

This multi-part series published in Dr. McCormick's Weekly Update and in the Accountability Moodle Community, provides information to educate schools about managing their graduation cohorts and the calculation of graduation rates. Please forward any questions to schoolaccountability@doe.in.gov.

Installment #8: Voluntary Graduation Rate Audit

During the same timeframe that the Department conducts a mandatory audit of graduation rates (in October each year), the Department has traditionally held a voluntary graduation rate audit as well. Keep in mind that the cohort process runs daily, allowing a school to check and correct most, if not all cohort issues well before a voluntary graduation rate audit becomes necessary. If a voluntary graduation rate audit becomes necessary, then the school will be required to prove the requested status change either through exit documentation or with a student transcript.

Tips to avoid the need to initiate a Voluntary Graduation Rate Audit

- Submit the last Real Time/Enrollment Mobility (RT/EM) data collections for the school year as soon as school ends. If corrections become necessary, utilize the Data Input form to correct individual students. This way a mass update will not undo a change later.
- Submit a Graduation (GR) data collection as soon as it opens for the mid-year graduates and any student that was inadvertently left off the previous year's report. Submit a GR file as soon as graduation occurs for the students who have earned the diploma. For the students still working on graduation requirements over the summer, develop a process so that school counselors, data submitters, registrars, and principals are made aware as a student meets the requirements.
- Check the 4 year cohort report frequently to ensure that all students have the correct status. At a minimum it should be checked the day after the RT/EM and GR files are submitted.
- As a final check (before GR closes), review the Historical Graduation Report (found in Learning Connection). This report shows the 5 year history of various graduation and cohort related metrics and can assist in identifying issues such as not identifying students as Honors graduates, or incorrectly identifying students as waiver graduates instead of Graduation Pathways.

Tips for a successful Voluntary Graduation Rate Audit

- Read and follow the instructions provided in the graduation rate audit guidance document available in the Accountability Community in Moodle.
- Complete the template listing the students for whom a voluntary graduation rate audit is being requested.
- Compile the documentation supporting the status requested for each student, label the documentation and make sure the scan is legible. If the student is graduating using a Graduation Pathways, be sure that the student's pathway is also documented.

Next Installment

Next week's installment will discuss the Homeschool exits in detail.