# 2023 Dashboard On-Demand Session: Graduation Rate Indicator Notetaking Guide

California Department of Education | January 2024

## California School Dashboard On Demand

This Notetaking Guide is a supplementary resource to the 2023 on-demand session for the Graduation Rate Indicator that is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardtoolkit.asp>.

## Agenda

* Overview of the California School Dashboard (Dashboard)
* General Rules About the Dashboard
* The Graduation Rate Indicator
* Differences Between DataQuest and the Dashboard
* Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
* Contact Us

## Overview of the Dashboard

The Dashboard is an online tool that displays the performance of local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and student groups on a set of state and local indicators to assist in identifying strengths, challenges, and areas in need of improvement. The goal of the Dashboard is to help communities across the state access important information about students in kindergarten through grade twelve.

### Dashboard State Indicators

The Dashboard features six state indicators that provide important information on how LEAs and schools are serving their students. The information used for these indicators is based on data collected statewide.

The state indicators are the following six indicators:

* Academic Indicators
  + English language arts/literacy (ELA)
  + Mathematics
* English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI)
* Chronic Absenteeism Indicator
* Graduation Rate Indicator
* Suspension Rate Indicator
* College/Career Indicator (CCI)

### Measurement of Performance

Compared to the 2022 Dashboard, you will find the calculation for Change as well as Performance Levels (or colors) for all state indicators except the CCI. The 2023 Dashboard will also display the local indicators submitted by LEAs.

The measurement of performance for state indicators on the Dashboard is done by looking at two years of data:

* Current year data equals **Status**.
* A comparison between current and prior year data is known as **Change**.

It is the combination of Status and Change that determines the performance color for LEAs, schools, and student groups. They receive one of five colors that range from Red (lowest Performance Level) to Blue (highest Performance Level).

The CCI is reported on the 2023 Dashboard but for Status only. Therefore, a Status level (not performance color) is given for this state indicator.

## Graduation Rate Indicator

### What Is This Indicator?

This indicator represents the percentage of students who graduate high school within a specified timeframe with a standard high school diploma.

### Who Receives This Indicator?

Any LEA and school that served grade twelve students during the 2022–23 school year receive this indicator on the 2023 Dashboard.

### Combined Four- and Five-Year Rate

The graduation rate for the Dashboard includes students who graduated in four years as part of the most current graduation class, and it also includes students who graduated in five years as part of the graduating class from the prior year.

The inclusion of the fifth-year graduates was approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) to provide schools the opportunity to demonstrate progress and success with students who may need additional time to earn a regular high school diploma.

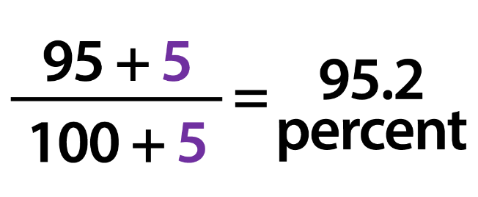
The formulas used to calculate the combined four- and five-year rate for the 2023 Dashboard are as follows:

* **Status**
  + Numerator: total number of students in the **Class of 2023** who graduated in four years by earning a regular high school diploma **plus** total number of students in the **Class of 2022** who graduated in five years by earning a regular high school diploma
  + Denominator: total number of students who entered grade nine for the first time in 2019–20 for the **Class of 2023** **plus**total number of students in the **Class of 2022** who graduated in five years by earning a regular high school diploma
* **Change**: 2023 Status (2022–23 graduation rate) **minus** 2022 Status   
  (2021–22 graduation rate)

#### Example of Calculating the Combined Graduation Rate

* For the Class of 2023, there were **95 graduates** out of **100 students** in the four-year cohort.
* For the Class of 2022, **five students** graduated in their fifth year   
  (i.e., graduated in 2022–23).

**The combined four- and five-year graduation rate is 95.2 percent.**



### Students in the Graduation Rate

Only students included in a **cohort** are included in the combined four- and five-year rate. When students first enroll in grade nine, they become part of the denominator of a four-year graduation rate (i.e., they become a part of a graduating class or a cohort). This class of students may also include those who transfer into later grade levels (i.e., grade ten, eleven, or twelve). Students **included** in the **denominator** of the cohort are those who

* dropped out during the last four-year period;
* transferred into a school during the last four-year period;
* are lost transfers (these are students who exited out of a school as a transfer, but never enrolled in another school by Fall Census Day); and
* transferred to an adult education program or community college (students who transfer to an adult education program or community college during their four or five years of high school without earning a regular high school diploma are included in the cohort [denominator] and counted as other transfers [excluded from the numerator]).

The following table identifies which students are **excluded** from the **denominator** of the cohort based on California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) codes.

Table 1. Cohort Denominator Exclusions by CALPADS Exit Category Code

| Exit Category Code | Description |
| --- | --- |
| E130 | Died |
| T180 | Transferred to a private school |
| T200 | Transferred to a high school out of California |
| T240 | Transferred or emigrated out of the US |
| T310 | Transferred to a health facility |
| T370 | Transferred to an Institution with a high school diploma program |
| T460 | Transferred to a home school program |

### Graduates and Early Graduates

Only students who receive a standard high school diploma are counted as graduates.

* Due to the restrictions by the US Department of Education, students earning all other high school equivalency certificates and examinations (e.g., GED®, HiSET®, California High School Proficiency Examination [CHSPE], and Special Education Certificate of Completion) cannot be counted as graduates.

Students who graduate high school in less than four years are counted in the **original cohort** in which they began.

* Example: A grade eleven student graduated early in 2022–23 (after three years). Because the student belongs to the Class of 2024, the student will be included in the graduation rate for the Class of 2024 even though the student received their diploma a year early.

### Graduation Cut Off Date

For a student to be counted as a graduate in the current year, the student must graduate **by August 15**.

For the 2023 Dashboard

* a class of 2023 student must graduate by August 15, 2023, to be counted as a fourth-year graduate; and
* a class of 2022 student must graduate by August 15, 2023, to be counted as a fifth-year graduate.

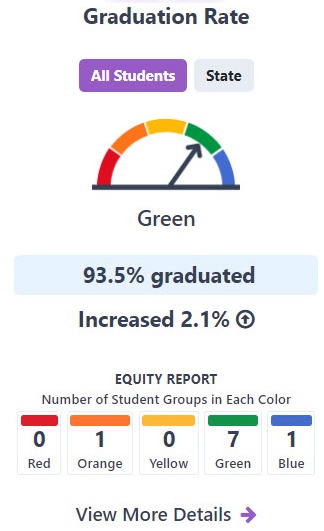
Keep in mind that summer school students must graduate by August 15 to be counted as a graduate in the current year.

### Transfer Students

When students transfer, the **last school** where a student was enrolled is held accountable for the students’ graduation outcomes.

### Graduation Rate Indicator on the Dashboard

The 2023 Dashboard will bring the return of Performance Levels (colors). This means that the state indicator cards on the Dashboard will have the colored banner across the top of the card as well as the Performance Level or color in the form of a gauge with the color explicitly written out. In the example figure below, the gauge is pointing to Green. There is an option to select the “All Students” group or compare it to the state student group results.



#### Description of Graduation Rate Baseball Card

The card reflects that the current year Status is 93.5 percent of graduates. It also indicates that the Status increased by 2.1 percentage points from the prior year.

The equity report shows the number of student groups in each of the Performance Levels or colors for a particular school or LEA. It reflects that there are 0 student groups in Red, 1 student group in Orange, 0 student groups in Yellow, 7 student groups in Green, and 1 student group in Blue. This equity report can assist schools and LEAs to review any inequities that may be occurring within their student groups.

Finally, there is a link to view more details, which takes you to specific student group information and trends in data over time.

### Five-by-Five Table

The SBE has approved one set of cut scores for both Status and Change for this indicator. These cut scores are used for all districts and schools, including both Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) and charter schools.

An LEA, school, or student group’s Performance Level (color) is determined through the use of a five-by-five colored table that utilizes both Status levels and Change levels.

As a reminder, for some indicators, Very Low is the desired outcome, so each state indicator has its own five-by-five table to properly identify the Performance Level (color).

Five-by-five tables and cut scores are available for each of the indicators on the 2023 Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardtoolkit.asp>.

### Three-by-Five Table

Select LEAs and schools with small populations are more susceptible to large swings in results from year to year. To account for this, a three-by-five table is applied when the N-size is less than 150 at the LEA, school, and student group levels​ for certain indicators.

As illustrated below, the three-by-five table removes both the “Increased Significantly” and “Declined Significantly” Change levels from Performance Level determinations. Small student populations with less than 150 students in the denominator of the Graduation Rate Indicator will receive only one of **three Change levels:** Increased, Maintained, or Declined.

Table 2. Three-by-Three Colored Table

| **Performance Level** | **Declined** | **Maintained** | **Increased** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Very High** | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| **High** | Yellow | Green | Green |
| **Medium** | Orange | Yellow | Green |
| **Low** | Orange | Orange | Yellow |
| **Very Low** | Red | Red | Red |

### Changes in 2023

Since the Dashboard was last published in 2022, there are only two general changes for this indicator:

* First, while only Status could be reported on the Dashboard last year, Performance Levels (colors) will be displayed on the 2023 Dashboard.
* In 2019, the three-by-five methodology was applied for schools with small populations to reduce the amount of volatility from year to year. With Change being calculated this year for the Graduation Rate Indicator, the three-by-five will once again be applied for LEAs, schools, and student groups with less than 150 students in the denominator.

### Verify Your Graduation Rate Data

LEAs can verify their **four-year graduation cohort rate** **before** these data are extracted out of CALPADS to be used for the Dashboard. Specifically, the following CALPADS Reports can be reviewed prior to the close of the CALPADS certification window:

* CALPADS Report 15.1 for summary results
* CALPADS Report 15.2 to access the student-level data

These reports are available all year round and can be reviewed throughout the CALPADS End-of-Year (EOY) certification window.

Further information about these reports is available in the *Connecting CALPADS to the Dashboard* handbook. This handbook contains print screens to help you navigate through these reports and includes examples and questions to consider prior to certification. The 2022–23 handbook Connecting CALPADS to the Dashboard is available at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/documents/caldashhandbook23.docx>.

### DASS

Due to the US Department of Education’s denial of California’s waiver request to continue using modified methods for DASS schools, the DASS one-year graduation rate is no longer used for accountability for the Graduation Rate Indicator. Therefore, DASS schools receive the same combined four- and five-year graduation rate as non-DASS schools receive on the Graduation Rate Indicator.

However, note that this waiver denial only affects the requirements under federal law. State law, under California *Education Code,* continues to permit the use of the DASS program and reporting of data separately for alternative schools. Therefore, the CDE will continue to:

* Report the DASS one-year graduation rate for schools identified for DASS. This rate is reported on both the CDE Dashboard web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/caschdashboard.asp> and the CDE School Dashboard Additional Reports web page at <https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/> **for informational purposes**.

For further details on DASS and the DASS on-year graduation rate, please refer to the CDE DASS web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/dass.asp>.

### Differences Between the Dashboard and DataQuest

Both the Dashboard and DataQuest report data on the graduation rate. However, different rules are used, which may cause different results. The following identifies the differences:

#### Dashboard

* Reports combined four- and five-year graduation rates
* Excludes charter school data from authorizer’s results
* Applies the District of Special Education Accountability (DSEA) or the District of Residence rule for Students with Disabilities (SWDs)

#### DataQuest

* Reports four-year cohort graduation rates
* Has filters to include/exclude charter schools’ data from authorizers’ results
* Does not apply the District of Residence rule; rather, SWDs are reported at the District of Attendance

## Frequently Asked Questions

### I have a grade eleven student who is graduating this year. When are early graduates included in the graduation rate?

Early grade eleven graduates are included in the graduation rate along with the rest of their class. Therefore, if a grade eleven student graduated this year, then the student will not be included in this year’s graduation rate. The student will be included in next year’s graduation rate along with the rest of the cohort.

### Why are students who completed a high school equivalency test not counted as graduates for the combined rate?

The US Department of Education requires that only students who receive a standard high school diploma are counted as graduates. Therefore, students who complete a GED, HiSET, CHSPE, or Special Education Certificate of Completion cannot be counted as graduates.

### Is the DASS one-year graduation rate used for accountability?

No. Because of the US Department of Education’s denial of California’s use of a modified graduation rate, the DASS one-year graduation rate can no longer be used for accountability. Therefore, the combined four- and five-year graduation rate that is calculated for DASS schools is used to determine Differentiated Assistance at the LEA-level and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) at the school-level.

### Can I still update my graduation data for the Dashboard even though the EOY has closed?

No. The graduation rate data is extracted out of CALPADS immediately after the EOY window closes. Therefore, any updates made in CALPADS after the close of the EOY will not be incorporated in the Dashboard.

### Need Additional Help with the Graduation Rate Indicator?

The following identifies a list of resources that pertain to the topics covered within this On-Demand Session:

* CDE Graduation Rate Indicator web page: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardgrad.asp>
* CDE School Dashboard Additional Reports and Data web page: <https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/>
* CDE DASS web page: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/dass.asp>
* For details on the DASS provided to the SBE, refer to the August 2022 Memorandum document about SBE Information on the CDE website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/aug22memogad01.docx> and the September 2022 SBE Agenda Item document at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr22/documents/sep22item03.docx>.

## General Rules About the Dashboard

### A Rule About Charter Schools

Since charter schools are treated as LEAs under the Local Control Funding Formula, their data are not included in their authorizer’s Dashboard report. This includes both direct and locally funded charters.

DataQuest reports have the toggle option to either include or exclude charters from the district reports.

### Dashboard for 30 or More Students

* Performance Level (color) gauge graphic displayed
* Status and Change reported
* Held accountable for support determinations

### Dashboard for 11 to 29 Students

* Performance Level (color) graphic greyed out
* Status and Change reported
* Not held accountable for support determinations

### Dashboard for Fewer than 11 Students

* Performance Level (color) graphic greyed out
* Status and Change not reported
* Not held accountable for support determinations

### Exception: Foster Youth and Homeless

LEAs with at least 15 students in the current and prior year will receive a Performance Level (color) for Homeless and Foster Youth only.

Charter schools are treated as schools and still require the 30 students to receive a Performance Level (color).

### DSEA

The DSEA rule is applied to all available state indicators for SWDs who receive special education services at another district or county office of education. These students will be “sent back” to the district of residence or DSEA and included in the DSEA’s Dashboard.

For example, the district where the student geographically resides is held accountable for the student’s graduation outcomes, and that data is included in the district of residence’s Graduation Rate Indicator.

Please note that this rule applies to LEAs only. All schools, including charter schools, are held accountable for all SWDs.

For more information, refer to the “District of Residence Rule” flyer under the Additional Flyers and Information section on the CDE Dashboard Communications Toolkit web page <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardtoolkit.asp>.

## Contact Us

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