

Glossary of Terms

Child Find	Refers to state-developed policies and procedures which ensure that all children with disabilities residing in Texas, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluate.
Differentiated Instruction	Refers to a process used to recognize the varying background knowledge, readiness, language, learning preferences, and interests of a student. The intent of differentiated instruction is to maximize each student’s growth and individual success.
Dyslexia	Refers to a brain-based type of learning disability that specifically impairs a person’s ability to read. These individuals typically read at levels significantly lower than expected despite having normal intelligence. Although the disorder varies from person to person, common characteristics are difficulty with phonological processing, spelling, and/or rapid visual/verbal responding.
Eligibility	Refers to the determination that a student is a “child with a disability” as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and as a result of the disability, the child needs special education services to benefit from education.
FAPE	Refers to a free appropriate public education for a student with a disability. FAPE includes the special education and related services in a student’s IEP that the ARD committee determines are necessary to provide the student with an appropriate education at public expense.
IDEA	Refers to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.). The IDEA is the federal law designed to ensure that all students with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a FAPE, which includes the special education and related services necessary to meet their unique needs and to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.
Parent	Refers to a biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a properly appointed surrogate parent, or other person as defined by the IDEA who has legal authority to make educational decisions for a student with a disability or who is suspected of having a disability.
Prior Written Notice (PWN)	A notice that must be given to the parents of the child whenever the local educational agency proposes to initiate or change or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. Texas defines a reasonable time for providing such notice as five school days.
Procedural Violation	Refers to a school district’s failure to follow the specific procedures outlined in the IDEA or in state special education law and rules. For example, if a school does not follow the timeline for conducting evaluations, this would be a procedural violation.

Response to Intervention (RtI)	Refers to a process addressing the 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, instructional goals and methodologies.
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Refers to a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Under Section 504, a free appropriate public education consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.
Specially-Designed Instruction	Refers to instruction adapted, as appropriate, to the needs of the eligible child under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which may include the content, methodology or delivery of instruction; addressing the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and ensuring access of the child to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the local educational agency that apply to all children.
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	Refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
Substantive Violation	Refers to a school district's failure to provide a student with a disability with a FAPE. For example, if a student's IEP does not provide the student with a meaningful educational benefit, this would be a substantive violation.
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Refers to an organization that provides vocational rehabilitation services for youth and students with physical or cognitive disabilities, including blindness or visual impairments. TWC supported programs encourage students to participate in science, technology, engineering and math programs in order to promote pursuit of careers and educations in these in-demand fields.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Refers to an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences.