



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 11, 2021  
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads  
Route To: School Business Administrators, Web User Administrators, Principals and School Leads  
From: Lisa J. Gleason, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Academics and Performance  
Deadline: August 31, 2021, 5 p.m.

**Action Required: Update and Review NJ SMART SID Management to Ensure Accurate Graduation Data for School Performance Reports and Accountability**

The NJ SMART SID Management window to inactivate 2020-2021 graduates and students who transferred from your district is currently open and the deadline is **August 31, 2021 at 5 p.m.**

SID Management is the management system that establishes students' unique identification numbers, compiles demographic data, and tracks graduation data and the pathways students use to meet the [graduation assessment requirements](#).

Data submitted by the August 31, 2021 deadline will be used to calculate 2021 school and district graduation rates, which include four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates. The data will also be used to report on the pathways students use to meet the [graduation assessment requirements](#). This data will be reported in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports in spring 2022. For school and district accountability, there is a one-year lag in graduation rate reporting; therefore, the 2021 graduation rates will be included in the ESSA Accountability Profiles in fall 2022.

**Reporting of Graduation Assessment Requirement Pathways**

NJ SMART SID Management includes two fields, ELA Graduation Pathway Indicator and Math Graduation Pathway Indicator, which districts should use to indicate how students met the graduation assessment requirements for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Phil Murphy signed [Executive Order No. 214](#) on January 11, 2021. This order waived for the 2020-2021 school year the graduation assessment requirements for any 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who had not yet satisfied the assessment requirements but had met all the credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements for graduation.

The graduation pathway code of "W" (created in the wake of Executive Order No. 214) was added to NJ SMART SID Management for districts to use for graduating students who had not yet met the graduation assessment requirements. Any students who have met the graduation requirements by demonstrating proficiency on the statewide assessment or by meeting the designated cut score on one of the substitute competency assessments should use the appropriate assessment pathway (options "A" through "L") and not the "W" option. Contact NJ SMART at (800) 254-0295 or [njsmart@pcgus.com](mailto:njsmart@pcgus.com) with any issues or if there are questions about which pathway code to use.

**Changes to Graduation Calculations**

As a reminder, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will be making changes to graduation rate calculations beginning in 2021 as required by the United States Department of Education's (USED) FY 2019 Federal

Performance Review Report. This change was outlined in an [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#) and an [Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate \(ACGR\) Fact Sheet](#).

The NJDOE will report two versions of the adjusted cohort graduation rate starting in 2021. The **state version** of the graduation rate will continue to include all students that earn a state-endorsed diploma as graduates (in the numerator) in the calculation and will align with graduation rates from prior years. The **federal version** of the graduation rate for 2021 will not include students with disabilities as graduates (in the numerator) if they have been exempted from meeting either the state course requirements and/or the attendance requirements for graduation per their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Importantly, please note that these changes to the graduation calculation for federal reporting do not affect the requirements to earn a diploma or the type of diploma that the state awards to students with disabilities. Additionally, they do not change how districts should report graduation status in NJ SMART this summer. Any student earning a state-endorsed diploma, including students with disabilities who have an IEP that exempted them from meeting graduation requirements, should continue to be reported as exiting with a School Exit Withdrawal Code of "L" (Graduated).

Two new fields, IEP Graduation Course Requirement and IEP Graduation Attendance, were added to SID Management this year to capture information on whether students' IEPs contain exemptions or modifications to the state course requirements or local attendance requirements. Districts should make sure these fields are updated and accurate by the August 31 deadline since this data will be used to calculate the federal version of the graduation rate for 2021.

### **NJ SMART District Reports**

NJ SMART has several reports available under the District Reports section that districts should use to ensure that their graduation data is accurate. The **NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile** allows districts to review their four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates. Districts are now able to view both the state and federal versions of the graduation rate in this report using the calculation type parameter on the report page. This year will be the first year that districts will be able to view their six-year graduation rates, which the NJDOE plans to report in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports.

The NJ SMART Graduation by Pathway Profile shows the number and percentage of students who were reported using each of the ELA and mathematics graduation pathways. Districts should review this to ensure that pathway data was reported accurately.

### **Graduation Resources**

The NJDOE and NJ SMART have provided several graduation resources that can support districts in reporting graduation data, explain how graduation rates are calculated, answer frequently asked questions, and describe how to use the associated district reports. These resources include:

- [Introduction to the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Calculation in New Jersey](#)
- [User Guide to High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile](#)
- [NJ SMART Graduation FAQs](#)
- [Understanding Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates](#)
- [School Exit Withdrawal Codes and Graduation Cohort Status Overview](#)

[Additional resources and trainings](#) for NJ SMART submissions are available under Documents for Download and eLearning Videos & Webinars.

### **Required Graduation Reporting Reminder**

New Jersey regulations (*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.2(f)*) require districts to report graduation results annually to their district boards of education or charter school boards of trustees at a public meeting no later than September 30. Districts are required to report:

1. The total number of students graduating in the prior school year;
2. The number of graduates who met the graduation assessment requirements by:
  - a. Passing a substitute competency test;
  - b. The portfolio appeals process; and
  - c. Meeting alternate requirements specified in their IEPs; and
3. The number of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who were denied graduation and how many of those students were denied solely due to failure to meet the graduation assessment requirements.

The information that districts report should align with the data that was submitted in NJ SMART SID Management by the August 31, 2021 deadline. If a district has submitted graduation appeals related to these measures that have not been finalized by the end of September, districts may report the information that they have appealed with a note that it is pending approval by the NJDOE.

### **Contact Information**

Contact the NJ SMART help desk at (800) 254-0295 or [njsmart@pcgus.com](mailto:njsmart@pcgus.com) with questions about NJ SMART submissions. Contact [reportcard@doe.nj.gov](mailto:reportcard@doe.nj.gov) with any questions about School Performance Reports or graduation calculations.

- c: Members, State Board of Education  
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