

Dear Chief School Administrators,

Re: Change to 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate **WILL affect AYP status**. Data must be reported to PDE via PIMS **by September 30 2010**.

Effective with the 2009-10 school year, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will begin calculating a “4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate” for all public high schools, comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) and charter schools that graduate students from 12th grade. The transition to the new method of calculating the graduation rate is required by the U.S. Department of Education and is a more precise way to measure the graduation rate than the “4-Year Leaver Graduation Rate” Pennsylvania currently employs.

States must begin using the “4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate” for determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) beginning with the 2011-12 AYP reporting year. Pennsylvania will continue to use a “lag rate” for AYP determinations. Therefore the 2011-12 AYP reports will include “4-Year Cohort Graduation Rates” based on 2010-11 graduates and in comparison to 2009-2010 graduates. Therefore, your 2010 graduate data needs to be complete and accurate because it will impact your 2012 AYP status.

Grad Rate Data from...	4-Year Leaver Graduation Rate	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate
2008-2009	-Used to determine 2009-10 AYP -Reported on Fall 2010 NCLB-required report cards	No impact on AYP
2009-2010	-Used to determine 2010-11 AYP -Reported on Fall 2011 NCLB-required report cards	-Reported on PDE website in Dec 2010 -Reported on Fall 2011 NCLB-required report cards for information purposes only -Used to inform 2011-12 AYP
2010-2011	No longer in use	-Used to determine 2011-12 AYP -Reported on Fall 2012 NCLB-required report cards

In preparation for this transition, Pennsylvania will report each public school’s 2009-10 “4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate” for informational purposes only on the PDE Website in December 2010. In order to publish this cohort graduation rate information, PDE will need the following data submitted in the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) by all LEAs and charter schools by **September 30, 2010**:

1. 2009-10 (and previous three years if necessary) Graduates, Dropouts, and Transfers Out data in the Student Template, Field #65 – “Graduation Status Code”
2. 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10 Cohort data in the Student Template, Field #97 – “Grade 9 Entry Date”

The September 30, 2010 deadline is earlier than the deadline for this information in previous years but still allows LEAs and charter schools ample time to accurately update summer graduate information. You will have the opportunity during the October submission window to finalize data. PDE staff will work with this data throughout November to ensure that the informational report in December is accurate.

Many PIMS administrators across the state have already been working with PDE staff in an effort to ensure cohort data is accurate, and we thank them for their efforts. However, numerous LEAs and charter schools still have significant data errors to address in PIMS that could have a negative impact on their cohort graduation rates that will be publicly reported in December. We ask that you convey the collection date change and the importance of accurate PIMS data to your PIMS administrators and work with them on timely PIMS data “clean-up.” Resources available to you and your staff include:

1. Webinar trainings that have been recorded and are available for review;
2. A “2009-10 Actual 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate Report” which allows PIMS administrator to view a school’s current 4-year cohort graduation rate, based on the data currently in PIMS.
3. PIMS Help Desk for additional support at 1-800-661-2423.

(See instructions below on how to access the Webinars and cohort reports.)

Thank you for your immediate attention to this very important matter. I truly appreciate your continued efforts during this transition as we work together to comply with federal law. PDE will be providing additional information regarding Pennsylvania’s transition to the use of the “4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate” and the implications this rate will have for LEAs and charter schools on the PDE Website. PDE is also working with your professional associations to help communicate the change in graduation rate calculations. Your questions and concerns should be directed to ***RA-CohortGraduation@state.pa.us***. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Amy C. Morton

Instructions on how to access Webinars and cohort reports:

PDE conducted webinars to provide guidance on reporting the cohort data.

- The recordings of these webinars can be found at <http://vclass.cciu.org> in the “Recordings” section.
 - Cohort Cleanup – Phase 1 Webinars were conducted on May 3, 4, and 5.
 - Cohort Cleanup – Phase 2 Webinars were conducted on May 17, 19, and 21.
 - PIMS Graduates, Dropouts, and 4-Year Cohort was conducted on June 16 and July 20, 2010.
- Webinar handouts, including presentations and notes, can be found on the PIMS Website.
 - Go to www.education.state.pa.us.

- Click on “Programs” on the left side of the PDE Website
- Under “Featured Programs” choose the “Pennsylvania Information Management System” link.
- In the “PIMS Documents” section, click on the “PIMS Webinars” link.
- The Webinar Handouts are located in the “Cohort Cleanup” folder at the top of the page

Cohort reports available to your PIMS Administrators:

- The “2009-10 **Actual** 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate” report is based on the actual graduate data that has been reported to PIMS so far.
- Edit reports to identify issues that may be negatively impacting your Cohort Graduation Rate.
- All cohort reports are available via PIMS Reports in Public Folders > eScholar Framework for Cognos - Production > Graduation and Dropout Reports > Cohort Reports.