Date:	August 16, 2023
To:	Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To:	School Business Administrators, Web User Administrators, Principals and School Leads
From:	Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner Division of Educational Services
Deadline:	August 31, 2023, 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 is currently open to deactivate 2022-2023 graduates and students who transferred from the district, charter school or renaissance school project (collectively "district"). The window will close **August 31, 2023 at 5 p.m**.

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

Data submitted by the August 31, 2023 deadline will be used to calculate 2023 school and district graduation rates, which includes four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation rates. This data will be reported in the 2022-2023 School Performance Reports in early 2024. For school and district accountability, graduation rates from the previous year are used, therefore the 2023 graduation rates will be included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Accountability Profiles in fall 2024. The 2022 graduation rates will be used in the ESSA Accountability Profiles this fall.

Key actions

Before the August 31, 2023 deadline, districts should take the following steps to ensure accurate graduation rates for their schools and district:

1. Ensure all graduation data is reported correctly by making sure that:
   - All students who will graduate by August 31, 2023 are reported as graduated with the correct school exit withdrawal date;
   - All students who have transferred out of the district have the appropriate exit withdrawal code; and,
   - The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Graduation Course Requirement and IEP Graduation Attendance fields are coded correctly to reflect whether students with disabilities did not meet course and/or attendance requirements because of modification or exemptions in their IEPs.

2. Use the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profile district report to:
   - Review cohort 2023 four-year, cohort 2022 five-year, and cohort 2021 six-year graduation rates;
   - Check the graduation rates and data for each school and the overall district;
   - Ensure that all students have the correct cohort, cohort status, and accountable school and district;
   - Review both the state-level and federal-level rates; and,
   - Review students in the Transfer Out – Unverified category to determine if students have the correct exit withdrawal code or if they were reported by another district using a different state identification number, which may require a SID merge.

Graduation Pathway Reporting

On Tuesday, July 5, 2022, Governor Murphy signed P.L.2022, c.60, which required the State Board of Education to administer the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment (NJGPA) as a field test for the class of 2023. As a result, there is no graduation assessment requirement for any student graduating with the class of 2023, however all students must meet all other state and local graduation requirements, including but not limited to, credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements.

In NJ SMART SID Management, any student graduating between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023 should be reported with the value of W (Class of 2023 per P.L. 2022, c.60: No graduation assessment requirements) for both the English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics Graduation Indicator fields. If a 12th grade student will not graduate by August 31, 2023, then the value of P (Denied graduation for any other reason) should be used. Since there are no graduation assessment requirements for the class of 2023, the 2022-2023 School Performance Reports will not include data on the pathways students use to meet the graduation assessment requirements.

Changes to Federal Graduation Calculations

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) was required to make changes to graduation rate calculations beginning in 2021 based on the United States Department of Education's (USED) 2019 Federal Performance Review Report. This change was outlined in an [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#). In 2021, the NJDOE began reporting two versions of the adjusted cohort graduation rate: a **state version** that includes all students that earn a state-endorsed diploma as graduates (in the numerator) in the calculation and a **federal version** that aligns with federal ESSA guidance for calculating graduation rates. 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.

To be included as a graduate in the federal version of the graduation rate, students must have met state course requirements and local attendance requirements for graduation. Additionally, students must meet the graduation assessment requirements in place based on the year they are graduating, regardless of their graduation cohort. Because there are no graduation assessment requirements for the class of 2023, students graduating between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023 will only be excluded as graduates in the federal version of the graduation rate if they did not meet the state course requirements and/or the local attendance requirements for graduation due to an exemption or modification in their IEP.

The NJDOE will use the IEP Graduation Course Requirement and IEP Graduation Attendance fields in SID Management to identify the students with disabilities who did not meet the state course and/or local attendance requirements, respectively. The ELA and Math Graduation Pathway Indicator fields will be used, **for students who graduated with the class of 2022 only**, to identify the students with disabilities who did not meet the state graduation assessment requirements but instead met alternate requirements specified in their IEPs for students. Districts should ensure that these fields are accurate and error-free by the August 31, 2023 deadline.

Districts can view both the state and federal versions of the graduation rate based on data in their Local Data Mart to check for potential errors using the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Profile district reports prior to the August 31 deadline. Preliminary graduation rates based on the official August 31 snapshot will be available in September.

Graduation Resources

There are several graduation resources available 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 12th grade students who were denied graduation and how many of those students were denied solely due to failure to meet the graduation assessment requirements.

Because there are no graduation assessment requirements for the class of 2023, districts will not be required to report on the pathways graduates used to meet the graduation assessment requirements. Districts will only report on the number of students who graduated and the number of 12th grade students who were denied graduation.

The information that districts report should align with the data that was submitted in NJ SMART SID Management by the August 31, 2023 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.

It is not required for districts to report on graduation rates at this time, however if districts choose to report on the preliminary adjusted cohort graduation rates that can be found in the NJ SMART High School Graduation Cohort Status Profiles to their local school boards, they should notify the public that the rates are preliminary and may be different from the final graduation rates that will appear in the 2022-2023 School Performance Reports. Final adjusted cohort graduation rates will be available in November, after the Graduation Appeals process is complete.

Contact Information

Contact the NJ SMART help desk at (800) 254-0295 or njsmart@pcgus.com with any questions about NJ SMART submissions. [Additional resources and trainings](#) for NJ SMART submissions are available under Documents for Download and eLearning Videos & Webinars. Contact reportcard@doe.nj.gov with any questions about School Performance Reports.

c: Members, State Board of Education
     NJDOE Staff
     Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
     Garden State Coalition of Schools
     NJ LEE Group