

2026 School Improvement Identification: Former Special Education Student Group Overview

What is the definition of a former special education student for purposes of 2026 School Improvement (SI) identification?

In accordance with TEC §39.053(e), a student is identified as formerly receiving special education services if, in the preceding year, they were reported in TSDS PEIMS as receiving special instruction and related developmental, corrective, supportive, or evaluative services, but in the current year, as reported through TSDS PEIMS for Graduation or CCMR, and TIDE for STAAR indicators, are no longer participating in a special education program. The definition was clarified to ensure consistent identification of students immediately after exiting special education, align with statute, and improve stability and comparability of results across years.

What has changed about the former special education definition?

Prior to 2026, within SI identification frameworks, former special education was defined as students formerly receiving special education services if, in any of the preceding **three years**, as reported in TSDS PEIMS, they were receiving special instruction and related developmental, corrective, supportive, or evaluative services, but who were no longer participating in a special education program. This has changed to reporting as receiving services **one** year prior. This change was made in response to public comment on the proposed 2026 Accountability System Manual and was incorporated into Chapter 10 of the adopted manual.

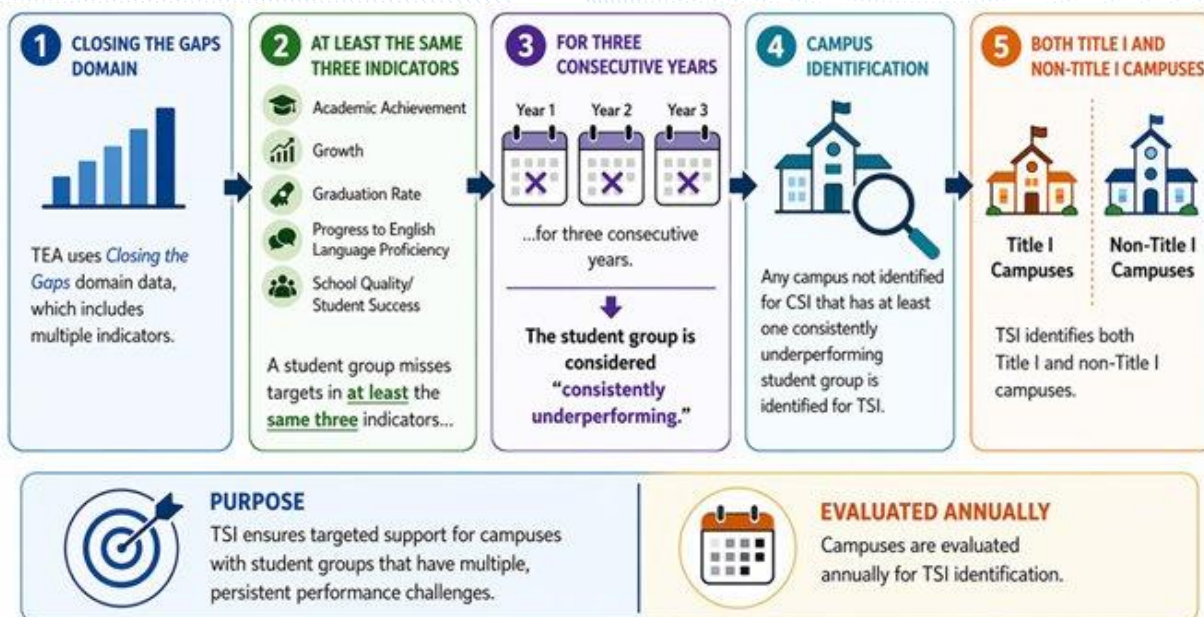
Where is former special education reflected in accountability?

As outlined in [Chapter 4: Closing the Gaps Domain](#) of the *2026 Accountability System Manual*, former special education is a student group evaluated but **is not a student group included in Closing the Gaps domain ratings and does not impact state A-F calculations or results.**

For U.S. Department of Education (USDE) accountability, Texas has identified the former special education group in the state's Every Student Success Act (ESSA) consolidated state plan as one of the student groups to be evaluated for federal school improvement identifications as of 2023. Specifically, Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) identification is based on identifying any campus with one or more consistently underperforming groups of students. ESSA defines "consistently underperforming" as a student group that does not meet interim targets or show expected growth towards the next interim target for three consecutive years. If a campus has a former special education student group that misses the targets in the same three indicators, for three consecutive years, it is considered "consistently underperforming" and the campus is identified for Targeted Support and Improvement. Additional details are provided in [Chapter 10:](#)

Identification of Schools for Improvement of the 2026 Accountability System Manual. Data from 2024, 2025, and 2026 will determine TSI identification for 2026 accountability.

Targeted Support and Improvement Identification



A campus is identified as Additional Targeted Support (ATS) if the campus meets the identification for TSI by having at least one consistently underperforming student group and the Closing the Gaps score for at least one consistently underperforming student group is lower than the score used to identify the lowest performing five percent of each school type (the same cut point used to identify CSI).

Additional Targeted Support Identification (ATS)



ATS identification is based on a subset of TSI-identified campuses.
ATS identifies both Title I and non-Title I campuses.

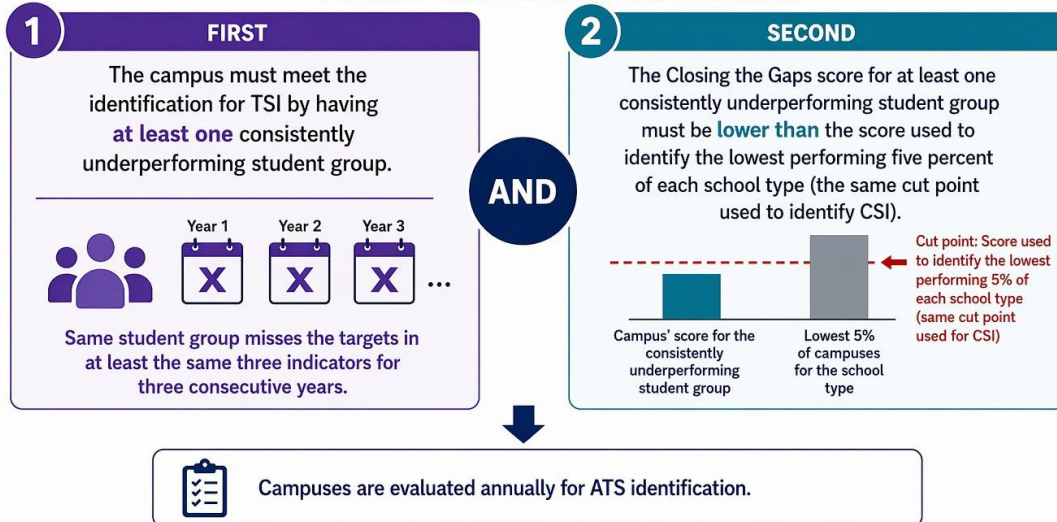


Title I



Non-Title I

Any TSI-identified campus has its identification escalated to ATS
if it meets **both** ATS identification criteria.



Additionally, in Results Driven Accountability (RDA), students who formerly received special education services are reflected in SPED Domain 1, Indicator #2, which measures the percent of students formerly served in special education who met the minimum level of satisfactory performance or higher on the STAAR 3-8 assessments. This indicator is unchanged for 2026, as it uses this definition of former special education, where students are reported as receiving services one year prior. Additional details on RDA can be found in [Chapter 12: Results Driven Accountability \(RDA\)](#) of the *2026 Accountability System Manual*.

Where are former special education data reported?

Within [Accountability Reports](#), data are reported for the former special education group under the Closing the Gaps menu:



Closing the Gaps Report:

As the former special education group is not evaluated in the Closing the Gaps domain calculations in state A-F accountability, the data are reported in the **Data Table:**

Additional Groups within the Closing the Gaps reports as **Special Ed (Former):**

Texas Education Agency

Division of Performance Reporting

tea.texas.gov

TXschools.gov | texasassessment.gov

TEA

2025 ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

Overview

Student Achievement

School Progress

Closing the Gaps

Distinction Summary

Distinction Indicators

Closing the Gaps

Identification of Schools for Improvement

Data Table: Additional Groups

Additional Groups													
All Students	Econ Disadv	Non Econ Disadv	G/T	EB/EL (Current)	EB/EL (Current & Monitored)*	Special Ed (Current)	Special Ed (Former)	Continuously Enrolled	Non Continuously Enrolled	Highly Mobile*	Foster	Homeless	Migrant

Identification of Schools for Improvement Report:

Additionally, as the former special education group is used in the identification of schools for TSI, progress for the past three years is reported within the Identification of Schools for Improvement report as **Special Ed (Former)**:

2025 Identification of Schools for Improvement

[2019](#) | [2020](#) | [2021](#) | [2022](#) | [2023](#) | [2024](#) | [2025](#)

This campus is identified for targeted support and improvement.

	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Econ Disadv	EB/EL (Current & Monitored)*	Special Ed (Current)	Special Ed (Former)	Continuously Enrolled
Count of Indicators Missed for Three Consecutive Years*												
A student group that misses the targets in at least the same three indicators, for three consecutive years, is identified for targeted support and improvement.												
	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	3	2
Academic Achievement Status: Reading/Language Arts (RLA)												
2023	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
2024	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
2025	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	2
Academic Achievement Status: Mathematics												
2023	-	2	0	-	-	-	-	1	0	1	0	1
2024	-	0	2	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
2025	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	1	0
Academic Growth Status: RLA												
2023	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	-	0	-	0
2024	-	0	3	-	-	-	-	0	0	2	-	0
2025	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	0	3	3
Academic Growth Status: Mathematics												
2023	-	3	0	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	0
2024	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	0
2025	-	2	3	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	0	2
Student Success (Student Achievement Domain Score (STAAR Component Only))												
2023	0	0	0	-	-	-	2	0	0	0	0	0
2024	-	0	0	-	-	-	0	0	2	0	0	0
2025	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	1	0	0	0	1
Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (EB/EL Current)												
2023									0			
2024									4			
2025									0			

TEA

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Identification of Schools for Improvement

How are prior year former special education scores used in SI identification?

The performance of former special education students is evaluated for the following Domain 3 components:

- Academic Achievement Status in RLA and Math
- Academic Growth in RLA and Math if no Federal Graduation Rate
- Student Success or School Quality

Student groups earn 0–4 points for each indicator, which demonstrates the extent to which the student group is meeting or making progress towards the student group targets approved by the USDE in the Texas ESSA State Plan and included in [Chapter 4: Closing the Gaps Domain](#) of the *2026 Accountability System Manual*. Long-term, next interim, and interim targets for the former special education group were approved in 2023 and calculated from 2022-23 baseline data. Targets are unchanged with the updated methodology.

The 0-4 gradated scoring methodology is defined as follows:

Points	Definition
4	Met long-term target (2037-38 target)
3	Met interim target (target through 2026-27)
2	Did not meet interim target but showed expected growth toward next interim target (target through 2031-32)
1	Did not meet interim target but showed minimal growth
0	Did not meet interim target and did not show minimal growth

To calculate 1 point, *Did not meet interim target but showed minimal growth*, or 2 points, *Did not meet interim target but showed expected growth toward next interim target*, the group's prior year's result is needed. If a student group is consistently underperforming, meaning over a three year period has not demonstrated expected growth (2 points) or met the interim target (3 points), the student group will be identified for TSI. For 2026 SI identification, 2025 results will be used to determine if expected progress has been made.

As 2026 represents a shift from former special education defined as three years after SPED exit to one year after SPED exit, **2025 data will be recalculated for the former special education group, aligned to the 2026 definition, to provide an accurate and fair growth score.**

Will data be updated to reflect the revised definition of former special education?

2025 Accountability Reports will not be updated. Both Closing the Gaps and Identification of Schools for Improvement reports accurately display results for this student group, as it was defined for 2025.

In 2026 Accountability Reports for Closing the Gaps, campuses may see a change in the reported prior year (2025) data, given the change to student group definition.

For example:

At this school, 77% of former special education students, or those that exited up to three years prior to 2025, demonstrated Meets Grade Level Standard or Above on the 2025 STAAR RLA exam.

	Additional Groups							
	All Students	Econ Disadv	Non Econ Disadv	G/T	EB/EL (Current)	EB/EL (Current & Monitored)+	Special Ed (Current)	Special Ed (Former)
Academic Achievement Status								
Reading/Language Arts (RLA) 2025 Target	46%	35%	n/a	n/a	n/a	37%	26%	38%
RLA Next Interim Target (2027-28 through 2031-32)	55%	46%	n/a	n/a	n/a	48%	38%	48%
RLA Long Term Target (2037-38)	73%	68%	n/a	n/a	n/a	69%	63%	69%
2025 % at Meets GL Standard or Above	74%	47%	75%	100%	45%	63%	37%	77%
2025 # at Meets GL Standard or Above	294	7	287	27	10	20	32	17
2025 Total Tests (Adjusted)	399	15	384	27	22	32	86	22
2024 % at Meets GL Standard or Above	73%	36%	74%		43%	53%	33%	68%

Prior to 2026 ratings release, this data will be recalculated with the revised student group definition. It is possible with the change in student group definition, that percentage could change from what was reported in 2025.

If, with the revised calculation, the percent at Meets GL Standard or Above changed to 68%, the 2026 reports would display the prior year data with the 2026 methodology applied. In this case, the bottom row of the Academic Achievement Status section for RLA would include 68% for 2025 % at Meets GL Standard or Above for the Special Ed (Former) group. This data would not match what is reported on 2025 reports, but would provide an accurate 2025 to 2026 comparison, and accurately portray the data used to calculate prior to current year growth.

Identification of Schools for Improvement reports from 2025 would not be changed. In the example above, this school received a “4” for the former special education student group in 2025 for Academic Achievement Status in RLA, as the 2025 calculated score (77%) was above the Long-term target (69%).

	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Econ Disadv	EB/EL (Current & Monitored) ⁺	Special Ed (Current)	Special Ed (Former)
Count of Indicators Missed for Three Consecutive Years*											
A student group that misses the targets in at least the same three indicators, for three consecutive years, is identified for targeted support and im											
	-	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	0
Academic Achievement Status: Reading/Language Arts (RLA)											
2023	-	3	3	-	4	-	4	3	3	3	3
2024	-	4	3	-	4	-	3	3	3	3	3
2025	-	4	3	-	4	-	4	3	3	3	4

The hypothetical recalculated 2025 score of 68% would al not be reported nor used in SI identifications. Rather, 2026 results will be calculated based on growth from the recalculated 2025 result of 68%.

Next Steps

- District and campus leaders are encouraged to use the recalculated 2025 results, which will be reported on the 2026 Closing the Gaps results for 2026 data internalization and for 2026-27 strategic planning.

Was this resource helpful? Share your feedback