California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

memo-imb-amard-apr21item01

# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 16, 2021

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TONY THURMOND, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Implementation of the Integrated Local, State, and Federal Accountability and Continuous Improvement System: Report on the Impact of the Dashboard Alternative School Status Graduation Rate on School Enrollment Patterns.

## Summary of Key Issues

In May 2018, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved the methodology for calculating the Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) graduation rate. During the discussion, SBE members raised concerns about the modified Graduation Rate Indicator’s potential to impact mobility between non-alternative and DASS schools. Specifically, the SBE provided feedback about the potential increase of student transfers from non-alternative high schools into DASS high schools. The SBE directed the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct analyses of enrollment data when it became available.

In August 2019, the CDE presented the SBE with an Information Memorandum, identifying the trends in student transfers from non-alternative to DASS high schools during the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 school years. The analyses showed that transfer patterns from 2017–2018 continued onto the 2018–2019 school year. Monthly counts, race/ethnicity student group counts, and program student group counts all stayed relatively consistent between the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 school years. The only exception was the notable decrease in Foster Youth in the 2018–2019 transfers. Overall, transfer patterns were not significantly different within this two-year span. Nevertheless, the CDE committed to conduct additional transfer analyses for the next two years. This Information Memorandum provides the results of the most recent analyses based on data from the 2017–2018 and 2019–2020 school years.

## Prior State Board of Education Action and Discussion

In July 2017, the SBE approved criteria for schools to apply for DASS (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr17/documents/jul17item01.doc>).

In March 2018, the SBE reviewed proposed revisions for the 2018 Dashboard, including the incorporation of modified methods for DASS schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/mar18item01.docx>).

In May 2018, the SBE approved the methodology for calculating the one-year graduation rate and directed the CDE to conduct analyses of enrollment data when it became available

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/may18item02.docx>).

In August 2019, the SBE received an Information Memorandum, identifying the enrollment data for DASS and non-DASS schools and the rates of transition from non-DASS to DASS schools during the 2017–18 and 2018–19 school years (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-pptb-amard-aug19item01.docx>).

## Attachment(s)

* **Attachment 1:** Analysis of Student Transfers from Non-Alternative High Schools to Alternative High Schools with Dashboard Alternative School Status (9 Pages)

# **Attachment 1**

## Analysis of Student Transfers from Non-Alternative High Schools to Alternative High Schools with Dashboard Alternative School Status

This is the second analysis on the transfer patterns between non-alternative high schools and Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) high schools and explores the impact of the DASS graduation rate on school transfer patterns. The analyses provided in this Memorandum are consistent with the first analyses provided in an August 2019 Memorandum (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-pptb-amard-aug19item01.docx>). Because the current analyses revealed that the DASS graduation rate does not significantly impact student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools, it does not warrant any changes to the calculation of the DASS graduation rate at this time.

Student-level enrollment data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) was used to identify student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools. Specifically, transfer patterns between the 2017–2018 and 2019–2020 school years were analyzed. The student exits and enrollments in this analysis occurred within the school year windows of July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018; July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019; and July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

To calculate the frequency of transfers, students who exited from a non-alternative public high school and sequentially enrolled in a DASS high school were only counted once. If a student had multiple transfers, only the first transfer was captured. This unduplicated count methodology ensures that each student is equally represented in the total transfer count.

A yearly transfer total, along with monthly totals, was calculated for the 2019–20 school year and compared to the 2017–18 and 2018–19 data. The month-by-month analysis reveals how transfer counts fluctuate over the course of a school year. The month in which a student transfer occurred was determined by the withdrawal date from the student’s non-alternative public high school.

The following questions informed the analysis:

1. Was there a substantial increase in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools between the 2017–2018 and 2019–2020 school years?
2. During which months did transfers from non-alternative to DASS schools most frequently occur?
3. Which student groups most frequently transferred from non-alternative to DASS schools?
4. Do transfer patterns from 2017–2018 continue through the 2019–2020 school year?

### **Comparison of Transfer Patterns across Three School years**

#### **Monthly Transfer Patterns**

The first question that we explored – Was there a substantial increase in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools between the 2017–2018 and 2019–2020 school years? – is answered in Figure 1, below.

##### ***Figure 1. Month-by-Month Transfer Totals across 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20***



##### ***Summary of Month-to-Month Transfer Totals***

As Figure 1 shows, the 2019–20 transfer patterns from July through February remain fairly consistent with those from the prior two years. However, beginning in March 2020, there is a steep decline in transfer counts. This is likely due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 19, 2020, and the wave of school closures that followed. Table 1 examines the months in which transfers from non-alternative to DASS schools most frequently occurred.

##### **Table 1. Difference and Percent Change of Transfer Totals**

| **Month** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19** **Counts** | **2019–20** **Counts** | **Difference 2017–18 to 2019–20** | **Percent Change****2017–18 to 2019-20** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| July | 190 | 246 | 304 | +114 | +60.0% |
| Aug | 4,180 | 4,888 | 4,163 | -17 | -0.4% |
| September | 5,153 | 5,257 | 4,918 | -235 | -4.6% |
| October | 6,402 | 6,543 | 5,993 | -409 | -6.4% |
| November | 4,122 | 4,025 | 3,859 | -263 | -6.4% |
| December | 5,754 | 6,338 | 6,367 | +613 | +10.7% |
| January | 7,728 | 7,195 | 6,808 | -920 | -11.9% |
| February | 5,028 | 5,083 | 4,688 | -340 | -6.8% |
| March | 5,518 | 5,912 | 2,748 | -2,770 | -50.2% |
| April | 3,184 | 3,118 | 333 | -2,851 | -89.5% |
| May | 1,267 | 730 | 151 | -1,116 | -88.1% |
| June | 148 | 0 | 35 | -113 | -76.4% |
| **Total** | **48,674** | **49,335** | **40,367** | **-8,307** | -**17.1%** |

Note: % Change = 100 x [(New Value - Old Value) ÷ Old Value]

##### **Summary of Difference and Percent Change of Transfer Totals**

As shown in Table 1, there is a significant decrease in the total number of transfers from the 2017–2018 base year to 2019–2020, owing in large part to the statewide school closures from March 2020 onwards. Overall, there were 8,307 fewer transfers, or a percent change of –17.1, from 2017–18 through 2019–20.

The sharpest drops (in terms of number and percentage) occur in April 2020 with 2,851 fewer transfers than during that same month in 2017–18, or a change of –89.5 percent. As mentioned above, these data likely reflect the larger state trends.

Looking at the months that precede the pandemic, there is a general downward trend in student transfers in 2019–20, with the exception of:

* December, in which student transfers rise from 5,754 to 6,367 (an increase of 10.7 percent) from 2017–18 to 2019–20. (We also see a steady rise in December transfers across all three year.)
* July, in which student transfer rise from 190 to 304 (an increase of 60 percent) from 2017–18 to 2019–20. (At least some of these transfers include Grade 12 students who attend a DASS summer school program and graduate.)

#### **Changes in Student Group Representation from 2017–18 to 2019–20**

The next set of tables examine the changes in student group representation from 2017–2018 to 2019–2020. Table 2 provides a breakdown in transfer counts by racial/ethnic student groups, while Table 3 provides the data at the program level.

##### ***Table 2. Change in Race/Ethnicity Representation Across School Years***

| **Race/Ethnicity Student Group**  | **2017–18 Counts**  | **2018–19 Counts**  | **2019–20 Counts**  | **Difference** **2017–18 to 2019–20**  | **Percent Change** **2017–18 to 2019–20**  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African American  | 4,979  | 4,705  | 3,792  | -1,187  | -23.8%  |
| American Indian or Alaska Native  | 550  | 538  | 390  | -160  | -29.1%  |
| Asian  | 828  | 911  | 730  | -98  | -11.8%  |
| Filipino  | 380  | 383  | 331  | -49  | -12.9%  |
| Hispanic or Latino  | 31,725  | 31,922  | 27,528  | -4,197  | -13.2%  |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  | 291  | 266  | 197  | -94  | -32.3%  |
| White  | 8,078  | 7,854  | 5,928  | -2,150  | -26.6%  |
| Two or More Races  | 1,180  | 1,169  | 1,091  | -89  | -7.5%  |
| All Students  | 48,011  | 47,748  | 39,987  | -8,024  | -16.7%  |

##### **Summary of Change in Race/Ethnicity Representation**

The racial/ethnic trend in transfers remains fairly consistent from 2017–2018 to 2019–2020, with Hispanic/Latino students continuing make up the largest percentage of students transferring from non-alternative schools to DASS schools. At the same time, transfer counts have declined for every student group.

##### ***Table 3. Change in Program Group Representation across School years***

| **Program Student Group** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19 Counts** | **2019–20 Counts** | **Difference 2017–18 to 2019–20** | **Percent Change****2017–18 to 2019–20** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English Learners  | 8,686  | 9,212  | 7,104  | -1,582  | -18.2%  |
| Foster Youth  | 2,025  | 1,379  | 1,458  | -567  | -28.0%  |
| Homeless Students  | 2,843  | 2,920  | 2,170  | -673  | -23.7%  |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged  | 39,089  | 39,903  | 33,139  | -5,950  | -15.2%  |
| Students with Disabilities  | 6,818  | 6,959  | 5,930  | -888  | -13.0%  |
| All Students  | 59,461  | 60,373  | 49,801  | -9,660  | -16.2% |

##### **Summary of Change in Program Student Group Representation**

Here too, the trend data are encouraging. For every program student group, transfer counts have declined from 2017–18 to 2019–20.

#### **Disproportionality in Student Group Transfers**

The Disproportionality Index helps us determine whether a particular student group is being transferred at a higher or lower rate than expected, given the group’s actual numbers within the general student population. An index of less than 1 indicates a lower representation of the group in the transfer population compared to the general population, while an index of higher than 1 indicates a higher representation. If the index is 1 or close to 1, this indicates an equal or nearly equal representation.

##### **Race/Ethnicity Composition in Transfer Group Compared to Statewide Student Enrollment Population**

To check for disproportionality of race/ethnicity representation in our transfer population, transfer student group percentages were compared against statewide student group percentages. The Disproportionality Index for racial/ethnic student groups would be calculated as follows:

$$ \frac{Number of Transfer Students in Race or Ethnic Group ÷ Total Transfer Population}{Number of Students in Race or Ethnicity in Student Population ÷ Total Student Population}$$

#### Table 4 provides the breakdown by racial and ethnic groups from 2017–18 through 2019–20.

##### **Table 4. Disproportionality of Race/Ethnicity in 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Race/** **Ethnicity Student Group**  | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2017–18**  | **% of Students Transfer to DASS** **in 2017–18**  | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2018–19**  | **% of Students Transfer to DASS** **in 2018–19**  | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2019–20**  | **% of Students Transfer to DASS** **in 2019–20**  | **DI in** **2017–18**  | **DI in** **2018–19**  | **DI in****2019–20**  |
| African American  | 5.48%  | 10.23%  | 5.41%  | 9.54%  | 5.27%  | 9.39%  | 1.87  | 1.76  | 1.78  |
| American Indian or Alaska Native  | 0.52%  | 1.13%  | 0.51%  | 1.09%  | 0.49%  | 0.97%  | 2.16  | 2.15  | 1.97 |
| Asian  | 9.16%  | 1.70%  | 9.28%  | 1.85%  | 9.33%  | 1.81%  | 0.19  | 0.20  | 0.19  |
| Filipino  | 2.44%  | 0.78%  | 2.42%  | 0.78%  | 2.38%  | 0.82%  | 0.32  | 0.32  | 0.34  |
| Hispanic or Latino  | 54.28%  | 65.18%  | 54.60%  | 64.70%  | 54.86%  | 68.19%  | 1.20  | 1.19  | 1.24  |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander  | 0.46%  | 0.60%  | 0.45%  | 0.54%  | 0.44%  | 0.49%  | 1.29  | 1.19 | 1.11 |
| White  | 23.19%  | 16.60%  | 22.91%  | 15.92%  | 22.42%  | 14.69%  | 0.72  | 0.69  | 0.66  |
| Total  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | NA | NA | NA |

##### **Summary of Disproportionality of Race/Ethnicity in 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20**

Table 4 indicates that trends in disproportionality from 2017–18 continued into 2019–20 for all racial and ethnic student groups (although the Disproportionality Index declined slightly for most groups in the last year). Across all three years the transfer student population has:

* A disproportionally higher percentage of transfers among African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, when compared to statewide percentages.
* A disproportionally lower percentage of transfers among Asians, Filipino, and White students, as well as students who are Two or More Races.

##### **Program Composition in Transfer Group Compared to Statewide Student Enrollment Population**

The Disproportionality Index for program student groups would be calculated as follows:

$$DI = \frac{Number of Transfer Students in Program Group ÷ Total Transfer Population}{Number of Students in Program in Student Population ÷ Total Student Population}$$

##### **Table 5. Disproportionality of Program Student Groups in 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  **Program Student Group**  | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2017–18**  | **% of Students Transfer to DASS** **in 2017–18**  | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2018–19**  | **% of Students Transfer to DASS** **in 2018–19**  | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2019–20**  | **% of Students Transfer to DASS** **in 2019–20**  | **DI in** **2017–18**  | **DI in****2018–19**  | **DI in** **2019–20**  |
| English Learners  | 20.44%  | 17.9%  | 19.3%  | 18.7%  | 18.6%  | 14.3%  | 0.87  | 0.97  | 0.77  |
| Foster Youth  | 0.55%  | 4.2%  | 0.5%  | 2.8%  | 0.5%  | 2.9%  | 7.52  | 5.15  | 5.41 |
| Homeless  | 3.28%  | 5.8%  | 3.4%  | 5.9%  | 3.2%  | 4.4%  | 1.78  | 1.76  | 1.38 |
| Socio-economically Disadvantaged  | 61.53%  | 80.3%  | 60.9%  | 80.9%  | 60.7% | 66.5% | 1.31  | 1.33  | 1.10 |
| Students with Disabilities  | 11.32%  | 14.0%  | 11.7%  | 14.1%  | 11.7%  | 11.9% | 1.24  | 1.20  | 1.02 |

##### **Summary of Disproportionality of Program Student Group in 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20**

Table 5 indicates that trends in disproportionality from 2017–18 continued into 2019–20 for all program student groups (although the Disproportionality Index declined slightly for all groups in the last year). Across all three years the transfer student population has:

* A disproportionally higher percentage of transfers among foster youth and homeless students
* A disproportionally lower percentage of English Learners and Students with Disabilities

#### **Findings**

The analyses show that there was an overall decrease in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS schools from 2017–2018 through 2019–2020. In total, there were 8,307 fewer transfers in 2019–2020, which translates into a 17.1 percent decrease from the base year.

One question that merits analysis is whether these declines in transfer counts are due to an overall decline in the DASS student population from 2017–2018 through 2019–2020. In fact, we can see in Table 6, that the overall number of high school students increased by about 20,000 during this period.

##### **Table 6. Statewide 2019-20 Census Data**

| **School Year** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** | **Grade 11** | **Grade 12** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017–2018 | 500,397 | 496,819 | 479,381 | 486,592 | **1,963,189** |
| 2018–2019 | 493,903 | 492,690 | 474,843 | 489,650 | **1,951,086** |
| 2019–2020 | 495,277 | 483,745 | 475,696 | 489,221 | **1,943,939** |

At the same time, the number of DASS high school students has increased by about 3,000 since 2017– 18, as shown in Table 7.

##### **Table 7. Number of Students in DASS Students, by Grade, from 2017–2018 through 2019–2020**

| **School Year** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** | **Grade 11** | **Grade 12** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017–2018 | 18,453  | 20,656  | 36,189  | 60,791  | **136,089**  |
| 2018–2019 | 15,751  | 25,698  | 38,464  | 60,426  | **140,339**  |
| 2019–2020 | 17,925  | 27,046  | 37,436  | 56,724  | **139,131**  |

However, the largest increase in DASS students occurs in Grade 10. The number of Grade 12 students in DASS schools has actually declined, which indicates that implementation of the DASS graduation rate has not led to a significant increase in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools. If we look at the percentage of DASS high school students that make up the total high school enrollment (using data from Tables 6 and 7), we see little movement:

* In 2017–18, 0.069 percent of all high school students attended DASS schools.
* In 2018–19, 0.072 percent of all high school students attended DASS schools.
* In 2019–20, 0.072 percent of all high school students attended DASS schools.

Overall, trend data in student transfers remained relatively stable from 2017–18 through 2019–20 (barring the months immediately following the COVID-19 school closures). This analysis indicates that the DASS graduation rates have not significantly impacted student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools. Therefore, at this time, it is not necessary to make any changes to the calculation of the DASS graduation rate.