

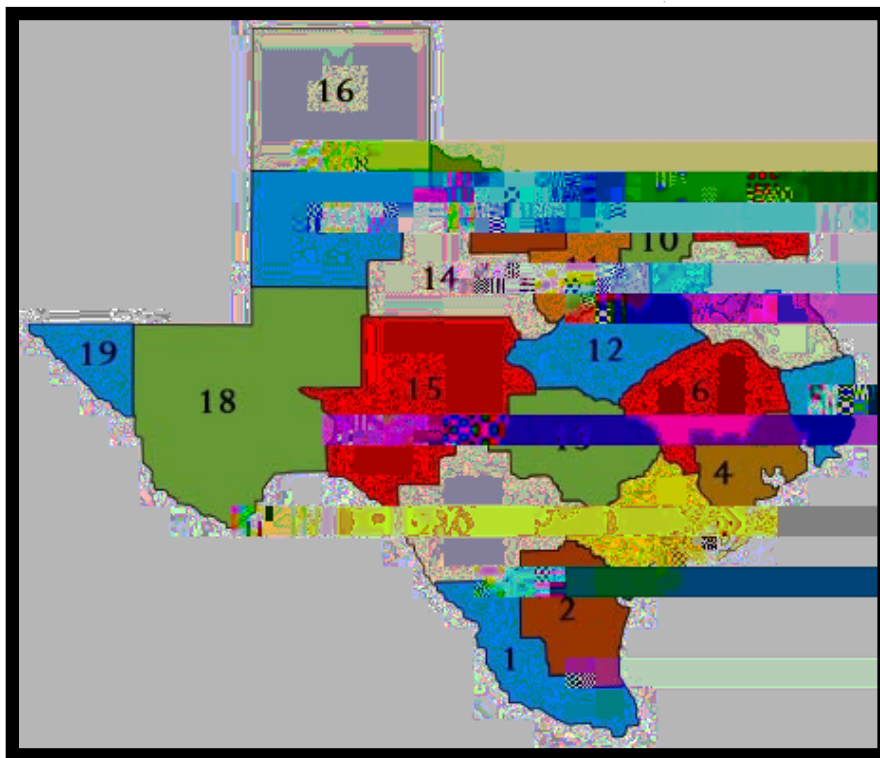




Role of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and  
the Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) Regarding

Region 4 Education Service Center (Region 4) is one of 20 regional education service centers (ESCs) established by the Texas Legislature in 1967 to assist school districts and charter schools in improving efficiencies and student performance. Region 4 serves a seven-county area comprised of 47 public school districts and 40 open-enrollment charter schools, representing more than 1.2 million students, 105,000 educators, and 1,500 campuses.

Regional education service centers are non-regulatory, intermediate education units. Texas Education Code, Chapter 8, gives schools the opportunity to voluntarily be served by and participate with a regional education service center. Figure 1.0 illustrates the boundary map of the 20 ESCs.



The purpose of regional education service centers as established by the Texas Legislature is to

- assist school districts in improving student performance,
- enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and
- implement initiatives as assigned by the Texas Legislature or Commissioner of Education.



The Region 4 RDSPD

\*Note. Years highlighted in figure are not consecutive. Due to the pandemic, student enrollment declined in the 2021–2022 school year with only 370 students reported.

There are three ways an LEA can access services from the Region 4 RDSPD, as shown in Figure 4 above. Each option is further defined I 9.5 (ear...o8-0.003 Tc 0.003 Tw DC 0 -1.15 T  
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who works with parents, infants, and toddlers is referred to as a deaf education parent advisor.

An Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is coordinated by the ECI agency. A certified teacher of the deaf must participate at the child's initial and annual IFSP meetings. The teacher also must participate in the IFSP meetings if there will be discussion related to deaf education. The parent advisor provides updates regarding the child's progress and participates in goal setting for the child and family. Services are recommended based on the following six items:

1. Discussions with the family about evaluation and assessment results
2. Parent interviews
3. Information from other sources (e.g., child care providers and medical professionals)
4. Child and family needs
5. Child's participation in family and community activities
6. Family routines and interests

Beyond participating in the annual IFSP meetings, the parent advisor also provides in-home instruction and support for families and their children. Additional support can take the form of ongoing assessment and transition assistance from the home to the school. Parent advisors are unbiased in their approach as they provide families with information regarding all available programs and supports, including communication modalities, for their child with hearing loss.

Currently, the Region 4 RDSPD has three parent advisors employed by Houston and Deer Park ISDs who support families across Houston, Pasadena, and Deer Park ISDs. Beginning July 1, two additional parent advisors will begin serving families in Klein ISD. The program collaborates with four Early Childhood Intervention agencies in the greater Houston





State Deaf funds are attained through student attendance for all students who are eligible for special education services as students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH), served by a RDSPD teacher for a minimum of 45 minutes one time per week, and are full-





Region 4 ESC has historically applied the ESC as Fiscal Agent grant as a way to reduce the per pupil tuition for students, thereby reducing the local contributions of its member LEAs.

Member LEA local contributions vary from year to year depending on several factors, including

- total comprehensive program budget,
- total federal and state grant funding received,
- total shortfall amount (i.e., total member LEA local contributions required),
- total Region 4 RDSPD student enrollment,
- annual per-pupil tuition amount, and
- total member LEA Region 4 RDSPD student enrollment.

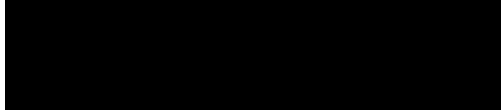
For smaller member LEAs, especially charter schools, RDSPD local contributions can create a significant financial obligation. Table 3 shows a five-year comparison of federal and state funding received as compared to local contributions made for the Region 4 RDSPD budget.

	\$7,256,508	\$2,630,727	\$4,625,781	345	\$13,408
	\$7,993,122	\$2,663,620	\$5,329,502	334	\$15,957
	\$8,758,554	\$2,726,085	\$6,032,469	396	\$15,234
	\$8,611,640	\$2,898,903	\$5,712,737	387	\$14,762
	\$9,575,568	\$2,928,325	\$6,647,243	412	\$16,134

Note. Region 4 Education Service Center. (2022). *Region 4 RDSPD comprehensive budgets, FY19-FY23*. Houston: Region 4 Education Service Center.



Member LEAs utilize federal, state, and local funding sources to support all student programming. On average, member LEAs must contribute additional funds to the Region 4 RDSPD to address the 70% budget shortfall for the program. Table 4 shows the 2020–2021 funding source percentages for the Region 4 RDSPD’s five member LEAs. While four member LEAs have flexibility in determining how to pay for their Region 4 RDSPD local contribution, Bloom Academy Charter School’s local contribution to the Region 4 RDSPD must come from state grant funding.







Texas Education Agency. (2020). *Regional day school programs for the deaf (RDSPDs) and shared service arrangement (SSA) procedures*. Retrieved on June 14, 2022 from <https://tea.texas.gov/media/document/278086>

Texas Education Agency. (2021). *Student attendance accounting handbook*. Retrieved on June 13, 2022 from <https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/financial-compliance/student-attendance-accounting-handbook>

Texas Education Code §30.081-30.087

Texas Legislative Budget Board. (2014–2021). *State budget by program*. Retrieved on June 13, 2022 from <http://sbp.lbb.state.tx.us/>