

Commission on Special Education Funding

Plano RDSPD: Invited Testimony
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Overview of Plano RDSPD

As Collin County was beginning to experience growth in the 1980's, it was determined that an additional RDSPD was needed to support the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing that lived in Collin County. Plano RDSPD was started in the 1988 - 1989 school year with three teachers to meet the needs of preschool students and itinerant students who received DHH services on their home campuses. Older Collin County students were allowed to continue their services in the Richardson RDSPD. Parent Infant services for birth to three-year-old students and their families were added in the 1989-1990 school year. Each year, the program added a grade level for students served in Plano RDSPD centralized classrooms. Over the next twelve years, the program added RDSPD centralized services for all grade levels.

The original Shared Service Arrangement (SSA) for Plano RDSPD began by serving the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing or deaf blind and residing in a Collin County school district which include Allen ISD, Blue Ridge ISD, Celina ISD, Community ISD, Farmersville ISD, Frisco ISD, Lovejoy ISD, McKinney ISD, Plano ISD, Princeton ISD, Prosper ISD, and Wylie ISD. Later Richardson ISD and Coppell ISD became SSA members.

the general education setting based upon each student's individual needs.
Centralized

Federal and State Grants for RDSPD Funding

Funding for RDSPDs are outlined in Texas Education Code §30.087,

“(a) The cost of educating students who are deaf or hard of hearing shall be borne by the state and paid from the foundation school fund, but independent school districts and institutions of higher education in the state may and are encouraged to make available property or services in cooperation with the regional day school programs for the deaf for any activities related to the education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, including research, personnel training, and staff development.

(b) From the amount appropriated for regional day school programs, the commissioner shall allocate funds to each program based on the number of weighted full-time equivalent students served. The commissioner may consider local resources available in allocating funds under this subsection.

(c) A school district may receive an allotment for transportation of students participating in a regional day school program, determined in the same manner as an allotment for the transportation of other special education students.”

The following federal and state grants support the Plano RDSP budget:

State Deaf - 435

IDEA-C Early Childhood Intervention - 340

IDEA-B Discretionary Deaf - 315

Plano RDSPD Grant Funding Overtime

Itinerant Students and Parent/Infant Students:

1. Compute Individual Student Teacher Time per Week

$DMS + IMS + TMS = \text{Total Teacher Minutes per Student}$

2. Add All Teacher Minutes per Students Together =

Grand Total Teacher Minutes

3. ISTM

$GTTM = \text{Percent of Time Charged per Student}$

Centralized Students:

TNSC

$TNDTC = \text{Percent of Teacher Time per Student}$

TNSC

$TNPC = \text{Percent of Para Time per Student}$

TNSCAC

$TNCPPC = \text{Percent of Communication Provider Time}$

Add Percentages Together for Percent of Time Charged per Student

$PTT + PPT + PCAT = \text{Percent of Staff Time per Student}$

District Billing:

1. By District: Add All Students' Percentages together to get a

Total Percent by District.

2. Add Together All the Total Percent by District to get the Grand Total

for all Districts.

3. GTD

Funding Needs = Billing Factor to be Charged to the

Districts using Total Percent by District.

2021 – 2022 RDSPD Percentage of Contribution to the Plano RDSPD Budget

All Grant Money	Allen ISD	Anna ISD	Community ISD
Farmersville ISD	Frisco ISD	Lovejoy ISD	McKinney ISD
Melissa ISD	Plano ISD	Princeton ISD	Prosper ISD
Richardson ISD	Wylie ISD		

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Excludes PISD SPED Direct Services

Using the weighted formula to determine charges to each district, the costs are passed on based on the weighted student time for each member district. The number of students is not necessarily a determining factor in a districts total bill as illustrated in the chart.

2021 – 2022 Percentage of Shortfall Paid by Each Member District

District			
Allen ISD			
Anna ISD			
Community ISD			
Farmersville ISD			
Frisco ISD			
Lovejoy ISD			
McKinney ISD			

Typically, students who attend the centralized programming are more expensive than the students served in the home or itinerantly on their home school campus. The reason for the higher cost is the amount of direct services required and the additional needs by some students for services to provide communication access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider reviewing special education funding models to determine if there is a more cost effective model for funding services for RDSPD services .

The current RDSPD funding model is a census-based funding model. The model does not take into consideration the level and type of service required by individual students to make progress in the general education curriculum and to meet their needs for communication access. Some students served in the RDSPD require a high level of service provided by certified teachers of the deaf, certified interpreters, CART providers, deaf blind interveners, and/or paraprofessionals. Other students may be successful on their home school campus with only weekly services from an itinerant teacher of the deaf. The current model does not take into account the service needs of students.

Consider an increase in the state budget's funding for RDSPD programming.

State and federal grant funding for RDSPDs has remained consistent for over the last ten years. During this same time period, the staff costs for providing services has increased. The increased costs for providing services through the RDSPD have increased RDSPD shortfalls and thus increased the tuition billed to member districts. The Texas legislature created RDSPDs to help LEAs provide services and supports to their students who are deaf or hard of hearing. As the costs continue to rise, LEAs are questioning their costs to the RDSPD. For smaller districts with high growth rates, the RDSPD tuition bill can cause financial hardship for those districts.

Consider a review of all RDSPD SSA local contribution formulas and possibly develop a standard set of rules and a formula for calculating member LEAs' local contributions to make RDSPD billing standard across the state .

To provide more equity for all member LEAs statewide, it may be beneficial for the state legislature to develop one standard formula for the calculation of member contributions. There is a wide variety of calculations employed by various RDSPDs to figure the amounts of member contributions. Some fiscal agents pay tuition to support their students served in the RDSPD and others do not pay any tuition because of the services they provide as the fiscal agent. Since Plano RDSPD began charging tuition, Plano ISD has paid their share of the tuition based on the service Plano ISD students received. Plano ISD has the largest tuition bill each year.

Consider an increase of funding in the state budget for early childhood intervention services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind.

Early services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind are essential for language acquisition. RDSPDs provide services in conjunction with Early Childhood

Intervention to provide services to the child and the family in the home. It is through these important early services, that parents learn the skills to help their children develop language, communication, sign language, speech, listening skills, and more. The funding to provide these services is inadequate.

Consider the creation of a similar grant for LEA run RDSPDs as the grants that support ESC as the fiscal agent.

Plano RDSPD is directly responsible for providing financial, instructional, and professional leadership for the Plano RDSPD. The ADA money generated for the Plano ISD students enrolled in Plano ISD does not go to the RDSPD. Plano ISD used the ADA funding to offset the district assumed costs of the RDSPD students.

To effectively run the Plano RDSPD requires the employment of a program coordinator, team leaders, and a secretary. These staff members, contracted services, instructional supplies, assistive technologies for students, and professional learning for are funded by our three state and federal grants based on student numbers and LEA contributions.

References

Texas Education Agency. (2020). *Regional day school programs for the deaf (RDSPDs) and shared service arrangement (SSA) procedures*.
<https://tea.texas.gov/media/document/278086>