

Graduation Technical Manual

4-Year, 5-Year, and 6-Year Cohort Graduation Rates New Mexico's Shared Accountability Model



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Preface

New Mexico implemented the first 4-year cohort graduation rate in 2009. Prior to that time the state utilized a *senior completion* method that tracked 12th grade students to completion of graduation requirements by spring. The use of the senior completion method was discontinued after the class of 2007, when New Mexico undertook the transition to the National Governors Association (NGA) cohort computation.

In order to capture the outcomes of students continuing to fulfill graduation requirements during the summer following the senior year, the reporting of graduation is lagged by one year. That is, the graduates of 2008 are reported in the spring of 2009. To shift to the one-year lagged schedule of reporting, the United States Department of Education allowed New Mexico to duplicate the graduation rates from 2007 in 2008. With the one-year lag now in place, New Mexico published in 2009 the first 4-year cohort representing students who were freshmen in 2004 and who graduated by August 1, 2008, and in 2010 the first 5-year cohort representing the same students with one additional year. Beginning in 2012, New Mexico will publish 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rates for each cohort.

Because the calculation method produces significantly different rates from prior years, the interpretation of New Mexico's longitudinal data should be made with caution. Between years 2007 and 2008 a break in trend prohibits useful comparisons with prior graduation data.

New Mexico's Shared Accountability model was reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education and approved in the spring of 2010. The model was amended in January, 2012, to comply with additional federal requirements.

Revision History

Year	Description of Major Changes	Reference	Author
	VERSION 1.0		
2008	<i>Initial version</i>	All	C Gregory
	VERSION 2.0		
2009	<i>Added cohort reassignment for IEP, Pregnancy, Incarceration, Medical, Hardship</i>	II.C.	C Gregory
2009	<i>Added evidence rules</i>	Appended	C Gregory
2009	<i>Added 5th Year rate</i>	All	C Gregory
	VERSION 3.0		
2012	<i>Removed cohort reassignment for IEP, Pregnancy, Incarceration, Medical, Hardship</i>	II.C.	C Gregory
2012	<i>Removed Time Share from calculations</i>	V.	C Gregory
2012	<i>Included locally-authorized charters with parent district for district rates</i>	IV.D.2.	C Gregory
2012	<i>Removed references to AYP</i>	All	C Gregory
2012	<i>Added 6th Year rate</i>	All	C Gregory

Operationalizing Shared Accountability

These business rules apply to students that began high school in the fall of a given school year, and who were expected to graduate 4 years later by August 1. The group is named by their expected graduation year, such as the *Cohort of (or Class of) 2009*. Students who qualify to be members of the 4-year cohort are then tracked for one additional year, and reported in the 5th and 6th years named for their original cohort (i.e. 5-year graduation rates for the Cohort of 2009).

I. Students Included in the Cohort

- A. First time 9th graders in the first of the four years. Student must meet both conditions:
 - 1. Present in one of the PED's 4 enrollment windows as a 9th grader (40D, 80D, 120D, or EOY)
 - 2. NOT present in any PED enrollment snapshot as a 9th grader in any prior year (40D, 80D, 120D, or EOY)
- B. Transfers In: Students new to public schools in subsequent 10th, 11th, and 12th grade years. Entering students must meet both conditions (1, and 2 or 3 or 4):
 - 1. Student appears for the first time statewide in grades 10, 11, or 12
AND
 - 2. Must enter as 10th grader in year 2 of the cohort span (40D, 80D, 120D, or EOY) OR
 - 3. Must enter as 11th grader in year 3 of the cohort span (40D, 80D, 120D, or EOY) OR
 - 4. Must enter as 12th grader in year 4 of the cohort span (40D, 80D, 120D, or EOY)
- C. Students who meet conditions A or B must have a minimum of 2 consecutive snapshots (one semester) in New Mexico public schools.

II. Students NOT Included in the Cohort

- A. Students are excused from the cohort who enter public education any time during or after the 9th grade and are misclassified at entry. Written documentation must be kept at the district, and reclassification must occur within one snapshot of the entry snapshot.
 - 1. Example: A student enters from out-of-state and parents declare the student to be in the 10th grade. Transcripts which arrive later show the student qualifies to be a 9th grader. This correction must occur within the first two snapshot windows for that student in order to reassign the student to a different cohort.
 - 2. Reclassified students must be reassigned to the appropriate cohort. In the previous example, the student would be an entering 9th grader in the subsequent cohort.
- B. Students do not belong to any cohort if they were pre-enrolled as a first-time 9th grader at the beginning of the cohort span but never attended.
- C. Students who meet exemption criteria do not belong to any cohort (note that all require written documentation):
 - 1. Deceased
 - 2. Foreign Exchange: Present in the United States on a "J" Visa
 - 3. Transfer-Out: Left to a non-PED school, including an out-of-state, BIE, home, or private school
 - 4. Émigré: Left the United States by moving or was deported. Does not include military families on temporary duty, or US students studying abroad as part of an exchange program. These students qualify for Transfer-Out.

- D. Students who have already counted in a prior cohort as a non-graduate. The exception is that students will count for the current cohort where graduation in the 5th or 6th year will be acknowledged.
- E. Returning adult students that are H6 or higher in their re-entry year can be reclassified into a new cohort. For example, a student that dropped out during their H3 year (typically junior) and returns four years later is now an H7 based on their original cohort. This student has passed all opportunities to count as a graduate in their 4-year, 5-year, or 6-year rates and re-enters as a member of a new cohort based on their grade at re-admission.

III. Definition of a Graduate

- A. Student must receive a Standard Diploma, which includes the Career and Ability pathways.
- B. All requirements for the diploma, including successful completion of the all parts of the exit examination, must be met by August 1 of the terminal year of the cohort span.
- C. The student's graduation must be declared during the correct year, either by submission to STARS or by submitting to the online program *High School Cohort* prior to the closing date. Late submissions will not be honored.
- D. Non-Graduates: Students who are *Completers* or *Exit Out* are NOT considered graduates, but are important to capture for legislative mandates and policy decisions:
 - 1. Completer: Students who completed course work but did not successfully pass all parts of the exit exam are awarded a Certificate of Completion. These students are eligible to receive a Standard Diploma for up to 5 years after their senior year once they pass all parts of the exit exam.
 - 2. Exit Out: Students who exit to a setting that grants a credential other than a Standard Diploma. Typically these include GED, military, or vocational programs such as auto mechanics. While the school may not know if the student successfully completed these programs, they should record the student's intent to enter and complete.

IV. Entities and Aggregates for which Rates are Calculated

- A. Schools with any combination of grades 9 through 12
 - 1. Feeder schools (i.e. 9th grade academy) will receive a rate.
 - 2. Alternative high schools will receive a rate.
 - 3. Charter and state-supported schools will receive a rate.
 - 4. Off-site programs and treatment centers that are not considered schools will not receive a rate.
- B. Schools that were in operation during early years of the cohort but closed prior to the publication year will receive a rate. However, schools that changed name or location during the cohort time span, but continue the prior school's heritage will inherit the schools cohort members and receive a rate (i.e. a local charter that transitioned to state-chartered status).
- C. Schools with fewer than 4 student records will not receive a rate.
- D. Districts will receive a rate compiled from all students who were ever enrolled in the district.
 - 1. District rates include students in locally-authorized charter schools
 - 2. District rates exclude state-authorized charter schools located within their boundaries.
 - 3. District rates include students in off-site programs that were not part of a rated school.
- E. The State will receive a rate compiled from all students ever enrolled in state public education.

All rates will be reported by subgroup. Students are tracked through data submissions (snapshots) that occur 4 times per year, for 4 years (Total N=16). If a student is declared to be in special education in one or more snapshots, they qualify to be in the Students with Disabilities (SWD) group for the cohort. The same is true for

any student who is an English Language Learner (ELL) during high school or in migrant status. Ethnicity and Economically Disadvantaged (FRL) are assigned by the last snapshot.

1. All Students
2. Gender
3. Ethnicity
4. Students with Disabilities (SWD)
5. English Language Learners (ELL)
6. Economically Disadvantaged (FRL)
7. Migrant

V. Shared Accountability Method

- A. A rate will be computed for each entity that has any combination of grades 9 through 12, including high schools without a 12th grade.
- B. A student's outcome will be distributed to each high school the student attended according to the fraction of their high school career spent at that facility. Apportioning by time equitably distributes responsibility for the student's outcome.
- C. Snapshots from 9th through 12th grades are used as the unit of time. In PED schools, students are tracked with 4 snapshots per year, yielding a maximum of 16 snapshots for the 4-year time span.
- D. School Share: Students who are mobile during high school may attend multiple schools. The student's outcome is shared proportionately among all schools attended, using snapshots as the unit of time. The sum of snapshots at that school is then divided by the total number of snapshots in public education to derive the proportion.
- E. Example: student had a total of **10 snapshots** in PED high schools before graduating:
School: 4 snapshots in school A (4/10=.4 or 40%)
6 snapshots in school B (6/10=.6 or 60%)

Students who stay at a single location throughout their high school career will contribute the entirety of their outcome (1.0 or 100%) to that school.

- F. Computation: Each cohort member contributes a proportion of 1.0 (100%) of their outcome to the final rate of all schools attended, all districts attended, and to the state. The student's outcome is shared among all schools and districts attended. In the example above note that 40% (.4 students) will go to school A's numerator and denominator.
- G. NUMERATOR: The numerator of the graduation rate is the sum of all student fractions accumulated for that school that graduated anywhere in the state. The student does not have to graduate from that school or district.
- H. DENOMINATOR: The denominator of the graduation rate is the sum of all student fractions accumulated for cohort members that were ever enrolled at that school or district for any period of time, and in any high school grade.

EXAMPLE:

Hill High School had 7 members of the cohort who were enrolled for either some or all of their 4 years at their school. The sum of all students (4.93) divided by the sum of the graduates (2.76) yields a graduation rate of 56%.

Features of New Mexico's *Shared Accountability Model* are illustrated in this example of Hill High School. The graduation rate is comprised of fractions of students that are reconstituted to make a whole student body. Hill High is being held accountable for every student that ever spent any amount of time in their school, but the longer

the time at Hill HS, the more the impact on their rate. When another school contributes to the student's success or failure, both Hill HS and the other school share responsibility. This method allows high schools that do not have a senior class to receive feedback on their graduation success.

Cohort Members Ever Enrolled at Hill HS		Snapshots				Graduation Rate	
		Hill HS	Statewide	School Share ¹		Numerator (Grads Only)	Denominator (All Students)
Diego	Graduated	16	16	16/16	1.00	1.00	1.00
Allen	Still enrolled	10	12	10/12	0.83		0.83
Sue	Graduated	2	16	2/16	0.13	0.13	0.13
Tom	Graduated	5	8	5/8	0.63	0.63	0.63
Kerry	Failed exit exam	8	12	8/12	0.67		0.67
Don	Graduated early	14	14	14/14	1.00	1.00	1.00
Juan	Still enrolled	8	12	8/12	0.67		0.67
		Sum				2.76	4.93

¹ For every student whose school share is less than 1.0, the remainder of their outcome is attributed to other schools attended during the high school years.

VI. Alternate Calculation for Small Schools

Collective Cohort: Schools or districts with fewer than 30 students in their cohort will have a second option of creating a new cohort comprised of students accumulated across multiple years.

- A. The aggregation will begin with the current students, and add all students from successive prior three cohorts until the aggregate reaches a minimum of 30 or more students.
- B. In the absence of sufficient numbers to reach 30 students, the prior 3 years will be used.
- C. The collective cohort is comprised of students who meet the same requirements for the current year's cohort. The *Shared Accountability Method* will be applied to the collective cohort.

VII. Reporting

Graduation rates are disaggregated by subgroup and are made publicly available as in prior years. Beginning in 2012, 6-year graduation rates will be included.

VIII. 5-Year and 6-Year Rates

- A. Students who were included in the 4-year cohort comprise the cohort used for subsequent years. Incoming students who are new to New Mexico public schools after the 4th year (H5 and higher) are not included.
- B. Students who met exemption criteria in the 4th year of the 4-year cohort continue to be exempt and cannot re-enter the cohort in the 5th year. For example, a student that transferred to a private school and did not graduate with their cohort, but returned the 5th year to a public school and graduated cannot be counted in the 5-year rate.
- C. Students who newly met certain exemption criteria in their 5th or 6th year do not belong to the cohort:
 1. Transfers out who exited to a non-PED school (i.e. out of state, BIE, home, or private school); the educational setting must have the capacity to grant a standard diploma.
 2. Émigrés who moved out of the United States or are deported (does not include military families on temporary duty, or US students studying abroad as part of an exchange program. These students may qualify for Transfer Out).
 3. Deceased.
 4. Note that reclassifying a student to *Foreign Exchange* or a different cohort is not honored in the 5th year. These students must be acknowledged at the establishment of the 4-year cohort.

- D. All 5th and 6th year demographics will be preserved from the student's 4th year so that group membership does not change.

IX. Documentation

- A. Districts are required to maintain written evidence of students who TRANSFER OUT, LEAVE THE US, or become DECEASED. Definitions and requirements for written documentation are appended
- B. Districts will be audited at random by the State to verify documentation
- C. Written evidence must be kept for 5 years after the student's cohort year expires.

Graduation Codes Requiring Documentation

Cells shaded in yellow indicate data retrieved primarily from STARS submissions

EXIT REASON	DEFINITION	REQUIRED WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION ¹
Foreign Exchange	Student from a country other than USA attending a high school in USA as part of an exchange program. Must have "J" Visa.	Telephone conversation ² Email ² Copy of Visa
Left Country	Student moved or was extradited outside the country. Does not include students enrolled in Dept of Defense schools, and US foreign exchange students still enrolled in US schools (use <i>Exited to Degree-granting Non-PED School</i> for these students).	Telephone conversation ² Email ² Transcript request from receiving school
Deceased	Student died.	Telephone conversation ² Email ² Obituary
Transfer Out	Student enrolls in a private, charter, home, or BIE school that grants a standard diploma recognized by the State. The school may be in-state or out-of-state.	Transcript request from receiving school
Exit Out	Student exited to a school that does not grant state recognized standard diplomas, such as a vocational certification program, or GED. The school may be in-state or out-of-state.	Telephone conversation ² Email ²
Status Unknown	Student dropped out of school for work, military, or other reasons. Any student with unknown graduation status defaults to "dropout" status.	(No documentation necessary)
Completer	A student that completed all course requirements but did not pass all parts of the high school exit exam.	Results from NMHSCE or HSGA Course completion
Graduated	A student that completed all graduation requirements, and received a standard diploma, but was not reported to the State as a graduate in any snapshot	Standard diploma ³ Other evidence of degree award

¹ Paper or electronic records must be maintained at district or school for auditing purposes. A minimum of one piece of evidence from the list provided must be kept.

² Qualifying communication must be from a responsible adult, not the student.

³ A New Mexico Standard diploma does not include GED, or Certificate of Completion. It does include students with disabilities completing requirements for a Standard Diploma as defined in NMAC 6.30.2.10, Section J (Career and Ability Pathways)