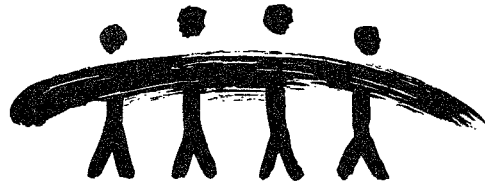




SB 451
March 12, 2009

- ◆ Good Morning, I am Rona Statman, Director of Family Support Services for The Arc of Texas, a statewide non - profit organization that advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be fully included in their communities
- ◆ All children with disabilities have the right to receive a free appropriate public education including the provision of special education and related services that will prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. They have the right to receive an education in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supplementary aids and services, to progress in the general education curriculum, and to receive scientific research based instruction from highly qualified teachers.
- ◆ Federal IDEA law requires School districts to ensure teachers receive staff development and training on scientific research based practices to ensure the success of their students.
- ◆ The majority of the over 450,000 students with disabilities spend all or most of their school day in general education classes; As more students with disabilities are served in the regular education classroom we must address the need to provide training for regular education teachers to prepare them to provide appropriate instruction and support to all of their students.
- ◆ Teachers of students with disabilities need ongoing training, technical assistance and mentoring to implement scientific research based instructional strategies, positive behavior intervention strategies and modifying the general education curriculum to help students with disabilities be successful in general education classrooms
- ◆ Most regular education teachers have received little or no training in teaching students with disabilities in their undergraduate courses.
- ◆ The number of special education students in general education classes continues to increase because of requirements of NCLB, such as access to Highly Qualified Teachers and requirements to take the same assessments as other students;
- ◆ Parents of students with disabilities consistently identify lack of training for general education teachers in how to modify the curriculum, differentiate instruction and implement positive behavior supports as the biggest impediment to the successful education of their children;



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- ◆ Most regular education teachers do not or cannot use their regular staff development days to receive training on how to instruct students with disabilities. These days are typically used for content areas such as Math and Reading. The training provided under this bill could and should be specific to a Math teacher who teaches students with disabilities on how to modify the math curriculum and differentiate instruction.
- ◆ SB 451 will allow the ARD committee to identify the need for teacher training in these and other areas based on the student's IEP. If the ARD committee does not know who the specific teacher will be they can identify the specific type of teacher and the training needed. For example they can say the student's math teacher must have training in how to modify the curriculum and differentiate the instruction. Or the ARD committee can say that all of the student's teachers need training to implement positive behavior supports. This training will take place using the designated regular staff development time allotted. The bill also allows the ARD committee to say all our Math teachers received training on this last year, or the student's Math teacher has received this training already and it is not needed again this year. The most important thing is for the ARD committee to have the discussion about the need for training, to identify the needs and to ensure the appropriate training is provided.
- ◆ Teachers who receive this training will be better teachers for all of the students in their classroom. The skills they learn to help students with disabilities be successful learners will translate to other students in their class who may need additional supports and differentiated instruction. This is just good educational practice.