



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 14, 2024
To: Local Education Agency Leads
Route To: School Business Administrators, Web User Administrators, Principals and School Leads
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services
Deadline: August 30, 2024, 5 p.m.

Action Required: Update and Review NJ SMART Data to Ensure Accurate Graduation Data for School Performance Reports and Accountability

The annual New Jersey Standards Measurement and Resource for Teaching (NJ SMART) Student Identification (SID) Management window to inactivate 2023-2024 graduates and students who transferred from an LEA is currently open. The window will close **August 30, 2024 at 5 p.m.** SID Management is the management system that establishes students' unique identification numbers, compiles demographic data, and tracks graduation data and the pathways students use to meet the [graduation assessment requirements](#).

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will use the data submitted by the August 30, 2024 deadline to calculate 2024 school and district graduation rates, which include four-year, five-year, and six-year rates. This data will be reported in the 2023-2024 School Performance Reports in early 2025.

Key actions

Before the August 30, 2024 deadline, LEAs should take the following steps to ensure accurate graduation rates for their schools and district:

1. Ensure all graduation data is reported correctly by making sure that:
 - All students who will graduate by August 30, 2024 are reported as graduated with the correct school exit withdrawal date;
 - All students who have transferred out of the district have the appropriate exit withdrawal code;
 - The IEP Graduation Course Requirement and IEP Graduation Attendance fields are coded correctly to reflect whether students with disabilities did not meet course and/or attendance requirements because of modification or exemptions in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); and
 - The ELA and Math Graduation Pathway Indicators accurately reflect how students met the graduation assessment requirements.
2. Use the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile district report to review:
 - Cohort 2024 four-year, cohort 2023 five-year, and cohort 2022 six-year graduation rates;
 - Graduation rates and data for each school and the overall district;
 - Whether all students have the correct cohort, cohort status, and accountable school and district;
 - State and federal versions of the graduation rates;
 - Students in the Transfer Out – Unverified category to determine if they have the correct exit withdrawal code or if they were reported by another district using a different state identification number, which may require a SID merge.

Graduation Pathway Reporting

Students graduating with the class of 2024 (between September 1, 2023 and August 30, 2024) were required to meet the [Class of 2024 graduation assessment requirements](#). LEAs report how students met the graduation assessment requirements for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics using the ELA and Math Graduation Pathway Indicators in NJ SMART.

If students took and demonstrated proficiency on the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment, they should be reported with a value of S (NJGPA). Students who took the NJGPA but did not demonstrate proficiency were able to access the second and third pathway options. These students should be reported with the appropriate pathway code that corresponds to the substitute competency test for which they met the designated cut score or a pathway code of N if the student submitted a student portfolio appeal to the NJDOE.

Under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of students with disabilities address whether students must satisfy the State's graduation assessment requirements or demonstrate proficiency through an alternate pathway to graduate. Students with disabilities who did not meet the graduation assessment pathways through the first, second, or third pathway and instead met alternate requirements specified in their IEPs should be reported with a value of M (Alternate requirements specified in IEP.)

Graduation Rate Reporting and Accountability

The NJDOE calculates and reports two versions of graduation rates:

- **State version:** Includes all students who earn a state-endorsed diploma as graduates (in the numerator) in the calculation.
- **Federal version:** Includes only students who earned a state-endorsed diploma and met the state course, local attendance, and, depending on the year of graduation, assessment graduation requirements; pursuant to federal rules, the federal version does not include students with disabilities who receive a state-endorsed diploma but instead met alternate requirements specified in their IEPs.

The NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Profile district reports have been updated for 2024 so that LEAs can view both the state and federal versions of the graduation rate in the same report.

Graduation Resources

Several graduation resources are available to support LEAs in reporting graduation data, explaining how graduation rates are calculated, answering frequently asked questions, and describing how to use the associated district reports. These resources include:

- [Introduction to the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Calculation in New Jersey](#)
- [User Guide to High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile](#)
- [NJ SMART Graduation FAQs](#)
- [Understanding Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates](#)
- [School Exit Withdrawal Codes and Graduation Cohort Status Overview](#)
- [Graduation Data Quality Checklist](#)

[Additional resources and trainings](#) for NJ SMART submissions are available under Documents for Download and eLearning Videos & Webinars.

Required Graduation Reporting Reminder

New Jersey regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.2(f)) require LEAs to report graduation results annually to their district boards of education or charter school boards of trustees at a public meeting no later than September 30, 2024. LEAs are required to report:

1. The total number of students graduating in the prior school year;
2. The number of graduates who met the graduation assessment requirements by:
 - a. Passing a substitute competency test;
 - b. The portfolio appeals process; and
 - c. Meeting alternate requirements specified in their IEPs; and
3. The number of 12th grade students who were denied graduation and how many of those students were denied solely due to failure to meet the graduation assessment requirements.

The information that LEAs report should align with the data that was submitted in NJ SMART SID Management by the August 30, 2024 deadline. If an LEA has submitted graduation appeals that are not yet approved and impact these measures, they may report the information that they have appealed with a note that it is pending approval by the NJDOE.

It is not required for LEAs to report on graduation rates at this time, however if they choose to report on the preliminary adjusted cohort graduation rates that can be found in the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profiles to their local school boards, they should notify the public that the rates are preliminary and may be different from the final graduation rates that will appear in the 2023-2024 School Performance Reports. Final adjusted cohort graduation rates will be available in November, after the Graduation Appeals process is complete.

Contact Information

Contact the NJ SMART help desk at (800) 254-0295 or njsmart@pcgus.com with any questions about NJ SMART submissions. Contact reportcard@doe.nj.gov with any questions about how graduation rates are calculated, reported, or used for accountability purposes.

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