

ISBE Center for Performance  
December 11, 2012

Responses to Graduation Rate Inquiry

**1. GED/Alternative school students: When students transfer to an alternative school or GED program, do they count as a transfer with their sending school, or a non-graduate?**

A student will only count as a graduate if s/he receives a “regular high school diploma.

Under Federal rules (34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(iv)), a “regular high school diploma” means the standard high school diploma awarded to students in the State and that is fully aligned with the State’s academic content standards or a higher diploma and does not include a GED credential, certificate of attendance, or any alternative award.

In Illinois, a “regular high school diploma” is a diploma awarded by a local school district. This does not include:

- diplomas awarded through any alternative education program pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/2-3.81 and 23 Illinois Administrative Code Part 215 [primary criterion is passage of the Test of General Educational Development (GED)],
- high school equivalency certificates [based on GED passage], or
- honorary diplomas or certificates of completion issued by local school districts.

A student enrolled in an alternative school will count as a graduate if s/he successfully completes the alternative school course of study and that course of study results in a regular high school diploma as described above. Otherwise, the student will be considered a non-graduate. The student’s status as a graduate/non-graduate will be attributed to the graduation rate of the most recent home school and district for the student.

A GED is not considered a regular high school diploma. As a result, a student who transfers to a GED program would not be considered a graduate upon completion. Thus, all students who transfer to a GED program will be counted as non-graduates with their status counting toward the most recent home school and district for the student.

**One problem with counting transfers to alternative/GED schools as transfers is that they are removed from the four-year graduation rate of the sending school, and because alternative/GED schools do not produce 4-year rates they never are counted in any 4-year graduation rate. If they count as a transfer, are they still included in the calculation of district and state graduation rates, even though they are not connected to a school that produces a 4-year graduation rate?**

GED students are not counted as transfers out and they are not removed from cohort calculation.

**How are students who drop out and then re-enroll counted in the 4-year graduation rate?**

The latest status will be the one counted. In other words, we treat this as though the dropout never happened. However, we do not reset the student's graduation cohort.

**Are they counted twice in dropout statistics if they drop out a second time?**

They will only be counted once.

**2. For students who transfer and then drop out, is there a minimum length of enrollment at the receiving school?**

There is no minimum length of enrollment

**3. What kind of training do school clerks receive to ensure that students who transfer in and out of the school are properly coded, to ensure validation of transfers, and to properly code dropouts?**

Each school district is responsible for deciding who should enter data in the state Student Information System (SIS) and how they will collect the data locally. ISBE provides annual training and a help desk for individuals districts assign to the task on using SIS. We are also in the process of developing a metric guide for the graduation rate so that districts have further guidance about properly entering these data elements.

**4. What are the exit codes that schools use, and how are they classified as dropouts/graduates, transfers in the graduation and dropout statistics?**

The following code is classified as a graduate:

06 – Graduated with regular, advanced, International Baccalaureate, or other type of diploma

The following codes are classified as transfers out (official written document is required):

02 – Transfer to another public school within district

03 – Transfer to home school

04 – Transfer to private school

16 – Victim of a Violent Crime

19 – Transfer to another public school district out of Illinois

20 – Transfer to another public school district in Illinois

The following codes are classified as dropouts:

09 – Dropped Out

10 – Transfer to GED program

11 – Moved, not known to be continuing

14 – Aged Out

**5. How do districts provide student-level information to the state? Is there an electronic system? How often are records updated?**

Districts provide data to ISBE through the state Student Information System (SIS). The data we collect provides exact entry and exit codes and dates for each enrollment. Districts vary in how often they

update their data. Some (e.g., Chicago District 299) send a nightly data feed. All districts are required to update their enrollment data by September 30 and to exit all students at the end of the school year.

**6. Speakers from the alternative schools were concerned that unverified transfers were not counted as dropouts. Could ISBE confirm that this is the case?**

Under state rules, districts and schools need to have official written document in order for students to be counted as transfers out. Otherwise those unverified transfers are to be counted as dropouts. ISBE provides guidance to school districts on this procedure. However, it is important to note that the district data is self-reported.

**7. There was a concern voiced at the last meeting that students are increasingly being counted as chronically truant instead of dropping out. Has this occurred? If so, what accounts for the change?**

We have not seen a rise in the chronic truancy rate.