information, instructional programming, eligibility folders, documentation of implementation of each individual education program, and professional development. This report consists of findings and recommendations for these areas.

Process

A team of education specialists from Region 4 conducted the special education program review. The evaluation consisted of the following activities:

- Conducting interviews with special education administrators (Appendix A)
- Conducting surveys of teachers, paraprofessionals, and campus administrators (Appendix B)
- Observing in classrooms at four campuses where students with disabilities receive services and staff have been trained by Lead4ward. These campuses included: Greentree Elementary, Oaks Elementary, Timberwood Middle School, and Summer Creek High School (Appendix C)
- Sampling of student folders (Appendix D)

- Desk review of district-provided data, state-reported data, operating guidelines, teacher service logs, sample lesson plans, and staff development regarding inclusion (Appendix E)

The remainder of this report provides information gathered during the evaluation with recommendations and next steps.

Special Education Profile

Humble ISD covers a 90+ square mile area and includes the communities of Humble, Atascocita, Kingwood, Fall Creek, and Eagle Springs, among others. It is located about 17 miles northeast of downtown Houston. Humble ISD has 43 campuses and more than 38,000 students and more than 5,000 employees. Humble ISD is listed among the 25 fastest growing school districts in Texas and is currently the 31st largest district in the state.

District special education enrollment and staff information for Humble ISD from 2010 to 2014 are provided in the following table.

Table 1. Special Education District Enrollment and Staff Information for Humble ISD (2010–2014)

	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014
STUDENTS				
Total Special Education Students	2,946	3,005	2,948	3,136
STAFF				
Total Special Education Teachers	411.24	335.96	342.78	344.46

Note: Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2013). Data obtained from TEA Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Standard Reports, and Humble ISD Special Education Department.

From 2010 until present, Humble ISD has increased by 190 students receiving special education services while the number of special education teachers decreased by 66.78 FTEs.

Focus Group Questions

Humble ISD special education administrative team members were asked a series of questions (Appendix B) regarding the changes in the areas of inclusion over the past few years since the last evaluation. The following is a transcript of their answers.

1. How has your district changed the approach to inclusion since 2010 (last audit)?

- a. Our department has increased its visibility on campuses
- b. We have scaffolded the layout of our trainings and expectations.
- c. We have made a paradigm shift in our vocabulary approach. We have adopted the general education vocabulary and linked it with special education terms.
Example: Instead of saying “modification,” we say “curriculum change.”
- d. The change to STAAR® has been good as it created a better understanding for all that the pulling out of students from general education should be limited.
- e. We have taken steps to change the perception of coteach class expectations. We no longer use the term *coteach*, we use *in-class support*.
- f. We have begun discussions with CTE on how to scaffold in order for our students to be more successful in CTE classes. [We are] attempting to incorporate prerequisites for CTE in order for our students to be more prepared for the classes offered.
- g. Using Person Centered Planning (PCP) has been helpful because it bases our decisions on the final outcome sought.

2. What are the expectations for campuses regarding inclusion?

- a. That staff are in their correct locations and working together collaboratively.
- b. An increased amount of common planning so staff can work more effectively together.
- c. Noticed that special education wasn't included in PLCs; now they are.
- d. When going into classrooms, would like to see specially designed instruction, supplemental aids, differentiated instruction, and universal design for learning.
- e. Improvements seen in elementary; still working on secondary;
- f. Discussions on how to provide targeted instruction.
- g. Collaboration and conversations between general education (GE)/special education (SE) on process standards.
- h. Speech therapists are now going into the classroom to provide service as opposed to isolated services.
- i. Would like to hire special education teachers that are highly qualified in subject areas and use them to provide service within the area they are highly qualified.
- j. Keep effective GE/SE teacher teams together from one year to the next.
- k. Ensure that the campus staff has done everything possible prior to recommending a student to a more restrictive (self-contained) environment.
- l. See positive behavior supports implemented with fidelity.
- m. Regarding deaf education—
 - i. Would like to see the curriculum aligned, vocabulary in place for each grade level, and interpreters in all classrooms.