



# Annual Report

July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018

# 2017-18 Advisory Council Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Area of Representation</b>
Shannon Taylor, Chair	Parents
Joey Ellis, Vice-Chair	Individuals with Disabilities
Amy Allen	Special Education Administrators
Brian Brown	Parents
Paula Brownyard	Institutions of Higher Learning
Travis Commons	Charter Schools
David Craig	Private Schools
Jennifer Escue	Parents
Gayle Feltner	Other State Agencies
Dawn Fry	Parents
Chantal Hess-Taylor	Parents
Angela Jackson	State & Local Education Officials
Catherine Knowles	Office of the Coordinator of Homeless Children and Youth
Cleatrice McTorry	State Adult Correction Agencies
Mary Meador	Juvenile Corrections Agencies
Stephanie Ortego	Teachers
Patricia Valladares	Organizations Providing Transitional Services
Darlene Walden	Parents

State of Tennessee  
Bill Haslam, Governor beginning January 2011

Tennessee Department of Education  
Candice McQueen, Commissioner beginning January 2015

Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Populations  
Theresa Nicholls, Assistant Commissioner

# Introduction

State and federal guidelines require the Advisory Council for the Education of Student's with Disabilities (Council) provide an annual report to the State Board of Education, the Tennessee Department of Education (department), the governor, and the state legislature. Information included in this report represents the progress made in programs for children with disabilities during fiscal year 2018. It is the Council's intention to work with the department's division of special populations to ensure the provision of appropriate services for children with disabilities throughout the State of Tennessee. This is accomplished through:

- Reporting by the division of special populations to the Council
- Council providing feedback to the division of special populations
- Public input presented to the Council
- Experiences of Council members, who represent consumers

## ***Mission Statement***

The Council's mission is to influence policy that shall ensure student success.

## ***Authority***

The Council was established in 1972 and is required by [T.C.A. § 49-10-105](#). This legislation states that the Council shall advise and consult with the governor, the commissioner of education, the state board of education, and the director of the division of special education.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) § 1412(a) (21), requires states to establish and maintain an advisory panel to provide policy guidance on special education and related services for children with disabilities. The Council's duties include:

- Advising the department of unmet needs in the education of students with disabilities;
- Commenting publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of students with disabilities;
- Advising the department in developing evaluations and reporting data to the U.S. Secretary under Section 618;
- Advising the department in developing corrective actions plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under this part;
- Advising the department in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and
- Advising the department in serving the needs of students with disabilities in adult prisons.

# Part One

C.A. § 49-10-105(e)(4) states that the Council shall provide an annual report to the governor, the general assembly and the state board of education that presents the Council's views of the progress or lack of progress made in special education by the state, its agencies and institutions and its school districts during the preceding year. The Council's goals for the period of July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018 are outlined in this section with a summary of the department's work related to the Council goals.

## **Goal 1**

Promote improved student learning/outcomes, including **promoting inclusive educational services** that meet the needs of all students, regardless of their abilities, and promote a sense of belonging and mutual respect for all students while affirming each student's individuality.

## **Department Work Related to Goal 1**

1. The revision to the special education guidelines and standards was [approved by the State Board](#) of Education and became effective on July 1, 2017. The revisions were made with input from a task force made up of department and district personnel and the Council.
  - a. A [comparison document](#) was created that outlines the revisions. This document was provided through the special education director's update and posted on the department's website ([here](#)).
  - b. Assessment documentation forms were revised for each disability criteria and new guidance was issued on each. The revised forms and new guidance documents can be found on the department's website ([here](#)) under the Disability Evaluations and Eligibility heading. These documents were also issued in the special education director's update.
  - c. The department offered training opportunities for school districts statewide between July and November 2017. Approximately 1000 individuals were trained.
2. The department's 619 preschool focused on promoting inclusion for children 3–5. The work included:
  - a. Development inclusion training for special education supervisors that provided at the special education supervisor's conference in August 2017 and the partners in education conference in February 2018.

## **Goal 2**

Promote expanded access and quality of services for students with disabilities (SWD) to better prepare them for **transition into independent living**, meaningful work or post-secondary education.

### **Department Work Related to Goal 2**

1. Finalized content on Transition Tennessee for Pathways to Education, Pathways to Self-Determination, and Pathways to Community Involvement. Over 3,600 registered users on [www.transitiontn.org](http://www.transitiontn.org).
2. Developed an interagency agreement with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) for the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). Presented on the agreement through the following venues:
  - a. Four webinars held for local school districts and vocational rehabilitation counselors
  - b. In-person training with supervisors of special education study council and vocational rehabilitation counselors
  - c. Presentation with VR at the Partners in Education (PIE) Conference
  - d. Presentation with VR at the Disability Mega-Conference
  - e. Training of the newly hired Pre-Employment Transition Specialist through VR
3. Partnered with the Council on Development Disabilities to bring Jonathan Martinis to the PIE conference as a keynote speaker concerning alternatives to conservatorships, specifically supported decision-making.
4. Held five regional mini-conference sessions on Postsecondary Readiness and the Transition Planning Process.
5. Formed a state transition leadership team to better inform transition practices, develop strategic plans, and ensure the plan is being carried out. A portion of that team attended the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition Capacity Building Institute where annual goals were developed, along with action steps, to improve the implementation of evidenced-based transition practices.
6. Began a monthly collaborative with the department, VR, and TennCare to better streamline transition services through education transition services, VR's pre-ETS, and TennCare's Employment and Community First CHOICES waiver program.
7. Created policy, course requirements, and course codes for the Alternate Academic Diploma.
8. Continued to highlight self-advocate vendors through the PIE Conference.
9. Hired the fourth Work-Based Learning Leadership Council to provide initial WBL certification, recertification, and technical assistance.
10. Continued monthly collaboration with the Employment Roundtable, which now has eleven state agencies who have a focus on employment of people with disabilities. The goal of this group is to better align the service delivery system for citizens in TN with disabilities.
11. Created internship positions for two students who are part of the IDEAL Inclusion Higher Education program at Lipscomb University.

12. Provided content and school district success stories for the 2017 Expect Employment Governor's Report. The Governor was presented this report at Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, where he met with students and toured their Transition School to Work program.
13. Served on the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center Advisory Board and VR's State Rehabilitation Council.

### ***Goal 3***

Promote the use of **ongoing assessments and unique accommodations** that will accurately evaluate SWD, while considering the scope of individual needs encountered.

#### ***Department Work Related to Goal 3***

1. Accessibility and accommodation training was provided to districts statewide through the bi-annual assessment roadshows.
2. The Parent Guide to TNReady Supports for Students with Disabilities was updated and posted on the department's accommodations webpage ([here](#)).
3. The Determining Accommodations for Students with Disabilities quick sheet was updated and posted on the department's accommodations webpage ([here](#)).
4. The test administration manuals specific to the assessment administration were updated to reflect changes to the accessibility features and accommodations due to paper testing.
5. Provided guidance to districts related to a new requirement for alternative assessments per ESSA through the department's Special Education Supervisor newsletter and email.
  - a. All guidance can be found on the department's alternate assessment web page ([here](#)) under the Resources heading.
  - b. Hosted a webinar for districts to review district self-reflection data and eligibility requirements application within IEP meeting determinations.
  - c. Convened the Collaborative for Student Success (i.e., district stakeholder group) to inform future guidance and training regarding the 1% cap.
  - d. The Council provided additional feedback and recommendations based on these findings, suggestions, and plan for support and training.

### ***Goal 4***

Promote increased **quality and quantity of special educators**, general educators, and para professionals serving eligible children and youth with disabilities.

#### ***Department Work Related to Goal 4***

1. All trainings mentioned in this report relate to this goal.
2. Provided the following grants to universities for speech language endorsement and vision endorsement.

University	Endorsement	Fiscal Year 2018 Maximum Liability
East Tennessee State University	Master's Degree in Speech Language Pathology	\$104,587
Tennessee State University	Master's Degree in Speech Language Pathology	\$412,232
Trevecca Nazarene University	Vision, Special Education pre-K-12	\$175,000

3. Created a school psychology intern program with Middle Tennessee State University, University of Memphis, and University of Tennessee Chattanooga. These universities will implement and manage a program that matches school districts with students from their National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) approved Ed.S. School Psychology program to serve as a school psychology intern. The program will allow for up to seven interns per year and each intern must commit to working in a Tennessee school district for a minimum of one year following the internship. The department will work with the universities to prioritize the school districts that will participate in this program and will have final approval of the districts. Interns will be placed in school districts in the 2018-19 school year.

## **Goal 5**

Promote **sufficient funding for special education services** and encourage the equitable distribution and utilization of funds to promote best practices for students with special needs.

### **Department Work Related to Goal 5**

1. School districts received an IDEA allocation for both Part B and Preschool through a formula grant as specified in IDEA. The Part B IDEA funding formula consists of three parts as detailed in in Appendix A.
2. School districts received a supplement for using the state approved skills based universal screeners for progress monitoring. The supplement offsets the cost associated with progress monitoring students with disabilities so that districts are not unnecessarily burdened and those costs can be put back into their special education budget to be used to further other special education activities. The total amount of supplemental funding provided to school districts in the 2017-18 school year was \$907,075.
3. Discretionary funds were made available through a competitive grant application. School districts use these funds to pay for programs that they identify as needed for their school districts. Typically focus on postsecondary transition, improving student performance, increasing graduation, reducing drop out. The total amount of discretionary funding provided to school districts in the 2017-18 school year was \$5,062,664.
4. District selections were made for SPDG 2.0: ACCESS to instruction and intervention. The districts were chosen through a highly competitive application process and will begin activities this June. These districts have committed to increasing ACCESS to core instruction for all students and

providing increasingly intensive interventions at all levels. For a comprehensive list of new districts click [here](#).

## **Goal 6**

Promote improved **use and application of State and local data** related to special education to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

### **Department Work Related to Goal 6**

1. Completed local determinations for the Annual Performance Report (APR) to determine whether or not districts were effectively supporting students with disabilities.
  - a. Completed visits for those districts with highest need to offer technical assistance and professional development opportunities to support educators of students with disabilities.
2. Revised the methodology for calculating significant disproportionality based on feedback from various stakeholders and agencies, including the Council. Background on the significant disproportionality requirement and the process used to determine the new methodology can be found on the department's website ([here](#)).
  - a. Districts received guidance on the new methodology via the department's director's update and special education director's update.
3. Completed a state [systemic improvement plan \(SSIP\)](#) designed to improve assessment results for students with disabilities (particularly students with specific learning disabilities). This plan will take place over 5-6 years.

## **Goal 7**

Promote **enhanced communication** among the community, educators, the state education agency (SEA) and other stakeholders on special education services.

### **Department Work Related to Goal 7**

1. Regular calls with the [Tennessee Association for Administrators in Special Education](#) (TAASE) Board and advocacy groups.
2. Hosted the Partners in Education Conference which focuses on instruction and best practices for all students. Approximately 2500 individuals attended.
3. Bimonthly newsletter was sent via email to special education directors and any other interested party.
4. Hosted special education supervisor's conference open to all district special education supervisors.
5. School psychology newsletter sent via email.
6. Speech language newsletter sent via email.
7. Collaborative for Student Success



- a. The Collaborative for Student Success is a group of parents, special educations supervisors, district administrators, advocacy groups, and Council representatives that advise the department on special education issues.
  - b. Two meetings were held during fiscal year 2017-18 on the topics of significant disproportionality (11/14/2017) and the alternate assessment participation guidance (3/5/18).
  - c. This group provided input regarding the state's new significant disproportionality calculation.
8. Advocacy Listening Sessions with advocacy groups

## **Goal 8**

Encourage implementation of **RTI<sup>2</sup>** to promote **positive behavior support** including planning, collaboration, and development of best practices that create a positive learning environment and successful experiences for students with disabilities.

### **Department Work Related to Goal 8**

1. Trainings on understanding behavior included:
  - A Is for Antecedent
  - C Is for Consequence
  - Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan training
2. Participated in the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) workgroup to align the RTI<sup>2</sup>-B work with all other state initiatives that support students non-academic needs
3. Through the collaboration with the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP) grant contracts, there are currently more than:
  - 372 school teams trained and implementing at a minimum of Tier I
  - 2,725 teachers, administrators, and staff trained in both Tiers I and II
  - 174,596 students currently supported through RTI<sup>2</sup>-B and the TBSPs
4. The 2018 Partners in Education (PIE) pre-conference was designed to introduce and train schools on the MTSS framework for providing comprehensive, cohesive supports for both academic and non-academic student needs
5. Worked in collaboration with the TBSPs to include the MTSS language, graphics, and conceptual framework in the RTI<sup>2</sup>-B training where appropriate.
6. Worked with the TBSPs to develop and begin training school on tier 3 of RTI<sup>2</sup>-B.
7. Began a student specific analysis of students who have the highest reported frequency of restraint and isolation in order to offer targeted student support services to these students/school teams.

## Part Two

The table below provides a snapshot count of students with disabilities ages 3–21+ receiving services as of December 1 of each school year. This data does not contain duplications and since used in a federal report, does not include the state-defined exceptionality categories of intellectually gifted and functionally delayed.

School Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Specific Learning Disability	47,040	48,785	48,115	44,582	41,952
Speech or Language Impairment	33,314	33,183	32,903	33,064	32,578
Other Health Impairment	14,360	15,220	15,472	16,048	16,898
Intellectual Disability (formerly Mental Retardation)	7,519	7,504	7,672	7,945	8,181
Developmental Delay	8,814	9,053	9,407	9,990	10,602
Emotional Disturbance	3,299	3,274	3,214	3,239	3,259
Autism	7,317	8,007	8,652	9,421	10,432
Multiple Disabilities	2,214	2,217	2,232	2,159	2,146
Hearing Impairment	1,496	1,455	1,431	1,347	1,319
Orthopedic/Physical Impairment	737	695	645	644	597
Visual Impairment	688	648	630	590	592
Traumatic Brain Injury	328	337	343	341	366
Deaf-Blindness	11	9	13	16	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127,407</b>	<b>138,387</b>	<b>130,729</b>	<b>129,386</b>	<b>128,936</b>

# Statewide SWD Population Data (as of 12/1/2016)

Ages 3-5



**Total by Grade**

Grade	Student Count
1	14
K	4739
P3	2955
P4	5772
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13480</b>

**Total by Environment**

Environment	Student Count
Attend Regular Early Childhood Program at Least 10 Hrs/Week - Receiving Services in EC Loc.	2939
Attend Regular Early Childhood Program at Least 10 Hrs/Week - Receiving Services in Other Loc.	4086
Attend Regular Early Childhood Program Less than 10 Hrs/Week - Receiving Services in EC Loc.	319
Attend Regular Early Childhood Program Less than 10 Hrs/Week - Receiving Services in Other Loc.	485
Home	54
Separate Class	4500
Separate School	100
Residential Facility	2
Service Provider Location	995
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13480</b>

**Total by Disability**

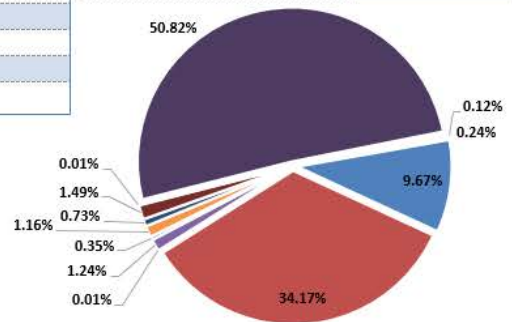
Disability Category	Student Count
Autism	1303
Deaf-Blindness	0
Developmental Delay	4606
Emotional Disturbance	1
Hearing Impairments	167
Intellectual Disability	47
Multiple Disabilities	156
Orthopedic Impairments	99
Other Health Impairments	201
Specific Learning Disabilities	2
Speech/Language Impairments	6850
Traumatic Brain Injury	16
Visual Impairments	32
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13480</b>

**Total by Gender**

Gender	Student Count
F	4221
M	9259
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13480</b>

### Disability %

- AUTISM
- DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY
- EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE
- HEARING IMPAIRMENTS
- INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY
- MULTIPLE DISABILITIES
- ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENTS
- OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS
- SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES
- SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS
- TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
- VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS



# Statewide SWD Population Data (as of 12/1/2016)

Ages 6-21



**Total by Grade**

Grade	Student Count
1	8787
2	8908
3	9673
4	9856
5	10103
6	10088
7	10195
8	9959
9	10325
10	9087
11	8064
12	8001
K	3366
1 – Trans.	8
P4	61
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>115456</b>

**Total by Environment**

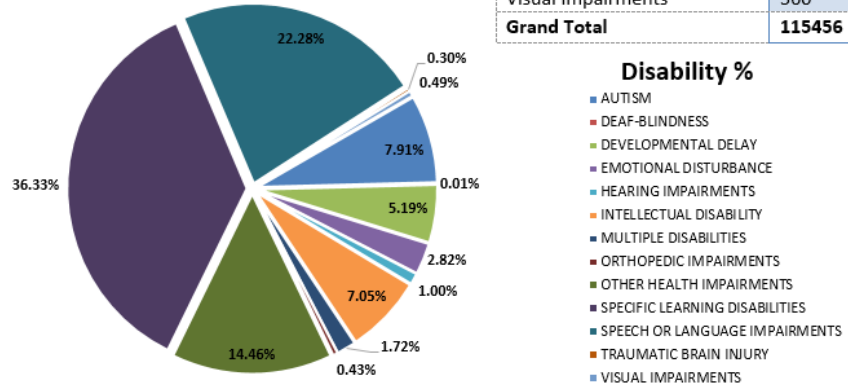
Environment	Student Count
Correctional Facilities	59
Homebound/Hospital	739
Inside reg. class 40%-79% of day	18248
Inside reg. class 80% or more of day	82073
Inside reg. class less than 40% of day	12944
Parentally Placed in Private School	1089
Residential Facility	320
Separate School	1009
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>115456</b>

**Total by Disability**

Disability Category	Student Count
Autism	9129
Deaf-Blindness	14
Developmental Delay	5996
Emotional Disturbance	3258
Hearing Impairments	1152
Intellectual Disability	8134
Multiple Disabilities	1990
Orthopedic Impairments	498
Other Health Impairments	16697
Specific Learning Disabilities	41950
Speech/Language Impairments	25728
Traumatic Brain Injury	350
Visual Impairments	560
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>115456</b>

**Total by Gender**

Gender	Student Count
F	39272
M	77209
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>115456</b>



## Part Three

All agendas and minutes for the fiscal year 2018 Council meetings can be found on the department's website ([here](#)). Meetings were convened on:

- July 10, 2017
- October 23, 2017
- January 23, 2018
- April 16, 2018