# 2023 Dashboard Technical Guide: GRADUATION RATE INDICATOR

A Grades Nine through Twelve Indicator



Prepared by the California Department of Education

Available on the CDE [California School Dashboard](https://www.cde.ca.gov/dashboard)

[and System of Support](https://www.cde.ca.gov/dashboard) Web Page

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### About this Mini-Guide, Resources, and Contacts

#### About this “Mini-Guide”

The California School Dashboard (Dashboard) Technical Guide provides technical information on California’s accountability system, specifically the state and local indicators reported on the Dashboard. The guide is divided into multiple sections, or mini-guides, to allow viewers to download only the topics of interest. The focus of this mini-guide is on the Graduation Rate Indicator. However, to ensure that you do not **miss important information and business rules** pertaining to the entire Dashboard, we encourage you to review as many of these mini-guides as possible:

* Access the full guide through the California Department of Education (CDE)[2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page.

#### Resources

* The [Graduation Rate Indicator](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardgrad.asp) web page offers all resources related to this state indicator.
* The [Dashboard Communications Toolkit](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardtoolkit.asp) was developed to support local educational agencies (LEAs), parents and communities bring the 2023 Dashboard closer to home.
* The [Dashboard Resources](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardresources.asp) web page contains general and technical information, tools for educators, translations, and downloadable data files.

#### Contacts

Questions about:

* State Indicators (Academic, College/Career, Chronic Absenteeism, English Learner Progress, Graduation Rate, and Suspension Rate), contact the Analysis, Measurement, and Accountability Reporting Division by email at [Dashboard@cde.ca.gov](mailto:Dashboard@cde.ca.gov).
* Local indicators, logging onto the Dashboard, submitting local indicators into the Dashboard, and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), contact the Local Agency Support Systems Office (LASSO) by email at [LCFF@cde.ca.gov.](mailto:lcff@cde.ca.gov)
* California’s System of Support (Differentiated Assistance and Comprehensive School Support), contact the System of Support Office (SSO) by email at [CASystemofSupport@cde.ca.gov](mailto:CASystemofSupport@cde.ca.gov).
* California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), contact the CALPADS-CSIS Service Desk at [calpads@cde.ca.gov](mailto:calpads@cde.ca.gov).

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### 2023 Dashboard

#### A Return to Colors

The 2023 Dashboard reflects a full return of California’s accountability system with the reporting of Status (current year data), Change (the difference from prior year data), and Performance Levels (or colors) for most state indicators. With this return, for the Graduation Rate Indicator, the Dashboard will display performance by using the color gauges illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Five Performance Levels (or Colors) Represented by Gauges** (Refer to [Appendix A](#AppendixA) for the descriptive text.)



### Introduction

#### What is this Indicator?

The Graduation Rate Indicator is one of several state indicators that the CDE reports on the [Dashboard](http://www.caschooldashboard.org/). It represents the percentage of students who graduate high school within a specified timeframe. While a high school graduation rate typically reflects whether students – who are part of a four-year cohort – graduated within four years, the graduation rate for the Dashboard also includes the count of fifth-year graduates. This inclusion was approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) in July 2019 to provide schools the opportunity to demonstrate progress and success with students who may need additional time to earn a regular high school diploma.

**Who counts as a graduate?** For a student to be counted as a graduate, the student must receive a regular high school diploma.

The requirement to use a regular diploma for the Graduation Rate Indicator is based on a federal mandate and guidance provided through an audit by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General. Therefore, students who pass or complete all other high school equivalency tests, such as the GED, California High School Proficiency Examination, Special Education Certificate of Completion, and adult education diplomas are not counted as graduates.

#### Who is Held Accountable for this Indicator?

***All*** LEAs and schools with students enrolled in ***grade twelve*** that also have **30 or more students in the denominator of the combined four -and five-year graduation rate** are held accountable for this indicator. **“**Accountable” means that the data are used to determine LEAs and schools eligible for support (i.e., Differentiated Assistance at the LEA level and Comprehensive Support and Improvement [CSI]/Additional Targeted Support and Improvement [ATSI] at the school level).

##### When there are Fewer than 30 Students

While the Dashboard does report data (i.e., Status and Change) for **11 to 29 students**, it is not used to determine eligibility for Differentiated Assistance and CSI/ATSI and is reported for informational purposes only. Because these data are published for informational purposes, Performance Levels (or colors) are not displayed on the Dashboard.

When there are **less than 11 students,** no data (i.e., Status, Change, and Performance Levels) are displayed on the Dashboard to protect students’ privacy. Therefore LEAs, schools, and student groups with less than 11 students are not held accountable and are not eligible for Differentiated Assistance and CSI/ATSI.

More information on when LEAs and schools are held accountable are available in the *California’s Accountability System and the Dashboard*, *Local Educational Agency Eligibility: Differentiated Assistance*, and *Every Student Succeeds Act School Support* mini-guides on the CDE [2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page.

#### Modified Dashboard Alternative School Status (DASS) Graduation Rate

In prior years, the DASS graduation rate was used for accountability for DASS schools. However, this is no longer allowable due to concerns raised by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) regarding California’s use of a DASS modified graduation rate and Academic Indicators on the Dashboard. The ED issued a decision in August 2022 to decline a waiver request from the SBE of the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to allow for continued use of the DASS graduation rate.

Therefore, **beginning with the 2022 Dashboard, DASS schools now receive the combined four-and five-year graduation rate**, and this rate is **used to determine eligibility for** Differentiated Assistance at the LEA-level and CSI/ATSI at the school-level.

**Please note** thatthe ED’s denial of California’s waiver affects the requirements under **federal law** (ESSA). **State law**, as provided by the California *Education Code* Section 52052(d) continues to permit the use of the DASS program and reporting of data separately for alternative schools. Therefore, the CDE will:

* Continue to produce and display the one-year DASS graduation rate. However, it is limited for informational purposes only on the Dashboard and the CDE [School Dashboard Additional Reports](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dbadditionalrpts.asp) web page.
* Continue to seek and recommend opportunities to the SBE to display DASS data in a prominent manner on future Dashboards and in other public reporting of data, such as the CDE’s web reporting system, DataQuest. The reporting of these data is critical to LEAs who support at-promise students in alternative school settings.

Further information in regards to the use of DASS for accountability can be accessed through the CDE [DASS](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/dass.asp) web page as well as the [August 2022 SBE Memorandum](https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/aug22memogad01.docx) and [September 2022 SBE Agenda Item 3](https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr22/documents/sep22item03.docx).

#### What is the Data Source?

Graduation data are reported in the CALPADS by LEAs and schools. These data are then extracted from the CALPADS Operational Data Store (ODS) by the CDE immediately after the close of the CALPADS End-of-Year (EOY) 3 data collection.

#### Differences between DataQuest and Dashboard

##### Four-Year Cohort (DataQuest) versus Combined Rate (Dashboard)

In DataQuest, the four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) is reported for all comprehensive high schools, DASS schools, charter schools, and non-charter schools. When students first enroll in grade nine, they become part of the denominator of a four-year graduation rate. The ACGR is the number of students who graduate from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class.

In contrast, the Dashboard reports a combined four- and five-year graduation rate, which includes students who graduate in four or five-years with a traditional high school diploma:

* Fourth-year graduates from the most current graduation class (e.g., students in the Class of 2023), and
* Fifth-year graduates from the prior graduation class (e.g., students in Class of 2022 who graduated as fifth-year seniors at the end of 2023).

As noted earlier, all schools, including DASS schools, receive the combined four-and five-year graduation rate.

##### Five-Year Graduation Rate

In DataQuest, the five-year graduation rate is a comprehensive calculation of students graduating within five years of starting grade nine.

* The numerator is the number of students from the previous year’s four-year cohort who graduate, with a regular high school diploma, within five years. It also includes students who transfer from another entity and graduate in their fifth year.
* The denominator is the number of students who form the previous year’s four-year graduation cohort and includes any fifth-year graduates who transfer in from another entity. It is possible for a student to be in two cohorts. A student who, in the fifth year, transfers from the final four-year cohort school will be added to the cohort of the receiving school or district *ONLY* if the student graduates in year five; however, the student will remain in the cohort of the sending school regardless of the outcome in year five.

In the Dashboard, the five-year rate is reported for *informational purposes only*.

* For the school level rate, the numerator is the number of students from the previous year four-year cohort who graduate from high school within five years with a regular high school diploma. This number also includes any cohort student who transfers from another entity during the selected year and ultimately graduates in year five.
* The denominator is the number of students who form the previous four-year adjusted cohort for the graduating class, and any cohort student transferring from another entity in year five who subsequently graduates. It is possible for a student to be in two cohorts. Students who transfer from their final four-year cohort school or district to another school or district in year five will be added to the cohort of the receiving school or district *ONLY* if they graduate in year five and will remain in the cohort of the sending school regardless of outcome in year five.

##### Inclusion of Charter Schools

In DataQuest, charter schools are included in their authorizer’s report, although they can be filtered out. In contrast, charter schools are treated as LEAs under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and are therefore not included in their authorizer’s report for the Dashboard.

##### District of Residence Rule

For the Dashboard, the data outcomes for students with disabilities (SWDs) are “sent back” to their district of residence. Therefore, the district where the student geographically resides is held accountable for their graduation outcomes and that data is included in the district of residence’s Graduation Rate Indicator. On the other hand, DataQuest does not apply the district of residence rule.

For further information on this rule, see the section titled “District of Residence Rule”.

### Graduation Rate Rules

#### What’s New Since the 2022 Dashboard?

##### Return of Change and Performance Levels (or Colors)

The 2023 Dashboard includes a return to the calculation and reporting of Change (the difference from prior year data) and Performance Levels (colors) for the Graduation Rate Indicator. Therefore, performance will be determined using the five-by-five colored table. For more information on how performance colors are determined, please refer to the Introductory mini-guide, *California’s Accountability System and the Dashboard*, posted on the CDE [2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page.

##### Application of Three-by-Five- Colored Tables for Fewer than 150 Students

In 2023, the Dashboard will restart the application of a separate methodology for LEAs, schools, and student groups that have fewer than 150 students as small counts have more Red (or Blue) Performance Levels compared to LEAs and schools with large student populations. This separate methodology—known as the “Three-by-Five”—removes both the “Increased Significantly” and “Declined Significantly” **Change levels** thereby limiting the large swings in the **Change data** that can be triggered by just a few students.

For the Graduation Rate Indicator, the Three-by-Five is automatically applied at the LEA, school, and student group levels when there are fewer than 150 students in the denominator of the combined four- and five-year graduation rate. To access more information about the Three-by-Five colored table for the Graduation Rate Indicator, refer to the Introductory mini-guide, *California’s Accountability System and the Dashboard*, on the CDE [2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page.

#### Which Students Are Included in the Graduation Rate?

The premise of the combined four-and five-year graduation rate is to use the four-year cohort graduation rate as the base but provide additional credit for any graduates from the previous year’s cohort (i.e., students who graduate in their fifth year).

**Example of Combined Four-and Five-Year Graduation Rate**

Emerald High School has 100 students in the Class of 2023 (the four-year graduation cohort). Of these 100 students, 95 graduated within four years (i.e., by the end of the 2022–23 school year).

Also in 2023, five students from the previous year’s four-year graduation cohort (Class of 2022) graduated at the end of the 2022–23 school year. These five students are counted in the combined four-and five-year graduation rate.

***Numerator:*** Total number of graduates:

95 graduates (Class of 2023) + 5 graduates (Class of 2022 who graduated in 2023) = 100

***Denominator:*** Sum of the 2023 four-year graduation cohort and the additional five-year graduates from the previous year’s cohort*:*

100 (Class of 2023 cohort) + 5 (Class of 2022 fifth year graduates) = 105

***Combined rate*** ***is***:

100 *divided by* 105 = 0.9523 or 95.2 percent

##### Denominator

As noted earlier, two sets of students are included in the denominator of the combined graduation rate:

1. **SET ONE: Students in the current four-year graduation cohort.** A student becomes a part of a graduation cohort, or high school graduating class, when the student first enrolls in grade nine. Students are placed in a cohort regardless of which school they enroll in. Once a student enters grade nine, the student remains in that cohort and is expected to graduate within four years. For the 2023 Dashboard, the four-year graduation cohort is the Class of 2023. These are students who enrolled in grade nine in 2019–20 and met the inclusion rules noted in the “Denominator Inclusion Rules” section below.
2. **SET TWO: Students from the prior graduating class who graduated in five years.** The second set of students included in the denominator of the combined four-and five-year graduation rate are those who enrolled in grade nine in 2018–19 (as part of the Class of 2022) and earned a high school diploma by the end of their fifth year in 2022–23. Note that these students must meet the inclusion rules identified below to be included in the denominator.

###### Denominator Inclusion Rules

The following students are **included** in the denominator of the combined graduation rate:

* **Has a grade** equal to 9, 10, 11, or 12. Note that students with these grade levels are most likely those in the Class of 2023. Graduates from the Class of 2022 typically have a grade equal to 12.
* **Has a primary enrollment** (CALPADS enrollment status code 10) or a **short-term enrollment** (CALPADS enrollment status code 30).
* **Dropped out** during the last four-year period.
* **Transferred into** a school within a four-year period.
* **Is a lost transfer.** This is for students who exited out of a school as a transfer but never enrolled in another school by Fall Census Day.
* **Is an early graduate** who graduated high school in less than four years. These early graduates are ***counted in the original cohort*** *in which they began*. For example, a student who entered grade nine for the first time in 2019–20 belongs to the Class of 2023. If the student graduated in 2021–22 (after three years in high school), the student would still be included in both the numerator and denominator for the Class of 2023 graduation rate (not with the Class of 2022) even though the student received a diploma a year early.
* **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).
* Note that any student who transfers in from out-of-state, a private school, or a different country – as grade nine, grade ten, grade eleven, or grade twelve – are included in the cohort.

###### Denominator Exclusion Rules

Students are **excluded** from the denominator of the combined rate if, during the four-year period, they have any of the following student exit category codes in CALPADS. Table 1 below identifies the exit category codes:

**Table 1: CALPADS Exit Category Codes and Descriptions**

| **CALPADS Exit Category Code** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| E130 | Died |
| T180 | Transfer to Private School |
| T200 | Transfer to a High School Out of California |
| T240 | Transfer/Emigrated out of the U.S. |
| T310 | Transfer to a health facility |
| T370 | Transfer to an Institution with a High School Diploma Program |
| T460 | Transfer to home school program |

###### August 15 Cut Off Date

For a student to be counted as a fourth-year graduate, the student must graduate by August 15. Fifth-year graduates must also graduate by August 15 to be counted as graduates in that year. See examples below:

* Sonya, a fourth-year student belonging to the Class of 2023 at Black Diamond High School earned her standard diploma on August 16, 2023, after finishing summer school. Because Sonya did not earn her diploma and graduate by August 15, 2023, she will not be counted as a four-year graduate for the Class of 2023. Rather, she will be counted as a fifth-year graduate in Black Diamond High School’s combined four- and five-year rate in the following year in 2024. Therefore, Sonya will be counted as a:
  + Non-graduate in the 2023 Dashboard (i.e., included in the denominator but excluded in the numerator) and
  + A fifth-year graduate in the 2024 Dashboard (i.e., included in both the numerator and denominator).
* Richard, a fifth-year high school student at Crystal High School earned his standard diploma on August 15, 2023. Because he graduated by August 15, he will be counted as a fifth-year graduate, and therefore be included in both the numerator and denominator of Crystal High School’s combined four- and five-year rate for the 2023 Dashboard.

###### District of Residence Rule

At the **LEA-level** **only,** SWDs may also be included in the denominator if they have a **District of Special Education Accountability (DSEA)** in the CALPADS SPED file (field #14.16). (This rule **does not apply to schools.** All schools are held accountable for their SWDs.)

Students with disabilities are included only if they meet the denominator inclusion rules identified in the section above.

* *Example:* Ruby Unified sent Amber, a grade twelve student, to Opal County Office of Education (COE) to ensure that she received appropriate Special Education services. Amber had been enrolled at Opal COE since grade nine and is in the Class of 2023. The DSEA field in CALPADS (SPED file; field #14.16) identified Ruby Unified as the DSEA. Because Amber is part of the four-year graduation cohort for the Class of 2023, she will be included in the denominator of Ruby Unified’s combined four- and five-year graduation rate. If Amber graduates from Opal COE, she will also be included in the numerator of Ruby Unified’s combined four- and five-year graduation rate. If she does not graduate, she will be excluded from the numerator.

Note that LEAs can confirm which of their SWDs’ data are: (1) sent to other entities and (2) attributed to their LEA by another entity by requesting an extract that identifies which students are being sent or attributed based on the County-District Code in the DSEA field. This extract can be downloaded directly from CALPADS and is accessible by CALPADS LEA Administrators.

For complete steps on how to request and download the DSEA extract, please refer to the [CALPADS User Manual District of Special Education Accountability (DSEA) Extract](https://documentation.calpads.org/Extracts/DSEAExtract/#district-of-special-education-accountability-dsea-extract) web page. You can also review information on the DSEA in the CDE [*Connecting CALPADS to the Dashboard Handbook*](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardresources.asp#handbookcalpads). Note that the CALPADS extract is data taken from the Operational Data Store (ODS), which reflects the most updated data submitted by LEAs. Because the DSEA data used for the Dashboard is extracted at the close of EOY, it is a snapshot (“point in time”) data and may not match the CALPADS extract that may include any updates made to this data by the LEA after the close of EOY.

This rule has been applied since the 2020 reporting of the graduation rate data on the CDE School Dashboard Additional Reports web site. Further information about the rule is available in the: (1) Introductory mini-guide, *California’s Accountability System and the Dashboard*, which is available on the CDE [2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page and (2) the CDE [*District of Residence Rule for Students with Disabilities*](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/documents/districtresidencerule.pdf) flyer.

##### Numerator

###### Numerator Inclusion Rules

Students are **included** in the numerator if they earn a high school diploma by the end of their fourth or fifth year of high school. Table 2 on the following page identifies the exit category and completion code in CALPADS used to identify graduates.

**Table 2: CALPADS Exit/Completion Code and Description**

| **CALPADS Exit/Completion Code** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| E230/100 | Graduated, standard high school diploma |

###### Students Graduating Under Reduced Credits

California *Education Code* Section 51225.1 allows for specific students to graduate under reduced credits. Determining if a student meets the graduation requirements is a function determined at the LEA-level. Therefore, as long as a student receives a standard diploma, the student is counted as a graduate and included in the numerator of the combined four- and five-year rate.

###### Numerator Exclusion Rules

The following students are **NOT considered graduates and are EXCLUDED from the numerator** as they do not meet the federal definition of a “regular high school diploma”:

* **Special Education Certificate of Completion**: Students who earn this certificate are excluded from the numerator but included in the denominator.
* **High School Equivalency Certificate:** Students who earn a GED or HiSET are excluded from the numerator but included in denominator.
* **Adult Education High School Diploma: Students who receive an adult education diploma** are not counted as traditional high school graduates. These students are excluded from the numerator but included in the denominator.
* **California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE):** These students are excluded from the numerator but included in the denominator.

#### When Students Transfer, Who is Held Accountable?

All first-time grade nine students are included in a cohort. Once a student enters a cohort, they remain in that cohort. If the student moves to a different school or LEA, they are removed from the first school’s/LEA’s cohort and included in the second school’s/LEA’s cohort. Therefore, **the last school** where the student is enrolled is held accountable for the student’s graduation outcome. The example below details this rule.

**Example of When a Student Transfers**

In fall 2019, Maude enrolled in Garnet School as a grade nine student. Because she was a first-time grade nine student, Maude was included in the 2022–23 (Class of 2023) graduation cohort and expected to graduate in June 2023.

In summer 2022, Maude’s family moved to a different neighborhood. That fall, Maude enrolled in Onyx School for the 2022–23 school year and graduated with a diploma as a grade twelve student at the end of the year.

Because Maude moved, she is removed from the 2022–23 graduation cohort (denominator) for Garnet School and added to the 2022–23 graduation cohort for Onyx School. She is also included in the numerator because she graduated from Onyx with a regular diploma.

#### Calculate Status

**Calculation Formula for Status**

Total number of students in the **Class of 2023** who graduated in four years by earning a regular high school diploma +total number of students in the **Class of 2022** who graduated in five years by earning a regular high school diploma

**divided by**

Total number of students who entered grade nine for the first time in 2019–20 for the **Class of 2023** +total number of students in the **Class of 2022** who graduated in five years by earning a regular high school diploma

#### Calculate Change

Once the Status for each LEA, schools, and student group is calculated, Change can be calculated. The following is the calculation formula for Change:

**Calculation Formula for Change**

2023 Status (2022–23 graduation rate)

**minus**

2022 Status (2021–22 graduation rate)

#### Status and Change Cut Scores, Five-by-Five Colored Table, and Three-by-Five Colored Table

To access the Status cut scores, Change cut scores, and five-by-five colored tables that are used for all Dashboard state indicators, refer to the CDE [2023 Five-by-Five Colored Tables](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/fivebyfivecolortables23.asp) web page.

To access the three-by-five colored table information for the Graduation Rate Indicator, refer to the section titled “Application of Three-by-Five Colored Tables for Fewer than 150 Students” in this mini-guide as well as the Introductory mini-guide, *California’s Accountability System and the Dashboard*, which is available on the CDE [2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page.

#### School Dashboard Additional Reports

Designed for educators, the [School Dashboard Additional Reports](https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/) offer information and data beyond what are reported on the Dashboard, including summarized views across all state indicators. Two reports specific to the Graduation Rate Indicator are the:

* **Graduation Rate Report:** This report displays the number and percentage of students included in the combined four-and five-year graduation rate and disaggregates the data to identify the number of fifth-year graduates.
* **Five-by-Five Placement Report:** This report helps LEAs and schools quickly identify which performance color they received on the state indicator, including the performance color received for all of their student groups.

#### Student Groups

To access student group definitions and the data used to determine the student groups for this indicator, please view the Introductory mini-guide, *California’s Accountability System and the Dashboard,* which is posted on the CDE [2023 Dashboard Technical Guide](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardguide23.asp) web page.

### School and LEA Examples

#### Example 1: Lapis Lazuli High School

(A comprehensive high school serving students in grades nine through twelve)

###### Step 1: Determine the Denominator

At the end of the 2022–23 school year, this school had:

* 300 students in the four-year cohort who entered grade nine in 2019–20 (Class of 2023). The school also had 25 students who transferred in and entered the four-year cohort (Class of 2023) as grade ten, eleven, or twelve students. Of these 325 students:
  + All of them had either a primary enrollment (CALPADS enrollment code 10) or short-term enrollment (CALPADS enrollment code 30)
* 3 fifth-year students from the Class of 2022 graduated at the end of the 2022–23 school year with a standard diploma. All students had a primary enrollment.

To determine the denominator, first review the enrollment records. Because the rate only includes students with primary and short-term enrollments, all 325 students in the Class of 2023 and the three fifth-year graduates in the Class of 2022 can be counted. Therefore, the denominator of the rate is:

(325 students in the Class of 2023) + (3 fifth-year graduates from the Class of 2022) = **328**

###### Step 2: Determine the Numerator

Of the 328 students in the denominator:

* 310 four-year cohort students received a standard diploma
* 3 fifth-year students received a standard diploma
* 2 received a GED (four-year cohort students)
* 7 received a Special Education Certificate of Completion (four-year cohort students)

Because only students who receive a standard diploma can be counted as graduates, based on the information above, the numerator is:

310 (Class of 2023 with standard diploma) + 3 (fifth-year students in the Class of 2022 with standard diploma) = **313**

###### Step 3: Calculate Status

The school’s calculated 2022–23 combined four- and five-year graduation rate or Status is:

313 (Step 2) ***divided by*** 328 (Step 1) = 0.9542 or rounded to **95.4%.**

###### Step 4: Calculate Change

Change is the difference between the current year graduation rate and the prior year graduation rate.

Because the school’s prior year (2021–22) graduation rate was 0.9311 or **93.1%**, the Change is:

0.9542 *minus* 0.9311 = 0.0231 or **2.3%**.

###### Step 5: Determine the Performance Level (Color)

Based on the school’s Status (95.4%) and Change (2.3%) data, the performance level (color) is Blue. The five-by-five colored table on the following page illustrates how the performance level is derived.

**Note:**"Percentage Point Change" or **p.pts**is referenced throughout the Change columns in the table on the following page to signify that Change reflects the numerical difference between two percentages.

**Table 3: Five-by-Five Colored Table Results for Example 1 (Lapis Lazuli High School)**

| Performance Level | Declined Significantly from Prior Year (by 5.1 p.pts or more) | Declined from Prior Year (by 1.0 p.pts to 5.0 p.pts) | Maintained from Prior Year (declined or increased by 0.9 p.pts or fewer) | Increased from Prior Year (by 1.0 p.pts to 4.9 p.pts) | Increased Significantly from Prior Year (by 5.0 p.pts or more) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very High 95.0% or greater in Current Year | N/A | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| High 90.5% to 94.9% in Current Year | Orange | Yellow | Green | Green | Blue |
| Medium 80.0% to 90.4% in Current Year | Orange | Orange | Yellow | Green | Green |
| Low 68.0% to 79.9% in Current Year | Red | Orange | Orange | Yellow | Yellow |
| Very Low 67.9% or less in Current Year | Red | Red | Red | Red | Red |

#### Example 2: Sunstone DASS Academy

(A DASS high school serving students in grades nine through twelve)

Note that because the U.S. Department of Education denied California’s use of the DASS graduation rate for accountability, beginning with the 2022 Dashboard, all DASS schools receive the same combined four- and five-year graduation rate as non-DASS schools.

###### Step 1: Determine the Denominator

At the end of the 2022–23 school year, this school had:

* 85 students in the four-year cohort who entered grade nine in 2019–20 (Class of 2023). The school also had 5 students who transferred in and entered the four-year cohort (Class of 2023) as grade ten, eleven, or twelve students. Of these 90 students (85 + 5):
  + All of them had either a primary enrollment (CALPADS enrollment code 10) or short-term enrollment (CALPADS enrollment code 30)
* 2 fifth-year students from the Class of 2022 graduated at the end of the 2022–23 school year with a standard diploma. All students had a primary enrollment.

To determine the denominator, first review the enrollment records. Because the rate only includes students with primary and short-term enrollments, all 90 students in the Class of 2023 and the two fifth-year graduates in the Class of 2022 can be counted. Therefore, the denominator of the rate is:

(90 students in the Class of 2023) + (2 fifth-year graduates from the Class of 2022) = **92**

###### Step 2: Determine the Numerator

Of the 92 students in the denominator:

* 65 four-year cohort students received a standard diploma
* 1 fifth-year student received a standard diploma
* 2 received a GED (four-year cohort students)
* 1 earned the CHSPE (four-year cohort students)
* 3 received a Special Education Certificate of Completion (four-year cohort students)

Because only students who receive a standard diploma can be counted as graduates, based on the information above, the numerator is:

65 (Class of 2023 students with standard diploma) + 1 (fifth-year students from the Class of 2022 with standard diploma) = **66**

###### Step 3: Calculate Status

The school’s calculated 2022–23 combined four- and five-year graduation rate or Status is:

66 (Step 2) ***divided by*** 92 (Step 1) = 0.7173 or **71.7%.**

###### Step 4: Calculate Change

Change is the difference between the current year graduation rate and the prior year graduation rate.

Because the school’s prior year (2021–22) graduation rate was 0.7432 or **74.0%**, the Change is:

0.7173 *minus* 0.7432 = -0.0259 or **-2.6%**.

###### Step 5: Determine the Performance Level (Color)

Based on the school’s Status (71.7%) and Change (-2.6%) data, the Performance Level (color) is Orange. Note that because the denominator is fewer than 150 students in the current year, the three-by-five colored table is used to determine the Performance Level. The three-by-five colored table below illustrates how the Performance Level is derived.

**Note:**"Percentage Point Change" or **p.pts**is referenced throughout the Change columns in the table below to signify that Change reflects the numerical difference between two percentages.

**Table 4: Three-by-Five Colored Table Results for Example 2 (Sunstone DASS Academy)**

| Performance Level | Declined from Prior Year (by 1.0 p.pts to 5.0 p.pts) | Maintained from Prior Year (declined or increased by 0.9 p.pts or fewer) | Increased from Prior Year (by 1.0 p.pts to 4.9 p.pts) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very High 95.0% or greater in Current Year | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| High 90.5% to 94.9% in Current Year | Yellow | Green | Green |
| Medium 80.0% to 90.4% in Current Year | Orange | Yellow | Green |
| Low 68.0% to 79.9% in Current Year | Orange | Orange | Yellow |
| Very Low 67.9% or less in Current Year | Red | Red | Red |

#### Example 3: Topaz Unified School District

(An LEA serving grades kindergarten through twelve students in traditional, DASS, and charter schools)

###### Step 1: Determine the Denominator

At the end of the 2022–23 school year, based on all the students in *traditional* and *DASS* schools (but not charter schools), this LEA had:

* 3,380 students in the four-year cohort who entered grade nine in 2019–20 (Class of 2023). The district also had 20 students who transferred in and entered the four-year cohort (Class of 2023) as grade ten, eleven, or twelve students. Of these 3,400 students:
  + All of them had either a primary enrollment (CALPADS enrollment code 10) or short-term enrollment (CALPADS enrollment code 30)
* 10 fifth-year students from the Class of 2022 graduated at the end of the 2022–23 school year with a standard diploma. All students had a primary enrollment.

Because the rate only includes students with primary and short-term enrollments, all 3,400 students in the Class of 2023 and the 10 fifth-year graduates in the Class of 2022 can be counted.

Next, because this a graduation rate for an LEA, the district of residence (or DSEA) must be considered before the denominator can be determined.

***District of Special Education Accountability***

Because the District of Residence (or DSEA) rule is applied ***only at the LEA-level***, it is critical to check if any SWDs are being “sent back” and attributed to Topaz Unified. After accessing the DSEA extract from CALPADS, it revealed that there were 250 SWDs enrolled at Sapphire County Office of Education (COE) to receive their appropriate special education services and these students need to be “sent back” to Topaz Unified as the DSEA. These students’ graduation data at Sapphire COE will be used to determine if they should be included in Topaz Unified’s graduation rate. For example:

* Chance was a grade twelve student in the Class of 2023 with a primary enrollment record who graduated with a standard diploma at Sapphire COE. His record also reflects the DSEA to be Topaz Unified. Because Chance had a primary enrollment record and was in the Class of 2023, his graduation outcome data is sent back to Topaz Unified and he is included in the denominator of Topaz Unified’s graduation rate. He is also included in the numerator because he graduated with a standard diploma.

After reviewing all 250 SWDs who were being sent back to Topaz Unified:

* 100 were students with primary enrollment, in the Class of 2023, and graduated with a standard diploma.
* 5 were students with primary enrollment, in the Class of 2022, and graduated with a standard diploma as a fifth-year graduate.
* 80 were students with a primary enrollment, in the Class of 2023, and graduated with a Special Education Certificate of Completion.
* 65 were students with a primary enrollment in the Class of 2023 but did not graduate.

Based on the above information, all 250 students will be sent back or included in the denominator of Topaz Unified’s graduation rate. Therefore, the denominator of the rate is:

(3,400 students in the Class of 2023) + (10 fifth-year graduates from the Class of 2022) + (250 SWDs sent back due to the DSEA) = **3,660**

###### Step 2: Determine the Numerator of the Graduation Rate

Of the 3,660 students in the denominator:

* 2,850 four-year cohort students received a standard diploma
* 10 fifth-year students received a standard diploma
* 12 received a GED (four-year cohort students)
* 7 earned the CHSPE (four-year cohort students)
* 35 received a Special Education Certificate of Completion (four-year cohort students)
* 100 DSEA students received a standard diploma (four-year cohort students)
* 5 DSEA students received a standard diploma (fifth-year students)
* 80 DSEA students received a Special Education Certificate of Completion (four-year cohort students)

Because only students who receive a standard diploma can be counted as graduates, based on the information above, the numerator is:

2,850 (Class of 2023 students with a standard diploma) + 10 (fifth-year students from the Class of 2022 with standard diploma) + 100 (DSEA students in the Class of 2023 with a standard diploma) + 5 (DSEA fifth-year students in the Class of 2022 with a standard diploma) = **2,965**

###### Step 3: Calculate Status

The LEA’s calculated 2022–23 combined four- and five-year graduation rate or Status is:

2,965 (Step 2) ***divided by*** 3,660 (Step 1) = 0.8101 or **81.0%.**

###### Step 4: Calculate Change

Change is the difference between the current year graduation rate and the prior year graduation rate.

Because the LEA’s prior year (2021–22) graduation rate was 0.8033 or **80.3%**, the Change is:

0.8101 *minus* 0.8033 = 0.0068 or **0.7%**.

###### Step 5: Determine the Performance Level (Color)

Based on the district’s Status (81.0%) and Change (0.7%) data, the Performance Level (color) is Yellow. The five-by-five colored table on the following page illustrates how the Performance Level is derived.

**Note:**"Percentage Point Change" or **p.pts**is referenced throughout the Change columns in the table below to signify that Change reflects the numerical difference between two percentages.

**Table 5: Five-by-Five Colored Table Results for Example 3 (Topaz Unified)**

| Performance Level | Declined Significantly from Prior Year (by 5.1 p.pts or more) | Declined from Prior Year (by 1.0 p.pts to 5.0 p.pts) | Maintained from Prior Year (declined or increased by 0.9 p.pts or fewer) | Increased from Prior Year (by 1.0 p.pts to 4.9 p.pts) | Increased Significantly from Prior Year (by 5.0 p.pts or more) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very High 95.0% or greater in Current Year | N/A | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| High 90.5% to 94.9% in Current Year | Orange | Yellow | Green | Green | Blue |
| Medium 80.0% to 90.4% in Current Year | Orange | Orange | Yellow | Green | Green |
| Low 68.0% to 79.9% in Current Year | Red | Orange | Orange | Yellow | Yellow |
| Very Low 67.9% or less in Current Year | Red | Red | Red | Red | Red |

### Frequently Asked Questions

This section covers the most commonly asked questions about this indicator by LEAs. Any updates or new questions and answers can be found on the CDE [Graduation Rate Indicator FAQs](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dbgradfaq.asp) web page.

1. **Does the combined four- and five-year graduation rate apply to both DASS and non-DASS schools?**

Yes. Because the U.S. Department of Education denied California’s waiver requesting the continued use of modified methods for DASS schools, beginning with the 2022 Dashboard, DASS schools no longer receive the DASS graduation rate. Rather, these schools receive the combined four- and five-year graduation rate and this rate is used to determine LEA and school support (i.e., Differentiated Assistance and CSI/ATSI).

1. **When a student transfers between two schools, is the student included in both schools’ graduation rate?**

No. Only the last school where a student is enrolled is held accountable for the student’s graduation status.

1. **I have several students who earned the GED. Are these students counted as graduates?**

No. The ED requires that only students who earn a standard diploma be counted as graduates.

1. **I have a fourth-year senior who is in the Class of 2023. The student attended summer school and graduated on August 15, 2023. Will this student be included in the graduation rate for the Class of 2023?**

Yes. Because August 15th is the cut-off date for students to be counted as a graduate, this student will be included as a graduate for the Class of 2023.

1. **Are grade 11 early graduates counted in the year that they graduate?**

No. These students are counted as graduates in the cohort that they belong to. For example, if the student was part of the Class of 2023 but graduated a year early in grade eleven, then this student will not be counted in the Class of 2022 but included as a graduate in the Class of 2023.

1. **Are students who transfer to an adult education program excluded from the denominator?**

No. Based on an audit by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General, 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). These students are also counted as other transfers and ***excluded*** from the numerator.

1. **If my graduation rate is 93.461%, does it get rounded up to the nearest tenth?**

Yes. A graduation rate of 93.461 is rounded up to 93.5 percent.

1. **I have a student who moved in from another state and is in grade eleven. Will this student be placed in the cohort?**

Yes. The cohort is adjusted by adding any student who may transfer in from out-of-state, a private school, or a different country as grade nine, grade ten, grade eleven, or grade twelve.

1. **If, after four years, a student did not graduate, will the student be part of the denominator of the graduation rate at the end of the fourth year?**

Yes. For example, if the student enrolled in 2019–20 and did not graduate by the end of the 2022–23 school year, the student will be included in the denominator in 2022–23 but excluded from the numerator because the student did not graduate. If the student receives a standard high school diploma in the following year (as a fifth-year senior), the student will be included in both the numerator and denominator of the combined rate in 2023–24 (i.e., 2024 Dashboard).

### Next Steps for the Graduation Rate Indicator

###### CALPADS Certification Updates and Summer Graduate Changes

As the deadline to release the Dashboard adjusts earlier each year through 2026, the CDE anticipates the End-of-Year (EOY) data submission certification deadlines for CALPADS to shift as well. Since the Dashboard is based largely on data LEAs certify as part of the CALPADS EOY submissions, this requires the CALPADS EOY certification deadlines to also become progressively earlier. The CALPADS EOY deadline for 2023−24 will be August 16, 2024, which is approximately one week earlier than the 2022–23 EOY deadlines. With this in mind, it is increasingly important that LEAs keep CALPADS updated with student enrollments and exits, and program data, along with certifying accurate data by the new deadlines because of the use of the data in mission critical functions and for high stakes purposes to assist with improving student outcomes.

**Summer Graduate Cut-Off Date:** With the new state statutory requirement to move up the Dashboard reporting timelines, the CDE has determined that “summer graduates” will no longer be included in the four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) effective in the **2024−25** academic year. The CDE will provide specific guidance as to how LEAs *must* report “summer graduates” in CALPADS (i.e., students who complete graduation requirements and graduate on or between July 1 and August 15). It will be critical that LEAs follow this guidance to ensure that LEAs’ Graduation Rate Indicator on the 2025 Dashboard is comparable with the data collected for the 2024 Dashboard.

Any updates to these topics will be shared with LEAs through CALPADS communications. Therefore, LEAs are encouraged to access these updates through the CDE [CALPADS Communications](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/communications.asp) web page.

###### Newly Added Pathway Diploma for Students with Disabilities

Per California *Education Code* Section 51225.31, eligible SWDs, who entered grade nine in 2022–23 school year or later, can graduate from high school through a newly defined “Alternative Diploma Pathway”.

With the implementation of the new alternative diploma pathway, effective July 1, 2023, School Completion Status Code 102 – Pathway Diploma for Students with Disabilities is now available for use in CALPADS. Because these SWDs must have entered grade nine in the 2022–23 academic year or later (per *Education Code)*, the earliest that these students can be counted as graduates may be with the 2026 Dashboard.

For more information on this new pathway diploma, please refer to the [August 25, 2023, correspondence](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/om082523.asp) from the CDE Special Education Division as well as [CALPADS Flash #260](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/calpadsupdflash260.asp).

### Local Data Source

Another critical resource for LEAs to use is their own local data as it reflects an up-to-date picture of current students. Here is a local source that can be considered for use:

* On-track reports (graduation, a-g, etc.) for current twelfth grade students and students in grades nine through eleven.

### Appendix A: Descriptive Text for Image in Guide

**[Figure 1](#Figure1" \o "Anchor to Figure 1): Five Performance Levels (or Colors) Represented by Gauges**

The 2023 Dashboard returns with the use of five-segmented gauges with an arrow that points to one of the following performance colors: red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. Out of the five gauges identified in this figure, starting from the right, the first gauge points to blue (with the word Blue underneath); the second gauge points to green (with the word Green underneath); the third gauge points to yellow (with the word Yellow underneath); the fourth gauge points to orange (with the word Orange underneath); and the fifth gauge points to red (with the word Red underneath). Under these five gauges are the words Lowest Performance to the left and Highest Performance to the right with a double-ended arrow between these words.