Discharge Reporting – 2010-11 School Year

Background & Methodology

Local Law 42, enacted in 2011, requires the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to report to the New York City Council by June 30, 2012 the number of students in grades 6 through 12 who were discharged, transferred, or graduated during the 2010-11 school year. This document summarizes and explains the reported data.

This law requires the reporting of discharges and graduations that occur during one school year. The DOE ordinarily presents both types of events in the context of a high school graduation cohort – the group of students who entered 9th grade in the same year. Such cohort reporting reflects discharges that occurred at any time during the cohort's four years of high school. Graduations and discharges are ordinarily reported by cohort because cohort reporting allows the DOE and the public to measure how well schools are fulfilling their purpose: educating all students who enter their school and preparing them to earn a high school diploma.

The data required by Local Law 42 reflects a snapshot of all students enrolled in a particular school year, regardless of the year they entered 9th grade. The data included in this reporting therefore differs significantly from most other graduation and discharge results reported by the DOE. As a snapshot of students at different stages of their educational careers, data reported by school year is less valuable than cohort reporting as a measure of New York City schools' success in keeping students engaged and moving them to graduation.

Results by Cohort

Graduation and Dropout Rates: The New York State Education Department and the DOE recently reported outcomes for the cohort of students who entered 9th grade in 2007 and completed their fourth year of high school in 2011.[1] According to these data:

- 65.5% of the class of 2011 graduated within four years, the highest graduation rate since New York State cohort reporting began in 2005.
- 12.1% of the class of 2011 dropped out, almost 10 percentage points lower than the drop out rate for the class of 2005.[2]

Discharges Outside of New York City: The DOE also reports on discharges outside of New York City schools.[3] A high school student with a confirmed discharge to a public or private school outside of the New York City school district is removed from a school's graduation cohort.[4] According to these data:

- At the same time that the graduation rate increased, the number of students discharged outside of New York City schools decreased from 16,647 in the class of 2005 to 12,877 students in the class of

[1] New York State cohort reports are available at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/GraduationDropoutReports.
[2] Codes for drop outs and other accountable discharges include 02, 12, 21, 29, 35, and 39. These codes reflect the subset of all discharges that indicate that a student has discontinued schooling without having obtained a diploma. Schools remain accountable for students discharged with these codes in their graduation cohort.
[3] The number of students discharged outside New York City schools is included in the DOE's annual report on its traditional cohort methodology, available at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/GraduationDropoutReports/NYCTraditionalCalc.htm.
[4] Codes for discharges outside New York City school include 06, 08, 10, 11, 15, 20, and 25.

2011, a decrease of 3,770. The number of students discharged outside of New York City schools in the class of 2011 was the lowest number since the DOE began reporting discharges by cohort in 1996.

Results for the 2010-11 School Year

In contrast to the cohort reporting described above, the data required by Local Law 42 includes all students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 during the 2010-11 school year, and only includes discharge and transfer events that occurred during that school year.[5] According to these data, during the 2010-11 school year:

- 16,120 students (2.9% of the 553,333 students included in the analysis) transferred between New York City schools.
- 13,598 students (2.5%) were discharged outside of New York City schools.
- 12,052 students (2.2%) dropped out or were discharged under other codes.

[5] Consistent with other school-year reporting, these results include students enrolled and events that occurred between October 31, 2010 and July 1, 2011.