

DATE:	May 14, 2026
SUBJECT:	Guidance Regarding Underreported Leaver Processing
CATEGORY:	Leaver Reporting Compliance
NEXT STEPS:	Conduct a local review of student leaver reporting policies now, because beginning with 2026–27 leavers TEA will default any missing required leaver records to <i>ExitWithdrawType</i> '98'.

Overview

The purpose of this communication is to inform school systems of upcoming processing changes to leaver reporting. These changes may affect a school system’s longitudinal graduation and annual dropout rate calculations moving forward. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is notifying school systems of this matter so they can review agency guidance, evaluate local policies and procedures, and take steps to ensure accurate, useful, and timely data are submitted to the agency going forward.

District Responsibilities

School systems are required to report the reason for withdrawal for students who leave Texas public schools; however, some school systems are not in compliance with this requirement. Failure to accurately report student withdrawals can create several issues. The most notable issue is that these students may not be actively recovered and re-enrolled. Additionally, underreporting may affect graduation and dropout rate calculations in the accountability system.

Notice of Upcoming Processing Changes

To address this noncompliance, TEA is implementing a change to agency processing for underreported leavers. With this change, students for whom a required leaver record is not submitted will be classified as *ExitWithdrawType* '98' (*Other – reason unknown or not listed above*). This change will first be applied to 2026-27 leavers and will also apply to all school years included in the four-, five-, and six-year longitudinal cohorts used to calculate graduation rates and annual dropout rates, to be reflected in the accountability system, starting with ratings in 2028. This change will provide school systems with better visibility to support efforts to recover and re-enroll students and will contribute to more accurate and transparent reporting of student outcomes for stakeholders and the public.

For school systems that report all leavers as required, this processing change will have no impact on state accountability data. For those who have not reported all leavers as required, this change may impact 2028 accountability ratings. Since rating calculation in the 2028 accountability system involves four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates, this processing change impacts data that have already been reported to the agency.

If a school system’s 2028 accountability rating, as reflected in the ratings released in August of 2028, is impacted, the school system will have the opportunity to submit an appeal through the TEAL Accountability application after preliminary ratings are released in 2028. When submitting an appeal, the school system must be able to provide the required supporting documentation outlined in the TSDS Web-Enabled Data Standards (TWEDS) Documentation Requirements for the

PEIMS Leaver Data technical resources to validate that these students should not be classified as *ExitWithdrawType* '98'.

Recommended Local Actions

TEA strongly recommends all school systems, even those that have not underreported students in the past, review their PEIMS data reporting and validation policies and procedures to ensure accurate leaver reporting going forward, because beginning with 2026–27 leavers, TEA will default any missing required leaver records to *ExitWithdrawType* '98'.

If, after reviewing local practices, gaps are identified that may contribute to underreported leavers, TEA encourages school systems to take immediate local corrective actions.

Proactive steps school systems may wish to consider include:

- Reviewing the students TEA identified as underreported, if any, by accessing “Final Graduation and Dropout Information” reports in TEAL through the Accountability application under the Research & Analysis tab. Updated reports will be released in June 2026.
- Implementing data validation checks to ensure that an *ExitWithdrawType* is submitted in PEIMS for all students identified as leavers, except for students who graduated in a prior year, earned a Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE), or who were verified to have moved to another Texas public school district or open-enrollment charter school (i.e., “movers”).
- Prior to submitting final leaver data to the Agency, utilize data validation reports through the TSDS Portal in TEAL to identify any remaining students for whom a leaver record should be submitted to the Agency. Submit the appropriate *ExitWithdrawType* and obtain the required supporting documentation for these students.
- Reviewing local practices related to identifying “movers,” ensuring that local codes in a Student Information System (SIS), if used, are updated to reflect state-approved leaver codes as outlined in the Texas Education Data Standards (TEDS) before final submission to the Agency, if the student does not actually enroll in another Texas public school district or charter school.
- Reporting students with *ExitWithdrawType* '98' (*Other – reason unknown or not listed above*) when a student’s whereabouts are unknown or when required documentation for a specific leaver reason cannot be obtained within the required timelines.
- Ensuring that students who return to school by the TEA school-start window are reported with the accurate *AsOfStatusFirstFridayOctober* descriptor and are not misidentified as leavers.
- Submitting a TSDS Incident Management System (TIMS) Ticket to the Agency as soon as possible if there are questions about leaver code definitions or documentation.
- Ensuring that staff follow the documentation requirements and timelines outlined in the TEDS for all leaver codes.
- Providing annual training for district- and campus-level staff involved in student withdrawals, leaver reason determinations, supporting documentation, and PEIMS reporting to promote consistent and accurate reporting practices.
- Annually reviewing and updating local leaver manuals, guidance, and procedures to ensure alignment with current TEA requirements and guidance.

Questions

For questions related to the processing change or leaver reporting and documentation requirements, please contact the Research and Analysis Division at research@tea.texas.gov. If you have any questions related to recommended local actions, you may contact the Self-Reported Data Unit at DataComplaints@tea.texas.gov.