



Learning LABS



LEADING TRANSFORMATION
JW Marriott Austin February 3-5

FEBRUARY 3

Room

3 - 4 P.M.

4:30 - 5:30 P.M.

Lone Star
A-B

Meltdowns to Milestones: Your Guide to Behavior Management

*Kaylyn Kirkpatrick, Walsh
Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.,
Angela Kirkpatrick*

AI in Special Education: Simplifying Tasks and Enhancing Productivity

Karlyn Keller, EdD, Texas Association of School Boards

Lone Star
C

Intentional Innovation: How to Guide Risk-Taking, Build Creative Capacity and Lead Change

A.J. Juliani

Intentional Innovation: How to Guide Risk-Taking, Build Creative Capacity and Lead Change

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Lone Star
D

Better Understanding the Underlying Causes of Dysgraphia: Orthographic Processing and Graphomotor Function

Mertie Gomez, PhD, Laura Dowdy, Humble ISD

Child Find Updates You Need to Know

*Jamie Turner, Meghan Beytebiere, Walsh
Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

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You Made That Up--ARD Committee Meeting Folklore Edition

*Elvin Houston, Walsh Gallegos
Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

Updates from the Courts that Count

*Jennifer Carroll, Naomi Harper, Andrea Gulley, Walsh
Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

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Equity in Action: Transforming the Principal Evaluation for Special Education

Stacy Venson, Kevin Alaniz, Houston ISD

An Overview of Monitoring Updates with TEA

*Lori Merrell, Scarlett Papas,
Nandini Gohil, Texas Education Agency*

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G-H

Changing Mindsets for Quality Inclusive Practices

Kathy Clapsaddle, lead4ward

What Changes to Developmental Delay Policy Mean for Districts

*April Crutcher, Edward Schultz, PhD,
Beth Barnard, Midwestern State University*

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The Confidence Cure

Marli Williams

Folder Audits Made Simple: Compliance That Works for You!

Marchelle Peters, Katy ISD

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Organizing your Dream Team: An Effective Guide to Collaboration

Christopher Bowie, Fort Bend ISD

How Might We Change the Behavior Program Paradigm?

Finding Solutions from Within

*Coral Wilkens, EdD, Leslie Flisowski, Jackie Mitchell, Royse
City ISD*

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Where Does It Say I Have To...? Finding the Answers to Your Biggest Budget and Finance Questions

Cindy Moses, TCASE Services by Design

Amplifying Advocacy by Relationship Building with the School Board

Andrea Chevalier, PhD, TCASE, Anna Smith, Leander ISD

FEBRUARY

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Room

10:30 - 11:30 A.M.

1 - 2 P.M.

Lone Star
A-B

**Paraprofessionals and Partnerships -
Onboarding, Learning Cycles
and Sub Support**

Carey Thornell, Jennifer Krawczyk, Georgetown ISD

2025 SHARS Program Updates

Dario Avila, Texas Association of School Boards

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**Child Study Team for
Emergent Bilingual Students**

Elvia Cisneros, Christina Wiggins, Humble ISD

**Crafting Legally Defensible IEPs:
From Start to Success**

Stacie Bonner, EdD, Denton ISD

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**Building a District Dyslexia Instruction
Continuum: One Size Does Not Fit All**

Nora Sanders, Carol Cagnoni, Northside ISD

Doctors Know Best; Do They Know All?

*Kelly Morrison, Amarillo ISD
Andrea Slater Gulley, Walsh Gallegos
Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

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Deep Thoughts in Special Education

*Elvin Houston, Walsh Gallegos
Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

**Top 7 Procedural Errors Your Lawyers
Are Seeing Teams Make**

Rebecca Bailey, Kendra Yoch, Thompson & Horton LLP

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**Developing a Legally Informed AI
Framework for Schools and Districts**

*Sean Klamm, Playground IEP, Kendra Yoch, Thompson &
Horton LLP, Piper Ayers, Silsbee ISD*

**New Directors:
Creating Your Greatest Hits Album**

Candice Wyatt, North West Texas SSA

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**Collaborative Excellence:
Optimizing Diagnostician and PDI
Relationships and Evaluation Processes**

Lara Cantú, Amy Montemayor, Fort Worth ISD

**You Made That Up--
ARD Committee Meeting Folklore Edition**

Elvin Houston, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

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**Great Ideas for
Effective Behavior Supports**

*Monica Johnson, Gregory-Portland ISD,
Barbie Ezell, Kingsville ISD*

**Operating Procedures for Child Find,
Evaluation and FAPE Matter,
But What About the Others Areas?**

*Denise Carter, Texas Association of School Boards, Dianna
Bowen, Taylor Montgomery, Thompson & Horton LLP*

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Hot Topics for New Directors

*Holly Lambert, EdD, Ingram ISD,
Laura Garza, San Antonio Special Programs Co-op,
Kami Finger, Lubbock ISD*

**Defusing Defiance:
Classroom Strategies for
Oppositional Behavior**

Karen Sanders, Forney ISD

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**Proportionate Share Services:
The Who, The What and The How Much!**

Cindy Moses, TCASE Services by Design

**Utilizing Specially Designed Instruction to
Create Districtwide Systems of Support**

*Tracy Walls, Sherman ISD,
Laura Seifert, STAR Autism Support*

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**An Overview of Monitoring
Updates with TEA**

*Lori Merrell, Scarlett Papas,
Nandini Gohil, Texas Education Agency*

**Mastering the Art of Specially Designed
Instruction: Strategies for Success**

Krista Garcia, TCASE Services by Design

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2:30 - 3:30 P.M.

4 - 5 P.M.

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**An IEP is Only Worth
the PLAAFP It's Written On**
Dianna Bowen, Thompson & Horton LLP

**Four Phases of Systems Change:
From New Priority to
Sustained & Successful Practice**
*Frances Stetson, PhD, Brandi Breaux, EdD,
Stetson & Associates*

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**Leading Behind the Scenes with
Communication & Culture**
Amy Mathews Perez, PhD, Robinson ISD

**Campus Support Checks & Balances:
Supporting Department
Staff & Teacher Retention**
*Vanessa Kosar, Jacque Erickson,
Jana Sevrins, North East ISD*

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Updates from the Courts that Count
*Jennifer Carroll, Naomi Harper, Andrea Gulley, Walsh
Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

**Navigating the Latest
Dos and the Don'ts of Discipline
for Students with Disabilities**
*Pam Kaminsky, Emma Ellefsen,
Rogers Morris & Grover, LLP*

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**Norm-Referenced Testing in
Identifying Specific Learning
Disabilities: Are They Necessary?**
Edward Schultz, PhD, Midwestern State University

**Top 7 Substantive SPED Questions
You Are Asking Your Lawyers**
Kendra Yoch, Rebecca Bailey, Thompson & Horton LLP

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**Harnessing AI for Enhanced Teacher
Capacity and Retention**
Tracy Bailey, PhD, Aldine ISD

**Lions and Tigers and
TEA Complaints, OH MY!**
Candice Mills, Abbey Kelly, Georgetown ISD

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Got PDIs? Let Us Help!
*Debi Buchanan, EdD, Scottish Rite for Children,
Center for Dyslexia, Veronica Allen, Dallas ISD,
Kim Lowe, ESC Region 20*

Deep Thoughts in Special Education
*Elvin Houston,
Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

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**Homebound Transition - Facts and Forms
to Support Compliance**
*Tamra Maribibi, Abbey
Kelly, Georgetown ISD*

**BIP Interventions in
the Real World Classroom**
Tiffany Roberts, Forney ISD

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**The School Lawyer/School Client
Relationship: Help Me Help You!**
*Eric Rodriguez, Arieana Martinez,
Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.*

**Special Education Shift:
Balancing the Load Between Case
Management and Instruction**
*Stacie Davis, Elizabeth McDowell,
Tami Perret, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD*

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**Behavior Programs:
Support vs. Disciplinary Placement**
Keegan Blackstock, Burleson ISD

**Move Beyond Compliance:
Elevating IEP Quality for
Student Success**
Kristin Burr, Denise Hood, Richardson ISD

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**Addressing Root Causes and
Implementing Corrective Actions to
Reduce Significant Disproportionality**
Krista Garcia, TCASE Services by Design

**Amplifying Advocacy by Relationship
Building with the School Board**
Andrea Chevalier, PhD, TCASE, Anna Smith, Leander ISD

Learning LABS

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

2025 SHARS Program Updates

PRESENTED BY:

Dario Avila, Texas Association of School Boards

The School Health and Related Services (SHARS) program has changed significantly over the years. This session will highlight the changes implemented for federal fiscal year 2025, discuss lessons learned, and show you how to maximize your reimbursements while remaining program compliant and audit safe.

Addressing Root Causes and Implementing Corrective Actions to Reduce Significant Disproportionality

PRESENTED BY:

Krista Garcia, TCASE Services by Design

This session will focus on identifying the root causes of significant disproportionality in special education, specifically related to discipline, identification and placement. Participants will gain insight into evidence-based practices for reducing disproportionality, with an emphasis on culturally responsive interventions and engaging key stakeholders in sustainable change efforts.

AI in Special Education: Simplifying Tasks and Enhancing Productivity

PRESENTED BY:

Karlyn Keller, EdD, Texas Association of School Boards

This session provides an introduction to artificial intelligence (AI) with a focus on special education. Participants will learn how AI can simplify administrative tasks, improve data-driven decision-making and support personalized learning for students with disabilities. You will hear about real-world examples of AI applications and explore how technology can be leveraged to enhance educational outcomes and efficiency. Attendees will walk away with actionable strategies for implementing AI in special education to better serve students and educators alike.

Amplifying Advocacy by Relationship Building with the School Board

PRESENTED BY:

Andrea Chevalier, PhD, TCASE

Anna Smith, Leander ISD

Local school boards are the closest level of government to special education, but school board members need help understanding this special population to make progress in the district and to amplify communications to higher levels of government. Come learn strategies for building relationships and communicating key metrics and messaging to school board members.

An IEP is Only Worth the PLAAFP It's Written On

PRESENTED BY:

Dianna Bowen, Thompson & Horton LLP

The words written (or not written) in the Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) section of the IEP can be the difference between winning or losing a due process hearing, resolving a dispute with a parent and/or providing FAPE to a student. The IDEA does not define academic achievement or functional performance and gives flexibility to ARD committees regarding how to determine and document a student's present levels. This session will focus on the legal requirements and best practices for the PLAAFP, including essential elements, common mistakes and practical tips for ensuring that the PLAAFP leads to a legally compliant and defensible IEP.

An Overview of Monitoring Updates with TEA

PRESENTED BY:

Lori Merrell, Texas Education Agency

Scarlett Papas, Texas Education Agency

Nandini Gohil, Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will launch Phase II of DMS monitoring starting in the 2025-2026 school year. This session will provide an overview of upcoming updates to Cyclical and Targeted monitoring activities. Additionally, TEA will present related updates and system enhancements for the Ascend platform for the 2025-2026 school year.

Behavior Programs: Support vs. Disciplinary Placement

PRESENTED BY:

Keegan Blackstock, Burleson ISD

This session offers an overview of behavior programs and how to set up one that is legally compliant and truly supportive of students. There will be a focus on how to keep behavior classrooms from being used as a disciplinary placement and how to ensure that not all students with behavior are placed there.

Better Understanding the Underlying Causes of Dysgraphia: Orthographic Processing and Graphomotor Function

PRESENTED BY:

Mertie M. Gomez, PhD, Consultant

Laura Dowdy, Humble ISD

This presentation will facilitate a better understanding of the underlying causes of dysgraphia, orthographic processing and graphomotor function. Participants will understand how to conduct and write up a comprehensive dysgraphia evaluation, considering the updated "Dyslexia Handbook" (2024). In addition, this training will include a discussion of case studies using formal and informal data.

BIP Interventions in the Real World Classroom

PRESENTED BY:

Tiffany Roberts, Forney ISD

Have you read a behavior intervention plan (BIP) and asked, "How would this look in a classroom?" Let's dive into the interventions and how they look in different grades/classrooms/units.

Building a District Dyslexia Instruction Continuum: One Size Does Not Fit All

PRESENTED BY:

Nora Sanders, Northside ISD

Carol Cagnoni, Northside ISD

The impact of dyslexia runs on a spectrum; therefore, services should run on a continuum to meet the unique needs of identified students. Learn about a district's strategic process and collaboration focused on meeting the diverse needs of students identified with dyslexia across all levels.

Campus Support Checks & Balances: Supporting Department Staff & Teacher Retention

PRESENTED BY:

Vanessa Kosar, North East ISD

Jacque Erickson, North East ISD

Jana Severyns, North East ISD

In an era of diminishing teacher supply and increasing student behavioral and academic need, how do you know you are doing the right work that supports both department staff and teacher retention? Participants will be introduced to a Google-based system that provides quantifiable data to drive your daily department work with a campus support system of checks and balances. Learn about the progression of work as we share our challenges, successes and next steps as we enter our fourth year of implementation.

Changing Mindsets for Quality Inclusive Practice

PRESENTED BY:

Kathy Clapsaddle, lead4ward

Students with IEPs need access to high quality Tier I and effective specially designed instruction. How do we meet both goals – without sacrificing either? The answer is inclusive instruction; however, the barriers to the effectiveness of inclusive instruction can be overwhelming. This session focuses on creating a cohesive message to change mindsets and get educators and leaders thinking differently about what inclusive instruction could look like. Strategies and ideas to use in your district will be modeled. Walk away with ways to change the conversation from compliance for meeting IEPs to ensuring quality instruction.

Child Find Updates You Need to Know

PRESENTED BY:

Jamie Turner, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson Roalson P.C.

Meghan Beytebiere, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson Roalson P.C.

Child Find can seem like an overwhelming obligation. This session will get you up to speed on recent court cases and hearing officer decisions regarding Child Find. This session will focus on the school's obligations to find and evaluate children with disabilities, focusing on what we can learn and apply from recent case law.

Child Study Team for Emergent Bilingual Students

PRESENTED BY:

Elvia Cisneros, Humble ISD

Christina Wiggins, Humble ISD

To address the needs of a growing emergent bilingual population, Humble ISD has created a district-wide prereferral intervention team. This innovative approach has enabled a more precise understanding of students' needs by distinguishing between linguistic diversity and potential disabilities. By implementing this district-wide team, the district is able to guide campus teams in making assessment decisions based on best practices and ensure equitable evaluation outcomes.

Collaborative Excellence: Optimizing Diagnostician and PDI Relationships and Evaluation Processes

PRESENTED BY:

Lara Cantú, Fort Worth ISD

Amy Montemayor, Fort Worth ISD

This session will explore the district's journey toward establishing a symbiotic relationship between evaluation staff and providers of dyslexia instruction (PDIs) using the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) timeline as a benchmark. Learn the critical stages of this process and apply them to your own district's unique context. Don't miss this opportunity to refine your approach and drive progress in building a mutually beneficial relationship within your district!

Crafting Legally Defensible IEPs: From Start to Success

PRESENTED BY:

Stacie Bonner, EdD, Denton ISD

This session will guide you through writing effective PLAAFP statements, setting measurable and meaningful goals and developing aligned objectives to ensure progress. Learn how to document the provision of FAPE through detailed progress reports that reflect growth and inform necessary adjustments. With a focus on specially designed instruction, this interactive workshop will equip you with practical tools and strategies to enhance your IEPs from start to finish.

Deep Thoughts in Special Education

PRESENTED BY:

Elvin W. Houston, Walsh Gallegos Robinson Kyle & Roalson P.C.

Whether you are a new professional in the world of special education or someone who has attended 10,000 ARDs, you can benefit from some deep thinking about special education. Participants will leave the world of special education compliance and dive into the big questions: what would make this all easier, better for kids, and better for education? Everyone is invited to a conversation about the alchemy of kids, parents, educators and the law.

Defusing Defiance: Classroom Strategies for Oppositional Behavior

PRESENTED BY:

Karen L Sanders, Forney ISD

Join this interactive discussion of strategies to work with oppositional behavior in the classroom and for defusing situations with challenging students.

Developing a Legally Informed AI Framework for Schools and Districts

PRESENTED BY:

Sean Klamm, Playground IEP

Kendra Yoch, Thompson & Horton LLP

Piper Ayres, Silsbee ISD

This session addresses the critical aspects of implementing AI for special education at a district level, within legal and ethical boundaries. This workshop will guide you through the intricacies of FERPA, data security and developing an AI policy for your school or district. Joined by experienced legal counsel and district leaders, this session offers an opportunity to gain expert insights and practical strategies for integrating AI into your school or district responsibly and effectively. Leave prepared to lead the change in integrating AI and creating a secure and inclusive education.

Doctors Know Best; Do They Know All?

PRESENTED BY:

Kelly Morrison, Amarillo ISD

Andrea Slater Gulley, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

This session will focus on the legal and practical considerations when districts are presented with physician recommendations for homebound, shortened school day and ABA and eligibility evaluations, including how to thoroughly document agreement or disagreement with information provided.

Equity in Action: Transforming the Principal Evaluation for Special Education

PRESENTED BY:

Stacy Venson, Houston ISD

Kevin Alaniz, Houston ISD

Explore Houston Independent School District's innovative approach to integrating special education into the district's principal evaluation. This session will explore the approach that allocates 20 percent of the principal evaluation to special education compliance and student achievement effectiveness areas. Presenters will discuss strategies for transitioning from vision to action, offering practical insights and lessons learned to help districts navigate similar initiatives. They will also discuss the district's vision to prepare students for 2035 competencies and how the district's implementation of wholesale reform supports this work as it has strengthened central office effectiveness.

Folder Audits Made Simple: Compliance That Works for You!

PRESENTED BY:

Marchelle Peters, Katy ISD

This session will guide participants through the process of conducting a comprehensive folder audit for special education records, ensuring compliance with district standards and TEA audit requirements. Attendees will receive access to a customizable template designed to support their district's auditing process. The session will cover best practices for reviewing folders, identifying compliance issues and incorporating TEA guidelines. Participants can ask questions and discuss practical applications of the folder audit system within their own districts, fostering collaboration and clarity on maintaining special education compliance.

Four Phases of Systems Change: From New Priority to Sustained & Successful Practice

PRESENTED BY:

Frances Stetson, PhD, Stetson & Associates, Inc.

Brandi Breaux, EdD, Stetson & Associates, Inc.

In today's challenging landscape, education leaders need a clear roadmap to achieve goals with confidence. This session presents four key phases of the change process that special education leaders can use to implement new programs, services and compliance requirements. Learn tools and strategies for each phase, including quality standards, self-assessment instruments, communication tools and methods to build staff capacity. Attendees will learn metrics to measure success and effectively communicate achievements to the board and the community, establishing a solid foundation for driving change at the district and cabinet levels.

Got PDIs? Let Us Help!

PRESENTED BY:

Debi Buchanan, EdD, Scottish Rite for Children, Center for Dyslexia

Veronica Allen, Dallas ISD

Kim Lowe, ESC Region 20

Hear how the dyslexia director of a large urban school district and a region service center dyslexia specialist with a range of school district sizes thought outside the box to train enough providers of dyslexia instruction (PDIs) to meet the growing number of students with dyslexia. Participants will explore the challenges they face in having enough qualified PDIs to provide effective dyslexia instruction and will brainstorm solutions.

Great Ideas for Effective Behavior Supports

PRESENTED BY:

Monica Johnson, Gregory-Portland ISD

Barbie Ezell, Kingsville ISD

As school districts face an increasing number of students requiring behavioral support, the necessity for innovative solutions has never been more critical. Join us for an engaging and interactive discussion as we delve into the journey of identifying a particularly successful special education classroom within our district. The success of this classroom serves as a cornerstone for how we designed and implemented effective behavioral practices across the district. Through this discussion, insights will be shared into the strategies that contributed to this classroom's success, including the specific programming and tools to support district staff while addressing students with diverse needs.

Harnessing AI for Enhanced Teacher Capacity and Retention

PRESENTED BY:

Tracy Bailey, PhD, Aldine ISD

This session delves into leveraging AI to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in special education teaching. Learn how AI can streamline the creation of PLAAFP statements, ensuring they are comprehensive, descriptive and accurately depict students' needs and strengths. By harnessing AI, educators can navigate the intricate and time-consuming paperwork associated with special education instruction more efficiently. As paperwork burdens often contribute to teacher attrition, this discussion highlights how AI-driven solutions can alleviate this strain, ultimately fostering greater teacher retention.

Homebound Transition - Facts and Forms to Support Compliance

PRESENTED BY:

Tamra Marbibi, Georgetown ISD

Abbey Kelly, Georgetown ISD

As the requests for homebound services continue to rise, campuses are faced with hard discussions about how to best transition students back to campus from homebound. Learn about a user-friendly document that outlines all the needed information to collaborate and effectively plan for students' return to campus. Participants will leave with an action plan to address homebound transitions as well as a usable template to include in ARD/504 meetings.

Hot Topics for New Directors

PRESENTED BY:

Holly Lambert, EdD, Ingram ISD

Laura Garza, San Antonio Special Programs Co-op

Kami Finger, Lubbock ISD

This session provides new special education directors with a comprehensive overview of the most pressing issues in the field. Speakers will cover key topics such as compliance with regulations, effective leadership strategies, financial management and program development. Participants will gain insights into navigating the complex landscape of special education, ensuring both legal adherence and the delivery of high-quality services. This session is essential for directors looking to build a strong foundation in their roles and drive positive outcomes for students with special needs.

How Might We Change the Behavior Program Paradigm? Finding Solutions from Within

PRESENTED BY:

Coral Wilkens, EdD, Royse City ISD

Leslie Flisowski, Royse City ISD

Jackie Mitchell, Royse City ISD

Royse City ISD was faced with a behavior crisis that overwhelmed campuses, administrators and staff. In an effort to support students, retain staff and develop a therapeutic program for students with intense behavioral needs, RCISD changed the model. RCISD Center for Excellence is a behavior center serving neurotypical students with a therapeutic, restorative approach. By changing the paradigm using the resources already available, RCISD has a thriving program that provides students with success.

Intentional Innovation: How to Guide Risk-Taking, Build Creative Capacity and Lead Change

PRESENTED BY:

A.J. Juliani

As the world changes, how do we educate differently so students, teachers, and staff are empowered to thrive in this environment? In this new talk from bestselling author A.J. Juliani, you'll learn a clear process to guide risk-taking and lead change so you can be intentional about innovation in your classroom, school and life. Juliani shows why we need intentional innovation and how to implement it effectively.

Leading Behind the Scenes with Communication and Culture

PRESENTED BY:

Amy Mathews-Perez, PhD, Robinson ISD

Two key elements of effective leadership are communication and culture. This session offers practical ways to expand your skills in these areas with procedures, actions and intention. Learn about ideas that can contribute to a culture that reflects your heart, instead of just the work. If you are already great at communication and culture, come share your input.

Lions and Tigers and TEA Complaints, OH MY!

PRESENTED BY:

Candice Mills, Georgetown ISD

Abbey Kelly, Georgetown ISD

At a time when the public education system is in the limelight and TEA complaints are rising, school districts are faced with navigating the day to day of operations and the quick turnaround required by TEA when a complaint is filed. Participants will gain tools to organize the completion of the complaint process, and sentence stems and language around providing documentation reflective of the school district's efforts to meet the learner needs.

Mastering the Art of Specially Designed Instruction: Strategies for Success

PRESENTED BY:

Krista Garcia, TCASE Services by Design

In this session, special education leaders will explore and analyze current in-class support instructional practices to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Participants will review instructional approaches and classroom structures to assess how well they align with best practices. Finally, learn how to embed specially designed instructional techniques in general education settings, ensuring that instruction goes beyond content support and accommodations, ultimately leading to improved learner outcomes.

Meltdowns to Milestones: Your Guide to Behavior Management

PRESENTED BY:

Kaylyn Kirkpatrick, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

Angela Kirkpatrick

This session focuses on enhancing special education compliance at the campus level and equipping special education administrators with the essential tools and strategies needed to effectively train their staff to work with students with high behavioral needs. Participants will leave with actionable insights for creating positive behavioral support systems and addressing common challenges.

Move Beyond Compliance: Elevating IEP Quality for Student Success

PRESENTED BY:

Kristin Burr, Richardson ISD

Denise Hood, Richardson ISD

Most IEPs meet the basic legal requirements; however, there is a gulf between simply fulfilling these requirements and crafting a high-quality IEP that truly benefits each student's education. To address this challenge, RISD has developed a comprehensive tool to define and assess the quality indicators of a high quality IEP. This initiative is part of a broader effort to build the capacity of staff across the district, focusing on enhancing the quality of IEPs and fostering meaningful growth and progress for all students. Come learn about the journey, the strategies implemented and the impact of making these changes.

Navigating the Latest Dos and the Don'ts of Discipline for Students with Disabilities

PRESENTED BY:

Pam Kaminsky, Rogers, Morris & Grover, LLP

Emma Ellefsen, Rogers, Morris & Grover, LLP

Participants will navigate TEA's "Discipline Flowchart for Students Identified with or Suspected of Having a Disability Under IDEA", gaining a comprehensive understanding of key disciplinary elements that administrators frequently overlook. Examine discipline and behavior issues and learn strategies for addressing situations that necessitate an ARD committee meeting. Additionally, participants will develop skills to manage and address various legal challenges associated with disciplinary actions. Come ready to get on your "soapbox" -- this session will give you the opportunity to share your views on this often controversial topic.

New Directors: Creating Your Greatest Hits Album

PRESENTED BY:

Candice Wyatt, North West Texas SSA

This session is designed for new directors and will focus on establishing yourself as a reliable director. Topics covered include tricks of the trade passed down from seasoned directors, recruiting quality employees, what to expect in your first years and things you need to know that people don't tell you. All topics are integrated into a "Greatest Hits" album and set to music from all genres and decades.

Norm-Referenced Testing in Identifying Specific Learning Disabilities: Are They Necessary?

PRESENTED BY:

Edward Schultz, PhD, Midwestern State University

Critics of norm-referenced testing (NRT) argue that it is expensive and time-consuming, adds no value and does not result in improved outcomes. Additionally, the language in the frequently asked questions (FAQ) section of the "Dyslexia Handbook" implies that we can identify specific learning disabilities (SLD) without using norm-referenced testing. Furthermore, despite guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), removing the "significant variance" language in the Legal Framework continues to perplex evaluators. Come learn about these issues and how to utilize these tools to identify SLD responsibly.

Operating Procedures for Child Find, Evaluation and FAPE Matter, But What About the Other Areas?

PRESENTED BY:

Denise Carter, Texas Association of School Boards

Dianna Bowen, Thompson & Horton LLP

Taylor Montgomery, Thompson & Horton LLP

Current regulations require districts to upload special education operating procedures into the Legal Framework in the areas of Child Find, evaluation, and FAPE. However, this does not eliminate the need for comprehensive written procedures in the remaining seven areas. This session will focus on the importance of covering all areas in your procedures. The session will address current due process hearing data and cases specific to the additional areas.

Organizing Your Dream Team: An Effective Guide to Collaboration

PRESENTED BY:

Christopher Bowie, Fort Bend ISD

Each school year, as resources shift, campus and district leaders in special education must find ways to increase student outcomes. Identifying key players is an effective strategy for increasing outcomes within a successful organization. Effective collaboration helps campuses and school districts organize the unique systems they use to reach desired outcomes. Participants will be inspired to reconsider how they collaborate within their organizations, while pondering, "Who do I need to be and who do I need to identify to execute a plan that produces the desired outcome?"

Paraprofessionals and Partnerships - Onboarding, Learning Cycles and Sub Support

PRESENTED BY:

Carey Thornell, Georgetown ISD

Jennifer Krawczyk, Georgetown ISD

Partnerships between paraprofessionals, teachers and campus leadership is critical to student success. This session will break down how Georgetown ISD provides onboarding support and ongoing professional learning opportunities to increase capacity, collaboration, and staff retention.

Proportionate Share Services: The Who, The What and The How Much!

PRESENTED BY:

Cindy Moses, TCASE Services by Design

Proportionate share services are required by the federal grant, but knowing which students to serve, how to serve them appropriately and utilizing only the required set aside can be a challenge. Come learn to identify who to offer services to, how to provide those services, how to track those services and how to leverage your set aside without putting any additional financial strain on your special education budget. Learn your options for unused funds.

Special Education Shift: Balancing the Load Between Case Management and Instruction

PRESENTED BY:

Stacie Davis, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Elizabeth McDowell, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Tami Perret, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Cypress Fairbanks ISD has an innovative approach to enhancing special education support. This session will delve into the strategic division of roles, separating instructional responsibilities from case management tasks. Discover how this shift alleviates teacher workload, fosters collaboration and ultimately improves student outcomes. Participants will gain insights into best practices, implementation strategies and the positive impact on both educators and students. Learn how to create a more sustainable and effective special education environment!

The Confidence Cure

PRESENTED BY:

Marli Williams

One of the major things holding leaders back from what they really want is the confidence to believe in themselves and the courage to go after it. Confidence is the medicine that gives people the ability to lead, innovate and create positive change in the world. This interactive presentation is designed to inspire and empower participants to overcome self-doubt so that they can play full out in every area of their lives.

The School Lawyer/School Client Relationship: Help Me Help You!

PRESENTED BY:

Eric G. Rodriguez, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

Arieana A. Martinez, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

State complaints and OCR investigations. Requests for due process hearings and lawsuits. These actions can be scary and intimidating, but your school works with a lawyer to help navigate these legal minefields. Learn practical tips on how to prepare to meet with your legal team. What questions should you ask the lawyer, how do you know what follow-up items are your responsibility from those that the lawyer handles, and when should you pick up the phone and call the school attorney? This session will give you an overview of the kinds of legal claims and issues you'll face in special education. You'll leave with recommended practices to help you stay in compliance while moving forward in partnership with your legal team.

Top 7 Procedural Errors Your Lawyers Are Seeing Teams Make

PRESENTED BY:

Rebecca Bailey, Thompson & Horton LLP

Kendra Yoch, Thompson & Horton LLP

IDEA's procedural requirements are critically important, and they do not have to be a boring and technical slog. In this engaging session, learn how to craft notices that get noticed, avoid checkbox purgatory and ensure FAPE reigns supreme. Participants will learn to spot and repair the procedural errors that frequently spell trouble and bring this knowledge to their teams.

Top 7 Substantive SPED Questions You Are Asking Your Lawyers

PRESENTED BY:

Kendra Yoch, Thompson & Horton LLP

Rebecca Bailey, Thompson & Horton LLP

You have questions, we have answers. Can a parent revoke consent for IDEA services and get 504 services? How do you write a measurable science goal? Does "processing time" with the counselor count as an informal removal? In this session, presenters will tackle these and other daunting questions you are asking your lawyers now and prepare you to work with your school teams to provide FAPE to students in a variety of difficult situations.

Updates from the Courts that Count

PRESENTED BY:

Jennifer Carroll, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

Naomi Harper, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

Andrea Slater Gulley, Walsh Gallegos Kyle Robinson & Roalson P.C.

Special educators deal with more than just IDEA. This session focuses on non-IDEA laws and policies that impact or overlap ARD committee meetings and IEP development, such as educational decision-making, when and how to conduct investigations, records requests and student discipline.

Utilizing Specially Designed Instruction to Create Districtwide Systems of Support

PRESENTED BY:

Tracy Walls, Sherman ISD

Laura Seiferd, STAR Autism Support

Sherman ISD continues to grow in overall student population as well as in numbers of students needing specially designed instruction. With this growth has come a substantial need for creating consistent supports for students at a variety of instructional levels. Successful programming for students includes using comprehensive curriculum, structured instructional areas, and the use of evidence-based practices throughout the day. Sherman ISD addressed these challenges by creating model training sites and developing a training plan to provide teachers with a hands-on learning experience. Come learn how utilizing a comprehensive training plan across settings helped to create systems of support districtwide.

What Changes to Developmental Delay Policy Mean for Districts

PRESENTED BY:

April Crutcher, Midwestern State University

Edward Schultz, PhD, Midwestern State University

Beth Barnard, Midwestern State University

This session will give an overview of IDEA policy on developmental delay as an eligibility category for special education services as well as an overview of the new Texas policy on developmental delay. Participants will gain an understanding of policy in other states that have been using this disability category before Texas and how some of this guidance might help evaluators as they begin to implement this disability category in their districts. Practices for determining eligibility will be discussed, including selecting appropriate norm-referenced measures and collecting additional evidence that supports the eligibility determination.

Where Does It Say I Have to...? Finding the Answers to Your Biggest Budget and Finance Questions

PRESENTED BY:

Cindy Moses, TCASE Services By Design

One of the greatest challenges for special education administrators is knowing where to find answers to specific questions, especially budget and finance questions. Come and discover where to find answers to SO MANY of your finance questions like what are the rules for grant set asides? Can I spend this money on (fill in the blank with your latest uncertainty)? How can I find out how much to expect in roll forward? You will get resources to help with those questions, along with tips and tricks to help you manage your special education finances and grow your expertise.

You Made That Up--ARD Committee Meeting Folklore Edition

PRESENTED BY:

Elvin Houston, Walsh Gallegos Robinson Kyle & Roalson P.C.

Participants will learn more special education rules that everyone gets wrong. Through humor, legal analysis and practical guidance, learn how to correct those common mistakes, get the law right and make your special education life easier. Participants will come away surprised at what the law doesn't say concerning bullying, data collection, 10-day recesses and much more!