

Frequently Asked Questions 2020-21 Graduation Rate Process

This document aims to address common questions that arise during the graduation cohort process, especially during the window in which districts may submit required documentation and make changes in EIS. For details on using the Cohort application and timelines, please reference the [2020 Graduation Cohort Protocol](#).

1. **Why are the changes I made in EIS not reflected in the Cohort application?**

Changes in EIS will update in the Cohort application automatically each morning during Phase I of the graduation rate process. During Phase II, the department will allow completion information updates for summer graduates **only**. Please note that completion information for summer graduates does not update automatically and will thus be reflected within one week of the changes being made in your district's student information system. In order to make sure the data in EIS are accurately reflected in the Cohort application, please ensure that the changes were made on the correct screen(s) for the correct field(s) for the correct student(s) in your SIS or the Enhanced Data Entry screen **well before the June 11, 2021 deadline**.

*Please note that only EIS changes made during Phase I will automatically update in the Cohort application. It is the district's responsibility to ensure the Cohort application has been updated with all changes reported to EIS **before the close of Phase I on June 11**. Please check periodically to ensure all changes are accurately reflected in the Cohort application.*

2. **What should I do if the cohort has a student with multiple state IDs or two students with the same student ID?**

These cases can arise when students transfer between districts or because of atypical enrollment situations. In order to reconcile these records, please contact the Help Desk at DT.Support@tn.gov. **Once the duplicate ID has been merged**, use the Cohort Change Request Worksheet to submit the ID to TNEG.Graduates@tn.gov for exclusion. Specific directions for this process are in the Change Request Instructions and can be found under the Instructions page on the Cohort application. The instructions include submission dates and details.

3. **What should I do if a "year entered grade 9" is listed incorrectly in the Cohort application?**

In the event of a disputed year entered grade 9, the district must provide a transcript documenting that the actual year the student entered grade 9 was prior to the year reported in the Cohort application. However, if the student was not properly included in the prior year's graduation rate, the request may be denied. Districts can use the Change Request Worksheet to submit these changes to TNEG.Graduates@tn.gov. Specific directions for this process are in the Change Request Instruction and can be found under the Instructions page on the Cohort application. The instructions include submission dates and details.

4. **What should I do if our district has documentation that a student transferred to another school/district, but there is no subsequent enrollment in EIS?**

In order for a student to be removed from the cohort, he or she must be reported in EIS by the receiving

school. Students with withdrawal codes 3, 4, or 14—indicating a transfer to another Tennessee district or school—who do not have a subsequent enrollment, will be flagged in the Cohort application, and the student will remain in your cohort unless proper action is taken. The district must work with the receiving school to have the student's subsequent enrollment reported in EIS **by the end of Phase I on June 11**. If this does not occur, the student cannot be automatically removed from the cohort. For this reason, the department encourages districts to check periodically and follow up with the receiving school if the subsequent enrollment is not reflected in EIS.

5. How should I update EIS to reflect a student who was placed in jail or the custody of the Department of Children's Services (DCS)?

Withdrawal code 2 should be used **only** if the student transfers to a DCS school or a state-approved institution that offers an education program culminating in a regular high school diploma. Districts must submit documentation that the student is receiving educational services resulting in a regular high school diploma. If the documentation does not support that the student was receiving educational services while at the DCS or state-approved institution, the request will be denied.

Withdrawal code 2 is **not** to be used for students placed in jail or prison where no education program culminating in a regular high school diploma is offered. Withdrawal code 11 should be used for students withdrawn under court order or other government placement, such as jail or prison.

6. How should I update EIS to document early graduates?

In order for an early graduate to be properly documented in the cohort, districts must accurately report in EIS **all of the three following components** in their Student Information System **before the end of Phase I on June 11**:

1. The withdrawal code for the early graduate should be 12,
2. The listed graduation date should be before spring graduation, and
3. The completion type should represent one of the following regular high school diploma codes.
 - a. 1 - Regular diploma
 - b. 11 - Foreign language waiver
 - c. 12 - Art waiver
 - d. 13 - Foreign language and art waiver

7. How should I document an exchange student in the cohort who will not receive a diploma?

Students who are enrolled under a student exchange program who will not receive a diploma should be withdrawn using code 5 as an out-of-state transfer. For an explanation of required documentation by withdrawal code, please refer to the 2019 Withdrawal Code Guidance document located on the Instructions page of the Cohort application.

8. Why does the department require accurate information regarding student subgroup inclusion, and what should I do if our subgroup information is inaccurate?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that states calculate and report disaggregated subgroup graduation rates. At a minimum, every student must be included in a race/ethnicity subgroup.

Where appropriate, students may also be flagged as Economically Disadvantaged (ED), English Learners

(EL), Students with Disabilities (SWD), or Career and Technical Education (CTE). Students should be included in the ED, EL, or SWD subgroup(s) if the student was included in the subgroup at any time since entering high school. For instance, if a student was receiving special education services for two years in high school but was no longer receiving services at the time of graduation, the student must still be flagged for inclusion in the SWD subgroup for the purposes of graduation rate calculations. Please verify student subgroup assignment(s) in the cohort .CSV download file.

9. Why does the “Included in Cohort” column show a “P?”

The “P” reflects the fact that the student’s inclusion in the cohort is “pending.” Unless required supporting documentation is submitted for pending students **during Phase I** and approved by the department, the code will automatically change to a “Y” to signify that the student **is** included in the cohort. If the documentation is approved, the code will be changed to “N” to signify that the student **is not** included in the cohort. These decisions and changes to the cohort will be reported during Phase III.

10. Which withdrawal codes require supporting documentation, and how can I upload these documents?

Districts must upload supporting documentation for students withdrawn using codes 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, and 17 for school years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. Districts can upload required documentation using the **Attach** link feature. For a more comprehensive list of adequate documentation for each applicable withdrawal code, please consult section 3 of the [2021 Graduation Cohort Protocol](#).

11. What should I do if a student repeated a grade, and I want to include them in a subsequent cohort?

The U.S. Department of Education requires that the cohort is composed based on the year the student **first entered grade 9**. For example, if a student first entered grade 9 in the 2017-18 school year but was retained and repeated grade 9 during the 2017-18 school year, the student must be included in the 2017 cohort, per federal guidelines.

For this example, if a student entered grade 8 in 2017-18 but was retained and repeated grade 8 during the 2017-18 school year, the student would be in the 2018 cohort. It is important to note that if this student’s EIS enrollment automatically rolled over with the 2017 cohort, the student may be removed from the 2017 cohort with approved documentation and completing the [Change Request worksheet](#) using the [Cohort Change Request guidance](#) found on the Instructions page of the Cohort application.

12. How should I document a student in EIS who is enrolled at an alternative school but will graduate from their original high school with a regular diploma?

In order to be counted as a *graduate*, students must graduate from a regular high school, not an alternative high school, on time and with a regular diploma. According to TCA § 49-6-3402(b): “All course work completed and credits earned in the alternative schools shall be transferred to and recorded in the student’s home school, which shall grant credit earned and progress thereon as if earned in the home school.” Three actions are required in order for this to take effect:

1. The student must be withdrawn from the alternative school on or before the penultimate day of the school year.
2. The student must be enrolled in the regular high school on or before the penultimate day of the

school year.

3. The graduation date and completion type must be entered in EIS, and the graduation date must fall within the school's defined calendar in EIS.

13. What should I do if I find a student who should have been included in a prior year's cohort?

Students who should have been included in a prior year's cohort cannot be removed, per federal law. For example, if a student's first year in grade 9 is 2016, but their enrollment is showing in the 2017 cohort, they must stay. Although the student is not in that cohort, the 2016 cohort rates have been calculated and released, and removing the student would leave the student without a cohort, tainting the quality of the data. Federal law requires students to be included in their **enrolled** first year grade 9 cohort. This is a district enrollment error and should have been changed the previous year.

14. What should I do if I find a student who transferred to homeschool?

Students who have been enrolled in homeschool require a code 10, and the official withdrawal from must be signed by the parent.

15. Would a picture of a student appearing to graduate classify as approved documentation to remove a student from a cohort?

No, documentation must prove the student earned a regular high school diploma. Students could participate in a completion ceremony and receive a certificate that is not a regular high school diploma. A transcript or diploma would be approved documents.

16. What should I do if I find a student who spent less than 60 days in my school or district?

Students who are enrolled less than 60 days in a school or district are eligible to be removed and returned to the school or district in which they were enrolled the majority of their high school career. These changes will be submitted to TNEG.Graduates@tn.gov during Phase II as an appeal. Cohort appeals resources can be found on the Instructions page of the Cohort application.