California Department of Education
Executive Office
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# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 16, 2023

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Multi-year Extended-Year Graduation Rate: Calculation and Analysis of its Impact on Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) and Non-DASS Schools

This memorandum is provided to update the California State Board of Education (SBE) on the calculation of a multi-year extended graduation rate that could be used to extend beyond the current combined four- and five-year graduation rate. The multi-year extended graduation rate is being explored as an option to assist Dashboard Alternative Status Schools (DASS) demonstrate a more accurate picture of the progress of their students, following the requirement by the U.S. Department of Education to remove the one-year DASS rate from the Graduation Rate Indicator. The California Department of Education (CDE) included the calculation of this rate in the March 2023 California School Dashboard (Dashboard) workplan and has completed the technical work for this proposal. Based on this analysis, the multi-year extended graduation rate fails to significantly assist DASS schools to demonstrate greater differentiation than the four- and five-year combined graduation rate.

The CDE will present this to several education partners as well as the California Practitioners Advisory Group for feedback and review ahead of action by the SBE at the September 2023 meeting.

## Summary of Key Issues

Beginning with the 2022 Dashboard, DASS schools began being evaluated on the four- and five-year combined graduation rate for the Graduation Rate Indicator, which was previously limited to non-DASS (or traditional) high schools. This requirement was implemented to bring California into compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which requires that all students be evaluated on the same metrics. Accordingly, DASS schools, who had previously been evaluated on a one-year graduation rate calculation, were now required to have the same four-and five-year combined graduation rate as traditional schools. Knowing that DASS schools serve different populations, many of which aim to assist in credit recovery and graduation of students in prior cohorts, CDE wanted to investigate if an extended year graduation rate would capture these students and raise the overall graduation rate for DASS schools in general.

For the ESSA Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) – Graduation Rate criterion, the change to using the combined four- and five-year graduation rate greatly affected the results of the eligibility determinations for DASS schools. In the 2022–23 school year, 293 DASS schools were eligible for CSI compared to 236 schools eligible in 2019–20 and 151 eligible in 2020–21.

In an effort to explore if a multi-year extended graduation rate would decrease the overidentification of DASS schools for CSI, and raise graduation rates overall, the CDE conducted a review that included an analysis of how the new rate will benefit DASS schools. Although a multi-year extended graduation rate would be applied to all schools (both DASS and non-DASS), the purpose of a new rate should be advantageous to DASS schools and not hinder them from showing progress.

## Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action

In May 2016, the SBE approved the Graduation Rate as a state indicator (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/documents/may16item02revised.doc>).

In September 2016, the SBE approved Status and Change cut scores for the Graduation Rate Indicator, based on the four-year graduation cohort (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr16/documents/sep16item01.doc>).

In March 2018, the SBE reviewed proposed revisions for the 2018 Dashboard, including the incorporation of modified methods for schools with Dashboard Alternative School Status (<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 DASS graduation rate (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/may18item02.docx>).

In June 2018, the SBE received an Information Memorandum on the revisions made to the calculation of the four-year cohort graduation rate to address audit findings from the (ED) Office of Inspector General (OIG) (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-pptb-amard-jun18item02.docx>).

In August 2018, the SBE received an Information Memorandum on the proposed Status and Change Cut scores for the one-year graduation rate for DASS schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-pptb-amard-aug18item02.docx>).

In September 2018, the SBE approved Status and Change cut scores for the one-year graduation rate for DASS schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/sep18item01.docx>).

In November 2018, the SBE approved modification to the Status cut scores for the Graduation Rate Indicator based on the inclusion of DASS schools for the first time within the calculation of the indicator and business rule changes to the calculation of the four-year cohort graduation rate based on audit findings from the ED OIG (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/nov18item04.docx>).

In July 2019, the SBE approved the implementation of the combined graduation rate for all comprehensive non-DASS high schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr19/documents/jul19item01.docx>).

In September 2019, the SBE approved raising the Very Low Status level from “below 67 percent” to “below 68 percent” due to the addition of fifth-year graduates increasing the graduation rates (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr19/documents/sep19item01.docx>).

In November 2019, with the long-term goal increasing to 90.5 percent from 90 percent as required via the federal ESSA State Plan, the SBE approved the revisions to the High and Medium Status cut scores for comprehensive non-DASS high schools and the High and Very High Status cut scores for DASS schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr19/documents/nov19item05rev.docx>).

In January 2021, the SBE approved an update to California’s ESSA Plan to use modified methods for DASS for the Academic and Graduation Rate Indicators. The item also provided an overview of the COVID-19 State Plan Addendum, which is a streamlined process offered by ED for use in the 2020–21 school year in response to the COVID-19 waivers approved by ED in March 2020 (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr21/documents/jan21item04.docx>).

In February 2022, the CDE presented the SBE with an Information Memorandum, which provided information on the letter from ED that denied the State Plan amendments related to clarifying the DASS program (<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>).

In August 2022, the CDE presented the SBE with an Information Memorandum which provided information on the letter from ED that denied the waiver request to maintain DASS modified methods business rules for calculating the Academic and Graduation Rate Indicators (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/aug22memogad01.docx>).

In September 2022, the SBE was provided short-term and long-term options on how California can continue implementing DASS for the 2022 Dashboard and beyond (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr22/documents/sep22item03.docx>).

In March 2023, the CDE presented the 2023 Dashboard Workplan that included the development of a multi-year graduation rate (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr23/documents/mar23item03.docx>).

## Attachment(s)

* Attachment 1: Development of a Multi-Year Graduation Rate and Analysis of its Impact on DASS and Non-DASS Schools (3 pages)

# Attachment 1

## Multi-Year Extended Graduation Rate and Analysis of its Impact on Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) and Non-DASS Schools

### Background

In July 2022, California received a letter from the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED’s) which denied the state's waiver request to continue the use of modified methods for DASS schools. The letter from ED described options that could be considered in lieu of using modified methods, such as a multi-year adjusted cohort graduation rate which would give credit to schools when students receive a regular high school diploma within six years or more. The letter further explained that this multi-year adjusted cohort graduation rate can be universally applied across all high schools and be used to identify any high school for Comprehensive Support and Improvement.

### Development of the Multi-Year Graduation Rate

The California Department of Education (CDE) began simulations to determine whether a multi-year extended-year graduation rate could be beneficial to DASS schools in February 2023. The data simulations were conducted by CDE staff in consultation with the Technical Design Group through May 2023. The simulations were designed to answer the following questions:

* What improvement does an extended-year rate make to the Graduation Rate for DASS and non-DASS schools?
* For schools with a 2022 Four and Five-Year Combined Graduation Rate of less than 68 percent, does adding six- and seven-year graduates raise their rate above 68 percent? (i.e. potentially removing them from qualifying for CSI – Low Graduation Rate)

The adopted California School Dashboard (Dashboard) uses a combined Graduation Rate Indicator which includes all students who have graduated in the current year within four-years and within five-years. For example, on the 2022 Dashboard, students from the Class of 2022 who graduated in 2022 would be recognized as four-year graduates and students from the Class of 2021 who graduated in 2022 would be recognized as five-year graduates. An extended-year graduation rate would look at graduates from the current year but would include students who began their high school career in previous cohorts. For example, students from the Class of 2020 who graduated in 2022 would be recognized as six-year graduates and students from the Class of 2019 who graduated in 2022 would be recognized as seven-year graduates.

### Results of the Multi-Year Extended Graduation Rate Simulations for the Class of 2022

The multi-year extended graduation rate simulations were conducted utilizing data from the 2021–22 school year.

*What Improvement Does an Extended-Year Rate Make to the Graduation Rate for DASS and Non-DASS schools?*

As shown in Table 1, the application of an extended-year graduation rate improved graduation rates in 285 (35 percent) out of 808 DASS high schools and had no effect on 523 (65 percent) DASS high schools.

#### Table 1: Percent Improvement in the Graduation Rate Using an Extended-Year Rate Over the Current Four and Five-Year Combined Graduation Rate in DASS High Schools (n=808)

| **Percent Improvement in the Graduation Rate**  | **Number of DASS High Schools** |
| --- | --- |
| No Improvement | 523 |
| 0.1% to 1.0% Improvement | 122 |
| 1.1% to 3.0% Improvement | 72 |
| 3.1% to 5.0% Improvement | 32 |
| 5.1% to 10.0% Improvement | 44 |
| 10.1% to 20.0% Improvement | 14 |
| Over 20% Improvement | 1 |

As shown in Table 2, the application of an extended-year graduation rate improved graduation rates in 125 (7 percent) out of 1,729 non-DASS high schools and had no effect on 1,604 (93 percent) non-DASS high schools.

#### Table 2: Percent Improvement the Graduation Rate Using an Extended-Year Rate Over the Current Four and Five-Year Combined Graduation Rate in non-DASS High Schools (n=1,729)

| **Percent Improvement in the Graduation Rate**  | **Number of non-DASS High Schools** |
| --- | --- |
| No Improvement | 1,604 |
| 0.1% to 1.0% Improvement | 109 |
| 1.1% to 3.0% Improvement | 10 |
| 3.1% to 5.0% Improvement | 2 |
| 5.1% to 10.0% Improvement | 3 |
| 10.1% to 20.0% Improvement | 2 |
| Over 20% Improvement | 1 |

Overall, the extended-year graduation rate would add a total of 3,638 students to the total number of graduates in California in 2022, with 2,628 six-year graduates and 1,010 seven-year graduates.

*For schools with a 2022 Four and Five-Year Combined Graduation Rate of less than 68 percent, does adding six- and seven-year graduates raise their rate above 68 percent?*

As shown in Table 3, the impact of the extended-year graduation rate on high schools with combined graduation rates below 68 percent in 2022 is minimal. The inclusion of six- and seven-year graduates only raises ten schools above 68 percent, which is the threshold for comprehensive support identification.

#### Table 3: Impact of the Extended-Year Graduation Rate on High Schools in 2022 with a Combined Graduation Rate below 68 percent

| **High School Type** | **Number of High Schools** | **Number of High Schools with a Combined Graduation Rate below 68%** | **Number of High Schools with an Extended-Year Graduation Rate below 68%** | **Number of High Schools where an Extended-Year Graduation Rate Raises Their Rate Above 68%** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All High Schools | 2,537 | 476 | 461 | 15 |
| DASS High Schools | 808 | 392 | 377 | 15 |
| Non-DASS High Schools | 1,729 | 84 | 84 | 0 |

#### Impact of a Multi-Year Extended Graduation Rate on Overidentification of DASS Schools in Comprehensive Support and Improvement – Low Gradation Rate (CSI-Low Grad)

The simulations of the extended-year graduation rate do not indicate that there is potential for a large reduction in the overidentification of DASS schools for CSI-Low Grad. While the simulations show that 15 high schools would have a 2022 graduation rate above 68 percent, CSI-Low Grad requires the average rate over three years to exceed 68 percent. Therefore, it is likely that the number of schools removed from CSI-Low Grad with an extended-year rate would be less than 15.