# IDEA Graduation (Indicator 1) Technical Documentation

Version 1.0

September 2025

Department of Education & Workforce

# Revision History

The revision history section provides a means for readers to easily navigate to the places where updates have occurred from prior years. Significant changes and updates are indicated through RED underlined text for additions and ~~RED text with strikethroughs~~ for deletions. Minor changes—such as typos, formatting and grammar corrections—are not marked.

| Date | Effective | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **9/15/2025** | | Updated Appendix A and Appendix C for Clarity |
| | | |

Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code require districts to report data to EMIS and to verify and approve all EMIS data. Data should be reviewed and verified prior to the close of the different data collections. This verification should include all relevant reports, including those in the General Issues Reports.

**The Department uses the data for this indicator in the evaluation of valid and reliable data reporting**. The Secure Data Center (SDC) is an interactive tool that allows districts to review data well before it is final. ***The local education agency (LEA) is responsible for data verification and validation. Districts and schools can now review Special Education Indicator Data in addition to all relevant EMIS reports through the expanded SDC.*** The EMIS Validation and Report Explanations webpage lists current Level 1 and 2 report explanations as well as a list of General Issues Reports that should be used to validate data. Another resource to validate data for students who cross LEAs is the Ohio District Data Exchange (ODDEX).

# Secure Data Center Reports Breadcrumb Trails

## INDICATOR 1

Report Portal > Secure Data Center > Special Education Indicators > **Special Education Graduation Rate**

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Department of Education & Workforce

# Introduction

The IDEA Graduation (Indicator 1) is a crucial component of Ohio's accountability system for special education. This indicator, defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), measures the percentage of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who exit special education by graduating with a regular high school diploma. Due to data availability, Indicator 1 **lags one year behind other indicators** for reporting purposes. This Indicator 1 technical document provides a comprehensive overview of this indicator, including details on who is included in the calculation, how it is calculated, what special education reports the data appears in, and what data the Department uses from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in the calculation to help improve graduation outcomes for students with disabilities. Understanding the intricacies of Indicator 1 is essential for schools, districts, and communities to develop effective strategies and interventions that enable students with IEPs to successfully complete their high school education and transition to postsecondary opportunities, employment, and independent living.

As a results-based measure, Indicator 1 serves as an important benchmark for evaluating how effectively Ohio is preparing students with disabilities for success beyond high school. By tracking this metric, the state can assess the progress of LEAs in supporting these students to achieve one of the most significant educational milestones - earning a regular high school diploma.

IDEA Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) set the Data Source and Measurement for Indicators. Indicator 1 uses the same data as used for reporting to the US Department of Education under section 618 using the definitions in ED*Facts* File specification FS009. The file is used to submit ED*Facts* Data Group 85: Children with Disabilities (IDEA) exiting special education table.

Data from Indicator 1 is included in several key reports to support comprehensive monitoring and accountability of special education services:

- **Special Education Profile**, which provides detailed data at the district and community-school levels;
- The **Annual Performance Report (APR)**, submitted to the U.S. Department of Education;
- The **Public Indicator Report**, which is publicly posted to promote transparency; and
- The **Special Education Rating**, which evaluates the performance of Ohio's districts and schools.

Each of these reports plays a vital role in assessing and improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities in Ohio.

# Business Rules

## DETERMINING STUDENTS INCLUDED IN DENOMINATOR

Indicator 1 evaluates students with disabilities, ages 14-21, who were in special education at the start of the reporting period and exited by the end of the reporting period based on the **last district where they were enrolled**. The full academic year and adjusted graduation cohort criteria **do not** apply to Indicator 1.

This indicator uses data from the ED*Facts* Data Group 85: Children with Disabilities (IDEA) exiting special education table, specifically:

- FS009 - The unduplicated number of students with disabilities (IDEA) who are ages 14 through 21, were in special education at the start of the reporting period and were not in special education at the end of the reporting period.

The data set:

- Includes the following categories:
  - graduated with a regular high school diploma
  - graduated with a state-defined alternate diploma
  - received a certificate
  - reached maximum age
  - dropped out
- Excludes the following categories:
  - transferring to regular education
  - Moved, known to be continuing in an educational program
  - who passed away before completing education

Students who withdraw from one district/school and then re-enroll in the same or another district/school within the same reporting period do not count as dropouts. For example, a student who exited on October 25, 2024, and then reenrolled April 2, 2025, for the 2024-2025 school year is not counted as a dropout.

## DETERMINING A GRADUATE WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

To be considered a graduate for Indicator 1, students must meet graduation requirements available to all students to earn a regular high school diploma. Students must complete all three parts of these requirements. Ohio's Graduation Requirements are as follows:

- **Credit Requirements:** Students will satisfy Ohio's curriculum requirements and any additional local requirements. Students will complete the state minimum 20 units, with specific units required in each content area.
- **Competency:** There are five options used to determine whether a student meets competency. These options include:
  - earn a "competency" score on the English language arts II and Algebra I (or integrated math I) end-of course assessment, OR
  - Career Readiness, OR
  - College Credit Plus, OR
  - Military Enlistment, OR
  - ACT/SAT remediation free requirement or ACT/SAT Pathway
- **Readiness:** Students must earn at least two diploma seals, one of which must be state defined. Ohio's 12 diploma seals are:
  - OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal (State-Defined)
  - Industry-Recognized Credential Seal (State-Defined)
  - College-Ready Seal (State-Defined)
  - Military Seal (State-Defined)
  - Citizenship Seal (State-Defined)
  - Science Seal (State-Defined)
  - Honors Diploma Seal (State-Defined)

- Seal of Biliteracy (State-Defined)
- Technology Seal (State-Defined)
- Community Service Seal (Locally Defined)
- Fine and Performing Arts Seal (Locally Defined)
- Student Engagement Seal (Locally Defined)

Note: IDEA considers only those students who meet Ohio's curriculum requirements and any additional local requirements **AND** who met competency through one of the above five options **AND** who earned at least two diploma seals, one of which must be state-defined, are considered to have met the graduation requirements available to all students and are reported as students who graduated with a regular high school diploma.

**Ohio does not have a state-defined alternate diploma or certificate. Therefore, students with disabilities who utilize IEP Goals to meet course requirements OR IEP Exemptions or Alternate Assessment to meet competency OR *Alternate Assessment to meet Readiness (Future Addition to calculation)* to receive their diploma are counted as part of the "received a certificate" group.**

# Indicator 1: Graduation Rate

**Indicator 1** measures the percentage of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who exit special education by **graduating with a regular high school diploma**.

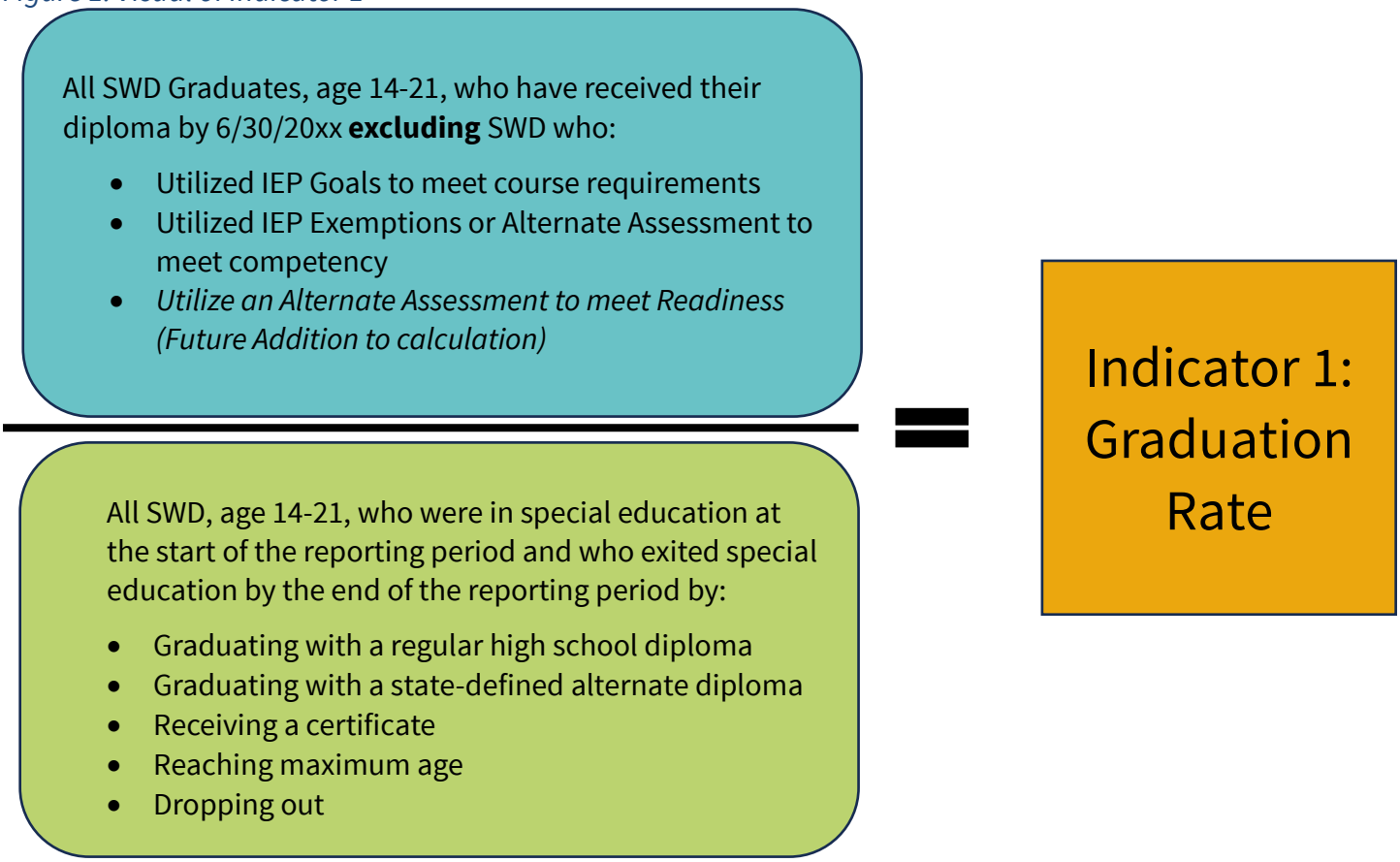
## CALCULATION

The Department calculates **Indicator 1** by dividing the number of students with disabilities, ages 14–21, who were in special education at the start of the reporting period and exited by the end of the reporting period by **graduating with a regular high school diploma** by the total number of students with disabilities, ages 14–21, who were in special education at the start of the reporting period and exited special education by the end of the reporting period (see Figure 1).

### Additional Details

- **Code Section(s)**: IDEA 20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A)
- **Grade Level**: Any, including Grades 13 and 23
- **N-Size**: None
- **Cell-Size:** None

*Figure 1: Visual of Indicator 1*




## Indicator 1 Met/Not Met Status

States have a responsibility under federal law to establish a system of general supervision to monitor the implementation of IDEA of 2004 by educational agencies. The **Phase 1 release** of the **Special Education Profile** includes data for Indicator 2. Indicator 2 is part of the indicators **reviewed** in the Compliance and Performance Indicator Reviews (Tier 1).

The Department determines whether an agency '**Met'** or did not meet ('**Not Met**') the target for Indicator 2 based on actual performance compared to the target. The targets must be:

- Rigorous, yet attainable,
- Developed with broad stakeholder input, and
- Show improvement over the state's baseline by the final year.

For more information, visit Ohio's Annual Performance Report webpage.

The **Indicator 1 Targets** are found below in Table 1.

*Table 1: Indicator 1 Target*

| Special Education Profile Year | Data Year* | 2 Target |
|---|---|---|
| 2024–2025 (Released in Phase 1) | 2022-2023 School Year | ≥ 66.61% |
| 2025–2026 (Released in Phase 1) | 2023-2024 School Year | ≥ 68.00% |
| 2026–2027 (Released in Phase 1) | 2024-2025 School Year | ≥ 70.00% |

** Data Year refers to the school year from which data is used to calculate performance. Due to data availability, Indicator 1 lags one year behind other indicators for reporting purposes*

# Appendix A Inclusion Criteria

Students are included in the **district with the latest enrollment date** for the following Measures/Indicators:

## IDEA GRADUATION (INDICATOR 1)

**IF** the students are reported in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) with the following:

*DENOMINATOR CRITERIA*

- **Disability Condition (FD130) ≠ **** equals a valid disability AND
- **District Relationship Element (FS140) = 1** AND
- **Withdraw Reason (FS100) = 51, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 99** AND
- **Effective End Date (FS090)** equals a date that is on or before October 31st of the school year AND
- **Date of birth (GI070**) equals a date which determines their age on October 31st of the prior year is between 14-21

OR

- **Disability Condition (FD130) ≠ **** equals a valid disability AND
- **District Relationship Element (FS140) = 1** AND
- **Withdraw Reason (FS100) = 51, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 99** AND
- **Effective End Date (FS090)** equals a date that is after October 31st of the school year AND
- **Date of birth (GI070**) equals a date which determines their age on October 31st of the school year is between 14-21

OR

- **Disability Condition (FD130) ≠ **** equals a valid disability AND
- **District Relationship Element (FS140) = 1** AND
- **Withdraw Reason (FS100) = 51, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 99** AND
- **Effective End Date (FS090)** equals a date that is on or before October 31st of the school year AND
- **Date of birth (GI070**) equals a date which determines their age on October 31st of the prior school year is between 14-21
- **Sent Reason Element (FS200 or FS230)** = CR, CT, JV, MR, OS, PI, PS or SE

OR

- **Disability Condition (FD130) ≠ **** AND
- **District Relationship Element (FS140) = 1** AND
- **Withdraw Reason (FS100) = 51, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 99** AND
- **Effective End Date (FS090)** equals a date that is after October 31st of the school year AND
- **Date of birth (GI070**) equals a date which determines their age on October 31st of the school year is between 14-21
- **Sent Reason Element (FS200 or FS230) = CR, CT, JV, MR, OS, PI, PS or SE**

*NUMERATOR CRITERIA*

- **Diploma Date Element (FN090)** equals a date that is during the school year AND
- **CORE Graduation Requirement Exemption Code (FN300) ≠ 3** which indicates the student met IEP goals, OR
- **GRAD EVENT CODE ≠ ('SPALT', 'SPEXP')** in ODDEX Grad Cohort Tab

# Appendix B: Definitions

The following definitions support the FS009 - Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education File, in which the Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table requires Indicator 1 to utilize as the data source :

## GRADUATED WITH REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Students are classified as regular high school graduates if they receive a high school diploma through the same avenues available to students without disabilities. According to 34 CFR 300.102(a)(3)(iv), a "regular high school diploma" is the standard diploma awarded to most students in the State, fully aligned with State standards or higher, but not aligned with the alternate academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA. A regular high school diploma does not include equivalent credentials such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser qualifications.

## MOVED, KNOWN TO BE CONTINUING

Students are considered moved, known to be continuing if they are reported as moved out of the attendance boundaries or otherwise transferred to another district and are KNOWN to be continuing in an educational program. There does not need to be evidence that the students are continuing in special education only that the students are continuing in an educational program. This includes students who are transferred by court order or adjudication, for verified medical reasons, to a private school, to another school district outside of Ohio, another Ohio school district, to another school district outside of Ohio, to a private school, by court order or adjudication, out of the United States, and verified medical reasons.

## REACHED MAXIMUM AGE

Students are considered to have reached maximum age and exited special education when their reported age extends beyond the maximum age for receipt of special education services. This includes students who reached the maximum age and did not receive a diploma.

## RECEIVED A CERTIFICATE

Students are considered to have exited an educational program when they are reported to have received a certificate of completion, modified diploma, or some similar document. This includes students who received a high school diploma, but did not meet the same standards for graduation as those for students without disabilities.

**Ohio does not have a state-defined alternate diploma or certificate. Therefore, students with disabilities who utilize IEP Goals to meet course requirements OR IEP Exemptions or Alternate Assessment to meet competency OR *Alternate Assessment to meet Readiness (Future Addition to calculation)* to receive their diploma are counted as part of the "received a certificate" group.**

## TRANSFERRED TO REGULAR EDUCATION

Students are considered to have transferred to regular education when they were reported as served in special education at the start of the reporting period on July 1, 20XX but at some point, during that school year ending on June 30, 20xx, returned to general (regular) education. These students no longer have an IEP and receive all of their educational services from a general (regular) education program. If the parent of a student with a disability revokes consent for special education and related services, the student would be reported in this category. This also includes students who left school to be homeschooled and are no longer receiving any special education services, including related services (See 34 CFR §300.300(b)(4)).

## DROPPED OUT

Students are considered to have dropped out if they were reported as enrolled at the start of the reporting period starting on July 1, 20xx but were not reported as enrolled at the end of the reporting period ending on June 30, 20XX. Additionally, these students were not reported as exiting special education through any of the defined ways above. The student is withdrawn due to truancy or non-attendance, pursued employment, moved (not known to be continuing), completed course requirements but did not pass assessments, non-attendance according to the 72-Hour rule in community schools, withdrew due to ORC 3314.26 (non-tested), withdrew due to ORC 3314.261(C)(non-attendance at internet-based community schools), and no longer eligible to be enrolled in a district.

## Appendix C: Summary of Graduation Rate Differences in Ohio

| Criteria | Ohio's 4-Year Graduation Rate | Federal 4-Year Graduation Rate | IDEA Graduation Rate (Indicator 1) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Students who count as graduates (Numerator)** | All students in the graduation cohort who earned an Ohio diploma. | All students in the graduation cohort who earned an Ohio diploma by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities.<br><br>**Note**: students on IEPs who earned a diploma by meeting IEP goals or were exempt from the competency requirements on end-of-course exams or who took the alternate assessment do NOT count as graduates. | Students with disabilities who exited special education during the school year (7/1/20xx-6/30/20xx) who earned an Ohio diploma by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities.<br><br>**Note**: students on IEPs who earned a diploma by meeting IEP goals or were exempt from the competency requirements on end-of-course exams or who took the alternate assessment do NOT count as graduates. |
| **Total students considered in the calculation (Denominator)** | All students in the graduation cohort. | All students in the graduation cohort. | Students with disabilities who exited special education during the school year (7/1/20xx-6/30/20xx) who earned an Ohio diploma by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities, earned an Ohio diploma by meeting IEP goals or were exempt from end-of-course exams or who took the alternate assessment, reached maximum age, or dropped out. |
| **Measurement** | Measures the percentage of students who earned an Ohio diploma within four years. | Measures the percentage of students who earned an Ohio diploma within four years by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities. | Measures the percentage of students with disabilities who exited special education by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities. |

FIGURE 2: VISUAL OF OHIO'S 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE CALCULATION

Graduates in Final Prior Year Adjusted Graduation Cohort (including summer graduates)

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All students in Final Prior Year Adjusted Graduation Cohort:

- Cohort Graduates (including summer graduates)
- Cohort Transfers In
- Cohort Dropouts (any year)
- Cohort non-graduates
- Cohort Reinstated Transfers

**Minus**

- Cohort Transfers Out
- Cohort Students Report in Error
- Cohort Students deceased

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Ohio's 4-Year Graduation Rate

*Figure 3: Visual of Federal 4-Year Graduation Rate Calculation*

Graduates in Final Prior Year Adjusted Graduation Cohort (including summer graduates) excludes

SWD who:

- Utilized IEP Goals to meet course requirements
- Utilized IEP Exemptions or Alternate Assessment to meet competency

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All students in Final Prior Year Adjusted Graduation Cohort:

- Cohort Graduates (including summer graduates)
- Cohort Transfers In
- Cohort Dropouts (any year)
- Cohort non-graduates
- Cohort Reinstated Transfers

**Minus**

- Cohort Transfers Out
- Cohort Students Report in Error
- Cohort Students who are Deceased

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Federal 4-Year Graduation Rate