



**TCASE**  
LEADING TRANSFORMATION

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### **TCASE RESPONDS TO USDE FINDINGS**

**AUSTIN, TX:** Today, the Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education (TCASE) is responding to a report issued by the United States Department of Education (USDE) regarding the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) monitoring visit which was prompted by reports about the declining identification rate of students receiving special education services in Texas.

The USDE letter to TEA was not unexpected. The question as to whether the 8.5 percent issue was a cap or merely a measurement indicator has long faded from discussion as the focus is and has always been, for our members, to meet the needs of children in Texas.

Governor Abbott's press release quote implying that public school districts exhibited a "dereliction of duty" is offensive and inaccurate.

Texas public schools have been faced with significant budget cuts alongside a soar in student enrollment and higher accountability requirements. Special education administrators are tasked with leading their staff to provide the best possible services with limited resources, limited training, and inconsistent guidance. It is not a dereliction of duty to follow a directive from your state regulatory agency, while at the same time trying to meet the needs of all students.

We appreciate the stated commitment by Education Commissioner Mike Morath to strengthen the support being offered to school districts. More resources and technical assistance have been added, and we hope to see more support in coming months from TEA, the Governor's office and from the state legislature. TEA's special education division has long been understaffed and there has been inadequate technical assistance available for districts.

The Texas Legislature has been passing leaner budgets each year with some of our state's legislators clearly not supporting the constitutional duty to support public education, coupled with more and more requirements. Governor Abbott must realize that he and some members of his Texas legislature exhibited their own dereliction of duty by failing to support ALL children attending public schools in this state.

Governor Abbott said the legislature took action to put an end to the 8.5 percent policy last year. What the legislature did not do is take action to make sure schools are supported through proper resources.

TCASE strives to have a good working relationship with the Texas Education Agency and parent advocacy groups, and we look forward to collaborating with these groups on the next steps.

**About TCASE:** TCASE is a professional organization comprised of nearly 1,000 members throughout the state of Texas who lead special education programs in public and charter schools.

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