California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** August 1, 2019

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Report on the Impact of the Dashboard Alternative School Status Graduation Rate on School Enrollment Patterns.

## Summary of Key Issues

The State Board of Education (SBE) approved the methodology to calculate the Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) graduation rate at the May 2018 SBE meeting. At that time, the SBE raised concerns about the modified Graduation Rate Indicator’s potential to impact mobility between non-alternative and DASS schools. Specifically, there was concern 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.

This Information Memorandum identifies trends in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to high schools with DASS during the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 school years. The analysis provides context about transfer patterns before and after the implementation of the DASS Graduation Rate included in the 2018 California School Dashboard (Dashboard). Note: An analyses of student transfer patterns between non-alternative schools was not conducted to determine if similar transfer patterns exists for non-alternative schools.

## Prior State Board of Education Action and Discussion

**DASS Graduation Rate**

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 methodology for calculating the one-year graduation rate (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/may18item02.docx>).

In July 2018, the SBE approved the application of the Safety Net methodology for DASS schools (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr18/documents/jul18item01.docx>).

## Attachment(s)

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

# **Attachment 1**

**Analysis on Student Transfers from Non-Alternative High Schools to Alternative High Schools with Dashboard Alternative School Status**

This analysis provides context about student transfer patterns before and after the implementation of the Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) Graduation Rate included in the 2018 California School Dashboard (Dashboard).

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 2018–2019 academic years were analyzed. The student exits and enrollments in this analysis occurred within the academic school year windows of July 1, 2017, to   
June 30, 2018, and July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019.

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 total for both academic years was calculated, as well as monthly totals within each year. This month-by-month analysis reveals how transfer counts fluctuate over the course of an academic year. The month a student transfer occurred was determined by the withdrawal date from the student’s non-alternative public high school.

*The following questions motivated our data analysis procedure:*

1. Was there a substantial increase in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS high schools between the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 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 into the 2018–2019 school year?

**Comparison of Transfer Patterns between Two Academic Years**

**Figure 1. Month-by-Month Transfer Totals in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019**

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

| **Month** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19 Counts** | **Difference** | **Percent Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| July | 190 | 246 | +56 | +29.5% |
| Aug | 4,180 | 4,888 | +708 | +16.9% |
| Sept | 5,153 | 5,257 | +104 | +2.0% |
| Oct | 6,402 | 6,543 | +141 | +2.2% |
| Nov | 4,122 | 4,025 | -97 | -2.4% |
| Dec | 5,754 | 6,338 | +584 | +10.2% |
| Jan | 7,728 | 7,195 | -533 | -6.9% |
| Feb | 5,028 | 5,083 | +55 | +1.1% |
| March | 5,518 | 5,912 | +394 | +7.1% |
| April | 3,184 | 3,118 | -66 | -2.1% |
| May | 1,267 | 730 | -537 | -42.4% |
| June | 148 | 0 | -148 | -100.0% |
| **Total** | **48,674** | **49,335** | **+661** | **+1.4%** |

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

## Summary of Yearly and Monthly Transfer Patterns

As shown in Table 1, overall there is a slight increase in the number of transfers from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019. However, this 1.4 percent increase is small. This finding indicates consistency between the transfer patterns of the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 academic years.

Further supporting a continuation of transfer patterns, Figure 1 displays a nearly identical frequency fluctuation over the course of the two academic years.

The largest percentage change across months between the two years is in June, where there are no transfer counts in June 2019 but 148 transfer counts in June 2018. Yet, overall patterns persist because in both years, June has the lowest number of transfers in the year.

Notice that transfer counts are highest in October, December, and January in both academic years relative to other months in the year. After March, transfer counts decline.

This consistency in frequency fluctuation across both years indicates that there is an independent cause or variable that is motivating a high number of transfers in the three months sited above.

## Table 2. Race/Ethnicity Representation in Transfers

| **Race/Ethnicity Student Group** | **2017–18**  **# of Students** | **2017–18**  **% of Total Students** | **2018–19**  **# of Students** | **2018–19**  **% of Total Students** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African American | 4,979 | 10.2% | 4,705 | 9.5% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 550 | 1.1% | 538 | 1.1% |
| Asian | 828 | 1.7% | 911 | 1.9% |
| Filipino | 380 | 0.8% | 383 | 0.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 31,725 | 65.2% | 31,922 | 64.7% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 291 | 0.6% | 266 | 0.5% |
| White | 8,078 | 16.6% | 7,854 | 15.9% |
| Two or More Races | 1,180 | 2.4% | 1,169 | 2.4% |
| Not Reported | 663 | 1.4% | 1,587\* | 3.2% |
| All Students | 48,674 | 100.0% | 49,335 | 100.0% |

## Table 3. Program Student Group Representation in Transfers

| **Program Student Group** | **2017–18**  **# of Students** | **2017–18**  **% of Total Students** | **2018–19**  **# of Students** | **2018–19**  **% of Total Students** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English Learners | 8,686 | 17.9% | 9,212 | 18.7% |
| Foster Youth | 2,025 | 4.2% | 1,379 | 2.8% |
| Homeless Students | 2,843 | 5.8% | 2,920 | 5.9% |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 39,089 | 80.3% | 39,903 | 80.9% |
| Students with Disabilities | 6,818 | 14.0% | 6,959 | 14.1% |
| Not Reported | 2 | 0.004% | 996\* | 2.0% |
| All Students\* | 48,674 | - | 49,335 | - |

Note: The “All Students” row in Table 3 does not represent the exact sum of all program student groups in that table because students can participate in multiple programs.

Note: The high number of students in the “Not Reported” category for the 2018–2019 academic year is due to the 2018**–**2019 enrollment data being matched with student demographic data from 2017**–**2018, which was the latest available data file. This one year discrepancy caused missing demographic records for students who were in the 2018–2019 dataset but not the 2017–2018 dataset.

**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.

**Summary of Race/Ethnicity Representation in Transfers**

As shown in Table 4 on page 6, there is evidence of disproportionality in race/ethnicity for both transfer years. To identify disproportionality, the Disproportionality Index calculation is used to compare the transfer representation of a student group with the statewide representation.

A disproportionality index of less than 1 indicates a lower representation of a race or ethnicity 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.

Table 4 indicates that trends in disproportionality from 2017–2018 continue into   
2018–2019. In both years, the transfer student population has a disproportionally higher percentage of African American students and American Indian or Alaska Native students compared to statewide percentages. Both transfer years also have a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino students and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students.

In both years, the transfer student population has a disproportionally lower percentage of Asian and Filipino students. Both transfer years also have a lower percentage of White students and students who are Two or More Races.

## Table 4. Disproportionality of Race/Ethnicity in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019

| **Race/Ethnicity Student Group** | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2017–18** | **% of Students Transferring to DASS**  **in 2017–18** | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2018–19** | **% of Students Transferring to DASS**  **in 2018–19** | **Disproportionality Index**  **in 2017–18** | **Disproportionality Index**  **in 2018–19** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African American | 5.48% | 10.23% | 5.41% | 9.54% | 1.87 | 1.76 |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.52% | 1.13% | 0.51% | 1.09% | 2.16 | 2.15 |
| Asian | 9.16% | 1.70% | 9.28% | 1.85% | 0.19 | 0.20 |
| Filipino | 2.44% | 0.78% | 2.42% | 0.78% | 0.32 | 0.32 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 54.28% | 65.18% | 54.60% | 64.70% | 1.20 | 1.19 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.46% | 0.60% | 0.45% | 0.54% | 1.29 | 1.19 |
| White | 23.19% | 16.60% | 22.91% | 15.92% | 0.72 | 0.69 |
| Two or More Races | 3.53% | 2.42% | 3.62% | 2.37% | 0.69 | 0.65 |
| Not Reported | 0.94% | 1.36% | 0.85% | 3.22% | - | - |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | - | - |

Note: The Disproportionality Index indicates if a race/ethnicity group is present in the transfer population at a higher or lower rate compared to their presence in the general student population in California.

The Disproportionality Index is calculated as:

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

To check for disproportionality of program student group representation in our transfer population, transfer student group percentages are compared against statewide percentages.

**Summary of Program Student Group Representation in Transfers**

As shown in Table 5, there is significant evidence of a disproportionally high percentage of foster youth and homeless students in the transfer population for both academic years. To identify disproportionality, the Disproportionality Index calculation is again used. Both transfer years also have a higher percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities, as compared to statewide percentages.

Notably, English Learners are proportionally represented, if not less represented, in both transfer years when compared to statewide percentages.

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

| **Program Student Group** | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2017–18** | **% of Students Transferring to DASS**  **in 2017–18** | **Statewide % Enrolled in 2018–19** | **% of Students Transferring to DASS**  **in 2018–19** | **Disproportionality Index**  **in 2017–18** | **Disproportionality Index**  **in 2018–19** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English Learners | 20.44% | 17.9% | 19.3% | 18.7% | 0.87 | 0.97 |
| Foster Youth | 0.55% | 4.2% | 0.5% | 2.8% | 7.52 | 5.15 |
| Homeless | 3.28% | 5.8% | 3.4% | 5.9% | 1.78 | 1.76 |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 61.53% | 80.3% | 60.9% | 80.9% | 1.31 | 1.33 |
| Students with Disabilities | 11.32% | 14.0% | 11.7% | 14.1% | 1.24 | 1.20 |
| Not Reported | - | 0.004% | - | 2.0% | **-** | **-** |

**Changes in Student Group Representation between Academic Years**

As shown in Table 7 and Table 8, the overall differences in student group percentages between 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 are minimal. One notable percentage change is the decrease in Foster Youth in 2018–2019.

## Table 7. Change in Race/Ethnicity Representation between Academic Years

| **Race/Ethnicity Student Group** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19 Counts** | **Difference** | **% Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African American | 4,979 | 4,705 | -274 | -5.5% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 550 | 538 | -12 | -2.2% |
| Asian | 828 | 911 | 83 | +10.0% |
| Filipino | 380 | 383 | 3 | +0.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 31,725 | 31,922 | 197 | +0.6% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 291 | 266 | -25 | -8.6% |
| White | 8,078 | 7,854 | -224 | -2.8% |
| Two or More Races | 1,180 | 1,169 | -11 | -0.9% |
| All Students | 48,674 | 49,335 | 661 | +1.4% |

## Table 8. Change in Program Group Representation between Academic Years

| **Program Student Group** | **2017–18 Counts** | **2018–19 Counts** | **Difference** | **% Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English Learners | 8,686 | 9,212 | 526 | +6.1% |
| Foster Youth | 2,025 | 1,379 | -646 | -31.9% |
| Homeless Students | 2,843 | 2,920 | 77 | +2.7% |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 39,089 | 39,903 | 814 | +2.0% |
| Students with Disabilities | 6,818 | 6,959 | 141 | +2.0% |
| All Students | 48,674 | 49,335 | 661 | +1.4% |

## Findings

The analyses show that there was not a significant increase in student transfers from non-alternative high schools to DASS schools between the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 academic years. In total, there were only 661 more transfers in 2018–2019, which translates into a 1.4 percent increase from the previous year.

There was also a high level of consistency between the transfer patterns of 2017–2018 and 2018–2019. A month-by-month transfer count in Figure 1 displays a nearly identical frequency fluctuation over the course of the two academic years. In both years, January had the highest number of transfer counts, and June had the least. Notably, transfer counts remain high from December until March relative to other periods in the year. After March, transfer counts decline. This suggests there is an independent cause or variable motivating a high number of transfers to occur in the winter months.

After identifying the student groups represented in the transfer population in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019, the data indicates there is a disproportionally high number of African American students and American Indian or Alaska Native students in both transfer years. The data also shows there is a disproportionally high number of Foster Youth and Homeless students in both transfer years.

In summary, the analyses show 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 stay 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. This analysis indicates that the DASS graduation rates have not impacted the student transfer pattern for the current academic year. However, the DASS graduation rate was only first produced for the 2018 Dashboard and the impact on transfer patterns may increase over time. Therefore, the CDE recommends that the transfer analyses be conducted in another two years to ensure there is no substantial increase in transfer patterns.