

RESULTS DRIVEN ACCOUNTABILITY (RDA) SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPED)



Updated for the 2025-26 School Year

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Introduction

The Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework is a data-driven system developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the performance of local educational agencies (LEAs) across key domains. These domains include academic achievement, post-secondary readiness, and disproportionate analysis.

Each year, TEA assigns LEA determination levels based on performance across a set of indicators in each domain. Determination levels (DL) are used to identify areas for improvement and guide LEAs in developing strategic support plans (SSP). In response, LEAs engage in activities aligned with their determination level to strengthen instructional practices, enhance program implementation, and improve student outcomes through continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making.

Aligned with TEA's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, the RDA framework transforms general supervision from a compliance-focused model into a results-based system. This shift enables coordinated and aligned support activities that are responsive to LEA performance data. For detailed information on the specific indicators within each RDA domain, please refer to the TEA Results Driven Accountability (RDA) web page.

RDA Determination Levels

Strategic Support Plan (SSP) and Continuous Improvement

The SSP is an annual continuous improvement tool designed to assist LEAs in identifying and prioritizing areas for improvement to enhance outcomes for students with disabilities. The SSP addresses performance gaps across all programs evaluated within the RDA framework by helping LEAs analyze root causes contributing to low performance in RDA indicators.

While all LEAs are encouraged to engage in continuous improvement regardless of their RDA determination level, submission of an SSP may be required based on determination level. Through this process, LEAs are supported in implementing targeted strategies that promote data-driven decision-making and sustained improvement.

RDA Framework Determination Levels

TEA analyzes data from the RDA indicators to address LEA performance on student outcomes and compliance with federally required elements (FRE) to guide supervision and support for each LEA. Each LEA is assigned an annual determination level (DL), which is then aligned with specific support activities. The DL is calculated based on an overall analysis of indicator and FRE performance levels (PL). LEAs are expected to address the needs associated with their assigned DL of 1, 2, 3, or 4 targeting the individual data indicators that contribute to the overarching DL.

- **Meets Requirements (DL1):** LEAs with this rating generally demonstrate successful self-monitoring, high levels of compliance with state and federal regulations, positive outcomes for students, and effective use of professional development resources. LEAs who meet RDA requirements have access to universal support to engage in an ongoing continuous improvement process related to all program areas within RDA (BE/ ESL/EB, OSP, and SPED). LEAs who obtain DL 1 and meet requirements retain the SSP outlining the LEA's plan for continuous improvement at the local level.
- **Needs Assistance (DL2):** LEAs who obtain this rating have one or more areas of moderate need as demonstrated through RDA indicators and will retain the SSP at the local level. The SSP will outline the LEA's plan for continuous improvement utilizing universal supports and may include engagement with educational service center (ESC) liaisons in activities and interventions to address improvement efforts.
- **Needs Intervention (DL3):** LEAs with a DL 3 rating have one or more areas of intense or moderate need as demonstrated through the RDA framework. Areas of improvement are identified through the RDA indicators, which highlight the need for universal and targeted support. LEAs will outline activities and interventions to address these improvement efforts in an SSP, developed with guidance from the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team and ESC liaisons. After identifying areas of strength and need, LEAs with a DL 3 rating will develop an SSP that prioritizes continuous improvement efforts and submit the plan to TEA using the ASCEND application in TEAL. The LEA and the ESC Liaisons will participate in an initial, midpoint and end-of-year conference with the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team. LEAs will engage with ESC Liaisons in monthly work sessions to identify and implement SSP-related activities. The LEA will receive assistance from the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team and the ESC liaisons regarding targeted supports designed to address prioritized areas of need.
- **Needs Substantial Intervention (DL4):** LEAs who obtain a DL 4 rating have one or more areas of intensive need demonstrated through the RDA framework. Areas of improvement are identified through RDA indicators, which highlight the need for universal and targeted support. LEAs with a DL 4 rating will outline activities and interventions to address these improvement efforts in an SSP, developed with support from the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team and ESC liaisons. After identifying areas of strength and need, LEAs with a DL 4 rating will develop an SSP that prioritizes continuous improvement efforts. LEAs will submit the plan to TEA using the ASCEND application in TEAL. The LEA and the ESC Liaisons will participate in an initial, midpoint and end-of-year conference with the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team. In addition, the LEA will participate in monthly progress check-ins with the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team and the ESC liaisons. LEAs with a DL 4 will participate in monthly work sessions facilitated by ESC Liaisons targeting root cause, data review, identification and implementation of professional development and directed technical assistance. The LEA will receive assistance from the TEA Monitoring, Review, and Support team and the ESC liaisons regarding targeted and intensive supports designed to address the prioritized areas of need.

RDA Interventions and Differentiated Supports

Interventions based upon determinations within the RDA framework are aligned across multiple program areas and are integrated into the Differentiated Monitoring and Support System respective to each program area. To achieve continuous improvement goals, the DMS system relies on a result driven approach to identify the types of support required for each LEA. Differentiated supports are provided for all LEAs based on needs identified through compliance and student outcomes data. Additional support activities may be recommended based on the results of monitoring activities such as a desk review or an on-site review.

Universal Supports

Universal supports are technical assistance resources available for all LEAs. Universal supports are designed to assist the LEA in continuously improving educational outcomes for students. LEAs accessing universal supports benefit by actively addressing identified areas of need, increasing capacity for quality program implementation, and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement.

Targeted Supports

Targeted supports include technical assistance resources available for LEAs who obtain a DL 3 to address specific areas of need focused on one or more discrete issues. Targeted supports are designed to address the needs identified through RDA indicators and to assist the LEA efforts to improve educational outcomes for students. LEAs participating in targeted supports benefit by implementing improvement activities that directly address needs, increase the LEA's capacity to resolve the root cause(s) of performance gaps, and establish a culture of continuous improvement.

Intensive Supports

Intensive supports are identified to prioritize areas of need for LEAs who obtain a DL 4. Like targeted supports, they are designed to address the needs identified through RDA indicator analysis and to assist LEA efforts to improve educational outcomes for students. LEAs participating in intensive supports benefit by prioritizing improvement activities that directly address needs, build capacity to identify, and address the root cause(s) of performance gaps, and establish a culture of continuous improvement. LEAs that are identified as a DL 4 and need substantial intervention will engage in prescribed activities and directed technical assistance related to the LEAs identified area(s) of need with sustained and in-depth support.

Interventions and Sanctions

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) must establish and implement a system of interventions and sanctions, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 United States Code, §§1400 et seq., Texas Education Code (TEC), §29.010, TEC, Chapter 39 and TEC Chapter 39A, as necessary to ensure program effectiveness and compliance with federal and state requirements regarding the implementation of special education and related services. TEA may combine any intervention and sanction outlined in 19 Tex. Admin. Code §89.1076.

The system of interventions and sanctions will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) on-site review for failure to meet program or compliance requirements;
- (2) required program or compliance audits, paid for by the district;
- (3) required submission of corrective actions, including, but not limited to, compensatory services, paid for by the district;
- (4) required technical assistance and support, paid for by the district;
- (5) public release of program or compliance review or audit findings;
- (6) special investigation and/or follow-up verification visits;
- (7) required public hearing conducted by the local school board of trustees;
- (8) assignment of a monitor, conservator, or management team, paid for by the district, as these terms are defined in TEC, Chapter 39A;
- (9) hearing before the commissioner of education or designee;
- (10) placing specific conditions on grant funds, required reduction in payment, required redirection of funds, or withholding of funds;
- (11) lowering of the special education monitoring/compliance status and/or the accreditation rating of the district; and/or
- (12) other authorized interventions and sanctions as determined by the commissioner.

Appendix: LEA-ESC-TEA Actions

Determination Level	LEA Actions	ESC Actions	TEA Actions
Meets Requirements (DL1)	- Review data and identify areas of continuous improvement - Maintain SSP locally - Access Universal Supports and ESC Liaisons as needed	Support LEAs with identifying universal supports and/or understanding DL requirements as requested	Support LEAs and ESCs with identifying universal supports and/or understanding DL requirements
Needs Assistance (DL 2)	- Review data and identify areas of continuous improvement - Maintain SSP locally - Access and incorporate universal supports - Engage with ESC liaisons for improvement activities as needed	- Provide support and interventions as needed - Engage as needed	Support LEAs and ESCs with identifying supports and/or understanding DL requirements
Needs Intervention (DL 3)	- Review data and identify areas of continuous improvement - Develop SSP with TEA and ESC guidance - Submit SSP via ASCEND in TEAL - Participate in the initial, midpoint and end-of-year conferences with TEA - Attend work sessions on root cause, data review, PD, and technical assistance	- Collaborate with TEA in developing and implementing the LEA SSP. - Participate in conferences with LEA and TEA. - Facilitate LEA work sessions and provide progress report to TEA - Support SSP development and implementation - Provide targeted supports related to data review, PD, and technical assistance	- Guide SSP development - Facilitate LEA conferences - Identify the targeted supports as needed - Monitor and support the selection of targeted supports and SSP implementation
Needs Substantial Intervention (DL 4)	- Review data and identify areas of continuous improvement - Develop SSP with TEA and ESC guidance - Submit SSP via ASCEND in TEAL - Participate in the initial, midpoint and end-of-year conferences with TEA - Report progress at monthly check-ins - Attend work sessions on root cause, data review, PD, and directed technical assistance	- Collaborate with TEA in developing and implementing the LEA SSP. - Participate in conferences and check-ins with LEA and TEA. - Facilitate LEA work sessions and provide progress report to TEA - Support SSP development and implementation - Provide targeted and intensive supports related to data review, PD, and technical assistance	- Guide SSP development - Participate in conferences and work sessions (as needed) - Facilitate monthly progress check-ins - Identify and direct the targeted and intensive supports including data review, PD, and technical assistance. - Monitor and support the SSP implementation

Submissions to the Texas Education Agency (TEA): Special Education

Although all LEAs with a Determination Level (DL) of DL 1 – DL 4 will engage in continuous improvement activities; submissions of the strategic support plan (SSP) will vary by program area and DL. LEAs will not be required to develop a goal for every indicator in the Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Framework. The LEA is encouraged to complete a root cause analysis to identify and prioritize goals represented on the SSP.

The superintendent of the LEAs engaging in RDA continuous improvement activities should appoint a DCSI to facilitate the SSP process. The DCSI should be an individual serving in a position to impact and/or influence the implementation of best practices aligned to increasing positive student outcomes.

Special Education (SPED) Determination Level (DL)

Determination Level 1 - Meets Requirements

- Establish a DCSI and DLT
- Engage in Continuous Improvement
- Maintain the SSP Locally

Determination Level 2 - Needs Assistance

- Establish a DCSI and DLT
- Engage in Continuous Improvement
- Maintain the SSP Locally

Determination Level 3 - Needs Intervention

- Establish a DCSI and DLT
- Engage in Continuous Improvement
- Submit the SSP to the TEA

Determination Level 4 - Needs Substantial Intervention

- Establish a DCSI and DLT
- Engage in Continuous Improvement
- Submit the SSP to the TEA

Appendix: 2025 RDA SPED Intervention and Submission Calendar

November

Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Determination Levels Released

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Actions:

- Superintendent identifies District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI)
- Superintendent and DCSI establish District Leadership Team (DLT)
- DCSI, DLT, and ESC liaisons, as needed, review data sources to develop the SSP

Education Service Center (ESC) Liaison Actions:

- Support LEAs with determining SSP development and submission requirements
- Review SSP data sources with LEA

Texas Education Agency (TEA) Actions:

- Notify LEAs with a Determination Level (DL) 3 or DL4 of the Strategic Support Plan (SSP) requirements

December

Required for RDA Special Education DL3 and DL4

LEA Actions:

- Participate in work sessions with ESC to identify priority areas to inform SSP
- Conduct root cause analysis to identify areas of improvement
- Review and analyze data sources to support the development of SSP
- Develop SSP annual goals and implementation activities
- Submit the SSP by due date in ASCEND

ESC Liaison Actions:

- Conduct work sessions to identify priority areas for SSP
- Assist the LEA with a review of data sources to support the development of SSP
- Facilitate root cause analysis to identify areas of improvement
- Review and analyze data sources to support the development of SSP
- Support the LEA in developing SSP annual goals and implementation activities

TEA Actions:

- Support LEAs and ESCs with SSP development and submission requirements
- Review SSP submission

Submissions:

SSP Due in ASCEND: Friday, December 19, 2025

January

Required for SPED DL3 and DL4

- Meeting Cadence with TEA:
 - DL3 – Initial Conference, mid-point progress check, end of year conference
 - DL4 – Initial conference, monthly progress check-ins, end of year conference

LEA Actions:

- Participate in the initial SSP conference
- Lead the SSP overview during the initial conference

ESC Liaison Actions:

- Participate in the initial SSP conference
- Support the LEA with the SSP overview during the initial conference and implementation of SSP activities

TEA Actions:

- Schedule and facilitate the initial SSP conference (DL3 and DL4)

Submissions:

SSP Supporting documents (as applicable)

February

Required for SPED DL3 and DL4

LEA Actions:

- Participate in work sessions with ESC
- Engage in monthly progress check-in with TEA (DL 4)
- Implement SSP activities and access Technical Assistance (TA)
- Review data on an ongoing basis and adjust the SSP as needed
- Gather evidence of SSP implementation and progress for submission

ESC Liaison Actions:

- Facilitate work sessions with LEA
- Participate in monthly progress check-in with TEA for DL 4 LEAs
- Assist in the implementation of SSP activities and provide Technical Assistance (TA)

TEA Actions:

- Provide and/or direct TA support as needed
- Review submitted SSP documentation and support the LEA and ESCs as requested
- Schedule DL4 SSP monthly progress check in

Submissions:

LEA submits SSP evidence of implementation and progress in ASCEND as applicable.

March

Required for SPED DL3 and DL4

LEA Actions:

- Participate in work sessions with ESC.
- Engage in monthly progress check-in with TEA (DL 4)
- Implement SSP activities and access Technical Assistance (TA)
- Review data on an ongoing basis and adjust the SSP as needed.
- Gather evidence of SSP implementation and progress for submission.

ESC Liaison Actions:

- Facilitate work sessions with LEA.
- Participate in monthly progress check-in with TEA for DL 4 LEAs
- Assist in the implementation of SSP activities and provide Technical Assistance (TA)

TEA Actions:

- Provide and/or direct TA support as needed.
- Review submitted SSP documentation and support the LEA and ESCs as requested.
- Schedule DL4 SSP monthly progress check in and DL 3 SSP mid-point progress check.

Submissions:

LEA submits SSP evidence of implementation and progress in ASCEND as applicable.

April

Required for SPED DL3 and DL4

LEA Actions:

- Participate in work sessions with ESC.
- Engage in mid-point progress check (DL 3)/monthly progress check-in (DL 4) with TEA
- Implement SSP activities and engage in Technical Assistance (TA)
- Review data on an ongoing basis and adjust the SSP as needed.
- Gather evidence of SSP implementation and progress for submission.

ESC Liaison Actions:

- Participate in work sessions with LEA.
- Engage in mid-point progress check (DL 3)/monthly progress check-in (DL 4) with TEA
- Assist in the implementation of SSP activities and provide Technical Assistance (TA)

TEA Actions:

- Provide and/or direct TA support as needed.
- Review submitted SSP documentation and support the LEA and ESCs as requested.
- Schedule DL4 SSP monthly progress check in.

Submissions:

LEA submits SSP evidence of implementation and progress in ASCEND as applicable.

May-June

Required for SPED DL3 and DL4

LEA Actions:

- Participate in EOY SSP conference.
- Implement SSP activities and engage in Technical Assistance (TA)
- Review the EOY SSP data to evaluate the effectiveness of SSP.
- Gather evidence of SSP implementation and progress for submission.
- Utilize the SSP as a road map to support ongoing continuous improvement beyond the current school year.
- Prepare, review, and submit the EOY SSP in ASCEND due June 3, 2026

ESC Liaison Actions:

- Support the EOY SSP data review to evaluate the effectiveness of SSP.
- Engage in EOY SSP conference with TEA.
- Review plan for future activities for continuous improvement.
- Support the review and submission of the EOY SSP submission Due: June 3, 2026

TEA Actions:

- Review EOY SSP
- Schedule and facilitate EOY SSP Conference May-June
- Conclude the SSP process.

Submissions:

- **LEA submits EOY SSP evidence in ASCEND Due: June 3, 2026**