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June 6, 2016

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# NCLB Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

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## Processing the 2016 Cohort File

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Guidelines for South Carolina's Public High Schools and Districts

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### CHANGES FOR THE 2016 COHORT

Two columns have been deleted from the 2016 BASE01 file. *Group Home Facility* and *Group Home Services* no longer appear in the file since those indicators were discontinued after the 2011-12 school year and were replaced by the *Group Home Indicator*.

To more closely identify those students enrolled in high school programs not located within a high school and for whom a 9GR has not been entered into PowerSchool, if the student is over 16 years old, that student has been included on the BASE01 file and schools will provide the appropriate 9GR.

Two files containing adult education students will be provided this year. The file posted at the same time as the BASE01 file contains students enrolling in adult education programs from 2012 through mid-April of 2016. The second file to be posted around July 20, 2016 will contain those students enrolling in adult education programs since mid-April of 2016.

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## THIS DOCUMENT

This document is divided into the specific components used in the preparation of the four-year adjusted cohort graduate file, the processing of the cohort file, and the federal audit requirements. The body of this document contains brief descriptions of the components. A more detailed description of each component and additional documents defining or explaining the calculation methodology are included in the appendices.

### CHANGES AND REMINDERS FOR THE 2016 COHORT

- Two columns have been deleted from the 2016 BASE01 file. *Group Home Facility* and *Group Home Services* no longer appear in the file since those indicators were discontinued after the 2011-12 school year and were replaced by the *Group Home Indicator*.
- To more closely identify those students enrolled in high school programs not located within a high school and for whom a 9GR has not been entered into PowerSchool, if the student is over 16 years old, that student has been included on the BASE01 file and schools will provide the appropriate 9GR.
- Two files containing adult education students will be provided this year. The file posted at the same time as the BASE01 file contains students enrolling in adult education programs from 2012 through mid-April of 2016. The second file to be posted around July 20, 2016 will contain those students enrolling in adult education programs since mid-April of 2016. More detailed information is available in appendix G.
- The adult education enrollment files are the source for documenting that a student is enrolled in a diploma program within an adult education program. If the student does not appear in that file, other documentation may be used as listed in appendix C - Graduation Rate Documentation Needed to Justify Adjustment to Cohort File.
- The 2016 graduation rate will be reported, but not used to calculate Federal accountability grades.
- Per state law, for school years 2014-15 and 2015-16 schools and districts will not be rated. Student academic performance, including the 2016 graduation rate, will be reported.
- When adding students with 9GR = 13 to the BASE01 file, (i.e., entered your school between the 135<sup>th</sup> day and 180<sup>th</sup> day of the 2015-16 school year), please provide all information for these students.

- If you enter "NN" as the student status in column A, a dialog box will appear instructing you to provide the correct 9GR. Column D will be automatically updated from the value you enter in this dialog box. If the student has never entered high school, the 9GR you will enter for that student will be "N/A." More detailed instruction for this process can be found on the first worksheet of your BASE01 Excel file.
- Continue to use column E in the BASE01 file to flag students, with 9GR=13, who graduated “early” (in a previous school year.) This data element is not a component of the graduation rate calculations, but used to validate students last enrolled in a previous year with a “graduate student status” (i.e., GY or AG in column A).
- Continue to use the notes field to note the following information:
  - ✓ Student in school with codes of “999999” (These students could not be linked to their school through the graduated school fields.)
  - ✓ Student receiving educational services while being detained in a local detention facility in school year 2012-13 (Local Adult Facility [LAD] or Local Juvenile Facility [LJD]).
  - ✓ Any notes/comments that you wish to include for your school/district’s information.

With the exception of providing SIDNs for students with a code of XXXX999999 and/or noting any student who’s last enrollment involved receiving educational services at a local detention center prior to the 2013-14 school year, information in the Notes field is not used to make determinations relating to graduation rate.

#### FOUR-YEAR ADJUSTED COHORT GRADUATION RATE DEFINITION

“The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (hereafter referred to as ‘the four-year graduation rate’) is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. From the beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently “adjusted” by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the next three years and subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die during that same period.”  
*NCLB High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance.*

## FOUR-YEAR ADJUSTED COHORT GRADUATION RATE FORMULA

**NUMERATOR:** Number of cohort members who earned a regular high school diploma by the end of the 2015-16 school year (including summer graduates)

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**DENOMINATOR:** Number of first-time 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2012-13 (starting cohort) plus students who transfer in, minus students who transfer out, emigrate, or die during school years 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16

### OVERVIEW OF THE 2016 PROCESS

1. Schools have been collecting documentation for the students in this cohort since these students were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Most of the processing that must occur is in matching the documentation to specific students and in determining the appropriate Student Status Code for each student in the file.
2. June 2016 – districts/schools download the BASE01 file and, using the Student Status Codes, mark the graduates and non-graduates in the file. The districts/schools then begin to review the other students in the file to determine if they should be included in the graduation rate calculation. For a student to be removed from graduation rate calculations, paper documentation must be provided per US Department of Education (USED) guidelines. This documentation must be stored in the school or district for a total of four years and available for monitoring purposes.
3. Districts/schools will update the BASE01 file with your school's summer graduates in August. In order for a student to be a 2016 graduate, the graduation date must be before August 14, 2016.
4. ~~August 26, 2016~~ – districts submit their final BASE01 file to SCDE via the Accountability Data Transfer (ADT) system. **\*\*School deadline: August 19\*\***
5. ~~September 16, 2016~~ – districts submit certification letter, signed by district superintendent and high school principals, to Office of Federal and State Accountability. **\*\*School deadline: August 19\*\***
6. Beginning in September of 2016, the BASE01 files will be utilized by SCDE in the calculation of graduation rates. Since both Federal and State accountability rating calculations have been suspended, the 2016 graduation rate will be displayed and not used for any calculation of ratings.
7. November 2016 – state BASE01 file is submitted to USED to fulfill federal reporting requirements.
8. Graduation data are monitored as part of the Title I monitoring cycle. More frequent monitoring may be undertaken as needed.

## THE HISTORY FILE

### Who is included in the HISTORY file?

The HISTORY file contains all records for all students who enrolled in your high school(s) at some point from the 2011-12 through the 2015-16 school years. Also, included are those special education students, identified by an Instructional Setting of “SE,” “SP,” or “SR” with a Truegrade of 9, 10, 11, or 12 enrolled in programs located outside a high school and students with a 9GR assigned, but not assigned a high school Grade or Truegrade level. The records come from the PowerSchool 180th day extractions for 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 and the 135th day extraction from 2016. If a student was enrolled in a school for four years, then you will see that student in the HISTORY file four times. Students transferring within the South Carolina public school system are tracked and flagged in the file. The 2016 Graduation Rate HISTORY File (GradHistory2016\_XXXX.xls) is available on the ADT.

## THE BASE01 FILE

### Who is included in the BASE01 file?

The BASE01 file (BASE01\_2016\_XXXX.xls) is the four-year adjusted graduate cohort file for the 2016 graduating class. Where the HISTORY file contains students each year they were in a South Carolina public school from 2011-12 through 2015-16 school years, the BASE01 file contains one record per student at the last high school where they were enrolled as their last enrollment anytime from 2012-13 through the 135<sup>th</sup> day of the 2015-16 school year. The BASE01 file was developed by identifying students who entered grade 9 for the first time in the 2012-13 school year. South Carolina uses a data field within PowerSchool to denote the school year in which a student enters 9<sup>th</sup> grade for the first time. This data field is the 9GR. **For this 2016 graduation cohort, the 9GR field value is "13."**

Please note:

- ✓ Students with a blank or invalid 9GR and enrolled in a high school are included in the BASE01 file. Because there is no indication of when these students entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade, their 9GR status will need to be determined by schools during the review process and corrected in the BASE01 file, column D.
- ✓ Students with a True Grade of 9, 10, 11, or 12 **with or without** an Instructional Setting code of “SE,” “SP,” or “SR” are included in the BASE01 file, even if they are not located at a high school.
- ✓ Students with multiple identification numbers, missing identification numbers, or actively enrolled or with a “no show” status in two or more schools at the same time, may appear in the BASE01 file more than once.

- ✓ Students transferring into the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections will remain in the BASE01 file at the school where they were enrolled prior to incarceration. The last school enrolled will need to determine if the student transferred into the high school diploma or the GED program at the correctional facility. For further details refer to the specific instructions relating to Student Status Code “DJ” and “GN” in appendix C of this document.
- ✓ Juveniles who are held in a local detention center awaiting trial or sentencing must, per state law, be provided an educational program. Municipalities can contract with a local school district to provide those educational services. For record keeping purposes, juveniles receiving educational services from a district may be entered into the PowerSchool system at a high school near the detention center. If your file includes any detention center juveniles whose last enrollment appeared in PowerSchool in school year 2012-13, you will need to tell us about those students. Appendix F explains how to note those students.
- ✓ In a few situations, a student has been moved to “graduated school” status in PowerSchool. When this occurs, the student’s SIDN becomes xxxx99999 (where xxxx=district code) and we may not have been able to determine from which school the student graduated. Please provide the correct SIDN (BEDS code) of the school where the student graduated in column AL (Notes column).

A more detailed description of how the BASE01 file was prepared appears in appendix A.

## DOWNLOADING AND DIVIDING THE BASE01 FILE

The BASE01\_2016\_XXXX.xls file for each district is available on the Advanced Data Transfer (ADT) system on the SCDE website. The ADT is the secure site where SCDE and district staff can transfer data files containing student information. Which staff members have access to the ADT is determined by each district and the Web Access Coordinator (WAC) sets the access. The 2016 file is in an Excel 97-2003 format.

There are two worksheets in the BASE01 file. One has the instructions for working with the file and the other contains the student records. **It is very important to follow the instructions in the BASE01 file instructions spreadsheet. Review the instructions before attempting to save or divide the BASE01 file. The file has verification processes and formulas for populating certain cells. Changes to the file may result in loss or corruption of your data.**

## ADJUSTING THE BASE01 FILE

Prepared by the SCDE, the BASE01 file is the four-year adjusted graduate cohort file for the 2016 graduation cohort and the mechanism for reporting to the SCDE which students should be included in the graduation rate calculation for each school. The file layout for the BASE01 file can be found in appendix B.

Using a coding system and four columns of the BASE01 file, school/district staff will:

- ✓ mark which students to include and which to exclude from the denominator and numerator of the graduation rate calculation, using a drop-down box selection of student status options (column A),
- ✓ enter or correct the 9GR (column D) for those students who have not left school,
- ✓ indicate if a student was an early graduate (graduated prior to the 2015-16 school year AND with a 9GR = 13) (column E), and
- ✓ enter the name of the person updating the file (column F).

The last column on the far right of the file provides a “Notes” column. With the exception of providing SIDNs for students with a code of XXXX999999 and/or noting any student who’s last enrollment involved receiving educational services at a local detention center prior to the 2013-14 school year, information in this field is not used to make determinations relating to graduation rate.

In the column titled “Person Updating Record” you will enter the name of the staff person revising the information. Since an audit of this information can occur up to three years after graduation, having the name of the person who reviewed the documentation and made the changes may help to clear up issues with the data.

The codes used in column A to denote how the SCDE should treat each student in the file are listed as follows. A detailed description of how to code each student is contained in appendix C.

**GY-GRADUATE** – Student has a 9GR of 13 and graduated during the 2015-16 school year, including summer of 2016, or was an early graduate from this school. (Early graduates are those students who graduated prior to the 2015-16 school year. Please note in column E.)

**CC-LOCAL DOCUMENT RECIPIENT** – Student has a 9GR of 13 and received a local or district document from this school during the 2015-16 school year or earlier.



GN-NON-GRADUATE – Student has a 9GR of 13 and did not graduate from this school within four years of entering the ninth grade (dropouts, students transferring to non-diploma programs, etc.)

AG-ADD GRADUATE – Add this student who has a 9GR of 13 and graduated from this school in the spring or summer of 2016 or was an early graduate from this school

AN-ADD NON-GRADUATE – Add this student who did not graduate from this school but has a 9GR of 13 and should have been included in this cohort file

DC-STUDENT DEATH – Student died during the cohort period

EO-STUDENT EMIGRE – Student transferred out of the country before the 2016 spring graduation date

A1-ADULT ED TRANSFER-BEFORE GRADUATION DATE– Student transferred to an Adult Education (AE) high school diploma program before the 2016 spring graduation date

DJ-TRANSFER TO DJJ OR DOC-DIPLOMA PROGRAM ONLY – Student transferred to a high school diploma program at a correctional institution

HS-TRANSFER TO HOME SCHOOL – Student left to be home schooled before the spring 2016 graduation date

FE-FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT – Foreign Exchange student attending your school

TI-TRANSFER TO PUBLIC SCHOOL IN SC – Student transferred to another public school in South Carolina before the 2016 spring graduation date

TO-TRANSFER TO NON-PUBLIC OR NON-SC PUBLIC SCHOOL – Student transferred to a **high school diploma program** before the 2016 spring graduation date

1) out of state or

2) at a non-public school

DD-DELETE, THIS IS A DUPLICATE RECORD – Delete this duplicate record

NN-GR9 IS NOT 13 – Student's 9GR is not 13, use column D to enter the correct 9GR

*Note: It is extremely important to fix ALL incorrect GR9's regardless of student status. If the 9GR for the student is not 13, the correct 9GR must be entered into column D. Proper documentation must be available to substantiate a change in the 9GR. If the student's 9GR is incorrect, but the student left your school for one of the "other" status reasons (e.g., TI, TO, EO, AI, etc.) choose that "other" reason in column A and enter the correct 9GR in column D. Use "NN" only if none of the "other" status reasons are applicable.*

PY-HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT IN PREVIOUS GRAD RATE – This student was included in earlier cohort and should be removed from this year’s cohort.

## DOCUMENTING YOUR 2016 COHORT STUDENTS

Using the BASE01 file, you can see which students appear to be members of the 2016 graduating cohort. You will need to determine which of those students will be included in the denominator and which students will be included in the numerator of the graduation rate calculation.

- 1) It is the responsibility of each district to provide all information for students who have been identified as members of this cohort but not listed in the BASE01 file. Be sure to include students with **9GR of 13** who entered your school between the 135<sup>th</sup> and 180<sup>th</sup> day of the 2015-16 school year or students still enrolled in your school at the end of the 2015-16 school year and not already appearing in your BASE01 file, regardless of their student status. *These students will be added to the denominator (and possibly the numerator if they graduated). Do not add early graduates with a 9GR greater than 13. These students will be a part of a future four-year cohort.*
- 2) You will need to report on the BASE01 file those students with a 9GR of 13 who graduated from your school this spring or earlier. *These students will be in the denominator and numerator of your graduation rate.*
- 3) You will need to make adjustments to the cohort file to ensure the accuracy of the information.

According to Federal Regulations, there are only three acceptable reasons that a student may be removed from the graduation cohort of your school: 1) death, 2) emigration to another country, or 3) transfer to a diploma granting entity. The scenarios whereby edits can be made to the BASE01 file for your school are listed in appendix C. **These adjustments require written documentation to be maintained for verification/audit purposes.**

## SUBMITTING THE FINAL ADJUSTED BASE01 FILE

One file per district will be submitted by the district accountability coordinator or designee to the ADT for processing.

Once the documentation has been reviewed and each student on the BASE01 file has been assigned a Student Status Code, you are ready to submit your BASE01 file to the SCDE. If you have split your original file into one file per school, you will need to append all school files together to create one file. The final BASE01 file does not need to be in a specific alphabetical or numerical order, but must include all the columns from the original file and in the same position. **Please name the file MYRESPOND\_2016\_XXXX.xls** where XXXX is your district SIDN. Please note, files must be saved in an earlier version of Excel (.xls) before uploading to the ADT.

**When you have uploaded the file, please send an email to Susan Rogers, [srogers@ed.sc.gov](mailto:srogers@ed.sc.gov) indicating that the file is ready.** In addition, your district superintendent will need to send a letter on district letterhead to the SCDE Office of State and Federal Accountability certifying the BASE01 file. A copy of the text for that letter is included in appendix E.

**All final BASE01 files must be submitted to the SCDE via ADT by August 26, 2016.**

**\*\*School deadline: August 19\*\***

**Email file to [info@sccharter.org](mailto:info@sccharter.org)**

## CALCULATING THE GRADUATION RATE

To calculate your school's graduation rate, divide the number of students with a "YES" in column C "*Student Graduated?*" by the number of students with "YES" in column B "*Student in Cohort.*"

Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) and Group Home (GH) students who meet the criteria for exclusion for the graduation rate calculation are noted in the Group Home Indicator column and are treated appropriately.

## PROCESSING OF THE DISTRICT FILES AT SCDE

Once district files are received at the South Carolina Department of Education, agency staff run a series of verification and validity checks. Cells with missing, invalid, and/or inconsistent data are identified as well as files with formatting issues. District accountability coordinators will be contacted and asked to provide correct or additional data and/or correctly formatted files.

Once the data elements and the file formats have been corrected, all the district files are merged and student IDs are matched across schools to locate any students who may have been included in the file at multiple schools or other anomalies. It is important that districts meet the deadline for submitting their cohort file (August 26, 2016) as a delay by a single district results in a delay providing this information to all districts.

## CERTIFICATION LETTER

A letter certifying that the graduation rate file information is correct and accurate must be supplied to the Office of State and Federal Accountability by ~~September 16, 2016~~. Districts with many high schools may submit more than one letter if unable to gather all signatures prior to the due date. The letter must be signed by the district superintendent and all high school principals. The text for the certification letter appears in appendix E. ([See page 25](#))

**\*\*School deadline: August 19\*\***

Email letter to [info@sccharter.org](mailto:info@sccharter.org)

## GRADUATION RATE MONITORING PROCEDURES

### **Triennial Monitoring**

As part of the Title I monitoring cycle, district records related to graduation rate student exclusions will be monitored once every three years. If discrepancies are found that impact the graduation rate for a given year, the graduation rate will be recalculated and changes made to report cards and other data as required by state and federal regulations.

### **Risk-based Monitoring**

Graduation rate records may be scrutinized more frequently if one of the following scenarios exists:

1. The graduation rate increases more than 5% from the preceding year.
2. The district fails to meet established deadlines for the submission of graduation rate data.
3. Previous monitoring revealed improper documentation.
4. Additional guidance is received from USED.

## Appendix A

### How were the HISTORY and BASE01 files created and who is included?

#### THE HISTORY FILE

A. Using the PowerSchool data files received from schools at the end of the 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years and the 135<sup>th</sup> day for 2015-16, all active, inactive, graduated and no-show students enrolled in your school at some point, the following student information is recorded in a field labeled “gradhistreason2016” (column S):

- 1) 9GR value, if there is only one 9GR value for all student records - flagged “GR9=##”,
- 2) Possible 9GR value, if there are multiple 9GR values for a student and at least one of the values is the current cohort value - flagged as “GR9=13 at some point”,
- 3) Possible 9GR value , where 9GR has never been the current cohort value - flagged as “GR9 is not 13”, OR
- 4) Missing or invalid 9GR value - flagged as “GR9=Missing or invalid.”

The HISTORY file includes students who were “no showed” or transferred out prior to the 45<sup>th</sup> day of school of the student’s first year in high school.

#### THE BASE01 FILE

B. Using the resulting flags from the “gradhistreason2016” field in the History File, all students with one of the following values were flagged for inclusion in the BASE01 file:

- 1) Gradhistreason value of “9GR = 13,”
- 2) Gradhistreason value of “GR9=13 at some point ,”
- 3) Gradhistreason is “GR9=Missing or invalid,” AND
- 4) The enrollment for the student is found to be the “last enrollment” at a public school.

The BASE01file excludes students who were “no showed” or transferred out prior to the 45<sup>th</sup> day of school of the student’s first year in high school.

Multiple records are matched by State ID and the most recent record remains in the file as the “last enrollment.” Please note that if a student has multiple identification numbers, missing identification numbers, or is actively enrolled or with a no show status in two or more schools at the same time, that student may appear in the file more than once. Students transferring within the South Carolina public school system are tracked and flagged in the file. Students transferring into the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections will remain in the file at the last school attended before entering the correctional facility. The last school attended will need to determine if the student transferred into the high school diploma or the GED program at the correctional facility and enter that information into the file.

## Appendix B

### BASE01 File Layout (\* districts can enter data in these columns)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Column A* – Student Status Code-<br/>dropdown menu</p> <p>Column B – Student in Cohort (denominator);<br/>automatically Yes or No, based<br/>on the Student Status Code</p> <p>Column C – Student Graduated? (numerator);<br/>automatically Yes or No, based<br/>on the Student Status Code</p> <p>Column D* – Correct GR9 (enter the correct<br/>GR9 for a student only if<br/>Student Status Code = NN or<br/>9GR is not 13);</p> <p>Column E* – If Graduated, (Student Status<br/>Code = GY or AG in column<br/>A) is student an <u>early graduate</u>?</p> <p>Column F* – Person Updating Record</p> <p>Column G – BEDSCoDe (SchoolID)</p> <p>Column H – School Year</p> <p>Column I – District Name</p> <p>Column J – School Name</p> <p>Column K – Student Last Name</p> <p>Column L – Student First Name</p> <p>Column M – Student Middle Name</p> <p>Column N – Suffix (Jr., Sr., II, III, etc.)</p> <p>Column O – Stateid (SUNSID)</p> <p>Column P – Permid (Student Number)</p> <p>Column Q – GR9</p> <p>Column R – Status Indicator-<br/>active, inactive, graduated or no<br/>show</p> | <p>Column S – Grad Histreason- why this<br/>student is in the HISTORY file</p> <p>Column T – Base01 reason- why this<br/>student is in BASE01 file</p> <p>Column U – In Base01 Year - YES and the<br/>last year of the student’s<br/>enrollment at this school</p> <p>Column V – Enter Date</p> <p>Column W – Exit Date</p> <p>Column X – Grade Code</p> <p>Column Y – True Grade</p> <p>Column Z – Instructional Setting</p> <p>Column AA – Birth Date</p> <p>Column AB – Student Ethnic Code</p> <p>Column AC – Student Race Code</p> <p>Column AD – Student Gender Code</p> <p>Column AE – ESL Code</p> <p>Column AF – Migrant Indicator</p> <p>Column AG – EFA Primary Code</p> <p>Column AH – Group Home Indicator</p> <p>Column AI – Unique ID - <b>DO NOT TOUCH</b></p> <p>Column AJ* – Notes- Provide here<br/>1) correct SIDNs for students with<br/>999999 as their SIDN<br/>and/or<br/>2) identify students who’s last<br/>enrollment involved receiving<br/>educational services at a local<br/>detention center prior to 2013-14.<br/>Districts may also enter their own<br/>notes here.</p> |
|---|---|

## Appendix C

### Graduation Rate Documentation Needed to Justify Adjustment to Cohort File

The following chart provides the codes that school or district staff will select in the dropdown menu on the BASE01 file and the documentation that must be kept at the school or district for audit purposes. Documentation can be stored in an electronic format (PowerSchool, Docufied, etc.) but keep in mind that federal guidelines call for paper documentation for audit purposes.

*All paper documentation must include student name, PERMID, and STATEID. These identification components may be written on the documentation or labels with the IDs may be affixed to the documentation. This allows Title I auditors to more easily find the documentation for a specific student.*

**Did this student graduate within four years of entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2012-13 school year?**

| Student Status Code | Description of Student Status Code   | Documentation that will need to be maintained at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>GY</b>           | <p>Student graduated on time from your school with standard diploma. This includes students graduating in the spring or summer of 2016 and any member of the of 2015 cohort who graduated early. Include here students who transferred to Adult Education <u>after</u> the graduation date and graduated during the summer.</p> <p><b>For early graduates,</b> mark yes in column E “If Graduated, is student an early graduate?” (Note: “Early Graduate” applies only to students in the current cohort, 9G =13, who graduated prior to the 2015-16 school year.)</p> | <p>Official transcript must be available upon request.</p>  |

|           |  |   |
|-----------|--|---|
| <b>CC</b> | Student received a local document, NOT a state diploma.                    | No documentation required   |
| <b>GN</b> | Student did NOT graduate from your school on time with a standard diploma. | <p>Include here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who transferred to Adult Education <u>after</u> graduation <u>and did not</u> graduate</li> <li>• Dropouts</li> <li>• Students with an IEP allowing extended time in high school</li> <li>• Students with not enough credits to graduate with their cohort</li> <li>• Students who transferred to a non-diploma program</li> </ul> <p>No documentation required.</p> |

**Add a student who was enrolled in your school and has a 9GR of 13.**

Before adding a student to the file, review your HISTORY file to determine if the student appears there. If the student is in the HISTORY file, review the student’s record to determine why the student is not in the BASE01 file. There may be a valid reason why the student was not included in your BASE01 file. **\*\*Contact the district prior to adding any student.\*\***

| <b>Student Status Code</b> | <b>Description of Student Status Code</b>  | <b>Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>AG</b>                  | <p><b>Add</b> a graduating student to cohort file.</p> <p>NOTE: ensure that the student has a 9GR of 13.</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official transcript with Diploma Type and Graduation Date.</li> </ul> <p>If a student enrolled between the 135<sup>th</sup> and 180<sup>th</sup> days of the 2015-16 school year, you need to provide <u>all</u> the same information as the other students.</p> <p>Refer to the Instructions spreadsheet in the BASE01 file for directions for inserting a new record.</p> |
| <b>AN</b>                  | <p><b>Add</b> a non-graduating student to cohort file.</p> <p>NOTE: ensure that the student has a 9GR of 13.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official transcript</li> </ul> <p>See AG above for adding a student who enters your school between the 135<sup>th</sup> and 180<sup>th</sup> days of the 2015-16 school year.</p>   |



According to Federal Regulations, there are only three acceptable reasons that a student may be removed from his or her graduation cohort in your school: death, emigration to another country, or transfer to a diploma granting entity. The following tables depict the scenarios whereby edits can be made to the BASE01 file for your school and the appropriate Student Status Code. The edits below require written documentation to be maintained for verification/audit purposes.

**Scenario 1 – Death**

| <b>Student Status Code</b> | <b>Description of Student Status Code</b> | <b>Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>DC</b>                  | Student Death                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed letter from the principal stating that the student has died; include the date of death <i>OR</i></li> <li>• Death certificate <i>OR</i></li> <li>• Obituary notice in a newspaper</li> </ul> |

**Scenario 2 – Emigration**

| <b>Student Status Code</b> | <b>Description of Student Status Code</b>  | <b>Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>EO</b>                  | Student Émigré<br>(Include here students from active or reserve military families transferring without a request for records.) | <p>For students transferring out of the United States before the spring 2016 graduation date, a letter from a school administrator, guidance counselor, ELL staff person, social worker, etc. with knowledge of the family situation can be used to confirm the transfer; this can be documentation of a conversation.</p> <p><b>The letter must be signed and dated.</b></p> |

**Scenario 3 – Student Transfer from Cohort File**

| <b>Student Status Code</b> | <b>Description of Student Status Code</b>   | <b>Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2015 Grad Rate Documentation</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>AI</b>                  | <p>Transferred to Adult Education (AE) high school diploma program <u>before</u> spring 2016 graduation date.</p> <p><b>Do not include students transferring to GED, remedial, vocational, or certificate programs.</b></p>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is listed on Adult Education enrollment file provided by SCDE as enrolled in high school diploma program. Codes <b>Adult Ed-Diploma</b> and <b>Adult High School</b> identify the diploma program.<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• <u>If the student is not listed</u> on the Adult Education enrollment file, an official transcript/records request from the AE program, with date of enrollment may be used. Transcript request must indicate enrollment in a diploma granting program.<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• <u>If the student is not listed</u> on the Adult Education enrollment file, a letter from the Adult Education director confirming that student enrolled in a diploma granting program. An email is not sufficient documentation.</li> </ul> |
| <b>DJ</b>                  | <p>Student transferred to <b>diploma</b> program at a correctional institution - Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) or Department of Corrections (DOC).</p> <p>Students transferring to a non-high school diploma program will be coded GN.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official transcript/records request from DJJ or DOC which includes verification of enrollment in diploma granting program and date of enrollment. Fax date on records request may be used as enrollment date.<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Letter from correctional facility administrator confirming that student enrolled in a diploma granting program in the correctional facility and the date enrolled. An email is not sufficient documentation</li> </ul>  |

|           |  |   |
|-----------|--|---|
| <b>HS</b> | Student left to be home schooled before the spring 2016 graduation date.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note written by parent(s) indicating intent to home-school the student with the date of withdrawal<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Records request from home school association confirming enrollment with beginning date of home schooling<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Withdrawal form, <u>with parent's signature and date of withdrawal</u>, indicating the purpose of withdrawal is to home school<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Form letter, <u>dated and signed by parent</u>, indicating intent to home school</li> </ul>                      |
| <b>FE</b> | <p>Foreign Exchange Student</p> <p>(Student enrolled as a foreign exchange student at your school.</p> <p>Students <u>from</u> your school who are participating in a foreign exchange program would be considered transfers to another school.)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J1 visa copy or copy of foreign exchange program forms showing year of participation<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Letter from host family stating they hosted the exchange student and the dates of participation<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• A copy of the exchange program paperwork showing the year the student was enrolled in the host school<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• A letter on the school's letterhead and signed by the principal certifying that the student was a foreign exchange student and dates of participation</li> </ul> |
| <b>TI</b> | Student transferred to a public school within South Carolina before the spring 2016 graduation date.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official transcript/records request from receiving institution with the date of enrollment<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Request for records on school letterhead with the date of enrollment<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• SUNS history screen showing student was enrolled in another school <u>after</u> the exit date from your school</li> </ul>  |

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>TO</b> | <p>Student transferred to a public high school diploma-granting institution outside the SC public school system.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></p> <p>Student enrolled in the high school diploma program of a non-public (private) institution.</p> <p>Before 2016 graduation date.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official transcript/records request from receiving institution with the date of enrollment and confirming student is enrolling in a diploma granting program. Fax date may be used as the date of enrollment if not on request for records.</li> <li style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Letter from an official at the receiving school on school letterhead verifying/acknowledging student's enrollment in the high school diploma program at the school and entrance date.</li> </ul> <p><b>Please make every effort to determine that transfer school is a legitimate school and that the student entered a high school diploma program. Appendix D provides information for determining if a school is legitimate.</b></p> |
|-----------|---|--|

**Adjustments to Cohort File – Column A, Student Status Code**

| Student Status Code | Description of Student Status Code   | Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation  |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <b>DD</b>           | Delete this duplicate record.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain the most recent record. You can determine the most recent record under column U - In Base 01 Year.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is at least one other record on the BASE01 file for the student you are deleting.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>NN</b>           | <p>9GR is not 13.</p> <p>Please enter the correct 9GR in column D of the BASE01 file.</p> <p>If the student has left your school, provide the reason the student left as the Student Status Code.</p> <p>Use "NN" only if none of the "other" status reasons are applicable.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official transcript or SUNS history showing first year of high school was <u>not</u> the 2012-13 school year.</li> <li style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Report card indicating the student was in middle school during the 2012-13 school year.</li> <li style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></li> <li>• A letter from the middle school principal stating the student was enrolled in that school for the 2012-13 school year.</li> <li>• For special education students, the appropriate documentation is the student's IEP.</li> </ul> <p>It is extremely important to fix ALL incorrect 9GR's regardless of student status.</p> |

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <b>PY</b> | This student's 9GR is 13 but was in an earlier cohort file for our school and should be deleted from this cohort file. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Base01reason (column T) = <i>Last year's gradfile, 2015 non-graduate, sameschool</i></li> </ul> <p>NOTE: If a student with a 9GR of 13 was included in your 2015 cohort file by mistake and that student graduated in 2016, you may want to keep that student in this year's file to count <u>for</u> your school. To do that, you would code that student with a GY.</p> |
|-----------|--|--|

**Adjustments to Cohort File – graduated school**

| <b>Student Status Code</b>                | <b>Description of Student Status Code</b>  | <b>Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation</b> |
|---|--|---|
| Enter the Student Status Code in Column A | In a few situations, a student has been moved to “graduated school” status in PowerSchool. When this occurs, the student's SIDN becomes xxxx999999 (where xxxx=district code) and we may not have been able to determine from which school the student graduated. Please provide the correct SIDN (BEDS code) of the school where the student graduated in the Notes column. | Official transcript must be available upon request.   |

**Adjustments to Cohort File – Juvenile in Detention Facility prior to 2014-15 school year**

| <b>Student Status Code</b>                       | <b>Description of Student Status Code</b>  | <b>Documentation that will need to be maintained collectively at the school level in a file marked 2016 Grad Rate Documentation</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Enter the Student Status Code in Column A</p> | <p><u>PRIOR TO 2014-15</u></p> <p>This student did not attend our school and was located in a local detention center awaiting trial or sentencing, but this student was provided educational services by our school district.</p> <p>This student appeared in our PowerSchool file prior to 2014 -15 only because our district provided educational services to this student and the detention center was within the attendance zone for this school.</p> <p><b>Provide details in the Notes column including the name of the detention center and enter and exit dates for the student.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verification letter from head of detention center. Must include dates of detention.<br/><i>OR</i></li> <li>• Statement from district office liaison with detention center.</li> </ul> <p>Refer to appendix F for more detailed information.</p> |

## Appendix D

### Identifying a Legitimate School

As defined by the US Department of Education (USED) in the 2010 edition of the *Digest of Educational Statistics*, a school is “a division of the school system consisting of students in one or more grades or other identifiable groups and organized to give instruction of a defined type. One school may share a building with another school or one school may be housed in several buildings.”

The key point in this definition is “to give instruction of a defined type.” There must be instruction. It can be on-line or in a classroom, but merely administering a test and awarding credit based on that test score is not giving instruction. Also, a school awarding a diploma solely on the basis of “life experience” or a test score would not fit the USED definition.

When a school appears to be a “real” school, but you are still unsure, another way to determine if a school is legitimate is if the school is a member of an accrediting body. Listed below are the accreditation agencies currently recognized by the USED as legitimate organizations. When reviewing school information to determine its legitimacy, care must be taken to closely examine the name of any listed accreditation agency. Unscrupulous “schools” may list the name of an accreditation agency with the same acronym as a legitimate association, but the actual agency name differs from the “real” accreditation agency.

When you determine that a school is legitimate, if that school offers a GED or certificate in addition to a high school diploma, you will need to determine which program your student entered. As with DJJ and DOC schools and adult education programs, only students entering a high school diploma program can be transferred out of your cohort.

#### ACCREDITATION AGENCIES

The U.S. Secretary of Education (Secretary) is required by statute to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies that the Secretary determines to be reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education and the higher education programs they accredit.

Search for schools and accreditation agencies:

<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx?6d6f64653d31267264743d372f372f323031332031303a30373a313420504d>

Although this federal list is for postsecondary accreditation agencies, most agencies (such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) which accredits public schools in South Carolina) also accredit high schools and we think that use of this list to ascertain the validity of a high school will meet Federal standards.

The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) provides information on private school accreditation and links to recognized state accrediting agencies and accredited schools.

The schools listed below are accredited by the Distance Education & Training Council. A student entering one of these schools would be a transfer to a legitimate school if they enter the

diploma program. For example, if you have a records request from Allied National, you have all you need to transfer that student out of your cohort. If you have a records request from Penn Foster, the request must indicate that the student is entering the high school diploma program for you to transfer that student from your cohort.

| Name  | Standard Diploma                   | Career / Vocational Certificate | State | Web Site  |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|---|
| Allied National High School                 | Yes                                | No                              | CA    | <a href="http://www.alliedhighschool.com">http://www.alliedhighschool.com</a>         |
| Ashworth High School                        | Yes                                | Yes                             | GA    | <a href="http://www.ashworthcollege.edu">http://www.ashworthcollege.edu</a>           |
| Avondale & Williams Preparatory High School | Yes                                | Yes                             | PA    | <a href="http://www.pennfosterhighschool.com">http://www.pennfosterhighschool.com</a> |
| Brigham Young University Independent Study  | No, but courses can be transferred | No                              | UT    | <a href="http://elearn.byu.edu">http://elearn.byu.edu</a>                             |
| Citizens' High School                       | Yes                                | No                              | FL    | <a href="http://www.citizenshighschool.com">http://www.citizenshighschool.com</a>     |
| Griggs International Academy                | Yes                                | No                              | MI    | <a href="http://www.griggs.edu">http://www.griggs.edu</a>                             |
| Humanities and Sciences High School         | Yes                                | No                              | AZ    | <a href="http://www.humsci.org">http://www.humsci.org</a>                             |
| International Commerce High School          | Yes                                | No                              | AZ    | <a href="http://www.humsci.org">http://www.humsci.org</a>                             |
| James Madison High School                   | Yes                                | No                              | GA    | <a href="https://www.jmhs.com">https://www.jmhs.com</a>                               |
| Middleton Academy                           | Yes                                | No                              | VA    | <a href="http://www.middletonacademy.com">http://www.middletonacademy.com</a>         |
| New Learning Resources Online               | Yes                                | Yes                             | MS    | <a href="http://www.nlro.org">http://www.nlro.org</a>                                 |
| Penn Foster High School                     | Yes                                | Yes                             | PA    | <a href="http://www.pennfosterhighschool.com">http://www.pennfosterhighschool.com</a> |

The following high schools are not accredited by an agency listed by the US Secretary of Education.

West Madison Falls High School <http://www.highschooldiplomaonline.net/>

Nation High School <http://www.nationhighschool.com/>

Stratford Career Institute [http://www.scitraining.com/stratford\\_diploma](http://www.scitraining.com/stratford_diploma)

#### PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

A list of private schools in South Carolina is available on the State Department of Education website here: <http://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/schools/school-directory/>  
Click on Directory Exports.





Superintendent:  
Elliot Smalley

Board of Trustees:  
Don McLaurin, Chairman  
Linzie Staley, Vice Chairman  
Kathleen Bounds, Secretary  
Betty Bagley  
Reese Boyd, Esq.  
Anne Bull  
Laban Chappell  
John Payne

Mr. Roy Stehle, Director  
Office of Federal and State Accountability  
South Carolina Department of Education  
1429 Senate Street, Room 502-A  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Stehle,

We certify that the information submitted in the 2016 cohort graduation rate file is accurate and complete. We hereby acknowledge that the information will be used in reporting to the legislature, other policy makers, and federal agencies. The information will also be used in ESEA Waiver grade calculations and state accountability calculations.

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Graduates (Numerator): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students included in cohort (Denominator): \_\_\_\_\_

Grad Rate: \_\_\_\_\_%

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Appendix F

### Juveniles Held in County, Municipal, and Regionally Operated Detention Facilities

#### SECTION 63-19-360

*(5)...County, municipal, and regionally operated facilities shall provide these services to all preadjudicatory juveniles under the jurisdiction of the family court and all pretrial juveniles awaiting general sessions court who are detained locally for more than forty-eight hours, excluding weekends and state holidays, by contracting with the Department of Juvenile Justice or by arranging the services through the local school district in which the facility is located. It shall be the responsibility of the school district where a local detention center which has been approved to detain juveniles is located to provide adequate teaching staff and to ensure compliance with the educational requirements of this State. Students housed in approved local detention centers are to be included in the average daily membership count of students for that district and reimbursement by the Department of Education shall be made accordingly. Services which are arranged locally must be approved by the Department of Juvenile Justice as meeting all criteria developed under the authority of Section 63-19-380. Special needs students who are detained locally shall have all services required by federal and state laws and regulations;*

As noted in the law, municipalities may arrange for educational services with the local school district and students in the detention center are to be included in the membership count of students for that district. Students appear in PowerSchool for funding purposes only and all educational services are provided by the district at the detention facility.

Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, these students can be identified in PowerSchool. If this type of student appears in your cohort file for students who were last enrolled in your school before the 2013-14 school year, you will need to tell us by entering the name of the detention center and the dates they entered and exits the center for those students in the NOTES column. Also, please **email** [LWoodard@ed.sc.gov](mailto:LWoodard@ed.sc.gov) to let her know that this situation exists in your file.

This refers only to students held in local detention centers and receiving educational services through the district, not the Department of Juvenile Justice or Palmetto Unified School District (Department of Corrections).

## Appendix G

### Adult Education Program Enrollment File for Use with the 2016 Graduation Rate Cohort File

The Office of Research and Data Analysis now has access to the student level data file from adult education centers across the state. We are sharing that information with you so that you no longer have to “guess” if a student entered a high school diploma program in an adult education center based on Request for Transcript documents that do not definitively state that the student has transferred into a diploma program within adult education.

#### New for the 2016 cohort

We will be providing two files this year. The file posted to the ADT on June 2 contains information for those students who transferred into an adult education program from 2013 through approximately April of 2016. The Office of Adult Education will provide a separate file this year listing those students who enter Adult Education after April 2016. Since this second file will include those students entering Adult Education after graduation, we hope this will help schools keep track of their students who may earn a high school diploma over the summer. This file with end of the year adult education transfers will be available July 20, 2016.

#### What are in the files?

The files contains the first, middle, and last name of every student who has entered an adult education program since 2013 who appears to be within the same general age group as the students in the 2016 graduation rate cohort file. This file also includes each student’s gender, ethnicity, birth date, adult education program enrollment date, current age, and age at time they entered the program. Also included is the name of the adult education center and the type of program the student entered as well as the last public school in which they were enrolled when matched to PowerSchool files.

#### Security of this file

Having the adult education student’s name, gender, race, and birth date on this file identifies specific individuals. **Only staff with appropriate security clearance should be allowed to access this file and all appropriate district security procedures must be followed.**

#### Why have an Adult Education enrollment file?

Using a Request for Records to determine what type of adult education program a student may have transferred into is sometimes difficult. Using the example below, the request states that the student “intends” to enroll in an adult education diploma program. The decision about which adult education program is appropriate for the student cannot be made until the adult education center staff receive that student’s high school transcript. A student may “intend” to enroll in a

diploma program, but when the transcript arrives in adult education and the student has only 3 or 4 credits and is 18 years old, that student may be advised to study for the GED if he/she wants to finish high school within a short time frame. That student then enrolls in the GED program at the local adult education center.

Also, using this file allows staff to “find” students that they may not have realized had transferred to an adult education high school diploma program.

**ABCD – Adult Education Program**  
Request for Records  
TO: Guidance Counselor or Records Office at: \_\_\_\_\_  
name of high school

|   |                 |                           |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
| The following student intends to enter the following program at our center: |                 |                           |
| ___ Diploma Program   | ___ GED Program | ___ Other (explain) _____ |

|  |                             |                                |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Name of Student: _____   |                             |                                |
| Date of Birth: _____   | Last grade completed: _____ | Last year of attendance: _____ |
| Handicapping condition? ___ No ___ Yes If Yes, please provide description: _____ |                             |                                |

I authorize the release of my official transcript (must bear signature or raised seal) to ABCD Adult Education Program.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the transcript to:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Files on ADT

2016AdultList1.xls and (as of July 20, 2016) 2016AdultList2.xls.

How to use these files

**NOTE: These files can be used to identify and code as a transfer only students who transferred out of your high school BEFORE the 2016 graduation date.** All students who transfer from your school after the 2016 graduation date remain in your school’s four-year cohort graduation rate file, regardless of the program they enter. Any students in the adult education file with an adult education entry date after your school’s graduation date remain in your school’s cohort file. If any of those students remaining in your cohort file graduate from adult education with a regular high school diploma before the end of the summer, they can be coded as a 2016 graduate from your school.

Search the file using the name and birthdate (DOB=date of birth) of students transferring from your school. It is possible that errors could have been made in entering the student’s information into the adult education database, so not all information may match exactly. But you can reasonably assume that a student with the name of Susan Young Smith – DOB=1/4/97 is the same as Susan Y. Smith – DOB=1/4/97, attending an adult education center in the same county

where she attended high school. Knowing a student's ethnicity also helps identify a specific student.

The date that the student entered the adult education program may also provide information for matching. If there is a Susan Smith with the same birth date as your student named Sue Smith and she enrolled in adult education in September of 2013 and the Sue Smith in your school left your school in March of 2014, you can conclude that the Susan Smith in the file is not Sue Smith from your school.

The adult education programs listed on the file include:

|                |  |                            |                          |
|----------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Adult Ed       | Adult Literacy<br>Community<br>Education | Adult Ed / GED             | <b>Adult Ed-Diploma</b>  |
| Adult Ed Basic | Family Literacy                          | Adult Ed-GED<br>Transition | <b>Adult High School</b> |
| Adult Ed-ESL   |  |                            |                          |

Only students with a Primary Program code of **Adult Ed-Diploma** or **Adult High School** who transferred to Adult Education before the 2016 graduation date may be coded **A1-ADULT ED TRANSFER-BEFORE GRADUATION DATE** on the graduation rate file. Students entering all other adult education programs would be coded GN-NON-GRADUATE in the graduation rate file.

But what if I have verification from the adult education center in my county?

Some adult education centers are providing high schools with information about their students who entered adult education before graduation. The adult education list is the primary source, but for this year, either source is appropriate documentation. Title I auditors may need to compare the two files if discrepancies are found, so keep both pieces of documentation.

Questions?

If you have questions about this data file or you find problems with the information in this file, please contact ~~Cynthia Hearn~~ at [CHearn@ed.sc.gov](mailto:CHearn@ed.sc.gov).

Contact the SCPCSD District Office ([info@sccharter.org](mailto:info@sccharter.org)) with all questions.

# Appendix H

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q. The four-year cohort graduation rate was a product of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). What changes can we expect from the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?

A. The South Carolina Department of Education is awaiting information from the U.S. Department of Education about the details of ESSA. There has been no indication that the four-year cohort graduation rate calculation will change.

Q. A student has entered a school that I know nothing about and it's not listed in Appendix D. What can I do?

A. The quickest way to find out about a school is to search on the internet. In many cases the home page tells you what you need to know about a school and if it awards a standard high school diploma. The following example from the internet would indicate that this school does not award a standard high school diploma.

### Earn your High School Diploma

- ✓ Without taking admission!
- ✓ Without any hassle of attending classes!
- ✓ Without studying long hours for tough exams!

Earn a recognized high school diploma from Belford High School within 15 days, for just \$399. Get your high school diploma on the basis of your Prior Knowledge and Experience

[Click here to Order Now](#)

No Experience? No Problem!  
Pass our simple online equivalency test to get your high school diploma within 15 days.

[Click here to Take the Test](#)

(100% free. No Credit Card Required)

Want GED?  
[Click Here](#)

Have Questions?  
Need more Info?  
Talk toll free  
866-232-7410  
OR  
We'll call you now  
[Click to talk](#)  
We are available 24/7

Q. Since we can include on the cohort file students who do not transfer from our school and graduate during the summer as graduates, can we code DC (Student Death) for a student who dies during the summer following graduation?

A. **NO**, only students who transfer out of your school to another diploma program, emigrate, or die before the graduation date can be coded out of graduation rate calculations. Otherwise it becomes very confusing when schools begin preparing the five-year graduation cohort file.

Q. I'm assuming that for U.S. students participating as foreign exchange students (educated their senior year in a foreign country) we can document them and remove them from the denominator, since they enrolled in a diploma granting school in a foreign country (like emigrants)? I assume we can document this situation the same as we do for emigrants?

A. Yes, or a TO (Transfer Out) would be acceptable too, with appropriate documentation.

Q. I don't have a request for records, but the student showed me his diploma, so I know he went to a real high school.

A. A diploma is not proof that a student entered a diploma program. As you can see below, you can buy anything on the web.

### **It's easier than ever to order at Phony Diploma**

**FAKE DIPLOMAS**  
Authentic Fake College & University Diplomas

The School District of Your City  
**Your School Here**  
...to Certify That  
Your Name Here  
Has satisfactorily completed the Program of Study prescribed for graduation  
from this School and is therefore awarded this  
**Diploma**  
Under the authority of the Board of Education of this School District.

Starting at **\$59.95**

High School, College, University  
**FROM ANY COUNTRY!**

Starting At: \$59.95

Fake Diplomas

**FAKE DIPLOMA AND TRANSCRIPTS**  
Fake High School, College Diplomas and Transcripts

Your High School Name Here

By authority of the Board of Education of School District  
Lake County, Illinois,  
this diploma is conferred upon  
Your Name Here  
who has successfully completed the course of study prescribed by the  
Faculty and approved by the Board of Education, and is entitled to be  
graduated by this school.  
As witness my hand, this seventh day of June 1999

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- Q. For verification that a student transferred to a high school diploma program (for those schools that we aren't sure of), do we need to have anything in writing from the school verifying that or is documentation that we did look online or called the school to verify enough? For example, last year we looked at a Florida school's website and couldn't really tell if it offered state diplomas, so we called the school and actually spoke to a guidance counselor. Is documentation of our conversation (we made notes on our file) enough or do we need to have the school fill something out for us?
- A. You may document a conversation by providing the position title and name of the person you spoke with (include your name) and date of that conversation or you can print information from the internet about the school to keep in the documentation file.
- Q. We are working on our Grad files and seem to be having a problem with one column. If we have a student who has incorrect 9GR, we choose NN in the first column then we go to Column D and try to enter the correct 9GR and it is not accepting anything that we enter and there is not a drop down to choose something. Can you advise as us as to what we may be doing wrong?
- A. If you are working in Excel 2010:
- Highlight the whole column
  - Click on Data (at top of page) then click on Data Validation, click Yes if you get the dialog box that says “The selection contains...”
  - Click on the Clear All button (left bottom of dialog box).
  - Click on OK. This will clear the field.
  - Save the workbook.
- Q. Can you please provide a list of private schools in South Carolina for which we do NOT have to have the school indicate that the student is in a diploma granting program (if there are any).
- A. We will accept any private school within South Carolina. You can download a listing of private schools by clicking on *Private Schools Listing* under *Directory Exports* here: <http://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/schools/school-directory/>
- Q. We have a few students who were mistakenly put in high school after the 45<sup>th</sup> day and were immediately inactivated because it was a clerical error. I have report card for documentation showing that they were in elementary or middle school in 11-12. However, they are not in high school yet, so I can't provide a 9GR value.
- A. These students appear in your file because they were enrolled in the ninth grade and had no 9GR. For documentation you will need to have a transcript or report card showing that the student was not in high school. Leave column D blank.



Q. What do I do with students who graduated this year (2016) with a 9GR of 14 (early graduate), should they be added to my list as graduated?

A. **NO**, you are reporting only those students who entered high school in the 2012-13 school year (9GR=13). A student with a 9GR of 14 will be included in next year's cohort file.

Q. There are a couple of students in my file who have the wrong 9GR, but they have transferred to a diploma program in another SC public high school. Which code is appropriate, NN or TI?

A. NN is always the secondary code if there is more than one code that describes a students' status. TI would be appropriate in this situation. You would, however, still provide the correct 9GR in column D of the BASE01 file.

The questions and answers below come directly from the *NCLB High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance* document prepared by the USED.

Q. What documentation is required to confirm that a student has transferred out--i.e., transferred to another school or to an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma?

A. To confirm that a student transferred out, a school or LEA must have "official written documentation" that a student has transferred to another school or to an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma (34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(ii)(B)(I)). In the case of a student who moves to another public school within the State, that transfer would most likely be officially documented and recorded in the State's data system; thus, a record from the State's data system would be considered official written documentation. Other examples of official written documentation include: a request for student records from a receiving public or private high school or an educational program (that culminates in a regular high school diploma); or a written record of a response from an official in the receiving school or program acknowledging the student's enrollment. With respect to a home schooled student, official written documentation may include, for example, a letter of withdrawal or other written confirmation from the parent or guardian; any documentation that meets the home school notification or compulsory attendance requirements in the State; or any other written documentation accepted in the State to verify a child is home schooled. A conversation with a parent or neighbor of a student, for instance, would not be considered official written documentation of a transfer.

Q. What documentation is required to confirm that a student has emigrated to another country?

A. A school or LEA must have written confirmation that a student has emigrated to another country (34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(ii)(B)), but need not obtain official written documentation. For example, if a parent informs a school administrator that the family is leaving the country,

the school administrator may document this conversation in writing and include it in the student's file. The regulations do not require written documentation to be "official" for a student who emigrates to another country because the Department recognizes that it may be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain transcripts or other official documentation from another country confirming that the student is enrolled in school.

Q. How can an LEA document the transfer of a migrant student?

A. The department's Migrant Student Information Exchange system includes information on migrant students that can be accessed by all States and LEAs to help ensure that the academic records of these highly mobile students are preserved during their frequent moves. This system should be of great assistance to States in documenting the enrollment of migratory students, as defined in section 1309 of the ESEA, in another school or in an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma.

Q. Is a student who leaves school because the student is incarcerated considered a transfer?

A. An incarcerated student may be considered a transfer only if the prison or juvenile facility to which the student is confined has a school (as defined under State law) or provides an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma. If the facility does not have a school or educational program, or provides an educational program that does not culminate in the award of a regular high school diploma, the student may not be considered a transfer, may not be removed from the cohort, and must remain in the denominator of the graduation rate calculation for the school, LEA, and State in which the student last attended high school.

Q. If, after multiple attempts, an LEA cannot obtain official written documentation that a student has transferred out, may the LEA remove the student from the cohort?

A. No. Although in some cases it may be difficult for an LEA to obtain official written documentation of a student's transfer, the student may not be removed from the cohort simply because the student's status cannot be documented. Removing a student from the cohort whose status cannot be documented could produce an inaccurate graduation rate if that student dropped out of school rather than transferred. It is critical that an LEA carefully document student transfers and accurately calculate the four-year graduation rate in order to (a) give parents and the public accurate information about the success of a school, LEA, and State in graduating students and (b) ensure that AYP determinations are based on valid graduation rate calculations.