



State of Arizona  
Department of Education  
Graduation, Dropout & Persistence Rate  
Technical Manual

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## Introduction

This manual helps LEAs and schools understand how graduation, dropout, and persistence rate are calculated. Graduation rate is included in the 9-12 school models for letter grades. Dropout and persistence rate are not currently used in any model; however, the information is still valuable to schools.

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) computes the four-, five-, six-, and seven-year graduation rate for every public high school in the state. The graduation rate measures how long it takes students to graduate from the time they enter grade 9 and aggregates the percentages each year for up to seven years. Graduation rates are required for state and federal reporting purposes. The results are reported at the subgroup, school, local education agency (LEA), and state levels.

The method the Arizona Department of Education uses to calculate graduation rates conforms to the 2008 non-regulatory guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education and to the National Governors Association Compact on State High School Graduation Data.

The source of information for the calculation is the state's longitudinal data system, the Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS)\*. AzEDS became the official system of record in FY 17. Prior to this, all data was submitted to SAIS. This document describes business rules used in graduation rate calculations, as well as the business rules used to calculate school-level dropout and persistence rates. This document is updated annually as needed.

\*Updated May – July 2017. Code values available in AzEDS for FY2017 and beyond are included in this document.



## Cohort Assignment & Membership

Membership in a cohort class is established at the time of the student's first enrollment in a high school grade in Arizona. Cohorts are assigned by the typical four-year expectation for graduation. The student's membership with the cohort class remains the same, regardless of transfers between schools, credits earned, time spent out of Arizona, time spent out of school, or the time necessary for the student to complete requirements for graduation. Student cohort membership does not change once the student enters any high school in Arizona.

For example, a student is considered a member of the 2017 cohort if:

- The student enrolled in an Arizona public school in Grade 9 or Ungraded Secondary (US) for the first time in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

OR

- The student enrolled in an Arizona public school in Grade 10 in the 2014-2015 fiscal year and had not previously enrolled in a high school grade.

OR

- The student enrolled in an Arizona public school in Grade 11 in the 2015-2016 fiscal year and had not previously enrolled in a high school grade.

OR

- The student enrolled in an Arizona public school in Grade 12 in the 2016-2017 fiscal year and had not previously enrolled in a high school grade.

A student's cohort is NOT established if the student is enrolled in both a high school and non-high school grade in the same fiscal year. Students are enrolled in a non-high school grade (i.e. Grade 8) at any point during the fiscal year will not have a cohort assigned for that year, even if they are also enrolled in a high school grade during that fiscal year. However, the student's cohort *will* be assigned the next fiscal year based on the enrolled grade.

For example, a student is enrolled in grade 8 until December and then promotes to grade 9 in fiscal year 2019, cohort will not be assigned for that student that fiscal year. A cohort will be assigned to that student based on the scenarios below:



- If the student is enrolled in grade 9 in FY 2020 the student's assigned cohort will be Cohort 2023.

OR

- If the student is enrolled in grade 10 in FY2020 the student's assigned cohort will be Cohort 2022.

Once the cohort is set for a four-year graduation expectation, the cohort membership follows the student through the Arizona public school system until graduation is recorded.

Students are maintained in the cohort for their last high school of record unless they have transferred to another school granting a high school diploma, transferred out of state or out of country, have left the public school system to be home schooled, or are deceased. Schools and LEAs are responsible for students in the non-graduate category even if the students were not enrolled in that school for their graduation year. The school and LEA that records the graduation exit code for a student is considered the last school of record regardless of whether it is the fourth or fifth year of high school for the student. If a student is concurrently enrolled in two schools at the time of graduation and the non-graduating school does not “exit” the student from the cohort, the school which did not issue the diploma may also code the student as “G” if they have physical evidence or written confirmation (i.e., copy of diploma) of the student’s graduation from another school. This evidence must be maintained with the student cumulative file for audit purposes.

When calculating the graduation rates for subgroups, membership in a subgroup depends on the student’s information at the last enrollment of record. For example, if a student is an English Learner in grade 9 who exits the program as proficient then graduates from high school, that student will not be included in the graduation rate of the English Learner subgroup. If a student is an English Learner and drops out before graduating, then that student will be included in the graduation rate of the English Learner subgroup.



## Exit and Year-End Codes

The student status used in the graduation rate calculations is based on the exit codes and year end codes submitted to AzEDS by schools and LEAs.

Exit Codes are used any time during the fiscal year when a student withdraws from an entity. Year-End Exit Codes are used to relay the status of a student at the **end** of the fiscal year. Dates must be attached to both exit and year-end exit codes.

Students within a cohort are assigned to one of three categories based on their last exit or year-end code in AzEDS following the end of their cohort year.

1. Students who have graduated (graduates)
2. Students who remain in the cohort but have not graduated (non-graduates)
3. Students who have exited the cohort (exited students)

The exit and year-end codes for each of these categories are detailed in the next section. The codes used are consistent across all graduation rate types.

Each student at the school may only have one exit or year-end exit code per year. The following sections provide detailed descriptions of these codes.

### Graduates

Year-end: G

Withdrawal: W7

Summer Withdrawal: S7

Graduates are students who have met one of the following requirements to receive a high school diploma:

- Completed a course of study for high school  
OR
- Completed an Individual Education Plan (IEP)  
OR

Students are considered as graduating on time for the four-year graduation rate if they graduate any time prior to September 1 of the following school year. Students are considered as graduating on time for the five-year rate if they graduate by June 30 of the



fiscal year following their cohort year. Participating in graduation ceremonies and other activities for students is a matter of LEA policy.

## Non-Graduates

The following are the codes for students who are considered non-graduates.

### Attendees

Year-end: A

Attendees are 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who met one of the following requirements:

- Did NOT fulfill a course of study  
OR
- Did NOT complete an Individual Education Plan (IEP)  
OR
- Turned 22 years of age  
OR
- Attended school as a twelfth grade foreign exchange student (used only in grade 12)

Attendees have concluded their high school education and are NOT expected to re-enroll. If a student has turned 22 years of age and is withdrawn with either a W6 or S6 code (i.e., Aged Out Withdrawn or Aged Out Summer Withdrawn), then they are considered to have exited the cohort.

### Completers

Year-end: C

Withdrawal: W13

Summer withdrawal: S13

Completers are:

11<sup>th</sup> grade JTED and/or Foreign Exchange students

OR

12<sup>th</sup> grade students who meet the following requirement:

- Completed a course of study at a Joint Technical Education District (JTED) before or after graduation



Completers have concluded their high school education and are NOT expected to re-enroll except in cases such as enrollment in a JTED post-graduation.

### Promoted

Year-end: P

This code is used for students who were promoted to the next grade (used in all grade levels except for grade 12).

### Retained

Year-end: R

This code is used for students who were retained in the same grade. This code **cannot** be used for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### Still Enrolled (Course of Study)

Year-end: SC

Student still enrolled (course of study) are students who will be enrolled for an additional year of high school to pursue a diploma

- SC is used only for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students

### Illness

Withdrawal: W2

This code is used for students who withdraw due to chronic illness. (Withdrawal may not be required. Please refer to the LEA chronic illness policy.)

### Expelled

Withdrawal: W3

This code is used to withdraw students for expulsion or long term suspension prior to the end of the school year or summer term. The student will not be returning to school.

### Status Unknown

Withdrawal: W4

Summer withdrawal: S4





Status unknown students are those students who have more than ten consecutive days of unexcused absences, and whose status is unknown to the school or LEA. Attempts should be made to find out what has happened to these students so that other more appropriate codes can be applied. Use the S4 code for students who were enrolled at the end of the prior school year but fail to show at any time during the next school year and whose status or location is unknown to the school or LEA. The effective date of withdrawal is the last day of actual attendance.

## Dropouts

Withdrawal: W5

Summer withdrawal: S5

Dropouts are students who leave school with the intention of NOT completing the necessary requirements for a high school diploma.

This code should be used for students who have intentionally dropped out of school, except for the following reasons:

- Chronic illness  
OR
- To receive a GED certificate  
OR
- Transfer to a juvenile correctional facility

## Detention

Withdrawal: W10

Summer withdrawal: S10

The detention code is used to withdraw students who have been transferred to a state detention or correctional facility where they are receiving educational services.

## GED

Withdrawal: W11

Summer withdrawal: S11

General Educational Development (GED) students are students who withdraw from school expressly for the purpose of obtaining a GED. Students of high school age must withdraw to take the GED test.



## Vocational School

Withdrawal: W12

Summer withdrawal: S12

This code is used for students who leave school to continue studies at a technical or vocational school. This includes ALL schools or educational programs that DO NOT meet Arizona requirements for obtaining a high school diploma.

## Grand Canyon Diploma

Withdrawal: W14

Student has met all of the requirements for the Grand Canyon Diploma but has not been awarded the diploma. Student is continuing in high school.

Withdrawal: W15

Student has met all of the requirements for the Grand Canyon Diploma and has been awarded the diploma.

## Exited Students

The following are codes for students who are considered as exiting the cohort. The school is no longer responsible for graduating students who exit the cohort for one of the following reasons:

### Transferred

Withdrawal: W1, W21, W22

Summer withdrawal: S1 (out of district) or S99 (within district) S21 (out of State) S22 (out of Country)

This code is used for students who withdraw from one school to continue their studies in another school, public or private, which grants an accredited high school diploma. This code also applies to students who have been accepted into an early admission college program as long as they are attending college full-time and are working toward an Arizona high school diploma.

An Official Notice of Pupil Withdrawal Form must be completed for students who withdraw. To confirm that a student transferred out, a school or LEA must have “official written documentation” that a student has transferred to another school or to an



educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma (34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(ii)(B)(1)). Examples of official written documentation include: a request for student records from a receiving public or private high school or an educational program that culminates in a regular high school diploma, or a written record of a response from an official in the receiving school or program acknowledging the student's enrollment. A conversation with a parent or neighbor, for instance, would not be considered official written documentation of a transfer (verbal notification IS NOT sufficient).

A school or LEA must have written confirmation that a student has emigrated to another country (34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(ii)(B)) but need not obtain official written notice that the student is enrolled in a new school within that country. Parents/Guardians can give written documentation ONLY in verification of W22/S22.

### Aged Out

Withdrawal: W6

Summer withdrawal: S6

This code is used to withdraw students who are no longer of school age or are under school age (younger than 6 or 22 years).

### Deceased

Withdrawal: W8

Summer withdrawal: S8

This code is used to withdraw students who have died while enrolled in the school. A school or LEA must have written confirmation that a student is deceased to apply this code (34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(ii)(B)). A letter from a parent or an obituary is sufficient documentation. Official written documentation of a student's death, such as a death certificate, is not necessary.

### Home Schooled

Withdrawal: W9

Summer withdrawal: S9

This code is used for students who withdraw to be taught at home. A.R.S. § 15-802(B)(3) allows a student to be taught at home after certain requirements are met. The parent must file an affidavit with the county school superintendent that the child is attending a



regularly organized private or home school. Official written documentation is required to apply this code. Documentation may include a letter of withdrawal or other written confirmation from the parent or guardian, or the affidavit filed with the county school superintendent.

### **Grand Canyon Diploma (not counted by LEA)**

These codes are for students who earned a Grand Canyon Diploma (GCD). GCD students cannot count towards graduation rate calculations per Federal guidelines (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]).

Withdrawal: W17

Summer withdrawal: S17

Student received the Grand Canyon Diploma and:

- Is no longer enrolled full-time at an AZ public university
- OR
- Is no longer enrolled in an AZ public university.

Withdrawal: W18

Summer withdrawal: S18

Student received the Grand Canyon Diploma but LEA may not count this student:

- Is no longer enrolled full-time at an AZ Community College
- OR
- Is no longer enrolled in an AZ Community College.

Withdrawal: 19

Summer withdrawal: S19

Student was eligible for the Grand Canyon Diploma but LEA may not count this student because student is no longer enrolled in a full-time Career Technical Education (CTE) program.

Withdrawal: W20

Summer withdrawal: S20

Student was awarded the Grand Canyon Diploma and the student's post Grand Canyon Diploma participation is unknown or ineligible.



## Not Affecting Classification

There are two exit codes for students who transfer within programs (i.e., grades) within their school. Since these codes are to be used in conjunction with enrollment codes to indicate enrollment into the new program within the school, the following codes are NOT used to determine the classification status of the student:

### Transferred Grade

Withdrawal: WP

This code is used to transfer students to the next grade level within the school. If a student is promoted to another grade within the same school, use the WP withdrawal code to withdraw the student from the grade he or she was enrolled in. Please note that this code does not change the student's cohort. The student should also be assigned the corresponding RP code.

Withdrawal: WD

This code is used to transfer students to the previous grade level within the school. If a student is demoted to another grade within the same school, use the WD withdrawal code to withdraw the student from the grade he or she was enrolled in. Please note that this code does not change the student's cohort. The student should also be assigned the corresponding RD code.

### Transferred Register

Withdrawal: WK

This code is used to transfer students to another calendar track within the same school before the scheduled end of the school year.



## Accountability

For all accountability purposes, graduation data are lagged, and each rate requires a separate end date. It is possible to calculate a four- and five-year rate using the same group of students by changing the as of date. The dates used to calculate each rate are described below:

Rate	Deadline	Example
4-year	8/31/ <b>Cohort</b> Year	8/31/2014
5-year	6/30/ <b>Cohort</b> Year + 1	6/30/2015
6-year	6/30/ <b>Cohort</b> Year + 2	6/30/2016
7-year	6/30/ <b>Cohort</b> Year + 3	6/30/2017

Because four-year graduates may graduate after the fiscal year their cohort year ends (i.e., June 30), all graduation data are lagged by one year every year. For each fiscal year's accountability determination, the four-year rate would measure the prior fiscal year's cohort graduation; however, the prior fiscal year's cohort can represent both the four- and five-year rate based on the date of graduation. For instance, Cohort 2018 four-year graduates graduated as of August 31, 2018; any students who remain in school after August 31, 2018 and graduate before June 30, 2019 would be considered a five-year graduate. Accountability for each fiscal year and the subsequent cohort rates are described below unless indicated otherwise:

Fiscal (accountability) year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
4-year cohort	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
5-year cohort	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
6-year cohort	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
7-year cohort	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

## Graduation Rate Calculation

When the graduation rate is calculated, year-end or exit codes are used to place students in the cohort into one of the three categories (graduate, non-graduate, and exited the cohort). Only records that have passed integrity are used in the calculation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On February 20, 2015, Senate Bill 1191 was signed into law, immediately ending the AIMS high school graduation requirement. The bill states that a student is not required to obtain a passing score on a standardized test during FY2015, FY2016, FY2017, and FY2018 school year in order to graduate from high school.



To compute each graduation rate, the following formula is used:

$$\text{Graduation Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of Graduates (G or W7 or S7) in the Cohort}}{\text{Number of students in the Cohort}}$$

Only records that have passed integrity are used in the calculation.

### Dropout Rate Calculation

Dropouts are defined as students who are enrolled in school at any time during the school year but are not enrolled at the end of the school year and did not transfer, graduate, or die. Students withdrawn due to chronic illness are also excluded from the dropout rate calculation. When the dropout rate is calculated, year-end or exit codes are used to determine the percentage of students who are no longer enrolled in any Arizona public school prior to exiting as a graduate or completer. Students in grades 7 through 12 are included in the dropout rate calculation.

$$\text{Dropout Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of W3, W4, W5, W11, W12, W13, S3, S4, S5, S11, S12, S13 students}}{\text{Number of students enrolled}}$$

Only records that have passed integrity are used in the calculation.



## Code Transaction Descriptions

Code in transaction	Short Description	Long Description
W3	Expelled or long term suspension	Expelled or suspended on a long-term basis before scheduled end of school year
W4	Absence or status unknown	Withdrawn before scheduled end of school year for 10 consecutive days of unexcused absence, status or location is unknown to the school or school district.
W5	Dropout	School received verification that student has withdrawn from school before scheduled end of school year; student does not intend to complete requirements for a high school diploma.
W11	GED	Student withdrew before scheduled end of school year expressly for the purpose of obtaining a GED. Students of high school age must withdraw to take the GED test. Verbal notification at the time of withdrawal is sufficient to apply the W11 code.
W12	Vocational school	Student withdrew before scheduled end of school year to continue studies at a technical or vocational school; this includes ALL schools or education programs that DO NOT meet Arizona requirements for obtaining a high school diploma. Verbal notification from a responsible adult is sufficient to apply the W12 code.
W13	Completed	Student has completed course of study requirements for high school. Completers have concluded their high school education and are not expected to re-enroll unless: 11th grade JTED and/or Foreign Exchange students or 12 <sup>th</sup> graders who have completed a course of study at a Joint Technical Education District (JTED) before or after graduation





S3	Summer expulsion	Student will not be returning to school due to expulsion during the summer. (same criteria as W3)
S4	Summer absence or status unknown	Students who are enrolled at the end of the prior school year but fail to show at any time during the next school year and whose status or location is unknown to the school or school district.
S5	Summer dropout	Student dropped out during the summer. (same criteria as W5)
S11	Summer GED	Student withdrew to receive a GED certificate during the summer. (same criteria as W11)
S12	Summer transfer - vocational school	Student withdrew to attend a vocational school during the summer. (same criteria as W12)
S13	Summer Completer	Student has completed course of study requirements for high school. (same criteria as W13)



## Persistence Rate Calculation

An academically persistent student is any student who is eligible to re-enroll at the end of the previous fiscal year and re-enrolls in any Arizona public school by October 1 of the current fiscal year. Students in grades 6 through 12 are included in the persistence rate calculation. Students who are eligible to re-enroll have a qualifying end of year code in the previous fiscal year. The following codes denote students who are eligible to re-enroll.

- Promoted
- Retained
- Attendee
- Still Enrolled (Assessment, Course of Study, Met no requirements)

Students who are withdrawn for any reason or are coded as graduated, aged out, or deceased are not included in the persistence calculation. Students withdrawn due to a change in track become eligible when the appropriate end of year code is used in the subsequent enrollment.

$$\text{Persistence Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of students who re-enroll by Oct. 1 of CY}}{\text{Number of students eligible to re-enroll based on PY}}$$

### Example 1:

Last year, Student A was promoted at the end of his 8<sup>th</sup> grade year at Middle School X. This year, Student A enrolls in 9<sup>th</sup> grade prior to October 1 at High School Y. Student A is ELIGIBLE to persist and would count in both the numerator and denominator of the equation above.

### Example 2:

Last year, Student B was still enrolled at the end of his senior year at High School Y. This year, Student B enrolls in 12<sup>th</sup> grade again prior to October 1 at High School Y. Student B is ELIGIBLE to persist and would count in both the numerator and denominator of the equation above.

### Example 3:

Last year, Student C was coded as a dropout at the end of his freshman year at High School Y. This year, Student C enrolls in 10<sup>th</sup> grade prior to October 1 at High School Z. Student C is NOT ELIGIBLE to persist and was counted in the dropout rate calculation for High School Y. To avoid double penalizing High School Y, the student would be excluded from the numerator and denominator of the persistence equation above for High School Y.

Only records that have passed integrity are used in the calculation.



## Appendix A

### Enrollment Codes

For more complete information about school membership please visit the [School Finance](#) website.

#### *E1*

The student is entering an Arizona public school for the first time this school year.  
The last school attended was same school in which student is enrolling this school year.

#### *E2*

The student is entering an Arizona public school for the first time this school year.  
The last school attended was another school within the district.

#### *E3*

The student is entering an Arizona public school for the first time this school year.  
The last school attended was outside district but within AZ. (This includes options such as not enrolled in any school in the prior year or enrolled in a private school in the prior year.)

#### *E4*

The student is entering this school for the first time this school year, but was previously enrolled this year in another Arizona public school outside the district.

#### *E5*

The student is entering this school for the first time this school year, but was previously enrolled this year in another Arizona public school within the district.

#### *E6*

The student is entering an Arizona public school for the first time this year.  
The last school attended was outside the state of Arizona.

#### *E7*

The student is entering an Arizona public school for the first time this school year.  
The last school attended was another school within the same district and that membership was coded by the previous school with a W5.

#### *E8*

The student is entering an Arizona public school for the first time this school year.  
The last school attended was outside the district but within AZ and that membership was coded by the previous school with a W5.

#### *E9*

The student is entering this school for the first time this school year, but was previously enrolled this year in another Arizona public school within the same district and that membership was coded by the previous school with a W5.

#### *E10*

The student is entering this school for the first time this school year, but was previously enrolled this year in another Arizona public school outside the district and that membership was coded by the previous school with a W5.



**E11**

Student entering AZ public school first time this school year; in most recent schooling, student was home taught within the state of Arizona.

**E15**

The student is entering an Arizona public school for first time this school year.  
The last school attended was a detention facility within the state of Arizona.

**E16**

The student is entering this school and was previously enrolled this school year in a detention facility within the state of Arizona.

**E17**

Student received a Grand Canyon Diploma; no longer attends high school. Student attends an Arizona university full-time; university is under jurisdiction of Arizona Board of Regents.

**E18**

Student received a Grand Canyon Diploma; no longer attends high school. Student attends an Arizona community college full-time.

**E19**

Student is eligible for a Grand Canyon Diploma and is enrolled in a full-time Career Technical Education (CTE) program.

**E20**

Student is eligible for a Grand Canyon Diploma and is continuing with additional board exam programs to prepare for baccalaureate degree programs.

