



2008 Cohort Methodology Overview

To comply with the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*, Michigan moved to an accountability system in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn regular diplomas within four years of entering high school. This calculation meets the guidelines provided by the National Governors Association (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact for calculation of such rates. As more and more states implement the NGA standard, state-to-state comparisons will become more meaningful. The release of graduation rates for the class of 2008 marks the second time that Michigan has used a cohort four-year graduation rate.

The formula for the calculation of 2008 graduation rates is possible because school districts have been tracking the enrollment of individual students since those students first enrolled in the 9th grade in the 2004-2005 school year and reporting that data to CEPI. The gathering of this information at a statewide level allows CEPI to help districts adjust enrollments to reflect "transfers in" and "transfers out" of the district, as well as students who exit from the public education system itself, over the course of four years.

The following pages list the business rules and methodology used by CEPI and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to identify students as members of a graduation cohort and for the calculation of graduation and dropout rates:

- Ungraded students:
 - The ungraded alternative education code (educational setting "13") was removed from the Single Record Student Database (SRSD) beginning in fall 2007. Students who are beyond the computed grade of 12 (beyond the age of 18) will be excluded from cohort calculations. Schools will not be held accountable for these students.
 - Students who are reported in a traditional grade, assigned to a cohort and are subsequently reported in adult education (educational setting "20") will be counted as "other high school completers" if they receive their General Educational Development (GED) certificate. If these students do not receive their GEDs, they will be counted as dropouts.
- Residency Codes - SRSD Field 30:
 - The following groups of students will not be included in the graduation and dropout rates. Under *Non-resident*, codes "04" Non-public school student and "07" Home-schooled non-resident will be excluded. Under *Resident*, codes "08" Non-public school student and "15" Home schooled resident will be excluded.
 - Students attending the Michigan School for the Deaf and Blind (code "11") will be counted in the state rates only.
- Cohort Year:
 - Students are placed in a cohort when they are first identified as ninth-graders.
 - Students reported in educational setting "13" and "14" (special education setting) are assigned a cohort using a computed grade (age minus 5). These students will only be placed in a cohort if they are at least 14 years old.
 - Students who transfer into the public education system after ninth grade are placed in the appropriate cohort based on the grade in which the initial Michigan district places them.
 - The end-of-year (EOY) SRSD collection will not be used to set the cohort year for a student unless the EOY collection is the only collection for the student.

- **Accountability:**
 - A student will not be included in the building-level graduation and dropout rates until the student has been reported in that building for at least two count days, based on Full Time Equivalency (FTE) from fall and spring counts. In the event the student has been in the building for less than two count days, the student will be included only in the district-level and state-level rates.
 - A student will not be included in the district-level graduation and dropout rates until the student is reported in that district for a least one count day, based on FTE from fall or spring counts. In the event the student has been in the district for less than one count day, the student will be included only in the state-level rates.
 - For a student, when an accountable district/building cannot be determined (using the student's last submitted exit status and FTE), the previously accountable district/building will be used.
 - For a new student, when an accountable district/building cannot be determined and there is no previously accountable district/building, this student will only be included in the state-level graduation and dropout rates until a collection where accountability can be determined.
 - The EOY SRSD collection will not be used to determine the accountable building or district.

- **Schools/Facilities who will not receive graduation and/or dropout rates:**
 - An entity identified as a 9th grade building may have a dropout rate, but will not have a completion or graduation rate.
 - An entity identified as an intermediate school district (ISD) school that does not graduate students may have a dropout rate, but will not have a completion or graduation rate.
 - An entity identified as an ISD district that does graduate students will have a graduation and dropout rate.
 - Career and technical education (CTE) facilities and math/science centers are not considered accountable entities and will not receive graduation or dropout rates.

- **Subgroup Determination:**

A student will be assigned to a subgroup based on the second to last collection that the student was reported to the SRSD, unless the student was only reported in one SRSD collection. Below are the subgroup populations:

 - race/ethnicity
 - gender
 - supplemental nutrition eligibility
 - migrant status
 - limited English proficiency status
 - special education status

- **Graduation/Dropout Review and Comment Application:**
 - District authorized users will be able to request to modify certain characteristics of a student's record. All requests will require approval by the ISD Auditor, the Michigan Department of Education, or CEPI. Certain modifications may require the district user to provide evidence to his/her ISD auditor as to why this modification needs to occur. Any modifications that have not been reviewed and approved will not be changed. Modifications will be limited to the following:
 - District users may request that student UICs be linked
 - CEPI will provide the review and approval for UIC linkage requests.
 - District users may request an accountability reappoint
 - CEPI will provide the review and approval for accountability reappoint requests.

- District users may request a cohort year change
 - CEPI will provide the review and approval for cohort year change requests.
 - District users may request a change in student exit status
 - ISD auditors will provide the review and approval of all requests for exit status changes.
 - Appropriate verification documentation must be provided to the ISD for approval of any exit status changes.
 - District users will not be able to request changes to student demographics including program participation. Based on feedback from a group of ISD Auditors, it was deemed too onerous for ISDs to approve these change requests as part of their audit process. The following data fields can not be changed:
 - race/ethnicity
 - gender
 - supplemental nutrition eligibility
 - migrant status
 - limited-English proficiency status
 - special education status
- During the review/request for modification period in GAD, district users will not be able to see their graduation/dropout rates, including information about subgroups. After the review period has ended, ISD auditors will be provided four weeks to approve or deny any district requests. During the ISD auditor review period, district users will be able to view their graduation and dropout rates, including information about subgroups with accepted changes.
- Calculating Building/District/State Rates:
 - Buildings in which students who have been ordered by the court to attend are not included in the district's rate, only the building's rate.
 - A student will not be included in the building-level graduation and dropout rates until the student has been reported in that building for at least two count days, based on Full Time Equivalency (FTE) from fall and spring counts. In the event the student has been in the building for less than two count days, the student will be included only in the district-level and state-level rates.
 - A student will not be included in the district-level graduation and dropout rates until the student is reported in that district for a least one count day, based on FTE from fall or spring counts. In the event the student has been in the district for less than one count day, the student will be included only in the state-level rates.

To calculate the cohort four-year graduation and dropout rates after transfers are accounted for, students are placed into one of four categories:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less
2. Other completer - earned a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, other certificate, or reached the special education maximum age
3. Off-track (graduated & continuing) - completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years, or did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school
4. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown

A student is counted toward the graduation rate of the final building or district that the student attended during the four-year period. "On-track graduated" is counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories. The total of the status categories is the 2008 Cohort Total.

- The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort four-year graduation rate:
 - $\text{On-track Graduated} / [\text{On-track Graduated} + \text{Off-track (Graduated \& Continuing)} + \text{Other Completers} + \text{Dropouts}]$
- The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort four-year dropout rate:
 - $\text{Dropouts} / [\text{Dropouts} + \text{On-track Graduated} + \text{Off-track (Graduated \& Continuing)} + \text{Other Completers}]$

New five-year graduation and dropout rates are calculated for students in the 2007 cohort. The five-year graduation rate is calculated in the same manner as the four-year rate, including students who graduated in the fifth year (Off-track graduated) in the numerator. "On-track graduated" and "Off-track graduated" are counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories (on-track graduated, off-track graduated, off-track continuing, other completer, and dropout). Transfers-in and out during that fifth year are accounted for as well.

- The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort five-year graduation rate:
 - $[\text{On-track Graduated} + \text{Off-track Graduated}] / [\text{On-track Graduated} + \text{Off-track (Graduated \& Continuing)} + \text{Other Completers} + \text{Dropouts}]$

The new five-year dropout rate is calculated in the same manner as the four-year rate, including those students who dropped out of high school in their fifth year. Transfers-in and out during that fifth year are accounted for as well.

- The following formula is utilized for calculating the cohort five-year dropout rate:
 - $\text{Dropouts} / [\text{Dropouts} + \text{On-track Graduated} + \text{Off-track (Graduated \& Continuing)} + \text{Other Completers}]$

A detailed list of cohort status categories and SRSD exit codes are available in the GAD User Guide.