California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 12, 2022

**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 meeting, SBE members raised concerns about how the modified Graduation Rate Indicator could potentially impact student transfers between non-alternative and DASS schools. Specifically, the SBE was concerned about the potential increase of student transfers from non-alternative high schools into DASS high schools and directed the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct analyses of enrollment data when it became available.

In August 2019 and April 2021, the CDE provided the SBE trends in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools. The data within these Information Memoranda identified the enrollment patterns during the 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20 school years. The analysis revealed that the transfer patterns were relatively consistent between the 2017–18 and 2018–19 school years but there was a notable decline in transfers in the 2019–20 school year beginning in March 2020. The CDE proposes that the decline was likely due to the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) stay-at-home order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 19, 2020, and the in-person school closures that followed.

In October 2020, the CDE received a letter from the ED that raised concerns about California’s use of DASS “modified measures” on the Academic Indicator and the Graduation Rate Indicator. In response to ED’s October 2020 letter, in January 2021, the SBE adopted amendments to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, which included a description of the proposed modifications made to the Academic Indicator cut scores for DASS schools and the one-year graduation rate that was developed for DASS schools. In January 2022, the ED denied the proposed amendments to the consolidated ESSA State Plan. As a result, in March 2022, the SBE approved the submission of a waiver to the ED to request the continued use of an alternative accountability system for DASS schools to allow California to maintain DASS modified methods business rules for calculating the Academic and Graduation Rate Indicators.

Although there is uncertainty of whether the state may be able to continue the application of “modified methods” for DASS schools, which includes the use of the one-year DASS graduation rate, the CDE is committed to continuing to provide the DASS transfer enrollment analyses. Therefore, this Information Memorandum includes the results of the most recent analyses based on data from the last four years (2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21).

## 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>).

In April 2021, the CDE provided a second analysis on the transfer patterns between non-DASS schools and DASS schools and reviewed the impact of the DASS graduation rate on school transfer patterns during the 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20 school years (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/apr21memoamard01.docx>).

In February 2022, the SBE received an update to California’s Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan which included a January 12, 2022 letter from the ED denying the amendments approved by the SBE in January 2021 regarding the DASS modified methods. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/feb22memogad01.docx>)

In March 2022, the SBE approved the submission of a waiver to the ED to allow the application of the DASS modified methods to continue for the Academic and Graduation Rate Indicators (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr22/documents/mar22item04.docx>)

### Attachment(s)

* **Attachment 1:** Analysis of Student Transfers from Non-Alternative High Schools to Alternative High Schools with Dashboard Alternative School Status (10 Pages)

## Attachment 1

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

This is the third 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 analyses that have been conducted to date. 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.

The analyses in this Memorandum reviews the transfer patterns between the 2017–18 and 2020–21 school years. 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. 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; July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020; and July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021.

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 2020–21 school year and compared to the prior three years (2017–18, 2018–19, and 2019–20) of 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.

As in prior years, the following questions informed the analysis:

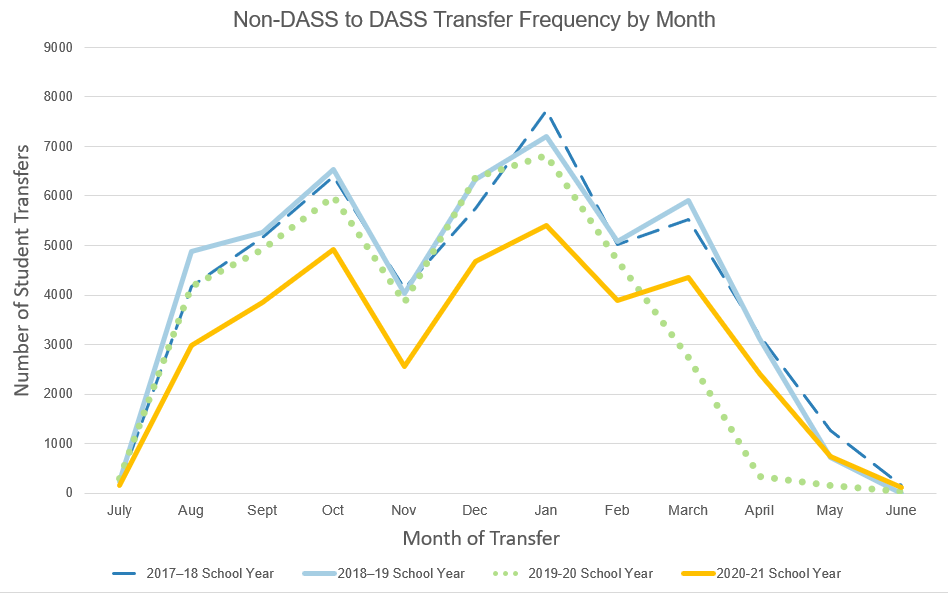
1. Was there a substantial increase in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools between the 2017–18 and 2020–21 school years?
2. During which months did transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS schools most frequently occur?
3. Which student groups were most frequently transferred from non-alternative high schools to DASS schools?
4. Do transfer patterns from 2017–2018 continue through the 2020–21 school year?

#### Comparison of Transfer Patterns across Four 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 2020–2021 school years? – is answered in Figure 1, below.

##### Figure 1. Month-by-Month Transfer Totals across 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21



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

As noted earlier, last year in 2019–20, there was a considerable drop in the transfer of students from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools beginning in March 2020. This dramatic decline was likely due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom on March 19, 2020, and the in-person school closures that occurred across the state following the executive order. However, as seen in Figure 1, the 2020–21 transfer patterns reflect the return of the general trends seen in 2017–18 and 2018–19. This may be due to the re-establishment of in-person learning beginning with the 2020–21 school year. This is all evident in Table 1 which reflects the same data as in Figure 1 and examines the months in which transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools most frequently occurred.

One significant general trend seen throughout the last four years (2017–18 to 2020–21) is the overall decline in transfer counts. This begs the question if this may be due to a decrease in the number of enrolled DASS students compared to prior years, which will be examined later.

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

| **Month** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19**  **Counts** | **2019–20**  **Counts** | **2020–21**  **Counts** | **Difference 2017–18 to 2020–21** | **Percent Change**  **2017–18 to 2020–21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| July | 190 | 246 | 304 | 164 | -26 | -13.7% |
| August | 4,180 | 4,888 | 4,163 | 2,974 | -1,206 | -28.9% |
| September | 5,153 | 5,257 | 4,918 | 3,854 | -1,299 | -25.2% |
| October | 6,402 | 6,543 | 5,993 | 4,922 | -1,480 | -23.1% |
| November | 4,122 | 4,025 | 3,859 | 2,566 | -1,556 | -37.7% |
| December | 5,754 | 6,338 | 6,367 | 4,676 | -1,078 | -18.7% |
| January | 7,728 | 7,195 | 6,808 | 5,413 | -2,315 | -30.0% |
| February | 5,028 | 5,083 | 4,688 | 3,890 | -1,138 | -22.6% |
| March | 5,518 | 5,912 | 2,748 | 4,360 | -1,158 | -21.0% |
| April | 3,184 | 3,118 | 333 | 2,421 | -763 | -24.0% |
| May | 1,267 | 730 | 151 | 750 | -517 | -40.8% |
| June | 148 | 0 | 35 | 115 | -33 | -22.3% |
| **Total** | **48,674** | **49,335** | **40,367** | **36,105** | **-12,569** | **-25.8%** |

Percent Change Calculation: 100 x [(New Value - Old Value) ÷ Old Value]

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

As shown in Table 1, the total number of transfers has continued to decrease compared to the 2017–18 base year to 2020–21, owing, perhaps, in large part to the continued uncertainties that have plagued schools and students since the start of COVID-19 in 2019–20. Overall, there were 12,569fewer transfers, or a percent change of -25.8, from 2017–18 through 2020–21.

But, even with the drop in total transfer numbers, both Figure 1 and Table 1 display a nearly identical pattern in fluctuation in 2017–18, 2018–19, and 2020–21. In all three academic years:

* The highest transfer counts were in January, October, December and March.
* The lowest transfer count was in June with a low number of transfers occurring between April to July.

When compared to the transfer counts in 2017–18, the largest percentage change seen in 2020–21 was in November and May, with -37.7 percent change and -40.8 percent change respectively. This signifies that compared to 2017–18, fewer students are transferring from a non-alternative high school to a DASS high school during these months.

#### Changes in Student Group Representation from 2017–18 to 2020–21

The next set of tables examine the changes in student group representation from 2017–18 to 2020–21. 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** | **2020–21 Counts** | **Difference 2017–18 to 2020–21** | **Percent Change 2017–18 to 2020–21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African American | 4,979 | 4,705 | 3,792 | 2,655 | -2,324 | -46.7% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 550 | 538 | 390 | 343 | -207 | -37.6% |
| Asian | 828 | 911 | 730 | 716 | -112 | -13.5% |
| Filipino | 380 | 383 | 331 | 345 | -35 | -9.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 31,725 | 31,922 | 27,528 | 24,505 | -7,220 | -22.8% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 291 | 266 | 197 | 194 | -97 | -33.3% |
| White | 8,078 | 7,854 | 5,928 | 6,059 | -2,019 | -25.0% |
| Two or More Races | 1,180 | 1,169 | 1,091 | 1,019 | -161 | -13.6% |
| All Students | 48,011 | 47,748 | 39,987 | 35,836 | -12,175 | -25.4% |

Note that the counts in the All Students row in Table 2 does not match the Total counts in Table 1 because Table 2 excludes the number of students that did not report a race/ethnicity.

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

The Hispanic/Latino student group continues to make up the largest percentage of transfer students followed by the White student group and the African American student group. Compared to the 2017–18 transfer counts, African American students show the most significant decrease in transfers with nearly half of the transfer counts in 2020–21 (46.7 percent decrease). This is followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (37.6 percent decrease) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (33.3 percent decrease).

##### Table 3. Change in Program Group Representation across School Years

| **Program Student Group** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19 Counts** | **2019–20 Counts** | **2020–21 Counts** | **Difference 2017–18 to 2020–21** | **Percent Change 2017–18 to 2020–21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English Learners | 8,686 | 9,212 | 7,104 | 5,831 | -2,855 | -32.9% |
| Foster Youth | 2,025 | 1,379 | 1,458 | 1,054 | -971 | -48.0% |
| Homeless Students | 2,843 | 2,920 | 2,170 | 1,813 | -1,030 | -36.2% |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 39,089 | 39,903 | 33,139 | 28,085 | -11,004 | -28.2% |
| Students with Disabilities | 6,818 | 6,959 | 5,930 | 4,659 | -2,159 | -31.7% |
| All Students | 59,461 | 60,373 | 49,801 | 41,442 | -18,019 | -30.3% |

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

The student groups represented in Table 3 also reflect a decline in the number of students transferring from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools. The most significant decrease is with the Foster Youth student group with 48 percent.

#### 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 the transfer population, transfer student group percentages were compared against statewide student group percentages. The Disproportionality Index for racial/ethnic student groups were calculated as follows:

##### Table 4 provides the disproportionality breakdown by racial and ethnic groups from 2017–18 through 2020–21.

##### Table 4. Disproportionality of Race/Ethnicity in 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21

| **Race/**  **Ethnicity Student Group** | **Percent Enrolled State 2017–18** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2017–18** | **Percent Enrolled State 2018-19** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2018–19** | **Percent Enrolled State 2019–20** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2019–20** | **Percent Enrolled State 2020–21** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2020–21** | **DI in 2017–18** | **DI in 2018–19** | **DI in 2019–20** | **DI in 2020–21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African American | 5.48% | 10.23% | 5.41% | 9.54% | 5.27% | 9.39% | 5.16% | 7.41% | 1.87 | 1.76 | 1.78 | 1.44 |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.52% | 1.13% | 0.51% | 1.09% | 0.49% | 0.97% | 0.47% | 0.96% | 2.16 | 2.15 | 1.97 | 2.03 |
| Asian | 9.16% | 1.70% | 9.28% | 1.85% | 9.33% | 1.81% | 9.54% | 2.00% | 0.19 | 0.20 | 0.19 | 0.21 |
| Filipino | 2.44% | 0.78% | 2.42% | 0.78% | 2.38% | 0.82% | 2.38% | 0.96% | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.34 | 0.41 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 54.28% | 65.18% | 54.60% | 64.70% | 54.86% | 68.19% | 55.32% | 68.38% | 1.20 | 1.19 | 1.24 | 1.24 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.46% | 0.60% | 0.45% | 0.54% | 0.44% | 0.49% | 0.44% | 0.54% | 1.29 | 1.19 | 1.11 | 1.24 |
| White | 23.19% | 16.60% | 22.91% | 15.92% | 22.42% | 14.69% | 21.74% | 16.91% | 0.72 | 0.69 | 0.66 | 0.78 |
| Two or More Races | 3.53% | 2.46% | 3.62% | 2.45% | 3.95% | 2.84% | 4.11% | 2.84% | 0.70 | 0.68 | 0.72 | 0.69 |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | NA | NA | NA | NA |

DI = Disproportionality Index; NA = Not Applicable

#### Summary of Disproportionality of Race/Ethnicity in 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21

The Disproportionality Index reflected in Table 4 indicates that the trends in disproportionality from 2017–18 has continued into 2020–21 for all racial and ethnic student groups. The only exception is with the African American student group which had a decrease in its Disproportionality Index in 2020–21 signifying that these students were less represented in the transfer population compared to the general population. Across all four years there has been:

* A disproportionally higher percentage of transfers among African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Hispanics/Latinos, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, and
* 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:

##### Table 5. Disproportionality of Program Student Groups in 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21 (Cont.)

| **Program Student Group** | **Percent Enrolled State 2017–18** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2017–18** | **Percent Enrolled State 2018-19** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2018–19** | **Percent Enrolled State 2019–20** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2019–20** | **Percent Enrolled State 2020–21** | **Percent Transfer to DASS 2020–21** | **DI in 2017–18** | **DI in 2018–19** | **DI in 2019–20** | **DI in 2020–21** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Foster Youth | 0.55% | 4.2% | 0.5% | 2.8% | 0.5% | 2.9% | 0.54% | 2.54% | 7.52 | 5.15 | 5.41 | 4.70 |
| Homeless | 3.28% | 5.8% | 3.4% | 5.9% | 3.2% | 4.4% | 3.05% | 4.37% | 1.78 | 1.76 | 1.38 | 1.43 |
| SED | 61.53% | 80.3% | 60.9% | 80.9% | 60.7% | 66.5% | 60.33% | 67.77% | 1.31 | 1.33 | 1.10 | 1.12 |
| SWD | 11.32% | 14.0% | 11.7% | 14.1% | 11.7% | 11.9% | 12.48% | 11.24% | 1.24 | 1.20 | 1.02 | 0.90 |

DI = Disproportionality Index; SED = Socioeconomically Disadvantaged; SWD = Students with Disabilities

#### Summary of Disproportionality of Program Student Group in 2017–18, 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21

Table 5 indicates that trends in disproportionality from 2017–18 continued into 2020–21 for all program student groups. However, when compared against the 2017–18 baseline year, the Disproportionality Index has markedly declined for the Foster Youth and Students with Disabilities student groups. Within the last four years, of the DASS transfer student population, there has been:

* A disproportionally higher percentage of Foster Youth students
* A disproportionally lower representation of English Learners and Students with Disabilities

#### Findings

The analyses show that for a second consecutive year, there is an overall decrease in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools. In 2020–21, there were 12,569 fewer transfers, which translates into a 25.8 percent decrease from the 2017–18 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 2017–18 through 2020–21. To answer this question, the overall population of high school students were examined first to review if there has been a general decline of high school students across the state. As seen in Table 6, the total number of high school students has, in fact, continued to increase each year by more than 26,600 during the last four years.

##### Table 6. Statewide Census Data from 2017–18 to 2020–21

| **School Year** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** | **Grade 11** | **Grade 12** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017–18 | 495,277 | 483,745 | 475,696 | 489,221 | **1,943,939** |
| 2018–19 | 493,903 | 492,690 | 474,843 | 489,650 | **1,951,086** |
| 2019–20 | 500,397 | 496,819 | 479,381 | 486,592 | **1,963,189** |
| 2020–21 | 501,926 | 496,383 | 480,561 | 491,750 | **1,970,620** |

At the same time, the overall population of DASS students has steadily decreased since 2018–19 by more than 6,100 (refer to Table 7 on the following page).

##### Table 7. Number of Students in DASS Schools, by Grade, from 2017–18 through 2020–21

| **School Year** | **Grade 9** | **Grade 10** | **Grade 11** | **Grade 12** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017–18 | 18,453 | 20,656 | 36,189 | 60,791 | **136,089** |
| 2018–19 | 15,751 | 25,698 | 38,464 | 60,426 | **140,339** |
| 2019–20 | 17,925 | 27,046 | 37,436 | 56,724 | **139,131** |
| 2020–21 | 19,594 | 24,784 | 33,573 | 56,277 | **134,228** |

Since 2017–18, the largest increase in DASS student enrollment occurs in grade ten with the largest decrease occurring in grade twelve. This continues to signify 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 as the DASS graduation rate is predominately based on students in grade twelve. Furthermore, the percentage of DASS high school students that make up the total high school enrollment (using data from Tables 6 and 7) reflects little movement and, in fact, shows a slight decrease in 2020–21:

* In 2017–18, 0.070 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, 0.071 percent of all high school students attended DASS schools.
* In 2020–21, 0.068 percent of all high school students attended DASS schools.

Even considering the challenges faced in the ever-changing education landscape caused by COVID-19, in general, the trend data in student transfers remained relatively stable from 2017–18 through 2020–21. 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.