

# **Technical Guide for the 2003-04 Florida High School Graduation Rate**

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/eiaspubs/reports.htm>

Education Information and Accountability Services



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Florida Department of Education  
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\*The abbreviation *DOE* designates the Florida Department of Education.

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## **Introduction**

This guide is designed to help MIS and program personnel understand data collection procedures and programming for calculating Florida's high school graduation rate. Note that beginning with the 1998-99 school year, Florida implemented a cohort-based method for calculating the rate based on the compilation and tracking of individual student records.

Ideally, the graduation rate calculation should account for every student entering and leaving the school population. The calculation is designed to account for students who transfer out of the school population by removing them from the group of students (cohort) for which the school district is held responsible. Likewise, students who transfer into the school population are added to the cohort by being included in the count of the class with which they were initially scheduled to graduate (i.e., upon entry). For example, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader who transfers into the district will be included with the 4-year cohort of students who entered ninth grade for the first time during the previous year.

Determining the denominator for the formula involves the following steps: determine the cohort of students who enrolled as first-time ninth-graders four years prior to the year for which the graduation rate is to be measured; add to this group any subsequent incoming transfer students who are on the same schedule to graduate; and subtract students who transfer out for various reasons, or who are deceased. The numerator simply consists of the number of graduates from this group (diploma recipients)\*. Information on the programming used to execute these calculations is provided in the section on DOE programming steps (p. 3).

Districts will be able to review and verify the data used in formulating the new rate by viewing/downloading customized files as described in the section titled "Electronically Viewable Reports for Districts" (p. 4).

Data-reporting concerns relating to the new graduation rate calculation are addressed in the section titled "Submitting and Reviewing Corrections to the Data" (p. 5), which also addresses procedures for correcting previously submitted data.

Finally, the listing on p. 6 provides additional information for resources on Florida's high school graduation rate.

\* Excludes certificates of completion.

## Applicable DOE Database Reporting Formats and Data Elements

The specific reporting formats and data elements used in the department’s programming for the new rate are listed below. Reporting format titles are highlighted in boldface type. Data elements are italicized.

### **Student Demographic Information**

*District Number, Current Enrollment*

*School Number, Current Enrollment*

*Student Number Identifier, Florida*

*Survey Period Code*

*Grade Level*

*Year*

*Student Number Identifier—Alias, Florida*

### **Student Course Schedule**

*District Number, Current Enrollment*

*School Number, Current Enrollment*

*Student Number Identifier, Florida*

*Survey Period Code*

*Fiscal Year*

*Course Number*

### **Prior School Status/Student Attendance**

*District Number, Current Enrollment*

*School Number, Current Enrollment*

*Student Number Identifier, Florida*

*School Year*

*Survey Period Code*

*Withdrawal Code, PK-12*

*Withdrawal Date*

### **Student End of Year Status**

*District Number, Current Enrollment*

*School Number, Current Enrollment*

*Student Number Identifier, Florida*

*School Year*

*Survey Period Code (always 5)*

*Grade Promotion Status*

*Diploma Type:*

*W06, W07, W10, WGD, W27, W43, W45, WFW, WFT, W6A, W6B, WFA, WFB*

*Withdrawal Reason*

*Grade Level*

*Withdrawal Date*

The section on the following page details the programming steps used by the DOE for calculating the rate.

## DOE Programming Steps

(general description of process)

1. Pull 9<sup>th</sup> graders using fall survey data (Survey 2 data from Student Demographic Information) submitted for the year four years prior to the year of graduation.
2. Check to ensure that students are actually enrolled during Survey 2 in the beginning year of the cohort by verifying that the students have course records on the Student Course Schedule format.

Steps 1 and 2 provide the initial cohort of students to be tracked over four years.

3. Pull out 9<sup>th</sup> grade repeaters from this group. This is done by looking for retentions from the prior year's Student End of Year Status format, using the *Grade Promotion Status* data element (coded "R"s for students who are retained) and also by matching against any students who were coded as 9<sup>th</sup> graders the prior year, again using Student End of Year Status records.
4. Review the Student End of Year Status format for each of the four years covered to identify incoming transfers on the same schedule to graduate as students in the initial cohort.

Data elements used in this step are the following:

- *District Number, Current Enrollment* • *School Number, Current Enrollment*
- *Student Number Identifier, Florida* • *Grade Level*

Add the incoming transfers to the group of students being tracked (cohort).

5. For this combined population, use the Student Attendance format to determine *Withdrawal Codes* and the Student End of Year Status format to determine *Withdrawal Reason* and *Diploma Type*.
6. Classify students in this population according to where they belong in the following groups. (Applicable withdrawal codes are shown in parentheses.)
  - Graduates (W06, W07, W10, W27, WGD, W43, W45, WFW, WFT, W6A, W6B, WFA, WFB)
  - Dropouts (DNE, W05, W11, W13-W23)
  - Students transferring out of the district (W03)
  - (For a school graduation rate, code W02 would also be used to identify students transferring out of the school to another school in the district.)
  - Deceased students (W12)
  - Students who left to enroll in a private school (W04)
  - Students who left to enroll in a home education program (W24)
  - Students who left to enroll in an adult education program (W26)

Any student who is not classified in one of the above categories is considered a non-graduate.

7. Determine the adjusted cohort to provide a denominator for the calculation. The adjusted cohort is determined by adding all the students from steps 1 through 5 and then subtracting students in the following categories:

- Students transferring out of the district (W03)  
(For a school graduation rate, code W02 would also be used to identify students transferring out of the school to another school in the district.)
- Deceased students (W12)
- Students who left to enroll in a private school (W04)
- Students who left to enroll in a home education program (W24)
- Students who left to enroll in an adult education program (W26).

8. Determine the graduation rate by performing the following calculation:

Number of graduates (W06, W07, W10, W27, WGD, W43, W45, WFW, WFT, W6A, W6B, WFA, WFB) ÷ number of students in the adjusted cohort.

### Electronically Viewable Reports for Districts

As indicated in a timeline attachment to the notification memorandum dated 3/17/04 (<http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-1923/grad.pdf>), districts have access to a set of electronic files that provide a breakdown of the population of students being tracked by diploma type, withdrawal reason, and withdrawal code over the four-year period applicable to the graduation rate. A unique file set is available for each district showing students included in the district’s cohort (file series F63494) as well as students included in schools’ cohorts within the district (file series F70307). Both file series include a data file ordered by student ID number (suffix .DATA), a report file ordered by student name (suffix .ALPHA), and a report file ordered by school and then by student name. The “alpha” file/report may be particularly useful in showing duplications—i.e., students with the same name and different ID numbers. The file ordered by school in the F70307 series allows for inspection of individual schools’ cohorts. The column headings on each report show the district number and name, the school number, the student ID number (Student Number Identifier, Florida), the student’s last name, the student’s first name, the student’s alias ID number (Student Number Identifier—Alias, Florida), the student’s gender, race, and birth date, and the student’s final classification based on the most recent withdrawal code/reason on record. Here is an example of how the data appears in the report files:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COHORT GRADUATION RATE USING A SCHEDULED TO GRADUATE POPULATION [additional headings]										
Heading/title ⇒										Data ⇓
DIST	DIST NAME	SCHOOL	STUID	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ALIAS	GENDER	RACE	BIRTH DATE	FINAL STATUS
64	VOLUSIA	6633	123456789x	DOE	JANE	6477543210	F	H	19860511	W06
Y1: A-W01 D-ZZZ C-ZZZ E-ZZZ   Y2: A-W01 D-ZZZ C-ZZZ E-ZZZ   Y3: A-W01 D-ZZZ C-ZZZ E-ZZZ   Y4: A-W06 D-W06C-ZZZ E-ZZZ										
	VOLUSIA	6633	113456789x	DOE	JOHN	6476543210	M	W	19860312	W06
Y1: A-W01 D-ZZZ C-ZZZ E-ZZZ   Y2: A-W01 D-ZZZ C-ZZZ E-ZZZ   Y3: A-W01 D-ZZZ C-ZZZ E-ZZZ   Y4: A-W06 D-W06C-ZZZ E-ZZZ										



The example above shows data for two students. Two lines/rows of data are provided for each student, with the second line showing the withdrawal codes for the student over the four-year span applicable to the graduation rate tracking.

## Submitting and Reviewing Corrections to the Data

### Data Reporting Concerns and Troubleshooting

During inspection of data used in previous calculations of the proposed graduation rate, the DOE became aware of several concerns in data submission that may affect the accuracy of the proposed rate. Some of the more common problems are listed below.

**Improper reporting of *Student Number Identifier—Alias, Florida*.** In order to accurately track students across surveys and reporting years when the *Student Number Identifier, Florida* changes, the DOE relies on the *Student Number Identifier—Alias, Florida* to be the link. If the alias number for a student is mistakenly changed when a new record is submitted to update the student's regular ID number, then an additional/extraneous record is created for the student (in lieu of the old record being updated), since the *Student Number Identifier—Alias, Florida* on the new record is different from the alias number on the old record and there is no ID number to link the new record with the record to be updated.

**Inappropriate codes reported on certain record formats.** Problems can occur when codes in certain elements on the Student End of Year Status records do not match withdrawal codes on the Prior School Status/Student Attendance records. For example, a W06 (standard diploma) may mistakenly be reported in the *Withdrawal Code* field on the Prior School Status/Student Attendance record for a student while the *Diploma Type* on the Student End of Year Status record for the same student is z-filled. As appropriate, withdrawal codes reported on the Prior School Status/Student Attendance record must match withdrawal codes reported on the Student End of Year Status record for the elements *Diploma Type*, *Certificate of Completion Type*, and *Withdrawal Reason*.

**Discrepancy between local records and records submitted to the state.** Students may complete a particular school year and be expected to return the following school year, but may never enroll. For example, a student may withdraw in August prior to the beginning of the school year. The district will record this withdrawal in its system, but the withdrawal is currently not submitted to the state. In addition, there are students who are considered DNEs at the beginning of the school year but for whom the district may determine another appropriate withdrawal code. Only the remaining DNEs are currently submitted to the state. In such cases, districts should therefore update the *Withdrawal Reason* element on the Student Attendance record (aka Prior School Status/Student Attendance record) for the year prior to the year the student was not enrolled. (See Attachments 2 - 4 of the notification memorandum dated 3/17/04, or request a copy by e-mailing the request to [ed.croft@fldoe.org](mailto:ed.croft@fldoe.org).)

**Missing record formats.** The data for a student for a particular year is not complete unless all the appropriate record formats were submitted for that student. For example, if a student has a Student End of Year Status record and no matching Prior School Status/Student Attendance record, the data will be incomplete (and relevant data may be missing).

**Improper reporting of *Grade Level* on the Student End of Year Status record.** The *Grade Level* code on the Student End of Year Status format is used in determining the cohort for the graduation rate calculation. Hence, the *Grade Level* on the Student End of Year Status format must reflect the grade level for the 180-day school year just passed.

**Inappropriate reporting of nonpublic/home-education students served in districts.** The appropriate *School Number*, *Current Enrollment* for nonpublic or home education students served in a district is N999 and N998, respectively. These students are not to be reported on the Student End of Year Status record. If districts use a valid school number other than N998 or N999 and report these students on the Student End of Year Status record, they will be included in the cohort (denominator) for the graduation rate calculation. This problem can be minimized by reviewing records to determine if any nonpublic or home education students served in the district have been reported to the state on the Student End of Year Status record. If so, delete the applicable record(s).

### **Submitting Corrections**

Corrections to data for 2003-04 Survey 2 may be submitted using normal procedures for updating student records on the DOE Automated Information Database, up until the regular update deadline has passed. Updates to Survey 2, 2003-04, are due no later than July 30, 2004. The DOE is also providing school districts with an opportunity to update duplicated sets of certain archived surveys and record formats for the reporting years 1999-00 through 2002-03. These updated record formats will only be used for graduation rate calculations. The deadline for submitting corrections to 2003-04 Survey 5 data for grad-rate processing is October 20, 2004. For specific instructions and information concerning this process, see the attachment packet for the memorandum dated March 17, 2004, which can be accessed online at (<http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-1923/grad.pdf>).

### **Requesting Reports for Viewing/Downloading to Verify Corrections**

The schedule for updates to the report is included in the attachment packet for the memorandum dated March 17, 2004. For additional questions, contact Education Information and Accountability Services at (850) 245-0400; SC 205-0400.

## **Additional Resources**

For additional background information on Florida's graduation rate data processing, contact Edward Croft ([ed.croft@fldoe.org](mailto:ed.croft@fldoe.org)) or Cyndi Holleman ([cyndi.holleman@fldoe.org](mailto:cyndi.holleman@fldoe.org)) by e-mail or by phone at (850) 245-0400, SC 205-0400.

Additional information is included in the EIAS memorandum (Lavan Dukes) dated March 17, 2004, including attachments issued to MIS directors, student database contacts, and data processing managers.

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