DATE: May 24, 2019

TO: All Campus Administrators

FROM: Brian Kelly, Director of Psychological Services and Child find

THROUGH: Gerard Cortez, Executive Director of Special Education

RE: Changes in LSSP/Educational Diagnostician Assignments for the 2019-2020 School Year

Last spring, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released two important documents: the Special Education Strategic Plan, and a June 2018 “To the Administrator Addressed” letter. The Strategic Action Plan mandated that school districts intensify efforts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children residing within the district who are suspected of having a disability. This year, the Special Education Department has experienced more than a 70% increase in the number of requests for initial evaluation when compared to 1 year ago. This increase is anticipated to grow more sharply next year as TEA implements additional public awareness efforts.

The June “To the Administrator Addressed” letter reiterated each school district’s obligation to evaluate dyslexia as part of its Child Find duty. Although the letter did not require any immediate changes, after a series of extended interdepartmental discussions, NEISD has determined that all evaluations addressing dyslexia will henceforth be completed through the special education evaluation process.

As a result of the recent TEA mandates, the following actions will be implemented:

1. **District wide “Initial Evaluation Team”:** We hope to minimize the number of itinerant staff reassignments next year through our plans to create an internal “Initial Evaluation Team.”
   - This team will consist of a combination of part-time and full-time LSSPs assigned to absorb the bulk of the district’s excessive /“overflow” assessments.

2. **Dyslexia Evaluation Team:** A Dyslexia Evaluation Team will be created to address the increased demand for dyslexia evaluations.
   - Diagnosticians will be reorganized into an Itinerant Evaluation Team.
   - This team will be provided additional training and tasked with completing all of the district’s dyslexia evaluations, including those previously assessed by the Instructional Intervention Teachers (IIITs).
   - The team will also work closely with the District’s current dyslexia supports and ARD committees to ensure consistency and collaboration in determining student eligibility and instructional supports.
3. **Change in assignment/allocation:** The manner in which LSSPs/diagnosticians support our campuses will be adjusted for the 2019-2020 school year.
   - At the elementary level; most LSSPs will be assigned 2 campuses
   - At the middle school level: Middle school LSSPs will be assigned half time to a middle school and half time to either (a) a cluster elementary school or (b) the district’s newly formed “Initial Evaluation Team”.
   - High school: No assignment changes are anticipated for high school at this point.

4. **Weekly Structured Consultation:** Currently, assessment personnel typically reserve Fridays for professional development, monitoring activities, consultation with departmental leadership and for report writing. This practice will continue throughout the 2019-2020 school year. With this in mind, please be aware that there may be times when your assigned appraisal staff member may be unavailable on Fridays due to participation in the aforementioned activities.

All of the proposed changes are predicated upon adequate staff and are subject to change. If you have any questions or need additional clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Brian Kelly