

2022-23 Graduation Cohort Protocol

Last updated: December 14, 2022

Important Updates in 2022-23

- **New in 2022-23:**
 - Districts shall submit Cohort Change requests using the [2022-23 Graduation Cohort Change Request](#) Form. Email submissions will not be accepted.
 - Districts can submit and update data for not only the current cohort (i.e., 2022-23 graduating cohort) but also future cohorts (i.e., 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 graduating cohorts).
- **Accountability Graduation Rate Calculation Update**
 - The department is currently working with the United States Department of Education (USED) to determine possible cohort adjustments that may impact federally reported graduate rates as a result of the USED monitoring findings.
 - Any adjustments made will only impact the calculation of the federally reported graduation rate and will **NOT** impact how diplomas are conferred to students. Diplomas will continue to be conferred to students in accordance with Tennessee State Board of Education rules and policies.
 - The department will implement an additional data verification process in spring 2023 for districts to identify students who may be impacted by the adjustments. More information will follow, pending US ED approval of the state's ESSA amendment.
- **Phase I tasks shall be completed by 5 p.m. CST on June 30, 2023**, including (1) updating withdrawal codes, (2) entering completion information, and (3) submitting Cohort Change requests (consult [Cohort Change Request Instructions](#) for more detail on tasks and timelines). In addition to entering and updating information in EIS, districts shall also provide acceptable documentation by the specified deadline.
- **Phase II tasks shall be completed by 5 p.m. CST on August 11, 2023**, including (1) entering completion information for summer graduates; (2) submitting 60-day appeals; and (3) submitting appeals ONLY to records that were submitted in Phase I. Appeals will only be considered to correct information when the issue is not due to district error or incomplete submission.
- **Phase III tasks shall be completed by 5 p.m. CST on September 15, 2023**, including (1) submitting appeals only for summer graduates whose completion status were updated in Phase II, (2) submitting appeals ONLY for receiving students as a result of the 60-day appeal process, and (3) reviewing preliminary graduation rate data. Appeals will only be considered to correct information when the issue is not due to district error or incomplete submission.
- Please reach out to TNEG.Graduates@tn.gov for all questions related to the Cohort process.

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Section 1: Overview

This document helps districts navigate the graduation rate calculation, verification, and reporting process. Graduation rate calculations require the transformation of many data points. This document outlines the cohort process timeline, withdrawal code guidance, and specific steps districts should take at each stage of the process. Any questions about the 2023 Graduation Cohort can be sent to TNED.Graduates@tn.gov.

1.1 Background and Calculations

Federal law¹ requires students to be counted in graduation rate calculations based on the year in which they first entered grade 9. Graduation rates are calculated using the U.S. Department of Education's four-year adjusted cohort formula listed below.

$$\text{Graduation Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of students who graduated in four years plus a summer}}{\text{Number of students in graduating cohort}} * 100$$

The *number of students who graduated in four years plus a summer (# of graduates)* is defined as the number of students who earn a **regular diploma**² or an **alternate academic diploma**,³ including completion types 1, 8, 11, 12, or 13,⁴ within four years and a summer of entering grade 9 for the first time.

The *number of students in the graduating cohort (# in graduating cohort)* is defined as the number of students entering grade 9 for the first time four years prior, removing withdrawn students and adding students who join that cohort in later years. For example, a student who enters grade 10 in a Tennessee public school for the first time in the fall of 2020 would be placed into the 2019 cohort, expected to graduate in spring 2023. Applying these definitions to the 2023 graduating cohort, the cohort includes students who entered grade 9 during the 2019-20 enrollment period. The graduates are students who completed high school in 2023 with completion types 1, 8, 11, 12, or 13 by the end of summer in 2023.

It is crucial for districts to be actively engaged in the cohort process as the graduating cohort data will be utilized for the ACT⁵ participation calculation and the subsequent determination for the Ready Graduate⁶ status. Once the data are finalized by the end of the cohort process, data related to the graduating cohort are final and cannot be appealed afterwards.

¹ [\(ESEA section 8101\(25\)\(A\)\(i\); 34 C.F.R. § 200.34\(a\)\(2\)\)](#)

² The department is working with USED to determine possible cohort adjustments that may impact federally reported graduate rates as a result of the USED monitoring findings. This will not impact the State's graduation policies approved by the State Board of Education.

³ Students entering grade 9 in 2019-20 qualify for this diploma if they participate in the alternate assessment and meet certain [criteria](#).

⁴ Please consult [Appendix A](#) for completion codes and appropriate documentation to support each completion code.

⁵ ACT participation rate = number of students who graduated in four years plus a summer with a valid ACT score / number of students who graduated in four years plus a summer*100

⁶ Ready Graduate = number of students who graduated in four years plus a summer meeting Ready Graduate criteria / number of students in the graduating cohort*100

Dropout rates reflect the number of dropouts divided by the number of students in the graduation cohort, rounded to one decimal place. Dropouts include students who:

- Have withdrawal codes of 0⁷, 1, 3, or 4 (see withdraw codes in [Section 3](#)) and did not receive a regular diploma, **or**
- Have neither a withdrawal code nor completion type⁸ (see Completion Type in [Section 3](#)) and were not enrolled in a Tennessee public school as of Oct. 1 of the following school year after the anticipated graduation year of their cohort, **or**
- Have neither withdrawal nor completion data, but have withdrawal codes of 0, 1, 3, or 4 in the most recent enrollment of the following school year.

1.2 Student Group Membership and Graduation Rate Reporting

Graduation rates are calculated for all student groups, including

- All Students
- Black, Hispanic, and Native American Students (BHN)
- English Learners (EL)
- Economically Disadvantaged students (ED)
- Students with Disabilities (SWD)
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Asian
- White

Student membership in certain student groups may change over time (e.g., ED, EL). When reporting on school and district accountability by student group, students' most current membership in student groups during the reporting year are used. When reporting on graduation rate, a different method is applied. That is, once a student is identified in the historically underserved student group (i.e., BHN, EL, ED, SWD) during any of the high school years, the student will be assigned to that underserved student group for graduation rate reporting. For instance, a student is assigned to ED in grade 10 but not in grade 9, 11, or 12, the students' graduation data is included in the calculation for the All Students group and ED group.⁹

⁷ For more information, please reference the services for minors' [policy](#) for those students enrolling in an adult education program.

⁸ This also includes students with completion type 5, as this completion type indicates students did not earn a completion document of any kind.

⁹ The rules around student membership are currently in practice. This section is added to the protocol for information only.

Section 2: Cohort Timeline

The graduation rate process occurs in four phases. **Phase I**—Districts will report and update student information and upload required documentation. **Phase II**—Districts will report summer graduates and submit appeals for appealable issues. **Phase III**—Districts will submit appeals for appealable issues and review preliminary graduation rates. **Phase IV**—Districts will review final graduation rates on the Accountability application prior to data being released on the [Data Downloads](#).

New! Starting in 2022-23, districts can submit and update data for both the current cohort (i.e., 2022-23 graduating cohort) and future cohorts (i.e., 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26 graduating cohorts). Because students may move in and out of schools and districts throughout their high school years, **it is an optional task for districts to update data for future cohorts during the current cycle**. However, districts must make sure all information for the 2022-23 graduating cohort is complete and accurate by the end of the 2022-23 graduation cohort process as specified in this document.

Important Update! Table 1 highlights the key dates and tasks for each phase of the Cohort process. It is critical for districts to complete all tasks **by 5 p.m. CST on the specified deadline**. The department will deny any documentation or inquiries submitted after the deadline. Specific tasks for each phase are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Table 1. Cohort Process Timeline

Phase	Timeline	District Tasks to be Completed
I	November 28, 2022- June 30, 2023	<p>District Submission Timeline:</p> <p>The following tasks shall be completed by June 15, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit (1) completion information (see Section 3.1), (2) withdrawal information (see Section 3.2) in EIS. • Submit Cohort Change requests and documentation using the Cohort Change Request form (see Section 3.3). • Address all other cohort related issues (e.g., duplicate students) (see Section 3.4). <p>The following tasks shall be completed by June 16, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload acceptable (1) completion documentation (see Section 3.1), and (2) withdrawal documentation (see Section 3.2) on the Cohort application. • Provide documentation for all other cohort related issues (e.g., duplicate students) (see Section 3.4). <p>Review and Remediation Timeline: The department will review the Phase I submissions on an on-going basis as they are submitted during Phase I. Districts are highly encouraged to monitor the Cohort application regularly to review the department’s responses. Any new inquiries submitted after June 15 will be denied. The department will review all data submitted by June 15 and provide an initial response on the Cohort application by June 22. Districts shall provide documentation needed to resolve all pending issues by June 30. All</p>

Phase	Timeline	District Tasks to be Completed
		documentation submitted by June 30 will be reviewed by the department to make a final decision. The department will not review any documentation submitted after June 30.
II	July 17 – August 18, 2023	<p>District Submission Timeline: The following tasks shall be completed by August 4, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report summer graduates in EIS (see Section 4.1) • Submit graduation data appeals and supporting documentation (see Section 4.2) • Submit 60-day appeals and supporting documentation (see Section 4.3) <p>Review and Remediation Timeline: The department will review the Phase II submissions on an on-going basis as they are submitted during Phase II. Districts are highly encouraged to monitor the Cohort application regularly to review the department’s responses. Any new inquiries submitted after August 4 will be denied. The department will review all data submitted by August 4 and provide an initial response on the Cohort application by August 11. Districts shall provide documentation needed to resolve all pending issues by August 18. All documentation submitted by August 18 will be reviewed by the department to make final decision. The department will not review any documentation submitted after August 18.</p>
III	August 28 – September 20, 2023	<p>District Submission Timeline: The following tasks shall be completed by September 8, 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit appeals for summer graduates (see Section 5) • Submit appeals for receiving students as a result 60 Day appeal process (see Section 4.3) • Verify 2023 graduates included in the federal graduation rate • Review preliminary graduation rate (see Section 5) <p>Review and Remediation Timeline: The department will review the Phase III submissions on an on-going basis as they are submitted during Phase III. Districts are highly encouraged to monitor the Cohort application regularly to review the department’s responses. Any new inquiries submitted after September 8 will be denied. The department will review all data submitted by September 8 and provide an initial response on the Cohort application by September 15. Districts shall provide documentation needed to resolve all pending issues by September 20. All documentation submitted by September 20 will be reviewed by the department to make a final decision. The department will not review any documentation submitted after September 20.</p>
IV	September 25-28,	All cohort and graduation data are final in Phase IV. Final Cohort data will be updated on the Cohort application on September 25 for district review before

Phase	Timeline	District Tasks to be Completed
	2023	graduation data are released on the Data Downloads on September 28.

Section 3: Phase I: Tasks and Required Actions

The first phase of the 2022-23 graduation cohort process **opens on November 28, 2022 and closes on June 30, 2023**. Districts shall complete all Phase I tasks, provide appropriate documentation, and resolve any Phase I specific issues (i.e., provide correct and acceptable documentation) by 5 p.m. CST on June 30, 2023. **Any Phase I related inquiries or required documentation submitted post the specified timeline will be denied.** Districts can submit appeals in Phase II **ONLY** for the records and data that were updated or submitted in Phase I. The following sections detail the specific tasks, steps, and potential pitfalls for districts to consider.

3.1. Submitting Completion Information

The department updates the Cohort application data nightly during Phase I. Districts must enter or update completion information in EIS and wait until the correction loads (the next day) in the Cohort application before uploading documentation. The last date for districts to enter and update completion data in EIS is by **5 p.m. CST on June 15, 2023**, and the last date for districts to upload the required completion documentation to the Cohort application is by **5 p.m. CST on June 16, 2023**. Completion information submitted from districts' SIS packages must contain the following pieces of information in order to be accepted into EIS and into the Cohort application.

1. Completion type
2. Completion date
3. Completion period

EIS will return an error if a submitted completion date falls outside the date parameters of the student's enrollment (e.g., a completion date of 6/11/2023 for an enrollment that ends on 5/29/2023 will return an error and the student will consequently **not** be counted as a graduate if the error remains uncorrected). The only instance in which a completion date may postdate a student's enrollment end date is if the completion period is listed as "SU" for summer, indicating that the student graduated after the official end of the school year and before the start of the following year. Districts will enter completion information for summer graduates during Phase II (see [Section 4](#) for more guidance).

For early graduates, in addition to providing appropriate completion type, date, and period, districts should document early graduates with withdrawal code 12.

Table 2 shows the completion types used to identify what completion code students in the cohort should receive. This information can also be found in Appendix J of [EIS Appendices](#).

Table 2. Complete Types and Codes

Document Code	Completion Document Short Description
1	Regular Diploma
3	Special Education Diploma and did not take alternate assessments
5	No Diploma, Senior but did not complete
6	GED ¹⁰

¹⁰ HiSet is a high school equivalency exam that is an alternative to the GED test. Students completing the HiSet exam should be given a completion code of 6.

Document Code	Completion Document Short Description
7	Occupational Diploma (Valid as of 2015-16) – Completed the occupational diploma Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) and two years of paid or non-paid work experience
8	Alternate Academic Diploma – Students graduating with a special education diploma who are taking the alternate assessment and who meet the graduation requirements set by the state board
11	Regular Diploma with Foreign Language Waiver
12	Regular Diploma with Fine Arts Waiver
13	Regular Diploma with Foreign Language and Fine Arts Waiver

3.2 Submitting Withdrawal Information and Supporting Documentation

The department updates the Cohort application data nightly during Phase I. Districts must enter or update withdrawal status in EIS and wait until the correction loads (the next day) in the Cohort application before uploading the supporting documentation. Therefore, the last date for districts to enter and update withdrawal data in EIS is by **5 p.m. CST on June 15, 2023**, and the last date for districts to upload the required documentation to the Cohort application is by **5 p.m. CST on June 16, 2023**. Withdrawal information submitted from districts’ SIS packages must contain a withdrawal reason and a withdrawal date.

Table 3 describes the different withdrawal codes, processes for documentation review, and requirements for supporting documentation. The department will deny documentation that does not meet the requirements listed in Table 3. **The department will only process and review the documentation that is submitted by the timeline specified in Table 1.**

Federal law¹¹ only allows students to be removed from the cohort if they enroll in another program that awards regular diplomas. Therefore, as shown in Table 3, students are eligible for removal from the cohort IF:

1. They have a withdrawal code of either **03** (Transferred to another Tennessee public school district) or **04** (Transferred to and enrolled in another school in the same district) **AND** have a subsequent enrollment in EIS in another district or school.
 - a. Students with withdrawal codes of 03 or 04 **without** subsequent enrollments in EIS will remain in the cohort and count as non-graduates in the district and school in which they were last enrolled. Districts shall reach out to the receiving districts and/or schools to update student enrollment information in EIS as students transferred out and/or enrolled in other districts and/or schools in TN.

2. They have a withdrawal code of **02** (Transferred to a state institution with an education program culminating in a regular high school diploma), **05** (Transferred out of state), **06** (Transferred to and enrolled in a non-public school in Tennessee), **08** (Deceased), **10** (Withdrawal to home school), or **17** (Transferred to and enrolled in out-of-state online school) **AND**:
 - a. They have accurate withdrawal codes entered in EIS **by 5 p.m. CST on June 15, 2023; AND**

¹¹ [ESEA section 8101\(23\)\(B\) and \(25\)\(B\); 34 C.F.R. § 200.34\(b\)\(3\)](#).

- b. Their district uploads documentation on the Cohort application that satisfies the requirements for the corresponding withdrawal code **by 5 p.m. CST on June 15, 2023**.

Districts shall update withdrawal codes in EIS and then upload acceptable documentation on the Cohort application whenever students' withdrawal circumstances change. For example, districts shall change the withdrawal code from 05 to 17 if they thought a student was transferring to an out-of-state public school and they consequently receive an enrollment confirmation from an out-of-state online school.

In the Cohort application, the "WITHDRAWAL REASON" column reflects students' withdrawal codes. The "STATUS" column indicates whether the department approved (1) or denied (2) the document the district submitted. For more information regarding values included in the file, please reference the [Cohort File Layout](#).

Table 3. Withdraw Codes and Required Supporting Documentation

Withdrawal Code	Description	Cohort Action	Requirements/Details of Adequate Supporting Documentation
00	Dropout, under 18	Included in cohort; counted as dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts changing this withdrawal code must submit adequate documentation for the new withdrawal code as outlined in this document.
01	Dropout, 18 and over	Included in cohort; counted as dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts changing this withdrawal code must submit adequate documentation for the new withdrawal code as outlined in this document.
02	Transferred to a state institution with an education program culminating in a regular high school diploma	Excluded from cohort only if adequate documentation is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer must be to an approved DCS school or institution¹² ; AND Written acknowledgement on official letterhead from an administrator at the state institution that the student is receiving educational services that culminate in a regular high school diploma. Note: An age waiver signed by DCS does not meet requirements for use of this withdrawal code. Further, a student being placed in DCS custody does not meet requirements for use of this withdrawal code.
03	Transferred to another Tennessee public school district	Included in cohort until receiving school reports subsequent enrollment in EIS; otherwise, counted as dropout if there is no subsequent enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sending school collaborates with the receiving school to report subsequent enrollment in EIS. Receiving school enrollment must be entered in EIS¹³ by the end of Phase I.
04	Transferred to and enrolled in another school in the same district	Included in cohort until receiving school reports subsequent enrollment in EIS; otherwise, counted as dropout if there is no subsequent enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sending school collaborates with the receiving school to report subsequent enrollment in EIS. Receiving school enrollment must be entered in EIS¹⁴ by the end of Phase I.

¹² Please contact [TN Department of children's Service](#) for more information about DCS approved school or institution.

¹³ Students that transfer to an adult high school or alternative school will be associated with the sending schools for accountability purposes.

¹⁴ Students that transfer to an adult high school or alternative school will be associated with the sending schools for accountability purposes.

Withdrawal Code	Description	Cohort Action	Requirements/Details of Adequate Supporting Documentation
05	Transferred out of state	Excluded from cohort only if adequate documentation is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written records request from receiving out-of-state public or private high school, OR • Written acknowledgement on official letterhead from an administrator at the receiving school confirming enrollment, OR • Official records/transcripts from the receiving out-of-state public or private high school • If a student has moved out of the country, written confirmation from the parent or a school administrator's documented conversation with the parent will be accepted if any of the above three types of documentation are unavailable. • For foreign exchange students, a copy of the official exchange program paperwork reflecting the year of participation on exchange agency letterhead.
06	Transferred to and enrolled in a non-public school ¹⁵ in Tennessee	Excluded from cohort only if adequate documentation is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written records request from receiving non-public school confirming the student is enrolled; OR • Written acknowledgement on official letterhead from an administrator at the receiving school confirming enrollment that includes the student's full name and student ID.
07	Withdrawal due to permanent illness or incapacitation where no return to school is anticipated and the withdrawal is considered permanent	Included in cohort; counted as dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This withdrawal code should only be used for students who are so sick or incapacitated (in the written opinion of a physician licensed by the State Board of Medical Examiners) that no return to school is anticipated and the withdrawal is considered permanent.
08	Deceased	Excluded from cohort only if adequate documentation is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An obituary or funeral program. • Official written documentation, such as a death certificate, is not necessary.
10	Withdrawal to home school	Excluded from cohort only if adequate documentation is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Intent to Home School form¹⁶ must be signed by the parent or guardian by the end of Phase I.
11	Court-ordered placement or other government-mandated placement, such as jail or prison	Included in cohort; counted as dropout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written copy of the court order or judgment decision should be kept on file with the district.
12	Early graduates who receive a regular high school diploma in less than four years	Included in cohort; counted as graduate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early graduates require both withdrawal code 12 AND a completion type with a graduation date in EIS.
13	Permanent dismissal from TN voluntary pre-K program	Not applicable to cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program must provide the state with a written request and justification for permanent dismissal of any child from Tennessee's voluntary

¹⁵ Please consult [School Directory](#) for list of non-public schools.

¹⁶ This form may be used for home school students both in Tennessee and other states.

Withdrawal Code	Description	Cohort Action	Requirements/Details of Adequate Supporting Documentation
			pre-K program. No student should be permanently dismissed without consultation and agreement between the grantee and the Tennessee Department of Education.
15	TEIS transition, non-eligible for special education services	Not applicable to cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students assigned to grade P3 who are transitioning from Tennessee Early Intervention Services may be withdrawn due to non-eligibility for special education services.
16	Permanent withdrawal of students with disabilities (SWD) who received a completion document but remained in school (up to age 22) under the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) provision	Only included in the graduation rate of one cohort based on year entered grade 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This code only applies to SWD who were included in a prior cohort's graduation rate and returned to school after previously receiving a special education completion document.
17	Transferred to and enrolled in an out-of-state online school	Excluded from cohort only if adequate documentation is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written records request from the online school; OR Written acknowledgement on official letterhead from an administrator at the online school confirming enrollment that includes the student's full name Withdrawal code 17 should only be used for students who withdraw from traditional bricks-and-mortar schools to enroll in a school in which the content is delivered via the Internet and the school location is not in Tennessee.

3.3 Cohort Change Requests

During phase I, the other major task is to remove any students with an inaccurate YE9 code that is generated by the department based on student enrollment record. Once a YE9 code is assigned, the value remains fixed until a cohort change request is made. During Phase I, districts shall review student records and verify data in SIS, EIS, and Cohort application carefully to make sure students are correctly assigned to the right cohort. If errors are found, districts must submit cohort change requests according to the specific format and timeline outlined in the [Cohort Change Instructions](#).

3.4 Other Cohort Issues

Table 4 outlines additional cohort issues that may appear in the Cohort application and must be addressed by districts by the end of Phase I. Please review the documentation required for the actions described. Please consult the [Cohort Change Instructions](#) for more guidance for scenarios that require submitting a Cohort Change Request.

Table 4. Other Cohort Issues

Issue	Required Action from District	Required Supporting Documentation
Duplicate student ID	Reach out to DT support to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to DT support (DT.Support@tn.gov) to

Issue	Required Action from District	Required Supporting Documentation
	merge the ID AND Submit cohort change request	merge the ID; then, submit a Cohort Change Request form . The process for merging student IDs is not complete until the cohort change request is submitted and processed by the department.
Student's year entered grade 9 is not for the current cohort	Submit cohort change request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a Cohort Change Request form if the student should be assigned to the current cohort. • If the student has completed the program, use the appropriate completion code and upload supporting documentation, if applicable. OR • If the student has withdrawn, use the appropriate withdrawal code and upload supporting documentation, if applicable.
Students enrolled in the individualized Education Account (IEA) program	Submit cohort change request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a Cohort Change Request form to remove the student from the cohort. • Submit a current transcript from the non-public school or program that the student has primary enrollment in. An additional transcript from the district would also be helpful to show the IEA enrollment.
The student never showed up for school on the first day of grade 9; the school has never served the student and has no knowledge of where she/he went.	Submit cohort change request. Note. The student will be included in cohort and counted as dropout unless districts confirm the student never attended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a Cohort Change Request form with a letter on letterhead from a school or district administrator that confirms the student(s) in question never attended school during grade 9 or higher in the district.
The student has no withdrawal code, however the student transferred to another Tennessee public school	Update withdrawal code in EIS. Note. The student will be included in the cohort and counted as dropout if no action is taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdraw the student using code 3 and work with the receiving school to report the student's subsequent enrollment in EIS.

3.5 Potential Pitfalls and Data Errors in Phase I

Common pitfalls and data errors in the Phase I graduation cohort process are discussed below. This section explains how these situations might arise, how they will be reflected in the Cohort application, and the steps districts should take to resolve these errors.

The department recommends that all districts download their student-level cohort data to resolve discrepancies between their list of expected graduates and the list of students who will form the denominator of their graduation rate. Districts can download their student-level data by:

1. Navigate to the [Cohort application](#) or log in through Single Sign On.
2. Select the "User" option under "Logon As..." for the Cohort application.
3. Read the News and Timeline sections on the Instructions page of the Cohort application.

4. Click the checkbox that says, “I agree / I acknowledge that I have read the news.”
5. Click the “Show Data” button.
6. Click the “Download CSV File” link.

Districts should filter these files for included students¹⁷ who have completion types other than 1, 8, 11, 12, or 13. These students will count against districts’ graduation rates. Districts should compare these students to data in their SIS packages to ensure all students are counted correctly.

3.5.1 Students Missing from Cohort

Occasionally, students are missing from the current cohort. This can happen for a couple of reasons:

1. Students’ enrollment information may not have been loaded correctly in EIS.
2. Students are included in another cohort.

To resolve missing cohort issue, district must submit a [Cohort Change Request form](#) following the guidelines of the [Cohort Change Instructions](#). To explore the issue, districts should first check that the student does not appear in another cohort by changing the dropdown field of “Graduation Cohort” on the Cohort Data page. If students appear in one of the other active cohort years, or if students do not appear in any of the active cohort years but should be listed under the current cohort based on districts’ data, districts should submit a [Cohort Change Request form](#) following the instructions provided in the [2023 Cohort Change Request Instructions](#).

3.5.2 Students with Withdrawal Information but Missing Documentation

Any student who has an eligible withdrawal code (i.e., 02, 05, 06, 08, 10, or 17) and no corresponding documentation will remain in the cohort. Common situations may include but are not limited to middle school cohort roll-over where a student never attended, students in other schools (elementary or middle), students receiving special education services, etc. As such, the department recommends that districts filter their student-level files by withdrawal reason to ensure they have uploaded documentation for all eligible students. ***Please note that the department will deny any inquiries or documentation to remove students submitted past the specified timeline as presented in Table 1.***

3.6 Final Checks

As a final check, districts should ensure they can answer ‘yes’ to the following questions before the Phase I deadline.

1. Did the district submit completion information for all graduates and verify that the information was loaded into the Cohort application?
2. Did the district submit withdrawal information for all applicable students and verify that the information loaded into the Cohort application?
3. Did the district upload documentation for all students with withdrawal codes of 02, 05, 06, 08, 10,

¹⁷ Students are included in the cohort if: 1) they have a value of “Y” in the REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column, 2) they have a value of “Y” in the INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column and no REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column, 3) they have a value of “P” in the INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column and no value in the REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column, or 4) they have a value of “Y” in the INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column and either no value or a value of “Y” in the REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column.

and 17 that satisfies the requirements outlined in the guidance documents?

4. Did the district verify that the list of students in the Cohort application matches the list of expected graduates in the district's SIS package (i.e., there are no students who, by virtue of a data entry error, were entered into the incorrect cohort)?

Section 4: Phase II

The second phase of the 2022-23 graduation cohort process **starts on July 17, 2023 and closes on August 11, 2023**. The phase II process allows districts to (1) enter completion status for summer graduates, (2) review and appeal the department's decisions as to which students will be included in graduation rate calculations, and (3) submit 60-day appeals.

4.1 Summer Graduates

Districts should also submit completion information for summer graduates and verify that the data load correctly in the Cohort application during Phase II. Summer graduates must have a completion date **AFTER** the Phase I deadline (June 16, 2023) **AND** a completion code of **SU**. Please note that completion information for summer graduates will not load into the Cohort application automatically from EIS¹⁸, as these data require a manual process. Please also note that the data will be updated manually each week even though the Cohort application may list the date the data were last updated as mid-June.

Districts can estimate their preliminary graduation rates during Phase II. Please note that these preliminary rates will not reflect any appeals the district submitted. Districts can estimate their rates using the following steps.

1. Download the student-level file following the steps in [Section 3.5](#).
2. Remove any rows from the spreadsheet where the student has a value of "N" for the field of REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT.
3. Remove any rows from the spreadsheet where the student has a value of "N" for INCLUDED_IN_COHORT and has a blank value (or a value of "N") in the field of REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT.
4. Count the number of students who have a completion type of 1, 8, 11, 12, and 13.
5. Divide the number in step 4 by the number of students left in the spreadsheet after completing steps 2 and 3. This rate will be the preliminary graduation rate, though it will not reflect the results of any appeals that districts have submitted.

4.2 Graduation Data Appeals

During Phase II, districts should carefully review the department's responses to Phase I submissions and submit appeals to decisions made by the department as to which students will be included in graduation rate calculations, as appropriate. During Phase II, districts should pay special attention to students whose removal from the cohort was denied. These students show a value of "Deny" in the "Status/Comments" field. The department recommends that districts download their student-level data (please see [Section 3.5](#) for more guidance) and filter the worksheet for values of "Y" for the REVISED_INCLUDED_IN_COHORT column. More information regarding the appeal process and guidelines will be released in spring 2023. During Phase II, districts can **ONLY** submit appeals to data that were entered in EIS in Phase I. Districts may not submit appeals to the data that were never entered or updated in Phase I.

4.3 60 Day Appeals

In general, students count in the district and school in which they were most recently enrolled. However,

¹⁸ Issues with EIS should be reported to the District Technology Help Desk at DT.Support@tn.gov.

[T.C.A. 49-1-601\(a\)](#) allows students to be assigned to the school in which the student was enrolled for the greatest proportion of days if that student did not attend the same high school for at least 60 days of the most recent school year. For instance, if a student was enrolled in a school or district for less than 60 days of the most recent school year, the school or district can submit an appeal and documents to have the student reassigned to the school or district in which they spent the majority of their time in high school. **Districts and schools must file 60 day appeals and provide acceptable documentation by 5 p.m. CST on July 28.** The department will then review the enrollment data and documentation to provide an initial response **by August 4**. Districts shall provide all acceptable documentation needed to resolve all pending issues by August 11. All documentation submitted by August 11 will be reviewed by the department to make a final decision. **The department will not review any documentation submitted after August 11.**

Following the appeal approval, the department will then send a letter to schools and districts whose cohort data are impacted by the 60 Day Appeals process **by August 11**. If a school receives a student back into their 2023 graduation cohort, and they have sufficient documentation that the student withdrew, they can submit an appeal for review in Phase III.

4.4 Potential Pitfalls and Data Errors

The most common complications during Phase II involve the submission of completion information for summer graduates. Due to the completion date for summer graduates often exceeding the date bounds of the enrollment, districts must list the completion period as "SU;" failure to do so will cause an error in EIS that will prevent the data from loading correctly into the Cohort application. Completion documents may have any date **prior to the Attendance Start** date of the following school year. However, **the End of Service Action** date must be **before the Attendance End** date of the school year in which the student is graduating. Also, summer graduates **should not** have a new enrollment for summer school. This will create an error and not allow for the student to be pulled from EIS into Cohort when manually updated. Please refer to [Section 3.1](#) for more details about submitting completion information.

4.5 Final Checks

As a final check, districts should ensure they can answer all of the following questions affirmatively before the Phase II deadline.

1. Did your district submit completion information for all summer graduates and verify that information loaded into the Cohort application?
2. Did your district submit withdrawal information for all students who withdrew since the last week of Phase I **only** and verify that information loaded into the Cohort application?
3. Did your district submit appeals for applicable students following the appeals guidance and appeals instructions?

Section 5: Phase III

The third phase of the 2022-23 graduation cohort process **starts on August 28, 2023 and closes on September 15, 2023**. During Phase III, districts shall submit appeals, as appropriate, for (1) summer graduates and (2) students who were reassigned back to their schools or district as a result of the 60 Day appeals process. Additionally, districts should review and verify their preliminary graduation rates. Districts that wish to calculate their preliminary graduation rates may do so following the steps in [Section 3.5](#). Districts should also review the appeals response letters sent to directors in response to the submitted appeals. These letters detail the department's appeals decisions as well as provide process recommendations for ensuring that districts' graduation rate data are as accurate as possible.

5.1 Final Checks

As a final check, districts should ensure they can answer all the following questions affirmatively before the Phase III deadline.

1. Did your district submit appeals for applicable students (i.e., students withdrawing since the last week of Phase I and summer graduates) following the appeals guidance and appeals instructions?
2. If your district submitted appeals, did your district review and retain the appeals response letter sent to your director of schools?

Section 6: Phase IV

The last phase of the 2022-23 graduation cohort process **starts on September 25, 2023, and closes on September 28, 2023**. At this stage, all Cohort and Graduation data for 2022-23 graduating cohort are final. Final Cohort data will be updated on the Cohort application on September 25 for district review before graduation data are released on the [Data Downloads](#) on September 28.

Section 7: Conclusion

We hope this guide helps navigate the graduation cohort process. Please feel free to provide feedback on this document or share any recommendations for support resources to TNEducation@tn.gov. Thank you for your continuing efforts to ensure that your district's graduation rate data are as accurate as possible.