# 2024 Dashboard On Demand Session: Graduation Rate Indicator

California Department of Education | November 2024

## Welcome

This Notetaking Guide is a supplementary resource to the 2024 On Demand Session for the Graduation Rate Indicator that is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardtoolkit.asp>.

### Agenda

* Overview of the California School Dashboard (Dashboard)
* General Rules about the Dashboard
* The Graduation Rate Indicator
* Differences Between DataQuest and the Dashboard
* Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
* Contacting Us

## Overview of the Dashboard

The California School Dashboard (Dashboard) is an online tool that displays the performance of local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and student groups on a set of state and local measures to assist in identifying strengths, challenges, and areas in need of improvement. The goal of the Dashboard is to help communities across the state access important information about students in transitional kindergarten through grade twelve.

### Dashboard State Indicators

The Dashboard features seven state indicators that provide important information on how LEAs and schools are serving their students. The information used for these indicators are based on data collected statewide.

* Academic Performance, which includes measures for both English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics
* English Learner Progress
* Chronic Absenteeism
* Graduation Rate
* Suspension Rate
* College/Career
* Science (for informational purposes only on the 2024 Dashboard)

### Measurement of Performance

The measurement of performance for LEAs, schools and student groups on the Dashboard is done by looking at two years of data.

* Current Year Data indicates **Status**.
* A comparison between Current and Prior Year’s Data indicates **Change**.

It is the combination of Status and Change that determines color performance on the Dashboard. LEAs, schools, and student groups receive one of five colors that range from red (lowest performance level) to blue (highest performance level).

## Graduation Rate Indicator Basics

### What is this Indicator?

This indicator represents the percentage of students who graduate high school within a specified timeframe with a standard high school diploma.

### Graduation Rate Indicator Formula

The Graduation Rate Indicator on the Dashboard uses a combined four- and five-year graduation rate. This combined rate was approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) in July 2019 to provide additional credit to those LEAs and schools that graduate students in their fifth year.

### What is the Combined Graduation Rate?

The rate consists of two sets of students:

1. Students in the most current graduating class
2. Graduates in five years as part of the prior year graduating class

### 2024 Dashboard Combined Graduation Rate Formula

The combined four- and five-year graduation rate formula for the 2024 Dashboard is:

* Number of Students in Class of 2024 Who Earned a Regular High School Diploma within four years; **and**
* Number of Students in Class of 2023 Who Earned a Regular High School Diploma during 2023–24 (i.e., fifth-year graduates).

Divided by

* Total Number of Students in the Class of 2023; **and**
* Number of Students in Class of 2023 Who Earned a Regular High School Diploma during 2023–24.

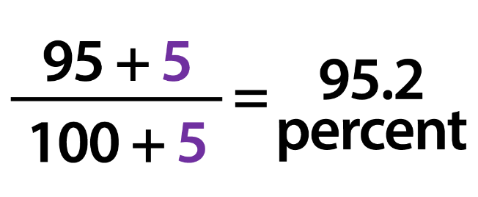
The graphic below also identifies the formula:

Number of Students Who Earn a Regular High School Diploma within Four Years 
Plus
Number of Students from Prior Cohort Who Earn a Regular High School Diploma within Five YearsTotal Number of Students in the
Four-Year Graduation Cohort
Plus
Number of Students from Prior
Cohort Who Earn a Regular High
School Diploma within Five Years

### Example of Calculating the Combined Graduation Rate

* For the Class of 2024, there were **95 graduates** out of **100 students** in the four-year cohort.
* For the Class of 2023, **five students** graduated in their fifth year (i.e., graduated in 2023–24).

**The combined graduation rate is:**



### Students in the Graduation Rate

When students first enroll in ninth grade, they become part of the denominator of a four-year graduation rate (i.e., the student becomes a part of a graduating class).

Students ***included*** in the **denominator** of the cohort include those who:

* dropped out during the last four-year period;
* transferred into a school during the last four-year period;
* lost transfers (these are students who exited out of a school as a transfer, but never enrolled in another school by Fall Census Day); and
* transferred to an Adult Education Program or Community College. (Students who transfer to an adult education program or community college during their four or five years of high school without earning a regular high school diploma are included in the cohort [denominator] and counted as other transfers [excluded from the numerator]).

The cohort also includes students who transfer in later during grade nine or during the next three years.

**CALPADS Exit codes excluded from the denominator of the cohort:**

| CALPADS  Exit Category Code | Description |
| --- | --- |
| E130 | Died |
| T180 | Transfer to Private School |
| T200 | Transfer to a High School Out of California |
| T240 | Transfer/Emigrated out of the U.S. |
| T310 | Transfer to a health facility |
| T370 | Transfer to an Institution with a High School Diploma Program |
| T460 | Transfer to home school program |

One additional consideration for the denominator of the cohort is regarding students with disabilities who receive special education services specifically focused on the student’s transition from secondary education to career and college. Students who are marked with a “Y” in the “**Adult Age Students with Disabilities in Transition Status**” (field 1.34 from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System [CALPADS] Student Enrollment [SENR] file) are ***also excluded*** from the denominator of the combined rate.

### Who is Counted as a Graduate?

Only students who receive a standard high school diploma are counted as graduates.

* Due to the restrictions by the US Department of Education, students earning all other high school equivalency certificates and examinations (e.g., GED®, HiSET®, the California High School Proficiency Examination [CHSPE], and the Special Education Certificate of Completion) cannot be counted as graduates.

### How Are Early Graduates Counted?

Students who graduate high school in less than four years are counted in the **original cohort** in which they began.

* Example: A grade eleven student graduated early in 2022–23 (after three years). Because the student belongs to the Class of 2024, even though the student receives a diploma a year early, the student will be included in the graduation rate for the Class of 2024.

### Graduation Cut Off Date

For a student to be counted as a graduate in the current year, the student must graduate **by August 15**.

For the 2024 Dashboard:

* Class of 2024 must graduate by August 15, 2024, to be counted as a fourth-year graduate
* Class of 2023 must graduate by August 15, 2024, to be counted as a fifth-year graduate

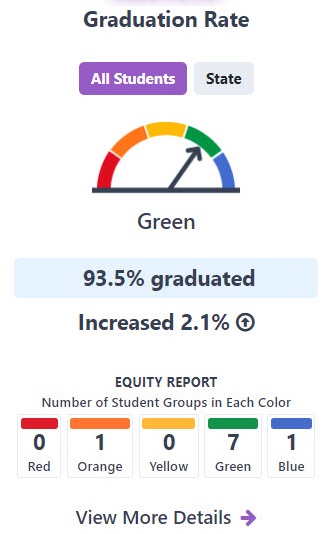
Keep in mind that summer school students must graduate by August 15 to be counted as a graduate in the current year.

### Transfer Students

When students transfer, the **last school** where a student is enrolled is held accountable for the students’ graduation outcomes.

### Graduation Rate Indicator on the Dashboard

Baseball cards will be the first level of information available to schools and LEAs related to the Graduation Rate Indicator. They show Performance Levels or colors, Status, Change, and the equity report.



**Description of Graduation Rate Baseball Card**

This card reports the results of a school or LEA's Graduation Rate Indicator. The gauge shows five different possible Performance Levels: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, and Blue. This sample baseball card displays an Green Performance Level, or color, with the gauge pointing to the green section and the word "Green" under the gauge. Under the gauge, there is the reporting for Status and Change. In this example, the Status shows a Graduation Rate of 93.5 percent and an increase of 2.1 percentage points from the prior year. Finally, at the bottom of the card, the equity report shares the number of student groups in each Performance Level or color. In this example, no student groups were in Red or Yellow, one group was in Orange, seven were in Green and one in Blue. There is a link to view more details at the base of the card, which provides more specific student group information.

### Graduation Rate Indicator Cut Scores

The SBE has approved one set of cut scores for both Status and Change for this indicator. These cut scores are used for all districts and schools, including both DASS and charter schools.

### Graduation Rate Five-by-Five

An LEA, school, or student group’s performance level (color) is determined through the use of a five-by-five colored table that utilizes both the Status level and Change level.

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As a reminder, for some indicators very low is the desired outcome, so each state indicator has its own five-by-five table to properly identify the performance level (color).

Five-by-five tables and cut scores are available for each of the indicators on the 2024 Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardtoolkit.asp>

**Five-By-Five Colored Table**

| **Performance Level** | **Declined Significantly** | **Declined** | **Maintained** | **Increased** | **Increased Significantly** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very High** | N/A | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| **High** | Orange | Yellow | Green | Green | Blue |
| **Medium** | Orange | Orange | Yellow | Green | Green |
| **Low** | Red | Orange | Orange | Yellow | Yellow |
| **Very Low** | Red | Red | Red | Red | Red |

### Three-by-Five

Select LEAs and schools with small populations are more susceptible to large swings in results from year to year. To account for this, a three-by-five table is applied when the N size is less than 150 at the LEA, school, and student group levels for specific indicators, such as the Graduation Rate Indicator.

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The three-by-five table removes both the “Increased Significantly” and “Declined Significantly” Change levels from performance level determinations. Small student populations with less than 150 students in the denominator of the Graduation Rate Indicator will receive only one of **three Change levels:** Increased, Maintained, and Declined.

**Three-By-Five Colored Table**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Level** | **Declined** | **Maintained** | **Increased** |
| **Very High** | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| **High** | Yellow | Green | Green |
| **Medium** | Orange | Yellow | Green |
| **Low** | Orange | Orange | Yellow |
| **Very Low** | Red | Red | Red |

### Verify Your Graduation Data Before It is Extracted for Dashboard Use!

LEAs can validate their **four-year** cohort counts prior to certification using the following two CALPADS Reports:

* *15.1 Cohort Outcome – Counts and Rates* for summary results*, and*
* *15.2 Cohort Outcomes – Student Details* to access student-level data

These reports are available year-round and can be reviewed throughout the CALPADS EOY certification window. Further information about these reports is available in the *Connecting CALPADS to the Dashboard* handbook. This handbook contains print screens to help you navigate through these reports and includes examples and questions to consider prior to certification. The 2023–24 handbook is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/documents/caldashhandbook24.docx>.

### DASS One-Year Graduation Rate

Beginning with the 2022 Dashboard, the use of modified methods was no longer allowable due to the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED’s) denial of California’s waiver. Therefore, **beginning with the 2022 Dashboard, DASS schools:**

* Received the combined four-and five-year graduation rate for the Graduation Rate Indicator (rather than the DASS one-year graduation rate).

However, the waiver denial from the ED affects the requirements under **federal law** (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]). **State law**, as provided by the California *Education Code* Section 52052(d), continues to permit the use of the DASS program and reporting of data separately for alternative schools. Therefore, the CDE will continue to produce and display the DASS one-year graduation rate for informational purposes on both the Dashboard and the School Dashboard Additional Reports (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dbadditionalrpts.asp>).

### Differences Between Dashboard and DataQuest

Both the Dashboard and DataQuest report data on the graduation rate. However, different rules are used, which may cause differing results. The following identifies the differences:

#### The Dashboard:

* reports the Combined Four- and Five-Year Graduation Rates;
* excludes charter school data from authorizer’s results; and
* applies the DSEA or the District of Residence rule for Students with Disabilities.

#### DataQuest:

* reports the Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates;
* uses filters to include/exclude charter schools’ data from authorizers’ results; and
* does not apply the District of Residence rule. Rather, Students with Disabilities are reported at the District of Attendance.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### I have a grade eleven student who is graduating this year. When are early graduates included in the graduation rate?

Early grade eleven graduates are included in the graduation rate along with the rest of their class. Therefore, if a grade eleven student graduated this year, then the student will not be included in this year’s graduation rate. The student will be included in next year’s graduation rate along with the rest of the cohort.

### Why aren’t students who completed a high school equivalency test counted as a graduate for the combined rate?

The U.S. Department of Education requires that only students who receive a standard high school diploma are counted as graduates. Therefore, students who complete a GED®, HiSET®, the California High School Proficiency Examination [CHSPE], and the Special Education Certificate of Completion) cannot be counted as graduates.

### Will students who complete the alternative diploma pathway be included in the graduation rate?

Students with exceptional needs, who entered ninth grade in the 2022–23 school year or later, attending a school district, county office of education, charter school, or state special school can graduate from high school through a newly defined diploma by meeting certain requirements.

Students exiting with this School Completion Status Code within four or five years of their initial ninth grade cohort entry year will be counted as graduates in the Four-Year and Five -Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for the Dashboard.

### Is the DASS One-Year graduation rate used for accountability?

No. Because of the ED’s denial of California’s use of a modified graduation rate, the DASS one-year graduation rate can no longer be used for accountability. Therefore, the combined four- and five-year graduation rate is used to determine Differentiated Assistance at the LEA-level and Comprehensive Support and Improvement/Additional Targeted Support and Improvement at the school-level.

### Can I still update my graduation data for the Dashboard even though End-of-Year has closed?

No. The graduation rate data is extracted out of CALPADS immediately after the End-of-Year (EOY) window closes. Therefore, any updates made in CALPADS after the close of EOY will not be incorporated in the Dashboard.

### Additional Help with the Graduation Rate Indicator

* The CDE Graduation Rate Indicator web page: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardgrad.asp>
* CA School Dashboard Technical Guide:  
  <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide24.asp>
* The CDE School Dashboard Additional Reports web page: <https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/>

## General Rules About the Dashboard

### A Rule About Charter Schools

Because charter schools are treated as LEAs under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), their data are not included in their authorizer’s Dashboard report.

### Dashboard for 30 or More Students

* Performance Level (color) gauge graphic displayed
* Status and Change reported
* Held accountable for support determinations

### Dashboard for 11 to 29 Students

* Performance Level (color) graphic greyed out
* Status and Change reported
* Not held accountable for support determinations

### Dashboard for Fewer than 11 Students

* Performance Level (color) graphic greyed out
* Status and Change not reported
* Not held accountable for support determinations

### N-Size Threshold Exception

For **Foster Youth, Homeless and Long-Term English Learner (LTEL) student groups only,** the N-size thresholds are different at LEA and school levels.

* LEA-level: N-size must be 15 or more students in the denominator to be reported on the Dashboard and held accountable.
* School-level: N-size must be 30 or more students in the denominator to be reported on the Dashboard and held accountable.

For this exception, **charter schools** are treated as schools (not LEAs). Therefore, charter schools will need 30 or more students in the denominator for Foster Youth, Homeless and LTEL student groups to be held accountable.

### District of Special Education Accountability (DSEA)

The DSEA rule is applied to **all state measures** for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) who receive special education services at another district or county office of education. The data generated by these students are “sent back” to their district of residence or DSEA and included in the DSEA’s Dashboard. For example, the district where the student geographically resides is held accountable for the student’s graduation outcomes and that data is included in the district of residence’s Graduation Rate Indicator.

Note that this rule applies to **LEAs only.** All schools, including charter schools, are held accountable for all SWDs.

For further information on the DSEA rule, refer to District of Special Education Accountability Rule for Students with Disabilities Flyer on the CDE website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/documents/districtresidencerule24.pdf>

### Contacting Us

Email the Analysis, Measurement, and Accountability Reporting Division at [dashboard@cde.ca.gov](mailto:dashboard@cde.ca.gov).

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter): [@CDEDashboard](https://twitter.com/cdedashboard)