



## **1. Why don't GED students count as graduates?**

The US Department of Education (USDE) regulations do not include the attainment of a GED in the calculation of on-time graduates for the purposes of this method. The student is counted as a non-graduate in the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate.

The full guidance can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf>

## **2. How does a district code students who have moved out of state? How should a district code a student who transfers to another district?**

A school must identify whether a student has transferred to a "diploma-granting institution." If the district determines that the student has, they are to code the student as a transfer out.

If the whereabouts are unknown, the school/district must report the student as a dropout and the student must remain in the cohort.

## **3. Will there ever be an instance when a student is attributed only to the state?**

Yes, while all attribution issues must be approved by USDOE via the Department's annual Accountability Workbook, it is likely that attribution for graduation rates will be very similar to the way attribution is currently handled for PSSA scores. (i.e., Wards of the State will still be attributed only to the state and not to a district or school.)

## **4. Is the "Full Academic Year" determination relevant to the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate calculations?**

No. While calculations of student performance require that the student attend the district from at least October 1 in order to have been enrolled in the district for a "Full Academic Year," this is not an allowance in the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Calculation. Students remain in the graduation calculation of the school that was last accountable for the student's education.

## **5. If a student, not previously attending a public school, enters school and is placed in 9<sup>th</sup> grade due to credits and then the next year is moved to grade 12. Is that student still attributed to their original cohort? This student would be coming from the justice system and is chronologically older than his/her earned credits indicate.**

A student who transfers into a school should be assigned to the cohort in which the student started 9th grade for the first time. For example, if a student who has repeated a grade transfers into a school, the student should be assigned to the cohort in which the student started 9th grade for the first time. Unless the student skipped a grade later in high school or caught up with the original cohort in some other manner, that student could not graduate within four years of starting 9th grade.



### **6. Explain how students with IEPs, who remain in a program until they are 21, but never graduate, will affect the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate.**

Federal regulations require that any student who graduates in more than four years is counted as a non-graduate in the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate. However, states are permitted to calculate “extended-year” cohort graduation rates which would give the state, schools or districts “credit” for AYP purposes for the success of students who take additional time to meet their graduation requirements, subject to USDE approval. As of June 2010, Pennsylvania has considered but has not submitted a plan to USDE to use extended graduation rates for AYP purposes.

### **7. Explain why a senior, who fails to graduate on time and comes back for the 5<sup>th</sup> year and does not graduate the second time, is attributed twice.**

Each member of a cohort is counted one time in the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate as well as the Extended Cohort Graduation Rates. No student is attributed twice. The student that does not complete with his/her cohort in 4 years, is considered a non-graduate and will negatively impact the 4-Year Cohort rate. If the student fails to complete the graduation requirements in 5 years, they would still remain a nongraduate.

### **8. Why does a student who leaves the district and never shows up in another PA district remain in the cohort of the sending district?**

Federal guidelines indicate that a student whose whereabouts are unknown are considered non-graduates and must stay in the denominator of the equation. In cases where a student is not coded as a graduate, a transfer out to another diploma granting institution, or as deceased, they are considered a non-graduate and will remain in the denominator.

### **9. How should students who are disabled and remain enrolled until age 21 be coded?**

USDE guidance requires that all students who do not graduate in four years remain in the denominator of an LEA’s four year cohort graduation rate. Only students who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less may be included in the numerator of the four-year graduation rate. A student who takes more than four years to graduate, regardless of the reason, must be included in the adjusted cohort for the four-year graduation rate (the denominator) but may not be counted as a graduate (the numerator) when calculating the four-year graduation rate.

Note: A student with a disability who does not graduate with a regular high school diploma, but instead receives an alternative diploma, certificate of completion, or any other degree or certificate that is not fully aligned with a State’s academic content standards may not be counted as graduating in calculating either the four-year or extended-year graduation rate.

### **10. How would a school/district code a student that registers for school, but does not attend?**

As soon as a student registers, he/she becomes part of the receiving school/district’s graduation rate.



### **11. How will the appeals process work if a student is attributed to a school or district and that district does not believe the student is a resident of their district?**

Technical components of the appeals process are still being discussed.

### **12. When does a student officially become part of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort? Is it at the end of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, or the beginning of their 9<sup>th</sup>?**

When a student is first reported as a 9<sup>th</sup> Grader in PIMS, they are required to code the Grade 9 Entry Date for their student record in the Student template. If they completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade and never began 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the LEA does not report them as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader.

For example, Johnnie completes 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 2009-10 but drops out over the summer of 2010 before starting 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2010-11. The LEA reports him as a dropout in the 2010-11 Student Template as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, but leaves the Grade 9 entry Date blank because he never entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Because the Grade 9 Entry date is blank, he is never captured in the cohort graduation rate but he is still reported correctly for the Dropout data collection according to the Federal Guidance.

### **13. How will adjudicated youth be attributed for purposes of graduation rate calculations?**

Based on current PSSA attribution issues – adjudicated youth are removed from the school and attributed only to the state. This is still something that the department is discussing and it will ultimately be up to USDOE to determine whether or not they agree with our attribution plans as well as the state's 4-year cohort graduation rate goals and targets.

### **14. What is the definition of on-time graduation? What does it mean?**

An on-time graduate is one that completes high school within 4 years from the date in which they enroll as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student. On-time graduate counts may not necessarily match your "count of graduates" for a school year because the count of graduates includes the number of students that graduate in more than four years.

### **15. Seniors in Special Education meet all requirements for graduation in four years but their IEP allows them to stay; they can choose to stay. These seniors will not be counted as graduating on time. Will it count against districts' graduation rate?**

Once a student receives a diploma and completes the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) they are considered a graduate.



### **16. Why hasn't PDE applied for approval to use extended graduation rate for AYP purposes?**

The department began collecting student level data through PIMS 4 years ago. When data is available, the department will likely submit a request to use that data for AYP purposes, but until we know what the data will indicate, we cannot establish 5 and 6-year Cohort Graduation Rate targets and goals.

### **17. When do four years officially end; the last day of school or before the start of the next school year?**

According to Federal Guidelines, students have until September 30 of the year following graduation to complete graduation requirements and be considered a graduate in the prior school year (i.e., 2009-10 graduates have until Oct 1, 2010 to graduate and still be considered part of the class of 2010).

### **18. What if a student transfers in and has already been held back for one grade?**

According to USDE Guidance, the student's cohort should be determined by the date of enrollment in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. If they enrolled in 9<sup>th</sup> grade twice – once in 2006-07 and once in 2007-08, the school should use the first date – 2006-07.

If a student who has repeated a grade transfers into a school, the student should be assigned to the cohort in which the student started 9th grade for the first time. Unless the student skipped a grade later in high school or caught up with the original cohort in some other manner, that student could not graduate within four years of starting 9th grade.