

Part B Exiting Data Notes

2018-19 Reporting Year

This document provides information or data notes on the ways in which states collected and reported data differently from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data formats and instructions. In addition, the data notes provide explanations of substantial changes or other changes that data users may find notable or of interest in the data from the previous year.

Alabama

- Alabama does not collect data for “Graduated with an Alternate Diploma.”
- Students w/ disabilities who have not earned an Alabama High School Diploma and who have not reached age 21 by August 1 may receive services up to age 21. A student who turns 21 on or after August 1 is entitled to begin and complete the school year.
- Alabama does not have an age limit for students that may receive a diploma. While Alabama does not provide for a minimum age for graduation by law, the ability to acquire all needed credits would nearly be impossible to be accomplished prior to a student’s 10th grade year (age 16 or greater). Therefore, Alabama does not collect data for ages 14 and 15 for Graduated with Regular High School Diploma basis of exit.

Alaska

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Alaska believes that the increase in children exiting special education with a certificate in SY 2018-19 is due to more accurate reporting at the district-level.
- If an eligible student is age 21 on the 1st day of the school term, special education services continue for the entire school year, even if the student’s 22nd birthday occurs during the school year.
- Any student in Alaska can exit with a certificate of achievement, completion, or attendance.

Arizona

- Exiting with a certificate is not a recognized exit category given that Arizona statute does not address a certificate option for any student. However, Public Education Agencies (PEAs) may grant certificates if their governing board policies permit.
- Arizona has no minimum age requirement for graduation.

American Samoa

- Individualized education program (IEP) students who do not meet full requirements of a regular education diploma and are of maximum age to graduate are issued certificates of completion (formally known as modified diplomas).
- The minimum age for graduation is 17.
- American Samoa is a Unitary System, we only report on state education agency (SEA).

Bureau of Indian Education

- The Bureau of Indian Education has local education agencies (LEAs) with high schools in 20 states. Our LEAs follow the statutory regulations that govern the State in which the school is located.

Colorado

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

- The cause for the shift in students who Reached Maximum Age and Received Certificates is two-fold. The population of students in 2018 had a larger cohort of individuals approaching their 21st birthday. In 2019 two things changed; the cohort of individuals approaching their 21st birthday decreased and the number of certificates earned by this cohort increased. The reduction of students approaching their 21st birthday, in addition to the increase in certificates received, produced a decrease in the Reached Maximum Age group. In reaching out to the Administrative Unit that had the highest increase in certificates, we learned that they closely follow state and federal guidance for graduation requirements and at the same time, worked to exit students who did not qualify for a regular diploma with a meaningful certificate. We conclude that the increase in certificates is related to more certificates being granted to students about to Reach Maximum Age.

Connecticut

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

- Connecticut noted an increase of students with disabilities exiting with a standard high school diploma which more than accounts for the drop of students with disabilities receiving a certificate of completion. The state of Connecticut is excited that in SY 2018-19, districts were able to exit more student with disabilities with a standard diploma rather than a certificate of completion of schooling, which does not support students ability to pursue post-secondary education or access to competitive employment.

- Students are reported by their age at the time of the most recent child count, therefore students who are 20 years old may be reported as Reached Max Age.

- Connecticut allows for a standard high school diploma or Certificate of Completion. Connecticut does not allow for a modified diploma or similar document. Local education agencies (LEAs) have authority to outline requirements for the Certificate of Completion, however, the Certificate of Completion cannot count as a standard high school diploma.

Delaware

- State regulations generally require a child's eligibility for special education and related services to terminate when the child reaches his or her 21st birthday. However, a child with a disability who

reaches his or her 21st birthday after August 31st may continue to receive special education and related services until the end of the school year, including appropriate summer services through August 31st.

District of Columbia

- District of Columbia does not offer an Alternate Diploma.

Federated States of Micronesia

- While there are many contributing factors to the Federation States of Micronesia's (FSM) reduction in the dropout data for SY 2018-19, we believe that one factor that impacted the dropout rate is the fact that the FSM School Systems now have a centralized education database system that also helps monitor student attendance.

- In the Federation States of Micronesia, the main contributing factor to students exited from the Special Education Program through this category is due to families migrating to other countries. The Federation States of Micronesia is working to determine the root cause of the 92.41% reduction in the number of students who moved but are known to be continuing. The variation may be due to enrollment patterns.

Florida

- Students who began ninth grade before SY 2014-15, and whose individualized education program (IEP) designated that they would work toward a special diploma, may continue to work toward a special diploma should they choose to do so. Florida's statute now contains high school diploma and certificate of completion requirements for all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

- Raising the graduation rate for students with disabilities is in Florida's State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) in the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). Florida has been working diligently to decrease the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate through a multi-tiered system of supporting local education agencies (LEAs) to increase evidence-based practices that decrease dropout rates and increase graduation rates. One example is the increased use of Early Warning Systems (EWS) throughout the state. The state has developed, through a discretionary project, a very effective EWS. Training and technical assistance on the system is offered to all LEAs. Students who are at risk of dropping out or falling behind their cohort are identified early and appropriate interventions are provided, decreasing the number of students dropping out of school and increasing the number who graduate on time. Florida discontinued the special diploma (a certificate) beginning with the cohort who entered high school in SY 2014-15. Students who were already in high school could continue working toward the special diploma. Many of these remaining special diploma students graduated in SY 2017-18, accounting for the dramatic decrease in the number of certificates in SY 2018-19.

Georgia

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Of the exit reasons, "Received a Certificate" is the second smallest percentage in Georgia; the smallest is deceased. There were more exiters for SY 2018-19 than SY 2017-18. Review of this data indicates that fewer students received a certificate and instead graduated with a general education diploma.

Guam

- Students with disabilities graduate with a regular high school diploma. Graduates must have a minimum of 24 credits for a high school diploma from a Guam public high school.
- Guam Department of Education (DOE) is a unitary school system. It is both a state education agency (SEA) and a local education agency (LEA). Guam DOE also has the capacity of collecting data for students who have moved off-island and have enrolled in an off-island school.

Hawaii

- Hawaii does not have a minimum age required for graduating with high school diploma.
- A child is eligible for special education services up until the age of 22. Upon reaching the age of 22, the child is no longer eligible for services.

Idaho

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Idaho is now using the Received a Certificate category to report students who graduated by meeting the program of study outlined in their individualized education program (IEP) and coded as Met Adapted Requirements. These students were previously reported under the category of "Dropped Out." The change in reporting has a substantial impact on program exit reporting.
- A modified or differentiated diploma or certificate may not be used for students who are eligible for special education unless the same diploma or certificate is granted to students without disabilities.

Illinois

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - In analyzing the local education agency (LEA) data, three LEAs collectively accounted for 75 of the 80 students that make up the increase. The three LEAs were provided guidelines for the conditions that require a Certificate of Completion exit code. In addition, the SEA has a scheduled data governance meeting to tighten up the edits in our SEA Student Information System around the exit code of "Certificate of Completion".
- Illinois confirmed that one local education agency (LEA) had a student with an individualized education program (IEP) who graduated high school at the age of 16 but was 15 on the date used for child count reporting.

Indiana

- Student must not turn 22 years before the beginning of the school year. Students who turn age 22 during a school year may finish that school year.

Iowa

- The State is a non-categorical state and does not assign students to disability category.
- The maximum age may be approved through age 24 by the director of special education.

Kansas

- Kansas does not have a minimum age for graduation.
- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Kansas found the increase of students to be representative of the increase of 21-year-old students served in the 2019 school year.

Kentucky

- A student with a disability is entitled to special education through age 20 as long as they have not graduated with a standard diploma. Districts may provide services to a student over age 20 if they desire and must if there is an order from a Hearing Officer for compulsory education.
- Students who complete the 12th grade state assessment may receive an alternative high school diploma and exit school. However, they remain entitled to special education until age 21 even if they have some other type of certificate that is not a standard high school diploma or better.

Louisiana

- If a student turns 22 after the first day of school, they can complete that school year.
- The minimum age for graduation with a regular high school diploma is 16.

Maine

- A student can receive special education services while age 20. However, if a student is age 19 at the time of the October child count and turns 20 during the school year (after the October child count), the student will be ineligible for services the following year and will be marked as reached maximum age at the close of the school year. Therefore, reached maximum age is a permissible value for 19-year-olds.

Maryland

- Services are provided the entire school year the student turns 21.

Massachusetts

- As noted in our State Submission Plan, along with Male and Female, Massachusetts collects “Non-Binary” gender. Guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) was to not include these

students in any count involving gender. This explains why counts for totals including gender do not equal counts for totals that do not include gender.

Michigan

- Michigan normally does not report reached maximum age since the state provides services to students up to age 26. The student cannot be more than 25 years of age as of 9/1 of the school year of enrollment, have completed a normal course of study, or have graduated from high school. However, Michigan's Department of Corrections has age 21 as the maximum age for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) qualifying students.
- Due to the mobility of students within the school year, we find students who were enrolled in more than 1 district; thus, each was responsible for the student when they exited.
- There is no state statute, regulation, or policy on exit certificates, this is locally determined. Students exiting by exit certificates would count as other completers, not graduates. The legislation clearly stipulates that a diploma shall not be awarded unless the pupil successfully completes all the credit requirements. This does not prevent districts from issuing alternative certificates such as the General Educational Development (GED) certificate or a certificate of completion for students who do not meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). A certificate of completion, however, has no legal standing as a substitute for a diploma. For students with a disability, only a diploma ends the entitlement to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Mississippi

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - The change in the "Moved, known to be continuing" count is the result of an in-depth review and revision of codes used to determine this count during the State's work with Generate.
- State law mandates a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children residing in the State from age three (3) through age twenty (20). It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) that the provision of FAPE will continue for a student with a disability through the school year in which the student reaches age twenty-one (21), if the student was enrolled in a public agency and was age twenty (20) on or before September 1.
- The special diploma or certificate of completion is offered for students with disabilities. The alternate diploma is offered for students with significant cognitive disabilities and applies to incoming 9th graders in SY 2018-19.
- The minimum age for graduation is 16.

Missouri

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Transferred to regular education increased by 24.9%. The data reflect student status as reported by local education agencies (LEAs). The state will continue verification efforts to ensure definitions are understood by LEAs.

Montana

- While the state's maximum age is 21, state law allows individual districts to also set a maximum age, and most of those are set at 19 on or before Sept. 10 of the current school year.
- The minimum age for graduation is 14.

Nevada

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - The year-to-year increase in students who dropped out, who moved but were known to be continuing, and who transferred to regular education is related to the overall increase in youth with disabilities who exited in SY 2018-19 when compared to SY 2017-18.
 - The decrease in students who reached maximum age reflects the inverse—if an increasing number of students transfer to regular education, move, or drop out, fewer students will have stayed in school until their 22nd birthday.
 - Beginning in SY 2018-19, the state education agency (SEA) has worked to implement clear, continuous technical assistance and training to local education agencies (LEAs) to increase data accuracy. The technical assistance system has also established protocols for preliminary data submission from LEAs to the SEA, so that data quality can be analyzed prior to submission.

New Mexico

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - The decrease in the number of students with disabilities that exited due to dropping out appears to be associated with the implementation of statewide initiatives which focus on identifying early warning signs of students that may drop out (Early Warning System), as well as a focus on improving daily attendance (Attendance Success Initiative). The Special Education Bureau has also implemented an initiative at two Local Education Agencies with high rates of drop out, based on evidence-based practices for keeping students in school.

New York

- Students who are 20 years of age at the beginning of the school year may remain in school until they finish that school year, even if they will become 21 years of age during the year. Students who are age

21 at the beginning of the school year are not entitled to educational services as per State law and regulations.

North Carolina

- Students who turn 22 during the school year may remain in services.
- Students who have exited but haven't received a high school diploma are allowed to re-enroll through age 21.

Ohio

- The individualized education program (IEP) team may decide that a student with a disability will meet graduation requirements solely by meeting the goals on the student's IEP.
- There is not a different diploma, certificate of completion, or any other non-diploma document but Ohio Revised Code permits students to receive a regular diploma meeting alternative requirement.

Oklahoma

- The maximum age is through 21. We may have students who exit at the age of 22 but were only 21 on the October 1 Child Count.
- We have minimum requirements that would make it difficult to graduate before the age of 16 but not legislation that states an age.

Oregon

- Per the U.S. Department of Education guidance, we do not include in count our Gender X students in Category Set C. Any comparison between Category Set C totals and Other Totals will not match.
- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Starting with SY 2018-19, Oregon allows for three permitted values in the Gender (Sex) category. The count of the third permitted value has been removed from all category sets that include Gender (Sex) thus sums of category sets that include Gender (Sex) will not add up to other category sets or totals.
- A student with disabilities must be under 21 years on September 1. The student is eligible to receive special education and related services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 21.
- With parent/guardian or adult student consent, a local education agency (LEA) may award a regular high school diploma to a student who has satisfied all the requirements, and a student may complete requirements in three years.

Pennsylvania

- Students who exit programs with other than a high school diploma may return to school to receive an educational program to the age of 21. If students do not meet the graduation requirements by age 21 they exit as Reached Max Age.
- Students may exit with a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

Republic of the Marshall Islands

- To signify a student's completion of the secondary program, a diploma shall be awarded. Students who do not meet the required grade point average (GPA) for high school graduation but have completed all required secondary courses shall be awarded a certificate of completion.

Rhode Island

- Students can continue to receive special education services up until the student's 21st birth date.
- The "Moved, Known to be Continuing" reporting category is for those students who moved out of state or who moved out of district and are known to be continuing.

Tennessee

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - Regarding the year-to-year changes in students exiting under the "reached maximum age" category, there appears to be some fluctuation with this count historically. Last year there was a decrease in count, but the SY 2018-19 count is similar to data from SY 2016-17. Longitudinally, it seems that this information is more volatile given the smaller sample size.
- There will be some students who are 21 years of age on the state's Child Count date (December 1) who will be reported in the age 21 report category.
- Beginning in SY 2018-19, a state-defined alternate academic diploma was available to students entering the 9th grade.

Texas

- The maximum age can extend beyond age 21 if the student begins the school year at 21 and subsequently turns 22 before end of school year.
- Students who (1) received a high school diploma but did not meet the same standards for graduation as students without disabilities, earn the same diploma as non-disabled students based on criteria aligned with the student's individualized education program (IEP). The State does not provide (2) an alternative degree not fully aligned with the State's academic standards.
- The "Moved, Known to be Continuing" category is reported for state and district wide student movements.

Utah

- The State offers an Alternate Diploma.
- Students can exit with a diploma or certificate of completion.

Vermont

- The minimum age for graduation is 16.
- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):
 - These year-to-year differences are a result of late exiting reporting for SY 2017-18.

Virgin Islands

- The minimum age to exit with an exit certificate is 17.
- The minimum age for graduation is 16.

Virginia

- Stakeholders expressed a desire to include in the Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI) calculation students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed using Virginia's alternate assessment and complete the requirements of the Applied Studies Diploma. Virginia is considering adjusting to the requirements for the Applied Studies Diploma in order to include this diploma in the FGI calculation; however, the Applied Studies Diploma will not be included in the FGI at this time.
- The student continues to be entitled to free and appropriate public education (FAPE) until graduating with a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma or reaching the age of eligibility.

Washington

- Washington gathers F, M, and X in their student-level data collection. Guidance was provided to exclude X in any Category Sets involving Sex, but to include those student counts in any other Category Sets and Totals.
- As additional pathways for graduating with a regular diploma become available, more students are earning a regular diploma and fewer are accessing the route of receiving a certificate.
- If a student turns 21 after August 31, they are eligible for the remainder of the school year.
- Washington's count of "Moved, Known to be Continuing" indicates that the student has one of the following:
 - (1) a confirmed transfer out of the enrolled school to attend another school within that district
 - (2) a confirmed transfer out of the enrolled school and district to attend another school within the State of Washington
 - (3) a confirmed transfer out of the enrolled school and district to attend a school in another state.

West Virginia

- West Virginia does not have a minimum graduation age, as noted in our State Supplemental Survey.
- West Virginia currently has a modified diploma and not an alternate diploma. The Modified Diploma will exist until SY 2020-21, after which point the state-defined Alternate Diploma will be implemented. The state-defined Alternate Diploma must be standards-based, be aligned with State requirements for

the regular high school diploma and be obtained within the time period for which the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Wisconsin

- The State provided the following response(s) to larger Year to Year change(s):
 - Changes in the counts of exiters are largely impacted by the largest local education agencies (LEAs) in the state. The decrease in the number of students who reached maximum age can be attributed to one LEA in the state which reported more children as receiving a certificate rather than reaching maximum age when compared to the prior year.
 - The increase in the number of dropouts again can be attributed to one LEA in the state. Staff from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) meet monthly with the largest school districts on data collection and reporting and are addressing these concerns within that structure.
 - The significant decrease in the number of students reported as transferring to regular education can be attributed to a change in data collection. The state has had concerns about the number of students reported as transferring to regular education in the past. The state changed its data collection to specifically ask when the special education record associated with a student's enrollment is ended whether the student returned to regular education.
- For the exiting file, the age for a student reaching the maximum age for services may be reported as age 20 because of the age calculated as of the date of the most recent child count prior to exiting.
- The minimum age at which a student may receive a high school completion certificate other than a regular high school diploma is age 17. For the exiting file, the age for a student receiving a certificate may be reported as age 16 because of the age calculated as of the most recent child count prior to exiting.

Wyoming

- A student who is under the age of twenty-one (21) as of September 15 of the applicable school year may receive services. If a student turns 21 during the school year the student may complete the current school year.
- Students can exit with a certificate of completion.