

FACT SHEET 1: CALCULATING GRADUATION RATES

STATUTORY SUMMARY –

On October 29, 2008, The U.S. Department of Education amended Section 200.19 of the Title I regulations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The amendments change the “other academic indicators” that states use in defining “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) including new requirements for calculating graduation rate, which is the other academic indicator for high school.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Question: How is the Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Calculated?

Answer: The regulations require states to calculate graduation rates in a mandated uniform way for the purposes of calculating AYP beginning in the 2011-12 school year. This is referred to as the “adjusted cohort graduation rate.”

The number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma by the end of the 2011-12 school year.

(Divided by)

=
Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

The number of first-time ninth graders in the fall of 2008 “adjusted” by adding students who transfer in and subtracting students who transfer out, emigrate or die during the four-year time period.

2. Question: What is the Extended Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate?

Answer: States can propose to use an “extended adjusted cohort graduation rate” that takes into account students who graduate with a regular high school diploma in more than four years in AYP determinations. This option is subject to the Education Secretary’s approval and must be supported and justified with data.

3. Question: How do Graduation Rates Affect AYP?

Answer: Only the four-year graduation rate and any extended-year graduation rate approved by the Secretary may be used to meet the Title I accountability requirements. In calculating AYP for high schools, states must disaggregate the graduation rate data by subgroup beginning in the 2011-12 school year and no later than the 2012-13 school year. Prior to now, graduation rates have been included in AYP calculations in the aggregate.

States are required to establish a graduation rate goal (e.g., 90 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.

Each state must submit the following information to the U.S. Department of Education:

- The state's graduation-rate goals and targets;
- The graduation rate of the schools at the 10th percentile, 50th percentile, and 90th percentile in the state (ranked in terms of graduation rate); and
- An explanation of how the state will use the extended rate in conjunction with the adjusted rate to calculate AYP.

Prior to 2011-12, states must use a graduation-rate that complies with regulatory requirements, but a specific method is not required.

4. *Question: What is the Impact of the Title I Changes on New York State?*

Answer: Currently in New York state, graduation-rate accountability for the 2008-09 school year will be based on the 2004 graduation rate cohort. The 2004 graduation rate cohort consists of all students, regardless of their current grade level including:

- Students who first entered grade 9 (anywhere) during the 2004-05 school year or all un-graded students with disabilities who reached their seventeenth birthday in the 2004-05 school year;
- Students enrolled in the school/district for 5 months or longer; and
- Students enrolled in the school/district less than 5 months but were previously enrolled in the same school/district for 5 months or longer between the date they first entered grade 9 and the date they last ended enrollment.

The graduation-rate is currently calculated as the percentage of these students who earned a regular high school diploma no later than the end of year four.

An exception is made for high schools where a majority of students participate in a state-approved five-year program that results in the receipt of certification in a career or technology field in addition to a high school diploma.

5. *Question: How Have the 2008 Title I Regulations Changed the Requirements for Disaggregating Graduation Rate Data?*

Answer: For a school/district to make AYP in graduation-rate in New York state, the graduation rate of the **ALL** students group (all students in the graduation-rate cohort) must equal the state standard or the group's progress target. For accountability groups below the state standard in graduation rate, the progress target is an alternate method for making AYP or qualifying for Safe Harbor based on improvement in the previous year's performance.

The 2008 regulations require New York state to disaggregate the graduation-rate data by subgroups no later than the 2012-13 school year in calculating AYP.

ADVICE TO LOCAL LEADERS

- Local leaders should designate union member(s) to monitor graduation rates in the aggregate and disaggregated by subgroups during the transitional time period and implementation of the disaggregated graduation-rate.
- Work with the school district to develop strategies to improve graduation rates for students.
- Work with the Professional Development Team to provide appropriate support to raise graduation rates.