

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Superintendents, Principals, and School Counselors

From: Maggie Paino, Director of Accountability

Date: June 26, 2020

Re: House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1305 – Graduation Rate Calculation

**Background:**

House Enrolled Act 1305 (2020) adds a new mobility code for purposes of establishing a high school's cohort and calculating a high school's graduation rate. This new mobility code is for students who withdraw from a high school after completing grade 10 with a sincerely held religious belief.

**Guidance:**

Students who are considered mobile are removed from a high school's cohort and are not included in the high school's graduation rate calculation. HEA 1305 (2020) provides that, in order to be considered mobile due to a sincerely held religious belief, all of the following must occur:

- 1) While the student is enrolled in grade 8, the student's parent must submit to the school:
  - a) A statement from the parent affirming the parent has a sincerely held religious belief against taking photographs and stating that the student will be withdrawing from school upon completion of grade 10 in order to allow the student to complete a career pathway certification or due to the parent's deeply held religious belief.
  - b) A statement from a member of the clergy of the religious organization of which the student's parent is a member regarding the prohibition of photographs of members of the religious organization.
- 2) The student's parent must provide proof to the school that at least one of the student's parents has been issued a photo exempt driver's license under IC 9-24-16.5.
- 3) The student withdraws from school upon completion of grade 10.

### **Implementation:**

HEA 1305 (2020) becomes effective July 1, 2020. A student who leaves high school due to a strongly held religious belief after completing grade 10 should be indicated on the real-time or enrollment/mobility (DOE-RT, DOE-EM) collection with mobility code “28”.

The mobility code due to religious beliefs only affects the state graduation rate calculation. Students removed from the cohort with code “28” will be considered “dropouts” for purposes of the federal graduation rate calculation. Students who are removed from the cohort with code “28” prior to or after the completion of 10<sup>th</sup> grade will be considered dropouts for purposes of the state graduation rate calculation.

Pursuant to HEA 1305, the required information provided by the student’s parent must be submitted on a form prescribed by the Department of Education (IDOE). In order to support the application and use of mobility code “28”, the high school must maintain the following documentation:

For students beginning with the 2025 cohort, students may exit using mobility code “28” only after submitting:

- Official, IDOE-prescribed form, “Withdrawal from School due to Religious Beliefs.” Note that portions of this form must be completed during the student’s eighth grade year *and* upon the completion of the student’s tenth grade year in order to be valid;
- A statement from a member of the clergy of the religious organization of which the parent is a member regarding the prohibition of photography of members of the religious organization; and
- A copy of a photo exempt driver’s license or photo exempt identification card issued under IC 9-24-16.5.

In the case of an audit, any student for which a high school does not provide the required documentation will be returned to the high school’s cohort and considered a “dropout” for purposes of the state graduation rate.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Accountability at [schoolaccountability@doe.in.gov](mailto:schoolaccountability@doe.in.gov).

This bill was authored by Representative Christy Stutzman. The full bill text can be found [here](#). Information regarding how to contact your legislators can be found [here](#).