

186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 Framework Overview and Application Process Webinar Comprehensive FAQ

Updated February 2025

The following questions were collected during each of the four **Fall 2024 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 Framework Overview and Application Process Webinars**. This resource is intended to support Educator Preparation Programs as they prepare to apply and offer the new 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 certificate and approve candidates for the new 186 exam.

Please submit any additional questions via TEA’s helpdesk system.

Question	Response
Test Development	
What certification is aligned with the new 186 Special Education Specialist exam?	A candidate that passes the 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam will qualify for one EC-12 certificate.
What is the standard setting process for the 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam?	Standard setting for the 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam is conducted with a committee of external stakeholders from the field of special education. Standard-setting activities concluded Fall 2024 . Following these activities, the passing standard can be found in the Commissioner's Rules Concerning Passing Standards for Educator Certification Examinations .
What is the last date candidates can take the older 161 Special Education EC-12 or the 163 Special Education Supplemental exams? What is the last date a candidate can apply and be recommended for certification using a score on the 161 or 163 exams?	The last day for candidates to take either the 161 Special Education EC-12 or 163 Special Education Supplemental exam is August 31, 2025 . The last day an individual can apply and be recommended for a certificate to become certified using a passing score on exam 161 or 163 is September 1, 2026 .
What is the overall percentage of each domain and competency on the 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam?	The overall percentage for each domain and competency on the new 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam will be available when the preparation manual becomes available in Spring 2025 .
Will the new Special Education Specialist EC-12 certificate affect students needing the EC-6 certification?	The Candidate, EPP, and LEA should review the assignment rules for the certification required for a Special Education assignment and ensure the candidate is properly certified to be placed as a teacher in the assignment.
What happens if a candidate fails either the 161 Special Education EC-12 or 163 Special Education Supplemental exam after the transition to the new	A candidate may attempt either the 161 or 163 exams until the exams expire on August 31, 2025 . After that point, the candidate will only be able to attempt the new 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam. EPPs are <u>strongly encouraged</u> to approve candidates who are testing using

186 Special Education Specialist exam?	the 161 Special Education EC-12 or 163 Special Education Supplemental exams well in advance of the exam transition to the new 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam.
When will preparation materials for the new 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam become available?	The preparation manual for the 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam will be available Spring 2025 . The Representative Form and Interactive Practice Test will be available Summer 2025 .
Which TX-PACT exam will be aligned to the new #186 Exam?	The current 701 TX PACT: Essential Academic Skills (Subtest I: Reading), 702 TX PACT: Essential Academic Skills (Subtest II: Writing) and 703 TX PACT: Essential Academic Skills (Subtest III: Mathematics) will remain in place for the new 186 Special Education Specialist EC-12 exam.
Is TEA sending out a notification to those eligible for the current 161 Special Education EC-12 and 163 Special Education Supplemental certificates that those exams and certificates will no longer be available?	Yes. It is our practice to communicate with candidates who may be impacted by the exam transition. Please contact your assigned education specialist for more specific information.
Application Process	
Is the Standards Alignment Chart available before requesting the packet to guide with course updates?	The standards alignment chart is available now upon request and will also be provided with the application packet. A completed alignment chart is a required artifact for the application.
Is there a separate application for supplemental?	After the Special Education Supplemental certificate expires on August 31, 2025 , there will not be a separate supplemental certificate for Special Education. The only option for Special Education certification will be the Special Education Specialist EC-12.
How long is the wait time between application submission and response/approval from TEA?	Application processing time is between 6-8 weeks. EPPs are encouraged to submit applications well in advance of the transition dates to avoid disruption in candidate preparation and certification. EPPs will not be able to admit candidates in Special Education Specialist EC-12, approve the 186 exam, or recommend the certificate without an approved application.
Is the fee payment for certificate applications electronic?	For EPPs that are currently approved to offer the Special Education EC-12 certificate or the Special Education Supplemental certificate, there is no application fee to apply to add the Special Education Specialist EC-12 certificate. For an EPP who is not approved to offer either of the current Special Education certificate options, a fee of \$500 is required to process the application to add Special Education Specialist EC-12. The fee may be paid by check or electronically. The assigned specialist at TEA will be able to provide ACH payment instructions.

How many application packages would an EPP need to submit if applying for more than one route?	The request letter template allows the requestor to identify the route requested. If candidates will be taking different courses depending on their certification route, then the EPP will find it easier to separate the application packages by route.
In past circumstances different certificate areas have not been transferable (e.g., an old EC-4 completer not being eligible for the EC-6 certificate exam). Will old SPED EC-12 and SPED Supplemental completers be allowed to take the Special Education Specialist exam for certification?	Yes, a candidate who is currently pursuing certification in Special Education EC-12 or who is a past finisher in Special Education EC-12 may be transitioned to the Special Education Specialist EC-12. The EPP may require additional coursework as needed for finishers who are seeking approval for the 186 exam.