

Frequently Asked Questions

Defining the Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Subgroup for Accountability

What definition will the department use for the economically disadvantaged subgroup for accountability purposes in 2015-16?

Beginning in 2015-16, only students who are *directly certified*, also known as “identified students,” will be considered part of the ED subgroup for accountability.

A “directly certified” student is any student eligible to receive free lunch without an application, regardless of school or district participation in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Who is considered a directly certified student?

Students who are directly certified include those receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, those whose families participate in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, students who experience homelessness and are on the local liaison’s list, Head Start participants, migrant youth, runways, foster children, and others who may be certified by state or local officials. All districts currently collect and maintain lists of the students described above as part of the National School Lunch Program.

What student classifications will be used to determine directly certified students for purposes of accountability?

Student classifications “J”, “H”, “I”, and “U” will be used for the ED accountability subgroup. These classifications will be used to pre-populate Code A, the code used to identify the ED subgroup, on assessments. The table below displays all student classifications used by the state to define economically disadvantaged and whether they will be used for accountability or other purposes in 2015-16.

Classification	Description	2015-16 ED Accountability Subgroup (Y/N)	2015-16 Poverty Definition for Finance and Other Purposes (Y/N)
X	Free Lunch	N	Y
Y	Reduced Lunch	N	Y
3	CEP Eligible	N	Y
J	Direct Certification	Y	Y
H	Homeless	Y	Y
I	Migrant	Y	Y
U	Runaway	Y	Y
L	Pre-K EconDis	N	Y

How will this change impact my district's accountability results?

In the 2015-16 school year, the state will begin administering a new TCAP assessment for English language arts and mathematics called TNReady. The new assessment will allow us to establish a new baseline for student performance, which means that comparisons to prior performance will not be appropriate. There will be no AMO targets set for student subgroups based on 2014-15 results.

The transition to TNReady means a new baseline for achievement based on the cohort comprised of students who meet the updated criteria for inclusion in the ED accountability subgroup. This should mitigate any concerns regarding comparing the performance of the newly defined ED subgroup to the subgroup based on historical criteria. Subsequent accountability determinations will compare apples-to-apples in terms of using directly certified students in the ED subgroup for accountability. Additionally, beginning in the summer of 2016, the department will no longer evaluate subgroup performance in district accountability using the gap closure calculation.

How will the state measure subgroup performance under the updated accountability framework?

In place of the gap closure calculation, the department will evaluate ED and other subgroups' performance using TVAAS, the decrease in the percentage of students scoring at the lowest achievement level (currently below basic), and the increase in the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency. The elimination of the historical gap closure calculation in district determinations should mitigate any concerns regarding the change in the ED definition as it relates to accountability.

What impact will this change have on finance or other functions using economically disadvantaged counts?

This revision does not impact the way the state defines ED and/or poverty status for purposes of finance (e.g. BEP or Title I funding) or any other function.