Sunday, Feb. 17
2:00 – 7:00 pm  Registration & Check-In

Monday, Feb. 18
Pre-conference
7:30 – 8:30 am  Breakfast with Exhibitors
8:30 - 11:30 am  Pre-Conference Sessions (advance registration required)

Session One: SSA Leaders Forum

Join your SSA colleagues from around the state to share best practice and learn new strategies for navigating the unique waters of an SSA.

Session Two: Interventions: Evidence-Based Behavioral Strategies for Individual Students (Tom Stacho, Safe & Civil Schools)

During this session, attendees will plan and implement validated, tiered strategies to increase motivation and improve behavior. Topics covered will include how to develop a culture of data-driven decision making for behavioral interventions, how to implement evidence-based support procedures for students with targeted intensive needs, fostering student success in least restrictive settings and more.

Session Three: Federal Grant Training with TEA (TEA Department of Contracts, Grants and Financial Administration)

TEA staff will provide training and updates specifically for special education leaders on federal grants administration, compliance, monitoring, and EDGAR.

Main Conference
1:00 – 2:30 pm

Welcome/Keynote Session
Practical Stress Reduction, Techniques, Self-Care, Work/Life Balance (Dr. Kathy Gruver)

It’s estimated that stress is responsible for 60-90% of doctor’s visits and, one million workers miss work each day because of stress, costing companies $602 per employee per year, according the American Institute of Stress.
It is imperative that we recognize that stress is not the problem - it's our reaction to our stress and we can learn to control it. During this session, participants will learn cutting edge self-care techniques for better health. This session will examine the definition of stress, recognizing its impact on health, indicators of stress, stress reduction techniques and more.

2:30 – 3:00 pm  
Break with Exhibitors

3:00 – 4:00 pm  
Thought Leader Sessions

Thought Leader Session #1:  
Communication for Conflict Resolution (Dr. Kathy Gruver)

Efficient and effective communication is so much more than just "listening" and repeating back what you think the person just said. It's about being present and fully in the moment, it's about taking a pause to choose whether you respond or react. It's about understanding the lenses through which other people are viewing the world and themselves, and adapting to that lens. It's about having the flexibility to adjust your communication to match that of whom you are speaking to, and it's about not being hesitant to ask questions, clarify, and dig deeper on an issue. Many people feel like they aren't being heard, but in reality, aren't clearly communicating anything to hear. Dr. Gruver's background consulting with individual clients, psychology and hypnotherapy training, presence and mindfulness study, and learning different communication exercises and styles combine to create a comprehensive and practical program to help you get your message to those who need to hear it.

Thought Leader Session #2:  
Balance is Bull$#%$: Defining Priorities to Find Peace of Mind (Anne Grady)

There is no shortage of stress in our lives, and the list of priorities we have to juggle isn't getting any shorter. In a time when every priority claims itself as the most urgent, and there always seems to be more to do than time to do it, maintaining focus on your top priorities can be difficult. While there is no magic formula for success, there are tools, skills and strategies that can take your personal and professional performance to the next level. Get ready for a fun, engaging, relevant discussion and learn specific and practical strategies to effectively prioritize the competing goals in your life, manage stress and work smarter, not harder.

Thought Leader Session #3:  
The Tough Kid – Support for Students in General Ed. Settings (Tom Stacho, Safe & Civil Schools)

This session is designed to provide ready-to-use, classroom-tested materials to help motivate and manage even the toughest-to-teach students. During this session, participants will learn about Mystery Motivators, the application of home
notes, student self-monitoring of behavior, data-driven tracking procedures, reinforcing systems and classroom interventions and more.

4:00 – 4:30 pm Break with Exhibitors

4:30 - 5:30 pm **Repeat of Thought Leader Sessions**

5:30 – 6:30 pm Afternoon Reception

**Tuesday, Feb. 19**

**Main Conference**

7:30 - 8:30 am Breakfast with Exhibitors

8:30 – 10 am **General Session: Federal and State Initiatives to Improve Special Education**

This session will highlight the intersection between the federal and state initiatives to improve special education, what is going on, how they are developing, and what that will mean for Texas.

10 – 10:45 am Break with Exhibitors

10:45 – Noon Learning Labs

12:15 – 2:45 pm **New & Aspiring Directors Session and Lunch (advance registration required)**

Join other new and aspiring directors for an extended Learning Lab session with lunch included, where you can build a trusted network and talk about issues and challenges facing new directors. Veterans in the field will join in to provide insight and to make your job easier.

This session is designed for individuals who have been a director for three years or less or those who are interested in becoming a director.

12 – 1:30 pm Lunch on your own

1:30 – 2:45 pm Learning Labs

2:45 – 3:15 pm Break

3:15 – 4:30 pm Learning Labs

4:30 pm Adjourn for the day

**Wednesday, Feb. 20**

**Main Conference**
8:30 – 9:00 am  Continental Breakfast

9:00 – 10:15 am  **General Session: TEA State of the State** (Dr. Justin Porter)

*Listen in as agency representatives discuss the state of special education in Texas.*

10:15 – 10:30 am  Break

10:30 – 11:45 am  **General Session: Crowd-Sourced Session: What’s the Buzz??**

*Some of the best conference experiences allow you to delve into issues that are relevant to you NOW. Back by popular demand, this session is designed by you, for you.*

*As the event draws near, convention attendees will have an opportunity to weigh in on the hottest issues impacting special education. Then, a team of your peers will analyze the data and design a session addressing what’s hot. The session will continue to be fine-tuned through various methods of gathering feedback throughout the Great Ideas Convention. Your feedback will tell us the topic(s) of the session, who should address the audience and what questions might be asked during the session.*