



New Hampshire

Department of Education *Technical Advisory*

Serving New Hampshire's Education Community

Graduation Rate Calculation

Federal Register Guidance

www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2008-4/102908a.html

This technical advisory is intended to help clarify the Graduation Rate Calculation

Graduation Rate is a key component of federal Title I (NCLB) accountability for states, districts, and schools. In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced final regulations establishing a uniform and more accurate way of calculating high school graduation rates that will be comparable across states. The US ED requires that, beginning with the 2010-2011 assessment year, states must use a 4 year cohort graduation rate for AYP determinations.

The October 2008 Title I regulations require each state to establish a single graduation rate goal and annual targets that reflect continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting or exceeding the goal (C.F.R. § 200.19 (b)(3)(i)(A)-(B)). States are required to establish a graduation rate goal (e.g., 95 percent of students will graduate) that represents the rate they expect high schools to meet, and define annual targets for AYP that schools and districts must demonstrate to show continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year. To make AYP, a school or district must meet the state-established graduation rate goal or the state-established graduation rate targets. The U.S. DOE sets many conditions that must be followed when calculating the graduation rate – for example, we can not include students who do not meet the state minimum standards for graduation, we must only count students who graduate within four years (which includes the summer after the fourth year) and include *all* students, including students on individual education plans and English language learners.

In January 2010, each state submitted its goal and targets for peer review and U.S. Department of Education (Department) approval. The Department then worked with each state to help ensure that its goal and targets complied with the regulations. New Hampshire's goals and targets were approved May 2010. NH has currently set 95% as the ultimate goal for all high schools. NH started with a 75% target for 2010 (Class of 2009) and will increase the targets by 5% each year. The targets may not vary by school or subgroups.

For New Hampshire, because our test is in October, the previous "teaching year" graduation date is used to determine AYP. This means that for the Class of 2010, we will be calculating a 4-year cohort graduation rate using individual student counts and using USED accepted parameters. Our fall assessment is based on achievement from the previous school year, i.e. fall 2010 assessment is based on school year 09-10 achievement and this data is combined with the Class of 2010 graduation rate data to determine AYP for 2011. Starting with this class, we will also be producing, for public information, a 5-year and a 6-year graduation rate for each cohort of students.

How will the NH Department of Education calculate the 4-year graduation rate using the new cohort formula?

To calculate the 4-year graduation rate, NH DOE will track a cohort of students from 9th grade through high school and then divides the number of students who graduate with a regular high school diploma or

Issued by:

Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.

Date Issued:

December 3, 2010

Supersedes

issue dated:

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an adult high school diploma within four years by the total number in the cohort. In other words, the rate provides the percentage of the cohort that graduates in four years or fewer. For example, the formula for the 2007 cohort is:

On time graduates by 2010 (spring + summer graduates)

[[first time 9th graders in year 06-07 + (transfers in) – (transfers out)]

- The final regulations define the “four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate” as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who entered high school four years earlier (adjusting for transfers in and out, émigrés and deceased students—see below).
 - Students who graduate in four years include students who earn a regular high school diploma or an adult high school diploma at the end of their fourth year; before the end of their fourth year; and during a summer session immediately following their fourth year. The diploma must be earned before October 1, of the end of the four years.
 - To remove a student from a cohort, a school or district must confirm that a student has transferred out, emigrated to another country, or is deceased, through a Beginning of Year or End of Year submission in the NH DOE Initiative for School Empowerment and Excellence (i4see) student level data collection system. .
 - For students who transfer out of a school, the written confirmation, maintained by the school, must be official and document that the student has enrolled in another school or in an educational program that culminates in a regular high school diploma or an adult high school diploma. If the student has transferred to another NH public school, the new school must confirm enrollment through i4see.

New Hampshire will use the following method to determine the class of 2010 adjusted 4-year cohort for each school.

- Identify all students who have a 2010 original graduation year in any of the submissions provided during the prior four years. From this group, any student who has an approved exit code (e.g. transferred out of state, to a private school, to home school, or deceased) will be removed.. This number is the denominator in the calculation.
- The same procedure can be used to calculate 5, 6 and 7 year cohorts and rates. For example, a 5-year rate can be calculated in October 2011 by looking at 5 previous years of data for the class of 2010 and making the same adjustments mentioned above.
- State and district rate calculations will include students in private out-of-district placements. When this situation occurs, the district and school rates for a single high school district will differ.

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- When computing State and districts rates, private out-of-district placements will be included with the district of residence, even if the district of residence does not operate a high school.
- The above method will also be used for schools that typically have students for fewer than 4 years, for example, the North Country Charter Academy and other at-risk programs.
- Rates will be reported publicly only when the adjusted cohort (i.e. cell size) is at least 40. For example, a school graduation rate for Students with Disabilities will be reported only if the class of 2010 adjusted Students with Disabilities cohort (i.e. denominator for the rate), as described above, is at least 40.
- The following criteria will be used for identifying and reporting on the subgroups of Students with Disabilities, , English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged, and race/ethnicity categories:
 - A student with an IEP at any time since entering the 8th grade will be in the Students with Disabilities sub-group. The same method will be used for identifying the English Language Learners and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups. For race/ethnicity, the last data submitted for that student will be used for grouping. These are all the federally required subgroups. (CTE reporting requirements are different, and not related to graduating class cohorts.)

NH will use a 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the class of 2010 and is pursuing with the USED the use of a 5 year cohort rate as part of AYP calculations in future years.

Questions and Answers about Graduation Rate

What was the impetus for calculating graduation rates?

In 2001, Congress adopted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which requires states to use a graduation rate that tracks only “on-time” graduates who receive regular diplomas. To help states meet this goal, the National Governors Association (NGA) convened a task force to help states develop a way to measure high school graduation rates. All 50 governors committed to adopting this methodology to track graduation rates in their states. The USED requires that, beginning with the calculation of AYP in 2011-12, all states must use a four year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

How are summer graduates included in the graduation rate calculations?

Summer graduates are included as if they graduated in the prior June. They must have completed by Oct. 1.

What about students who graduate early?

Students who graduate early will count in the cohort to which they were originally assigned.

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What defines a “regular high school diploma”?

A “regular high school diploma” means the standard high school diploma awarded to students that is aligned with the State’s minimum standards. The Adult High School diploma will also be counted in the graduation rate.

Not included are the GED credentials, certificate of attendance or any other alternative diploma or award.

What about students who take longer than four years to graduate?

The Department understands that many students need longer than four years to graduate from high school and that it is important to recognize the accomplishment regardless of the time it takes. Therefore, NH DOE will publish a 5-year and 6 year graduation rate for each cohort when data becomes available.

How are students assigned to cohorts?

Students are assigned to cohorts based on when they first enter grades 9-12 in a New Hampshire public-school system. Once a student is assigned a particular cohort year (e.g., 2007), the student’s cohort never changes. Original graduation year is reported to NH DOE annually. NH DOE verifies that the year has not changed from the previous year’s submission.

How are transfers counted?

- Students who transfer from one NH public school to another NH public school will not be included in the original school cohort, but will be included in the new school’s cohort for the same year.
- There is no cut-off date for transfers into a school in the 4-year graduation rate. For example, a student who transfers into a high school in May of his/her senior year will be counted in that school’s graduation rate.
- Students transferring into the public school system from a private or home school or from out of state will be assigned to the cohort in which the student started 9th grade for the **first** time, regardless of where the student started 9th grade. Students transferring out of the NH public school system or deceased will be removed from their cohort.
- Foreign Exchange students do not count in any cohort.

How are students who are placed “out of district” included?

Publicly funded students placed in private special-education schools or programs will be assigned to a cohort year upon entry into 9th grade and will be included in their district’s (not school’s) graduation rate.

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What happens to students retained in their grade?

A student's cohort does not change when he/she is retained in a grade. Therefore, the student would not count as a graduate in the 4-year rate, but could be counted as a graduate in the 5 or 6-year calculation for that cohort.

Students who are retained in a high-school grade prior to transfer are counted in the second school and district same cohort, but not as a 4-year graduate. For example, if a student repeats grade 9 in school X and then moves to school Y in another district at the start of grade 10 and graduates three years later, he/she is counted in the denominator for school Y but not in the numerator for the 4-year graduation rate. He/she is counted in the numerator for the 5-year graduation rate.

How are high school dropout students counted?

Students who drop out remain in the same cohort. If the student re-enrolls in another school at a later date, the transfer rules would apply.

How is a student who graduates in more than four years counted in the four-year graduation rate?

A student who graduates in more than four years is counted as a non-graduate in the four-year graduation rate. The student may *not* be removed from the cohort or assigned to a different cohort when calculating the four-year graduation rate.

Only students who graduate with a regular high school diploma or adult high school diploma in four years or less may be counted in the numerator. Thus, a student who takes more than four years to graduate, regardless of the reason (i.e., insufficient credits, IEP determinations), must be included in the denominator, but may not be counted in the numerator when calculating the four year-graduation rate. The student will be counted in the five or six year rate if they earn a regular high school diploma or adult high school diploma.

What is the difference between New Hampshire's Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate?

The annual dropout rate measures the percentage of students who drop out of school in a single school year. Beginning with 2007-2008, the Department began using new terminology and a new report format. Previously, all students who left school without some type of diploma/certificate were labeled "dropouts." The new name for this group is "Early Exit Non-Graduates." The sub-category "Dropped Out" are early exiters who, as of the report date, have not completed a GED or enrolled in college. Dropouts are not counted as transfers out and remain in the denominator when calculating the NH Graduation Rate. The annual dropout rate requires only one year of data. Students who earn a GED or are enrolled in college are not dropouts according to NH law, but these same students would not be identified as a graduate for USED Graduation Rate purposes. Calculation of Dropout Rates is addressed in a separate Technical Advisory.

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