

Graduation, Dropout, and Completion Rates: Understanding & Use for Continuous Improvement

**Presented by:
Data Services
School Improvement & Planning**

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COLORADO
Department of Education

Introductions & Norms

Presenters

- **Dan Jorgensen, PhD**

Accountability Support Manager, primary responsibilities are related to providing technical assistance and training related to state accountability, data literacy and board governance.

- **Reagan Ward**

Data Analyst/Statistician, primary responsibilities are related to providing technical assistance and training related to the Student End of Year data collection from which graduation/completion, dropout, and mobility/stability rates are derived.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilitytrainingtechnicalassistance>



Meeting Norms

This webinar is being recorded. Slides and the recording will be posted to the [CDE website](#). Q&A at the end of this session won't be recorded.

Please mute your sound if you are not speaking.

Use the chat feature to ask questions throughout the presentation. I will take pause breaks to answer chat questions.

Session Outcomes

This webinar will focus on the following topics:

- Provide an overview of how graduation, completion, and dropout rates are used for accountability determinations and improvement efforts.
- Explore how graduation, completion, and dropout rates are calculated in the state of Colorado.



Background

- **Graduation, Completion & Dropout Rates:**
 - Are strongly related to long term student success including:
 - Employment opportunities
 - College going rates, skill gaps
 - Community engagement, health outcomes, etc.
 - Comprise a sizable proportion of points within state accountability frameworks including the AEC frameworks.
 - May reflect student performance priorities within your schools and districts'.



The Colorado 4-year graduation rate in 2023 was 83.1%, the highest it has been in nearly a decade.

State Accountability

- PWR measures account for 30% of the state accountability rating for districts and schools.
 - The ratings for traditional schools and districts includes both graduation and dropout rates.
 - For Alternative Education Campuses, completion rates are a required state measure.

POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE READINESS						
Subject	Student Group	Count	Best Rate	Rate/Score	Participation Rate	Pts Earned/Eligible
Colorado SAT -	All Students	1,842	*	444.0	82.7%	1.00/4
Evidence Based	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	1,247	*	430.5	81.8%	0.25/1
Reading &	Minority Students	1,631	*	436.4	82.0%	0.25/1
Writing	Multilingual Learners	573	*	392.0	78.1%	0.25/1
	Students with Disabilities	181	*	368.8	67.1%	0.25/1
Colorado SAT -	All Students	1,923	*	422.4	82.7%	1.00/4
Math	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	1,310	*	409.1	81.8%	0.25/1
	Minority Students	1,709	*	414.3	82.0%	0.25/1
	Multilingual Learners	654	*	375.8	78.1%	0.25/1
	Students with Disabilities	181	*	357.1	67.1%	0.25/1
Dropout Rate	All Students	20,099	*	2.1%	*	4.00/8
	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	12,686	*	1.8%	*	1.50/2
	Minority Students	17,403				
	Multilingual Learners	6,371				
	Students with Disabilities	2,742				
Matriculation Rate	All Students	1,967				
	2 YEAR	*				
	4 YEAR	*				
	CTE	*				
	MILITARY	*				
Graduation Rate	All Students	2,317				
	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	1,901				
	Minority Students	1,998				
	Multilingual Learners	885				
	Students with Disabilities	246				
TOTAL		*				

0000: District Name | 0000: School

POSTSECONDARY & WORKFORCE REA

Indicator Type	Measure	Category
Required State Measures	CO SAT	Reading & Wr
		Math
	Completion	Completion
	Dropout	Dropout
Optional Measures	CREDIT COURSE CO..	BY COURSE
	POSTSECONDARY AC..	POSTSECOND
TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL



PWR Metrics for Continuous Improvement

- PWR metrics may serve as a critical piece of the improvement planning process. This is especially true for schools that identify graduation, completion and/or dropout rates as performance challenge areas.
- The webinar explores how rates are calculated for each metric to support understanding and use for *continuous improvement*.





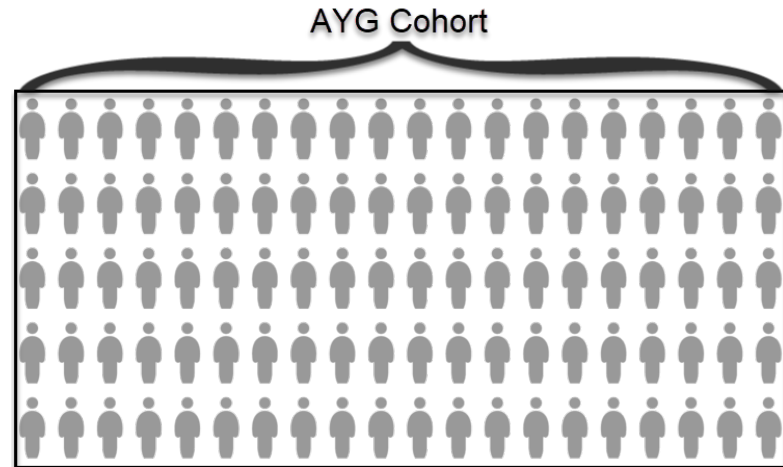
Graduation & Completion Rates

Overview of Graduation & Completion Rates

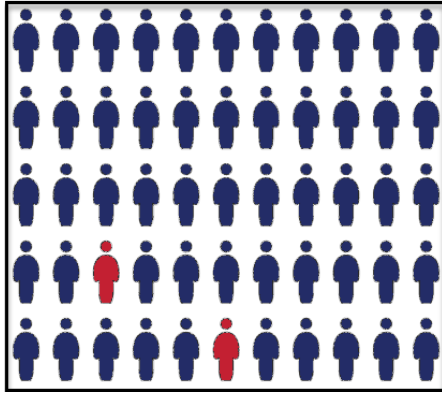
- Student End of Year collection is the source collection for these rates
- Graduation Rate and Completion Rate are cohort-based calculations
 - Based upon students in a school/district with the same Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG)
- **Graduation Rate** – reflects students who have been counted as a graduate
 - 4-year rate
 - Extended rates (5-, 6-, 7-year)
 - Accountability uses the ‘best of’ rate
- **Completion Rate** – reflects students who have been counted as a graduate and students who are other high school completers or have received their HSED
 - Used in AEC frameworks

Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) Cohort

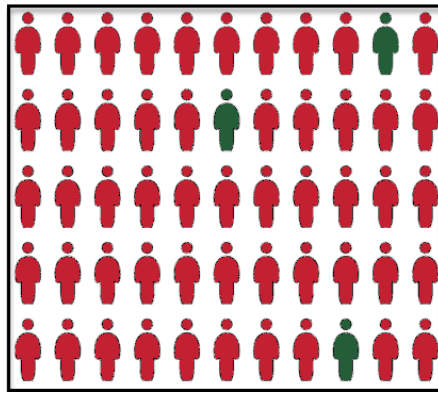
- All students with the same AYG assignment in a group (state/district/school)
- AYG Cohort initially built based upon students entering 9th grade
 - Transfers in are added to the AYG cohort
 - Verified transfers out are removed from the AYG Cohort
- Serves as the graduation base (denominator) in graduation and completion rate calculations



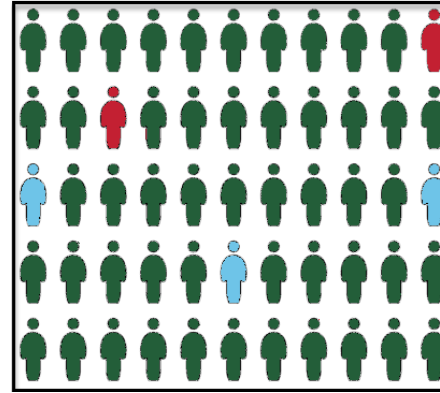
9th Grade



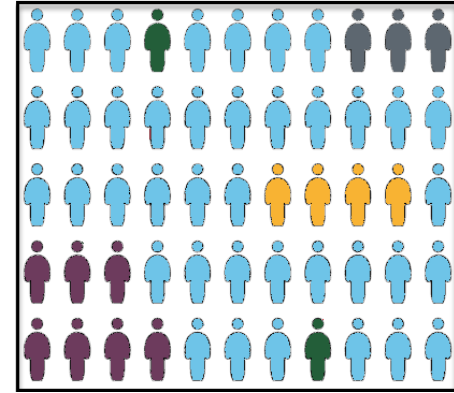
10th Grade



11th Grade



12th Grade



Example
AYG cohort

2026

2025

2024

2023

2022

2021

2020

AYG represented in High School Population

- Once a student is assigned an AYG, that AYG remains constant.
- Students who experience grade reassignments (acceleration or retention) remain in their original AYG cohort.

Graduation Rate

Graduate

- A student who exits high school with a regular high school diploma.
 - Locally defined graduation requirements
 - Colorado Graduation Guidelines
 - Required for AYG 2021 and beyond
 - [Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options](#)
 - At least one Reading/ Writing/ Communicating (English) measure
 - At least one Mathematics (Math) measure

Graduation Rate

Number of AYG cohort members graduated

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Number of students in the AYG cohort

Completion Rate

Completer

- Completers are student's who meet locally defined criteria for completing high school, but not graduating
 - Certificate of Completion
 - Receive a non-diploma certificate of completion (locally defined certificate of completion, attendance, achievement)
 - Complete a vocational program
 - Are accepted into an institution of higher education to pursue a bachelor's or associate's degree without receiving a high school diploma
 - HSED (GED) Recipient
- Completion rates reflect all graduates and completers within an AYG cohort

Completion Rate

$$\frac{\text{Number of AYG cohort members graduated or completed}}{\text{Number of students in the AYG cohort}}$$

Student Groups: Graduation/Completion Rates

Cohort based student groups - a student is counted in this group if they belonged to the instructional program service type (IPST) group at any point in 9th-12th grade.

- o Economically Disadvantaged
- o English Learners
- o Students with Disabilities

Other student groups - a student is counted in this group based upon their status when they graduate.

- o Gender
- o Race/Ethnicity
 - Minority Students

Graduation Rate	Postsecondary Program	Count	Grade	Rate	Significance	Score	Performance
	All Students	960	6yr	97.5%	*	8.00/8	Exceeds
	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	240	6yr	95.4%	*	2.00/2	Exceeds
	Minority Students	372	6yr	97.0%	*	2.00/2	Exceeds
	Multilingual Learners	56	6yr	94.6%	*	1.50/2	Meets
	Students with Disabilities	74	6yr	93.2%	*	1.50/2	Meets



Dropout Rates



Overview of Dropout Rates

- Dropout rate is an annual calculation
 - Students can only be counted as a dropout once in a given year
 - Students may be counted as a dropout in a subsequent year if they reenter a Colorado public school and then drop out again
- Dropout Rate – Reflects percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 that leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program.
 - District/State level dropout rate – includes summer district dropouts
 - School level dropout rate – only includes students who dropped out from the given school
- Accountability Frameworks calculate a dropout rate for students in grades 9-12 only as part of the high school frameworks

Definition: Dropout

- 7th-12th grade student who was enrolled in school at any time during the current school year, including summer, but leaves for a reason other than one of the following exclusionary conditions:
 1. Transfers ([with adequate documentation](#)) to another public school district, private school, home-based education program, or other state-/district-approved educational program (includes HSED transfers & expelled students)
 2. Temporary absence due to suspension or expulsion
 3. Serious illness or death and does not complete their education
- Includes students in membership the previous year who do not return to school prior to the end of the current year
- Includes students who reach the maximum age for services before receiving a diploma or designation of completion

Dropout Rates

*Number of 7th-12th grade students
who dropped out in the school
year*

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*Number of 7th-12th grade students
in membership at any point within
the school year*

Membership Base:

- The membership base includes all 7th-12th grade students who were in membership at some point during the school year (7/1 through 6/30)
 - Includes students returning from the prior year (continuously enrolled students)
 - Includes students transferring into the district/school
 - Includes students recovered (former dropouts, expulsions, return from HSED program, etc.)
- Students who are in membership in a school and transfer out during the year are still included in the membership base

Student Groups: Dropout

- Student groups reflect the status of a student within the current school year.
 - Gender
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Minority Students
 - Instructional Program Service Type (IPST)
 - Economically Disadvantaged
 - English Learner
 - Students with Disabilities

Dropout Rate	Students with Disabilities	2018	2019	2020	2021	Does Not Meet
All Students	6,727	*	1.1%	*	6.00/8	Meets
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	1,393	*	1.5%	*	1.50/2	Meets
Minority Students	3,066	*	1.2%	*	1.50/2	Meets
Multilingual Learners	246	*	2.4%	*	1.00/2	Approaching
Students with Disabilities	589	*	1.7%	*	1.50/2	Meets



Summary & Wrap-Up

Summary of Key Points

- Graduation, completion, and dropout rates are closely tied to a wide range of student academic and life outcomes.
- PWR measures inform school performance and support continuous improvement efforts.

Graduation Rates

Are based on 'cohorts' that change over time.

Reflect students who have been counted as a graduate.

Completion Rates

Are based on 'cohorts' that change over time.

Reflect students who have been counted as a graduate and student who are other high school completers or have received their high school equivalency diploma.

Dropout Rates

Is a one-year rate for 7th to 12th grade students.

Reflects the percentage of all students enrolled that leave school during a single school year without subsequently attending another school or educational program.

More Information

Resources

[Student End of Year Website](#)

[Education Statistics Website](#)

[UIP Resources](#)

Accountability/UIP Questions:

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Thank you for attending this webinar!



Questions?