

**Q. What is risk-based monitoring of special education programs?**

A. Special Education program monitoring is a major component of the Louisiana Department of Education’s overall General Supervision structure. The LDOE’s Division of Program Monitoring tests the effectiveness of the provision of services for students with disabilities, under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), through its Continuous Improvement Monitoring System. The Continuous Improvement Monitoring System includes an annual tiered ranking of local education agencies, driven by a risk-based analysis process. The LDOE uses data from identified areas of risk to determine what level of monitoring activities to assign or to suggest to each local education agency.

**Q. How are risk indicators selected for special education monitoring?**

A. The LDOE annually selects risk indicators by consulting with external stakeholders and experts, and with leadership teams within the LDOE, such as academic planning, accountability and program support. The key indicators of risk are growth of students in performance on statewide academic assessments, graduation rate, and dropout rate. Other indicators of risk may contribute to a school system’s monitoring rank, as described in the risk indicator table in this document.

**Q. How many risk indicators are considered in the monitoring selection process?**

A. Five identified areas of risk directly impact a school system’s monitoring tier assignment. Beyond these five risk indicators, other risk indicators may influence each school system’s monitoring tier assignment, such as complaints, fiscal audit findings, and risks identified in the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).

**Q. How are the risk indicators measured?**

Risk Indicators	Measurement
<b>Statewide Assessment: English Language Arts</b>	For the students with disabilities subgroup, two consecutive years of statewide assessment data are compared to calculate growth in percentile change. School systems demonstrating growth is eligible to earn a set number of points during monitoring selection.
<b>Statewide Assessment: Mathematics</b>	For the students with disabilities subgroup, two consecutive years of statewide assessment data are compared to calculate growth in percentile change. School systems demonstrating growth are eligible to earn a set number of points during monitoring selection.
<b>Graduation Rates</b>	For the students with disabilities subgroup, two consecutive years of graduation rates are analyzed to determine growth as evidenced by an increase in the actual graduate rate.
<b>Dropout Rates</b>	For the students with disabilities subgroup, two consecutive years of dropout rates are analyzed to determine growth as evidenced by a decrease in the actual dropout rate.
<b>LEA Determination</b>	States are required to make annual Determinations about the performance of IDEA, Part B programs using the following categories: Meets Requirements (MR), Needs Assistance (NA), Needs Intervention (NI), and Needs Substantial Intervention (NSI). Factors included in LEA Determinations are disproportionality, early childhood transition, time and accurate submission of data, high school transition compliance, and audit findings.

### Q. What are the labels used to describe each Tier of the ranking system?

A. Tier I – Low Risk; Tier II A – Moderate Low Risk; Tier II B Moderate High Risk; Tier III – High Risk

### Q. What does a rank of Tier I Low Risk mean?

A. The **Tier I - Low Risk** rank triggers very limited monitoring activities. The LDOE's risk analysis results assume SWDs (for identified areas of risk) are performing well and are likely showing significant growth when compared to a cohort in other LEAs. A **Low Risk** rank also suggests the school system has received a favorable determination and meets compliance requirements.

### Q. What does a rank of Tier IIA – Moderate Low Risk mean?

A. The **Tier IIA- Moderate Low Risk** rank triggers a mandatory self-review monitoring. A **Moderate Low Risk** rank generally suggests the school system has met compliance requirements and received a favorable LEA Determination. Performance outcomes may also be favorable overall with an isolated area of weakness. This rank is the one most frequently earned by school systems.

### Q. What does a rank of Tier IIB– Moderate High Risk mean?

A. The **Tier IIB -Moderate High Risk** rank triggers a mandatory comprehensive desk audit. A **Moderate High Risk** rank suggests the school system has not met compliance requirements and received an average to unfavorable LEA Determination. Performance outcomes may be favorable or unfavorable in one or more areas of risks. However, a **Moderate High Risk** rank typically means declining performance in more than one area of risk.

### Q. What does a rank of Tier III High Risk mean?

A. The **Tier III - High Risk** rank triggers the most intensive level of monitoring. A school system earning a **High Risk** rank typically struggles with both performance and compliance. School systems assigned a **High Risk** rank will likely have an unfavorable LEA Determination. The required level of monitoring assigned to school systems with a **High Risk** rank is on-site monitoring.

### Q. Can the LDOE adjust the level of monitoring activities assigned to a school system?

A. Yes. The LDOE reserves the right, under its General Supervision responsibilities, to monitor a school system at any time. Depending on specific circumstances, the LDOE may elect to conduct more rigorous or less intrusive forms of monitoring activities. The monitoring team leader will communicate directly with the school system's Special Education Director, when monitoring plans are changed.

**Q. How does the Continuous Monitoring System impact positive outcomes for students with disabilities?**

A. In addition to ensuring that students receive the services identified in their IEPs, other positive outcomes of the monitoring process include, for example, improved technical assistance and targeted support to the school system’s fiscal planning process.

**Q. What are the monitoring activities linked to each Tier?**

A. Examples of monitoring activities linked to each Tier are listed in the table below.

**Examples of Monitoring Activities Linked to Each Tier**

Tier I Low Risk	Tier II – A Moderate Low Risk	Tier II – B Moderate High Risk	Tier III High Risk
No mandatory risk-based monitoring activities for the current year	Mandatory self-monitoring using LDOE’s comprehensive self-assessment tool	Mandatory comprehensive desk audit conducted by LDOE	Onsite monitoring
Optional LDOE self-assessment	Results of self-assessment must be submitted to the LDOE	LDOE identifies a student sample from the Special Education Reporting System (SER)	Interviews with school system staff
	Corrective Action Plans and evidence of implementation, where applicable, must be submitted to the LDOE	The school system submits documentation and evidence of services, per the standard student documentation checklist.	Classroom observations
			File reviews
			Parent Focus Meeting