

## **Frequently Asked Questions - Graduation Cohort Report (RGCS) in ATS**

Date: January 13, 2009.

### **1. What do the selection criteria mean?**

*Cohort Year:* Enter the letter corresponding to the graduation cohort you wish to review. In ATS, the letter “K” represents the 2005 cohort (“Class of 2009”).

*4 Year or 6 Year Report:* Enter a “4” to review students’ graduation outcomes after four years and a “6” to review students’ graduation outcomes after six years. For the 2008/09 Progress Report, the four-year graduation rate will be based on the students in the 2005 (K) cohort. The six-year graduation rate will be based on the students in the 2003 (I) cohort.

*Type:* Enter a “1” to select the NCLB / SED graduation cohort. Enter a “2” to select the Progress Report graduation cohort. Enter a “3” to select the list of students who are assigned to your school but excluded from your graduation cohort based on their discharge code.

### **2. What is the difference between the NCLB/SED graduation cohort and the Progress Report graduation cohort?**

The NCLB/SED graduation cohort does not include students who have been enrolled in your school for fewer than five months. For NCLB/SED accountability, these students are not attributed to any school.

By contrast, the Progress Report attributes all students to the latest diploma-granting high school he or she attended before June 30<sup>th</sup> of his or her fourth year in high school. This is in keeping with the core tenant of Children First that there be an adult who feels accountable for *every* child enrolled in the NYCDOE school system.

This is the only difference between the two graduation cohorts.

### **3. Why is the NCLB/SED graduation cohort an estimate?**

Your school’s official graduation cohort for NCLB/SED accountability will be made available in nySTART. However, RGCS can provide you with an estimate of your graduation cohort that can be used to verify the data in nySTART.

By contrast, your Progress Report graduation cohort is not an estimate because your schools graduation rate on the 2008/09 Progress Report will be based on a download of the RGCS report in early September, 2009.

#### **4. What do the columns in the RGCS report mean?**

*Student ID:* A student's NYCDOE ID number

*Student Name:* A student's last and first name

*DOB:* A student's date of birth

*COHORT:* A letter and year corresponding to when a student entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade (in the case of "graded" students) or when a student turned 17 (in the case of "ungraded" students). A cohort of "K (2005)" corresponds to those students who started 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2005/06 or turned 17 in the 2005/06 school year. They are members of the "Class of 2009" and expected to graduate in 2008/09.

*YEAR:* The year in which a student entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade, regardless of a student's status as "graded" or "ungraded"

*UNG:* An "ungraded" indicator that is set to YES if the student is NYSAA eligible and, therefore, "ungraded." It is set to NO otherwise. Students who are ungraded have their Cohort Year determined by the school year in which they turn 17, rather than the school year in which they enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade

*ST:* Status. A student's status is "A" if they are currently active and "D" if they are currently discharged.

*DISC 4YR DATE:* The student's discharge date as of September 1 of the year following his/her fourth year in high school, whether from the school accountable for the student or the "Current DBN."

*DISC 4YR CODE:* The student's discharge code as of September 1 of the year following his/her fourth year in high school, whether from the school accountable for the student or the "Current DBN."

*DISC 6YR DATE:* The student's discharge date as of September 1 of the year following his/her sixth year in high school, whether from the school accountable for the student or the "Current DBN."

*DISC 6YR CODE:* The student's discharge code as of September 1 of the year following his/her sixth year in high school, whether from the school accountable for the student or the "Current DBN."

*CURRENT IEP:* An indicator set to Y if the student currently has an IEP and N if the student does not.

*CURRENT ETH:* An indicator for a student's ethnicity where 1 = American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2 = Asian or Pacific Islander, 3 = Hispanic, 4 = Black – Not of Hispanic

Origin, 5 = White – Not of Hispanic Origin, 6 = Parent Refused to Sign, and 7 = Multi-Racial.

*CURRENT LEP*: An indicator for a student's LEP status, where E = Eligible for Testing, N = Not Entitled as per School, P = Passed/Tested Out, R = Tested Out-Never Entitled, S = Entitled as per IEP, X = Not Entitled as per IEP, Y = Entitled as per Exam, and Z = Entitled as per School.

*CURRENT GRD*: A student's latest grade code in ATS

*CURRENT LV*: A student's latest grade level in ATS

*CURRENT DBN*: A student's latest DBN in ATS. This will usually be your school's DBN. When it is different, that means that either: a) the student transferred to a non-diploma granting program, such as a YABC or GED or b) the student transferred to another diploma-granting school after June 30 of the student's 4<sup>th</sup> year in high school. In either case, your school is still accountable for that student's outcome in the four and six-year graduation rates.

*GRAD*: A Y/N flag that indicates whether the student graduated with a Local or Regents Diploma. A "Y" flag corresponds to ATS Discharge Codes of 22, 26, 27, 28, 46, 47, 60, 61 and 62.

*DIPLOMA TYPE*: Indicates the type of diploma the student received. A Local Diploma corresponds to ATS Discharge Codes 22, 26 and 61. A Regents Diploma corresponds to codes 27, 28 and 46. An Advanced Regents Diploma corresponds to codes 47 and 60. And Advanced Regents with Honors Diploma corresponds to code 62. GEDs (30) and IEP Diplomas (23) are also noted but are not counted as a graduate for the purpose of calculating the graduation rate.

## **5. How is the graduation cohort different from other "cohorts" used for NCLB/SED accountability?**

There are three cohorts that are important for high school NCLB/SED accountability. They are:

*Graduation Cohort*: The group of students used to determine a school's graduation rate. These are students who started 9<sup>th</sup> grade in a particular year or, in the case of ungraded students, turned 17 in that year. This cohort is also called the *Total Cohort*. This cohort is important for both the Progress Report and NCLB/SED accountability. NCLB/SED accountability uses the *Graduation Cohort* with a one year lag.

*Performance Cohort*: The group of students used to determine a school's performance index, which is a measurement based on Regents test scores. Like the graduation cohort, these are students who started 9<sup>th</sup> grade in a particular year or, in the case of ungraded students, turned 17 in that year. However, unlike the *Graduation Cohort*, any student

who left school before BEDS day of his or her fourth year is not included. The cohort is also called the *Accountability Cohort*. This cohort is only important for NCLB/SED accountability, and reflects the most recent school year (i.e. no one-year lag).

*Participation Cohort*: The group of students used to determine whether or not a school meets the 95% participation requirement for Regents/RCT scores. This cohort includes all students who finish a school year in 12<sup>th</sup> grade as well as any students who graduate in 12<sup>th</sup> grade during the school year. This cohort is only important for NCLB/SED accountability, and reflects the most recent school year (i.e. no one-year lag)

## **6. How is the RGCS report in ATS different from the RCOS report in ATS?**

The RGCS report estimates your *Graduation Cohort* for NCLB/SED accountability, while RCOS estimates your *Performance Cohort*. The most important difference between the *Performance Cohort* and the *Graduation Cohort* is that the *Performance Cohort* excludes students who graduate or drop out before BEDs day of their fourth year in high school. The *Graduation Cohort* includes these students.

## **7. How is my six-year graduation cohort for the Progress Report determined?**

A student's membership in the six-year cohort is fixed based on his school and discharge code at the end of four years. For the 2003 cohort, he is assigned a school based on the last diploma granting school attended before June 30, 2007 and his membership in the cohort is determined by his discharge code as of September 1, 2007. However, a student's outcome can change up through the end of his sixth year, so any graduates recorded through September 1, 2009 will count as a positive outcome.

## **8. Is membership in the six-year graduation cohort determined by the same rules as the four-year graduation cohort?**

Yes, the same rules are used, but there is one important distinction to note. Specifically, any enrollment activity that takes place in a student's fifth or sixth year does not impact his or her cohort member ship.

The six-year graduation cohort is made up of the students who would have been in the four-year graduation cohort from two years ago. The six-year graduation cohort in 2008/09 is the same group of students who would have been in the four-year graduation cohort in 2006/07 (i.e. the Class of 2007) based on current rules.

If a student transfers from one school to another school in his fifth or sixth year, he stays on the graduation cohort of the first school. Likewise, if a student is discharged with a code 11 or similar code in his fifth or sixth year, he stays on the school's six-year graduation cohort.

However, if a student graduates during his fifth or six-year, his status changes from "non-graduate" to "graduate". Therefore, the only way for a school to improve from its four-

year to its six-year graduation rate is to graduate more students. The numerator in the graduation rate calculation can be changed, but the denominator cannot be.

**9. Are IEP diplomas and GEDs counted as graduates when calculating the graduation rate?**

No, IEP diplomas (code 23) and GEDs (code 30) are not counted as graduates when calculating the graduation rate for either the Progress Report or NCLB/SED accountability. This is consistent with State policy and past practice on the Progress Reports.

However, GED diplomas do receive a weight of 0.5 on the weighted diploma rate on the Progress Report. Also, when earned by a student who is eligible for alternative assessment (i.e. NYSAA eligible), IEP diplomas receive a weight of 1.0 on the weighted diploma rate on the Progress Report.

**10. Are students still on my graduation cohort if they leave New York City and then come back and enroll directly in a GED or YABC program?**

No, if a student leaves your school with a code that removes him or her from the graduation cohort (6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 20, 25), that student is not put back on your graduation cohort unless he or she re-enrolls in your school.

**11. Are students still on my graduation cohort if they are enrolled in Island Academy (79Q535) or one of the other programs on Rikers Island?**

Yes, unless a student has been discharged with a code that removes him or her from the cohort (6, 8, 10, 11, 15, 20, 25), he or she remains on your graduation cohort. Island Academy is treated like any other GED program in the DOE system and students are counted on the graduation cohort of their last diploma-granting school. If a student is convicted of a crime and given a long sentence, he or she will sometimes be sent upstate to a non-DOE facility and will be discharged from Island Academy with a Code 10, removing him or her from your graduation cohort. However, those students who remain at Island Academy will remain on your graduation cohort. Many students are enrolled in Island Academy for short periods of time and re-enroll in the high school that they last attended.