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**Nebraska Student and Staff Record System**

<http://www.education.ne.gov/nssrs>

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# **Guidance for Graduation Cohort**

**Version 3.0.0 – September 13, 2012**



**NEBRASKA**  
*DEPARTMENT OF*  
**EDUCATION**

Nebraska Department of Education

301 Centennial Mall South

PO Box 94987

Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

888-285-0556

402-471-3151

[nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov)

# NSSRS GRADUATION COHORT GUIDE

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## **Introduction**

The NSSRS (Nebraska Student and Staff Record System) Graduation Cohort Guide provides information concerning how NDE (Nebraska Department of Education) calculates and reports the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates and the extended graduation rates. This guide provides an overview of the NSSRS Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool and the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT). The document's objective is to ensure districts know how a student's Graduation Cohort Year and the Graduation Cohort is determined.

This guide covers:

- The Graduation Cohort Determination Process.
- The Expected Graduation Year and the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) Business Rules.
- The layout and functionality of the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT).
- The calculation for the Cohort Four-Year and Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate and where/how it will be used.

The Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate is calculated by determining how many students in the Graduation Cohort graduate with a regular diploma in four years divided by the number of students entering grade level nine for the first time, plus the number of students who transferred in, minus the number of students who transferred out in four years.

High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR X)

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FIRST-TIME ninth graders [(YEAR X) - 4] + (transfer in) - (transfer out)]

The Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate is calculated by determining how many students in the Graduation Cohort graduate with a regular diploma in four years plus how many students in the Graduation Cohort graduated with a regular diploma in the fifth year divided by the number of students entering grade level nine for the first time, plus the number of students who transferred in, minus the number of students who transferred out in the fifth year.

High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR X) +

High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR X+1)

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FIRST-TIME ninth graders [(YEAR X) - 5] + (transfer in) - (transfer out)]

This document is based on the *NCLB (No Child Left Behind) High School Graduation Rate, Non-Regulatory Guidance (December 22, 2008)* and provided at the following link: <http://www.education.ne.gov/nssrs/> and click on Program-specific Information.

Additional reference documents are available on the NSSRS page at <http://www.education.ne.gov/nssrs/>.

1. *“Current and future methods for calculating graduation rates”*
2. *“Quick Reference Guide – Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT)”*
3. *“Quick Reference Guide – Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool”*
4. *“Guidance for Reporting Dropouts”*

Please contact the NDE Helpdesk ([nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.helpdesk@nebraska.gov) or 888-285-0556) for additional information.

## **Graduation Cohort Determination Process Overview**

The Graduation Cohort Determination Process Map (Figure 1 and 2), on pages 5 and 6, and the Graduation Cohort Determination Business Rules (Figure 3), on page 11, describe the Graduation Cohort Determination Process. The Graduation Cohort Determination Process Maps in conjunction with the Graduation Cohort Determination Business Rules determines which students remain in the Current Graduation Cohort. The Current Graduation Cohort displays the list of students in the Graduation Cohort for the current school year.

The Graduation Cohort Determination Process has three parts to establish:

- Part 1. The Graduation Cohort Year for a student from the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) data. The Expected Graduation Lookup Tool and the Starting Nebraska Graduation Cohort category in the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) display the results.
- Part 2. The placement of the student in a Graduation Cohort based on the student's maximum (most recent) School Enrollment records. The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) displays the results.
- Part 3. A record to link the student's Graduation Cohort Year and the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment record at a state level.

In Part 1, the Graduation Cohort Year is based on the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) data from the Student template records provided by districts. Districts must assign the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) to all students entering high school (grade levels 9, 10, 11, and 12). The Expected Graduation Year value must not change throughout high school.

In Part 2, districts can identify the students who begin in the Graduation Cohort, the students remaining in the Graduation Cohort, and the students who transfer in and transfer out of a Graduation Cohort throughout their high school years. The maximum (most recent) School Enrollment record (Enrollment code [School Enrollment: Enrollment Code (7)]) for a student is evaluated for each school.

In Part 3, the Graduation Cohort Year and the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment data for a student are combined. The School Enrollment records for a student at the school level is re-evaluated to determine the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment at a state level and merged with the student's Graduation Cohort Year record.

## Graduation Cohort Determination Process Maps

The Graduation Cohort Determination Process Maps, as shown in Figure 1 and 2 on page 5 and 6, are a diagram to evaluate the School Enrollment status for the students who start in a Nebraska Graduation Cohort, transfer in, transfer out, and remain in a Graduation Cohort. The Graduation Cohort Determination Process Maps influenced the design for Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool's graphical user interface.

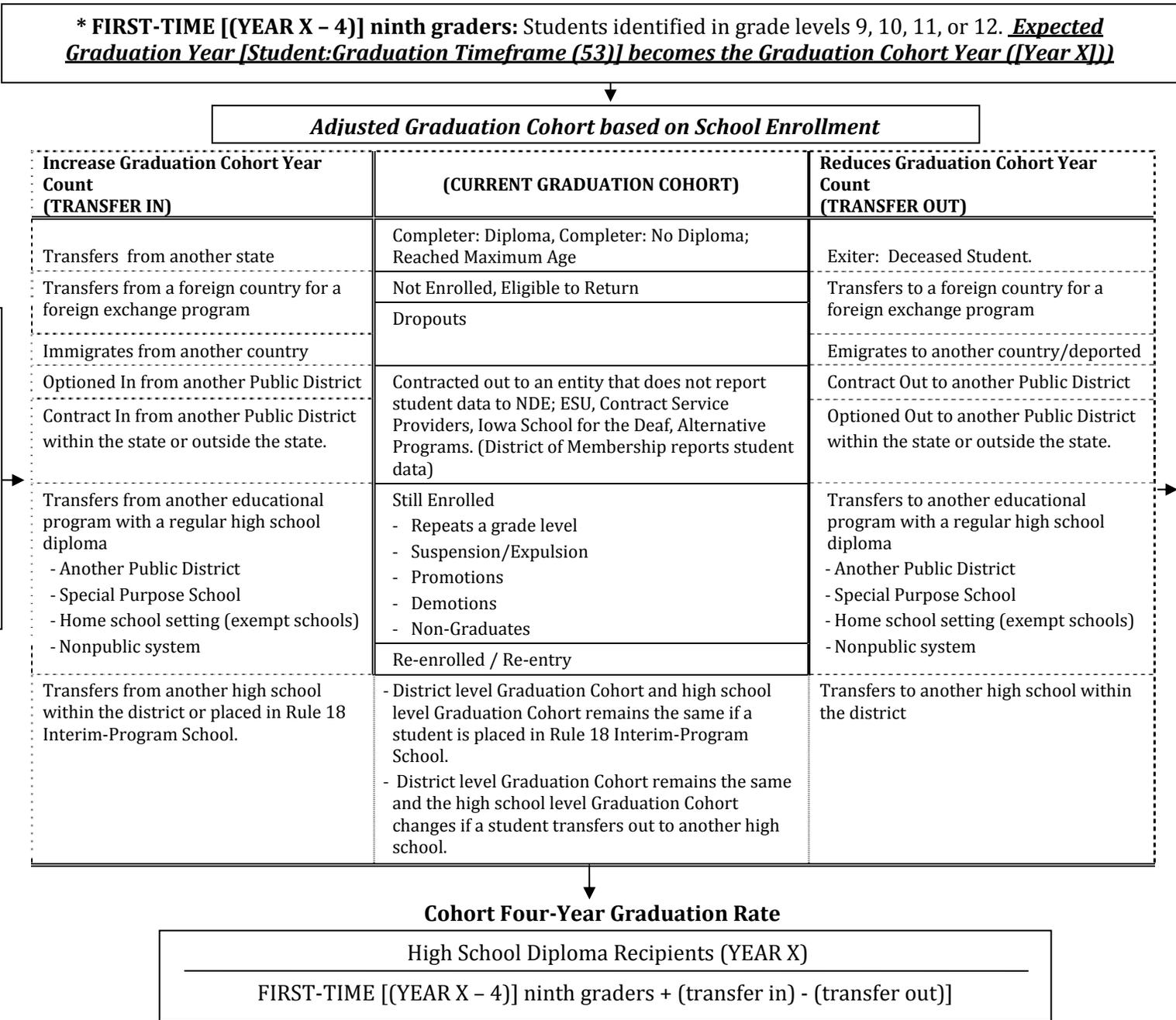
A student is assigned an Expected Graduation Year when he or she enters grade level nine for the first time. The Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) is based on the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) from students identified in grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12 in NSSRS. The *[Year X-4]* value in Figure 1 and 2 on page 5 and 6 are the fall of the school year in which students are ninth graders for the first time. If a student enters ninth grade for the first time in the spring or summer of a school year, the district must calculate the Expected Graduation Year from the fall of the school year (*[Year X-4]*). For example, the Expected Graduation Year is 2016 for a student promoted to grade level nine in the spring of the 2012-2013 school year (*[Year X-4]* or  $2016 - 4 = 2012$ ). In summary, the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) minus four equals the fall of the school year (*[Year X-4]*) when a student entered grade level nine for the first time.

A student with a Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) can be added to, removed from, or remain in the Current Graduation Cohort depending on the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment records for a student. In Figure 1 and 2 on page 5 and 6, the Current Graduation Cohort count is increased if a student transfers into a district. The Current Graduation Cohort count is reduced at a school and district level if a student transfers out of a district or is deceased; however, the Current Graduation Cohort count at a district level remains the same with an intra-district transfer out. A student emigrating to another country is considered a transfer out and written confirmation of the student's enrollment needs to be included in the student's file. The student's education file is maintained at the district. When a student transfers out to an in-state or out-of-state public district or nonpublic system, the receiving district/system should request an official document from the sending district/system (i.e. transcripts, etc).

In the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate (Figure 1, on page 5), the students in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate Student Roster receiving a regular high school diploma or '203' (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) are the only students in the numerator. The denominator consists of all students including students receiving a regular high school diploma, General Education Development diploma or credential (GED), certificate of attendance, certificate of achievement, or an alternative award. Other students in the denominator include: dropouts; students who continue enrollment; or students who pass the age to which the district is required to provide a free, public education.

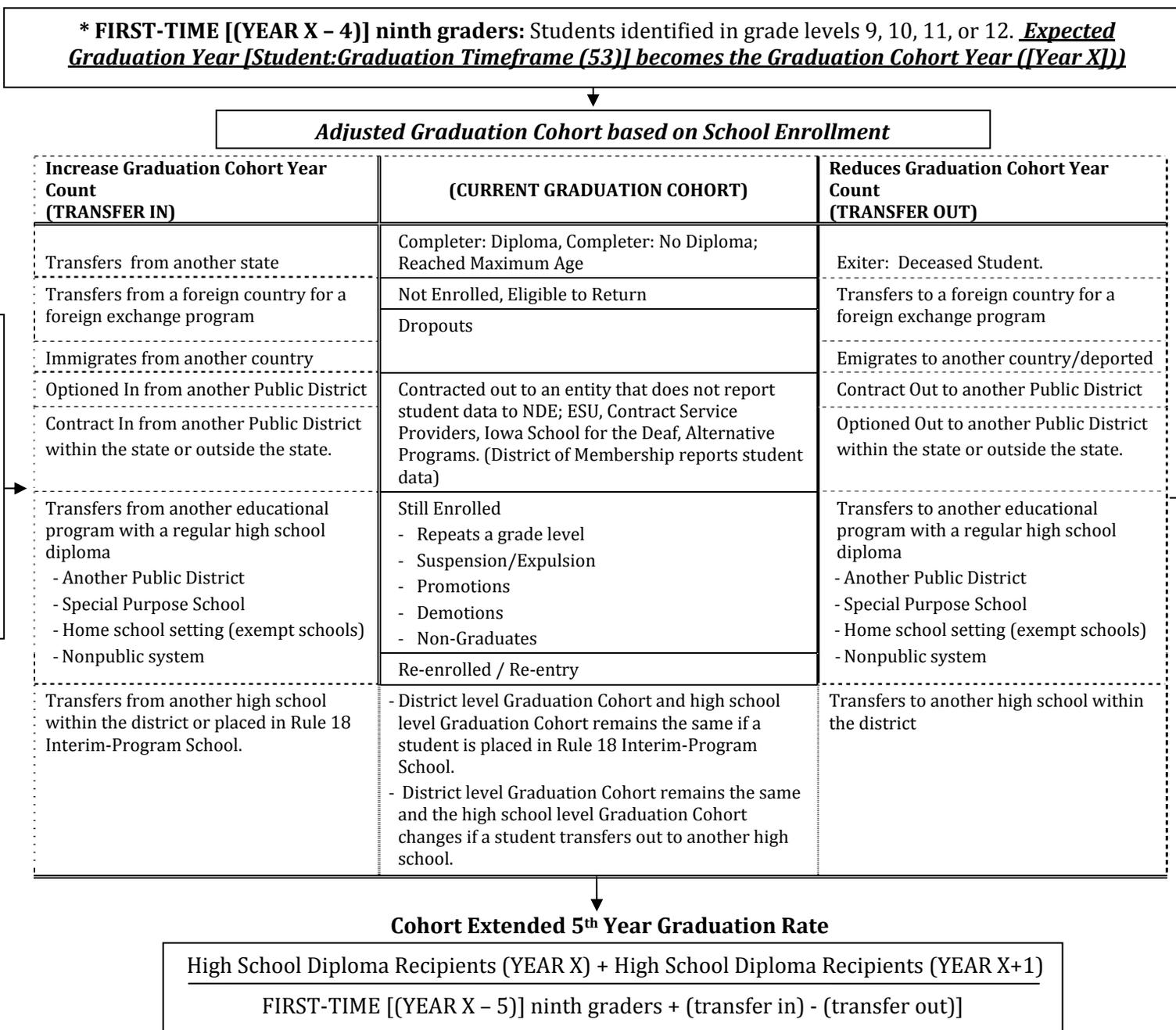
In the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate (Figure 2, on page 6), the students in the Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate Student Roster receiving a regular high school diploma or '203' (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) in the fourth year (on-time) plus the students who received a regular high school diploma in the fifth year are the only students in the numerator. The denominator consists of all students including students receiving a regular high school diploma, General Education Development diploma or credential (GED), certificate of attendance, certificate of achievement, or an alternative award. Other students in the denominator include: dropouts; students who continue enrollment; or students who pass the age to which the district is required to provide a free, public education.

**Figure 1. Graduation Cohort Determination Process Map (Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate)**



\* The FIRST-TIME [Year X-4] value is based on the fall of the school year in which students are in grade level nine for the first time.

**Figure 2. Graduation Cohort Determination Process Map (Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate)**



\* The FIRST-TIME [Year X-4] value is based on the fall of the school year in which students are in grade level nine for the first time.

## **Graduation Cohort Determination Business Rules**

The Graduation Cohort Determination Process Business Rules, as shown in Figure 3 on page 11, is a detailed diagram to evaluate the Student and School Enrollment records from NSSRS. The business rules extract the Student and School Enrollment data for the Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool (for further information, see page 16) and the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) (for further information, see page 16).

This procedure establishes:

1. The list of students assigned to a high school grade level;
2. The Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) from the Expected Graduation Year field ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) in the Student template;
3. The entry School Enrollment record for students who transfer into a school after the Graduation Cohort Year is assigned.
4. The placement of a student based on the School Enrollment records is shown in the Graduation Cohort Determination Process Map categories (Figure 1 and 2) on page 5 and 6; and
5. The combination of the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) and the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment records for a student.

### **Stage 1**

Stage 1, *All Students in High School*, determines a list of NDE Student IDs for the students assigned to a grade level in high school for each school year starting with the 2007-2008 school year (*[Year X-4]*).

**Stage 1-a.** The NDE Student IDs are collected for the students in grade levels 9, 10, 11, and 12 in the Student template.

**Stage 1-b.** The NDE Student IDs are evaluated to determine if an NDE Student ID is retired. The link is created in NSSRS between the retired NDE Student IDs and the active NDE Student ID to evaluate all records belonging to a student. Factors may vary to determine the active or the retired NDE Student ID.

## Stage 2

Stage 2, *Determine the Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]) – Expected Graduation Year Lookup (Starting Nebraska Graduation Cohort)*, evaluates the School Enrollment records for each student uploaded by districts to determine the Expected Graduation Year value. The Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) value becomes the Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]). The Stage 2 results are provided in the Expected Graduation Year Lookup tool (for further information, see page 16) and the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) (for further information, see page 16) by district or school level.

**Stage 2-a.** The active NDE Student IDs are evaluated to determine the earliest school year determined in Stage 1-a.

**Stage 2-b.** The active NDE Student IDs are identified in NSSRS in grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12 using the earliest entry School Enrollment record or using a dropout or not enrolled, eligible to return School Enrollment record in grade level nine. The earliest School Enrollment record is based on the earliest school year determined in Stage 2-a. The Expected Graduation Year is calculated by the district based on the student's first-time in grade level nine. The district calculates the Expected Graduation Year for a student in grade level nine by adding four years to the fall of the school year ([Year X-4]). For example, the Expected Graduation Year is 2012 in the Student template for a student in grade level nine in the 2008-2009 school year ([Year X-4]). If a student enters a public school in grade level ten in 2009-2010 but entered grade level nine for the first time in 2008-2009 in another state or nonpublic school, the student's Expected Graduation Year is 2012 in the Student template. (Please see FAQ A-12 for exempt or home school students.)

**Stage 2-c.** The district, school, and Expected Graduation Year data are collected for the active NDE Student IDs with a Student record but no School Enrollment record. A student belongs to a Graduation Cohort with a School Enrollment record (including the entry enrollment codes; dropout code; or not enrolled, eligible to return code) or a Student record. If a Student record exists in the Student template for a district, the student must have a School Enrollment record or the Student template record must be removed.

**Stage 2-d.** If the NDE Student ID is not found in the earliest school year, the subsequent school years are evaluated for the earliest enrollment record.

**Stage 2-e.** The active NDE Student IDs are evaluated to return a single Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]). There can be only one Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]) for a student. If an active NDE Student ID is assigned multiple Expected Graduation Years, the following steps are applied:

**Step 1.** The Expected Graduation Years assigned to a student below grade level nine are removed from the Graduation Cohort details. For example, a student was enrolled in grade level eight with a 2013 Expected Graduation Year and enrolled in grade level nine with a 2014 Expected Graduation Year; the Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]) indicator identifies the 2014 Expected Graduation Year as the Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]).

**Step 2.** The records remaining after Step 1 are evaluated to determine the earliest grade level in high school assigned to the NDE Student ID. For example, an NDE Student ID was assigned in grade level nine with a 2014 Expected Graduation Year and in grade level ten with a 2015 Expected Graduation Year; the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) indicator identifies the 2014 Expected Graduation Year as the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) and the higher grade level is removed from the Graduation Cohort details.

**Step 3.** The records are evaluated to determine the earliest Expected Graduation Year if multiple Expected Graduation Years are assigned to an NDE Student ID for the same grade level. (The grade level is determined to be the earliest grade level in Step 2.) For example, an NDE Student ID was assigned in grade level nine with a 2014 Expected Graduation Year from District A but a 2015 Expected Graduation Year from District B; the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) indicator identifies the 2014 Expected Graduation Year as the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) and the higher Expected Graduation Year is removed from the Graduation Cohort details.

### Stage 3

Stage 3, *Determine the Graduation Cohort – Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) – Current Enrollment (Current Graduation Cohort or Transfer Out)*, collects School Enrollment records to determine the placement of the student in a Graduation Cohort. A student with a Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) can transfer in, transfer out, or belong to the Current Graduation Cohort at a district or school level as shown in the Graduation Cohort Determination Process Maps (Figure 1 and 2). The student's maximum (most recent) School Enrollment record determines if a student transfers out or belongs to a Nebraska public Graduation Cohort. The results are provided in the Transfer Out and Current Graduation Cohort categories of the Graduation Cohort Analysis tool (G-CAT) by district or school level. For further information, see page 16.

**Stage 3-a.** The active NDE Student IDs are evaluated for the maximum (most recent) school year for each district and school on or after the earliest school year determined in Stage 1-a.

**Stage 3-b.** The active NDE Student IDs are evaluated for the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment records based on the maximum (most recent) school year determined in Stage 3-a for each district and school.

**Stage 3-c.** The active NDE Student IDs with a Student template record but without a School Enrollment record are placed in a Graduation Cohort for each district and school. If a Student record exists in the Student template for a district, the student must have a School Enrollment record or the Student template record must be removed. Districts with multiple high schools are evaluated to display the most recent school enrollment record for the district.

## Stage 4

Stage 4, *Determine the Graduation Cohort – Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) - Minimum Entry School Enrollment (Transfer-In)*, evaluates minimum entry School Enrollment records for the active NDE Student IDs in high schools that did not assign the Expected Graduation Year to the student. For example, a student transfers into another school after he or she is assigned an Expected Graduation Year. The student may be a transfer in from another public/nonpublic system or exempt (home) school, or contracts out or optioned out from another public district. The receiving school uploads an entry School Enrollment record for this student into NSSRS. The entry school enrollment record places the student in the Graduation Cohort at the receiving district. The Stage 4 results are provided in the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT). For further information, see page 16.

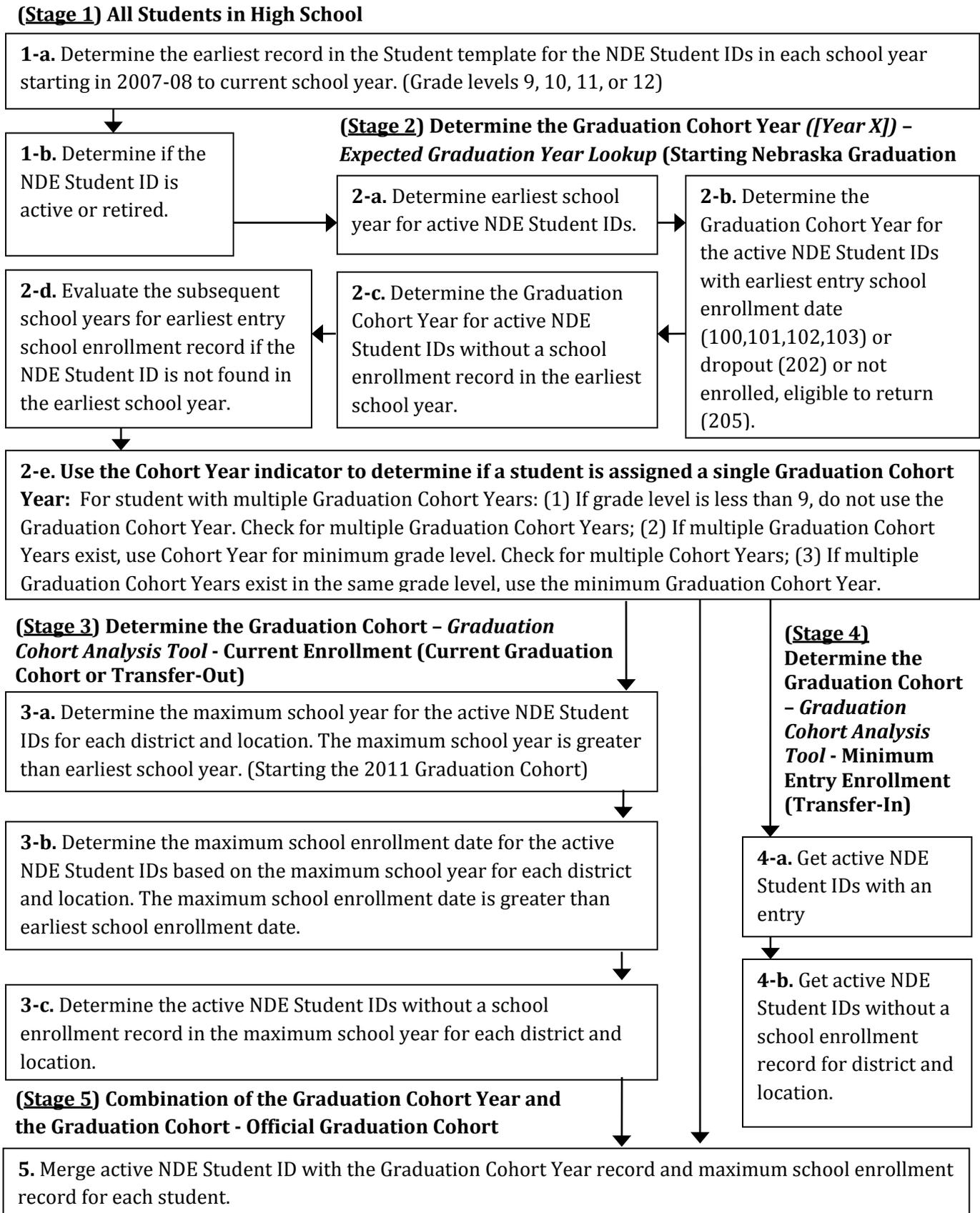
**Stage 4-a.** The active NDE Student IDs are collected for the earliest entry School Enrollment record for each district and school on or after the earliest school year determined in Stage 1-a.

**Stage 4-b.** The active NDE Student IDs are collected for students with a Student record but without a School Enrollment record for each district and school. If a Student record exists in the Student template for a district, the student must have a School Enrollment record or the Student template record must be removed.

## Stage 5

Stage 5, *Combination of the Graduation Cohort Year and the Graduation Cohort (Current Graduation Cohort or Transfer-Out) (Official Graduation Cohort)*, a student must have only one Graduation Cohort and one Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]) at a state level. The results from Stage 2, *the Graduation Cohort Year*, and Stage 3, *the Graduation Cohort*, are combined to provide an answer for an individual student. The records are compared from the school level to state level ensuring a student is identified with one Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]) and belonging to one Graduation Cohort at a high school.

**Figure 3. Graduation Cohort Determination Process Business Rules**



## **Impact of the School Enrollment Codes on the Graduation Cohort**

An overview of the impact of the School Enrollment codes on a Graduation Cohort is provided in Table 1 on page 13. A student entering high school becomes a member of a Graduation Cohort. The school enrollment records determine the placement of the student in a Graduation Cohort. The School Enrollment codes at the school and district level may vary the counts for the Graduation Cohort because a student may or may not belong to a Graduation Cohort.

The district and school level Graduation Cohort count increases if a student:

- Is assigned to a high school grade level; or
- Enters high school from an exempt (home) school; or
- Transfers in from public district or nonpublic system; or
- Leaves from grade level eight and enters high school.

The district and school level Graduation Cohort count remains the same if the student:

- Continues enrollment in school;
- Withdraws from high school, but then returns to school;
- Withdraws from high school, but is eligible to return;
- Drops out;
- Completes high school with a diploma or without a diploma (see A-23); or
- Passes the age to which the district is required to provide a free, public education.

The district and school level Graduation Cohort count decreases if the student:

- Transfers out of the public system; or
- Is deceased;

However, the student with an intra-district transfer out remains in the Graduation Cohort at a district level but the student is removed from the Current Graduation Cohort at the school level.

If the student has a maximum (most recent) school enrollment record of an intra-district transfer out (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 200), the student is included in the district's Graduation Cohort Rates but not the school's Graduation Cohort Rates.

**Table 1. Impact of the School Enrollment Codes on the Graduation Cohorts at the School and District Level**

**Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]**

		<u>Adjusted Cohort Affect on the Count</u>		
<u>School Enrollment Codes</u>		<u>School Level</u>	<u>District Level</u>	<u>**Definitions</u>
100 <sup>††</sup>	Still Enrolled	INCREASE or <i>REMAINS THE SAME</i>	INCREASE or <i>REMAINS THE SAME</i>	(or intra-district transfer in) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student/receiving education services and funding in the district/system.</li> <li>A student who had previously entered any class in a school and then continues his or her membership in the same school from one term to the next because of a promotion or demotion, or who transfers from one homeroom or class to another during a regular school session.</li> </ul>
101	Original Entry	INCREASE	INCREASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student enters a school for the first time. For example, a student enrolling in Kindergarten or Prekindergarten.</li> </ul>
102	Transfer In	INCREASE	INCREASE	(from another district, nonpublic system, state-operated system, institution or home school setting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student transferring from a private school.</li> <li>A student transferring from an institution.</li> <li>A student transferring from a home-school setting.</li> <li>A student transferring from another public district.</li> </ul> NOTE: Do not include if transferring between schools within the same district/system.
103 <sup>**</sup>	Re-entry	INCREASE or <i>REMAINS THE SAME</i>	INCREASE or <i>REMAINS THE SAME</i>	(after a withdrawal, whether voluntary or involuntary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student who had previously entered any class in a school and then re-enters the same school after he or she has left school for any reason whether voluntary or involuntary.</li> </ul>
200	Transfer Out – intra-district	DECREASE	<i>REMAINS THE SAME</i>	(within the same district) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student who transfers between schools within the same district/system.</li> <li>Do not use for end-of-year grade advancement.</li> <li>An entry enrollment code of 100 Still Enrolled should accompany or follow any exit enrollment code of 200 Transfer out – intra-district within the same school year.</li> <li>Only use the 200 code if the district has more than one school offering the same grade.</li> </ul>

\*\* Definitions come from the Student Template Instruction Manual (Nebraska Staff and Student Record System, Version 7.0.1 – May 3,2012)

†† If the student enters the ninth grade level for the first time or enrolls in another high school within the district, the Current Graduation Cohort count increases. If the student is part of the Graduation Cohort, the Cohort count remains the same.

\*\* If the student leaves the eighth grade level and returns in the ninth grade level, the Graduation Cohort count increases. If the student leaves the ninth grade level and returns during the high school years, the student continues to belong to the graduation cohort and the Graduation Cohort count remains the same.

		<b><u>Adjusted Cohort Affect on the Count</u></b>		
<b><u>School Enrollment Codes</u></b>		<b><u>School Level</u></b>	<b><u>District Level</u></b>	<b><u>**Definitions</u></b>
201	Transfer Out	DECREASE	DECREASE	(out of district/system) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student known to be receiving services in another district/system.</li> </ul>
202	Drop Out	REMAINS THE SAME	REMAINS THE SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student who withdrew for personal or academic reasons.</li> <li>• A student removed from the education system for other than health reasons, and whose return is not anticipated.</li> <li>• A student enrolled in adult education, or some type of program whose education services do not lead to a diploma or other credential recognized by the state.</li> <li>• A student who has not graduated or completed an approved program and is not enrolled and whose status is unknown; this includes a student withdrawn from the rolls for excessive absence.</li> <li>• A student who moved out of the district, out of state, or out of U.S. and is not known to be in school (includes any student whose education status cannot be confirmed either through a parent or other responsible adult or through some formal notification of transfer.)</li> <li>• A student in an institution that is not primarily educational (Army, or vocational program) and not considered a special school district/system.</li> <li>• A student who is disenrolled by a parent and does not enroll in another district/system.</li> <li>• A student who was suspended or expelled and the disciplinary period has expired and student has not returned.</li> <li>• A student who was expelled and chose not to participate in a district approved alternative education program.</li> </ul>
203	Completer: Diploma	REMAINS THE SAME	REMAINS THE SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student who completed an approved program of study and met district/system requirements for a high school diploma.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Includes District Approved Alternative Programs.</li> <li>○ Is the only category NDE uses to calculate graduation rates.</li> <li>○ Includes Special Education students that can be reported in either completion category depending on the language contained in the students Individual Education Program (IEP).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• DOES NOT INCLUDE persons receiving a diploma of high school equivalency. GED recipients are not counted as high school completers at this district/system.</li> </ul>
204	Completer: No Diploma	REMAINS THE SAME	REMAINS THE SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student who completed an approved program of study for high school completion, but did not meet district/system requirements for a diploma. This includes a student who completed a program of study that did not address state diploma requirements and received a certificate of achievement or attendance (e.g., some Special Education students' Individual Education Plans).</li> <li>• DOES NOT INCLUDE persons receiving a diploma of high school equivalency from the state (a student must be officially withdrawn from membership in order to take the GED tests). GED recipients are not counted as high school completers at this district/system UNLESS your board formally recognizes GED recipients (i.e., a school district/system awards a local high school diploma based on a student's successful completion of the GED tests), then they would be included in this category.</li> </ul>

**Adjusted Cohort Affect on the Count**

<b><u>School Enrollment Codes</u></b>	<b><u>School Level</u></b>	<b><u>District Level</u></b>	<b><u>**Definitions</u></b>
205 Not Enrolled, Eligible to Return	REMAINS THE SAME	REMAINS THE SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student not attending for disciplinary or other eligibility reasons, but is eligible to enroll at a later date.</li> <li>• A student experiencing a long-term medical condition that prevents him or her from receiving services, or is in drug treatment or rehabilitative centers, but is eligible to return to school.</li> <li>• A student enrolled in a foreign student exchange program and is eligible to return to school in the United States.</li> <li>• A student enrolled in a college program (early admission) but is eligible to return to graduate (such students often re-enroll and graduate on the same day).</li> <li>• A student under the compulsory age for school attendance withdrawn from school (usually for reasons of immaturity) but is eligible to return to school.</li> </ul>
206 Exiter: Deceased	DECREASE	DECREASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student who died.</li> </ul>
208 Reached Maximum Age	REMAINS THE SAME	REMAINS THE SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student who passed the age for which the state guarantees a free, appropriate public education and subsequently exited school.</li> </ul>

## **Graduation Cohort Determination Process**

The Graduation Cohort Determination Process Features Layout in Figure 4 on page 22 provides a summary of features for the Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool and Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT).

## **Graduation Cohort Tools**

### **Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool**

The Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool in Figure 4 - A on page 22 displays the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) for a student in NSSRS. The Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) is the Expected Graduation Year assigned by districts. The Expected Graduation Year for an NDE Student IDs is based on the earliest entry School Enrollment record for grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12. Only students in grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12 are placed in a Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*). If the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) is blank, no information was provided and must be corrected. In the Graduation Cohort Determination Process Business Rules (Figure 3), Stage 2 provides the strategy to evaluate records previously uploaded by the district to establish the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*). For further information, please see "*Quick Reference Guide – Expected Graduation Year Lookup Tool*".

### **Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT)**

The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool in Figure 4 - B on page 22 provides the ability to review high school students in a Graduation Cohort at a school or district level and manage several Graduation Cohorts. Districts attempting to track and correct student movement at the end of four years will be difficult. Public reporting of graduation rates includes demographic groups. The groups reported to the U.S. Department of Education for the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate are the Race/Ethnicity, Special Education Students, English Language Learners, and Students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) contains student data for several Graduation Cohort Years (*[Year X]*). An example of multiple Graduation Cohorts within a high school during a five year time period is shown in Table 2 below.

The objective is to review:

- The Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) for a student;
- The School Enrollment record in a Graduation Cohort for students transferring in and transferring out from a Graduation Cohort; and
- The list of students in the Current Graduation Cohort.

Table 2 displays the 2011 to 2015 Graduation Cohorts by school year starting in 2007-2008 school year (*[Year X-4]*). Graduation Cohorts do not overlap or repeat in the five year time frame. The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) begins to track Graduation Cohorts in grade level nine. Graduation Cohorts that form in future school years are represented with open cells and dash lines. For example, the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) in the 2010-2011 school year will track the 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 Graduation Cohorts but not the 2015 Graduation Cohort. The Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rates for 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 are determined four years after the Graduation Cohort begins in grade level nine. During the four years, districts should review the students belonging to a Current Graduation Cohort. The Current Graduation Cohort is updated each

night and follows the Graduation Cohort into the extended years. The Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate is calculated at the end of the four years and the student roster can be reviewed in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate Student Roster but not the extended graduation rates. The extended Cohort Graduation Rate for the Graduation Cohort is calculated at the end of the fifth year and can be reviewed in the Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate Student Roster.

**Table 2. Graduation Cohorts by Years – Example of Multiple Graduation Cohorts in High School during a Five Year time period.**

Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X])	School Year				
	First-Time [Year X-4]				First-Time([Year X-5])
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
2011					<i>Cohort Extended 5th Year Graduation Rate</i>
2012					
2013					
2014					
2015					

**B1. Graduation Cohort Report**

The Graduation Cohort reports in Figure 4 – B1 on page 22 provides the user the choice to review a group of students in a Graduation Cohort at the district or school reporting level for a selected Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]). For further information, please see “Quick Reference Guide – Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT)”.

The Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT) results page for the district or school level shows an aggregate count but districts can review the student rosters and the student’s school enrollment history. The results page displays the following information.

***B1a. Starting in a Graduation Cohort Report***

**Category ‘1’ (STARTING NEBRASKA GRADUATION COHORT) of the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT):** The student’s earliest School Enrollment in high school. The district assigns the Expected Graduation Year (Graduation Cohort Year *([Year X])*) to a student.

<b>The student*:</b>	<b>Enrollment code ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)])</b>
Promoted to high school grade level.	1XX
Transfers in from an educational program outside Nebraska.	1XX
Transfers in from a Nebraska public, nonpublic system or exempt (home) school.	1XX
Contracts in from outside Nebraska.	1XX
Optioned in from another public school.	1XX
Dropouts in grade level nine.	202
Not enrolled, eligible to return in grade level nine.	205

\*The NDE Student IDs are found in earliest School Enrollment record or student record in high school.

***B1b. Transfer-In Report***

**Category ‘2’ (TRANSFER IN) of the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT):** A student enrolls in a different Nebraska public school after a previous Nebraska public school assigned the student an Expected Graduation Year (Graduation Cohort Year *([Year X])*).

<b>The student with a Graduation Cohort Year belongs to the Nebraska public school if the student*:</b>	<b>Enrollment code ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)])</b>
Transfers in from an educational program outside Nebraska.	1XX
Transfers in from a Nebraska public, nonpublic system or exempt (home) school.	1XX
Contracts in from outside Nebraska.	1XX
Optioned in from another public school.	1XX

\*The NDE Student IDs identified with an entry School Enrollment code of 100, 101, 102, or 103 (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) and not in the Starting Nebraska Graduation Cohort (Category 1).

***B1c. Transfer-Out Report***

**Category '3' (TRANSFER OUT) of the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT):** The students in the Transfer-out category are based on maximum (most recent) School Enrollment records. Students removed from a Graduation Cohort need appropriate documentation to confirm the student is a transfer out.

<b>The student*:</b>	<b>Enrollment code ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)])</b>
Transfers out to an educational program outside Nebraska.	201
Transfers out to a Nebraska public, nonpublic system, or exempt (home) school.	201
Intra-district transfer at a school level (intra-district transfer out stays in the Graduation Cohort at a district level).	200
Optioning out to another Nebraska public district after being enrolled in the district of residence.	201
Contracts out to another Nebraska public system or school system outside Nebraska.	201
Deceased.	206

\*The NDE Student IDs are identified as a transfer out of the Graduation Cohort with a maximum (most recent) School Enrollment date and the enrollment code.

***B1d. Current Graduation Cohort Report***

**Category '4' (CURRENT GRADUATION COHORT) of the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT):**

The students in the Current Graduation Cohort category are based on maximum (most recent) School Enrollment records. The student rosters in the Current Graduation Cohort may or may not contain the students included in the Graduation Cohort Rates (Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate and the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate). Districts should review the Cohort Graduation Rate Student Rosters.

<b>The student*:</b>	<b>Enrollment code ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)])</b>
Continues enrollment in high school.	1XX
Withdraws from high school and then returns to school.	1XX
Withdraws from high school but is eligible to return.	205
Drops out.	202
Completed high school with a diploma.	203
Completes high school without a diploma.	204
Passed the age to which the district is required to provide a free, public education.	208
Intra-district transfer at a district level (intra-district transfer out is a transfer out of the Current Graduation Cohort at a school level).	200

\*The NDE Student IDs are identified in the Graduation Cohort with a maximum (most recent) School Enrollment date and the enrollment code.

***B1e. Unresolved Issues Report***

**Category 'UR' (UNRESOLVED ISSUES) of the Graduation Cohort Analysis Tool (G-CAT):**

Validation errors associated to the Graduation Cohort that must be resolved. Validation errors from multiple school years may exist for a single Graduation Cohort.

***B1f. Cohort Graduation Rate Student Rosters***

**Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate Student Roster:**

The student in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate Student Roster displays the students who are included in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate, the student's demographic group, and the school enrollment status.

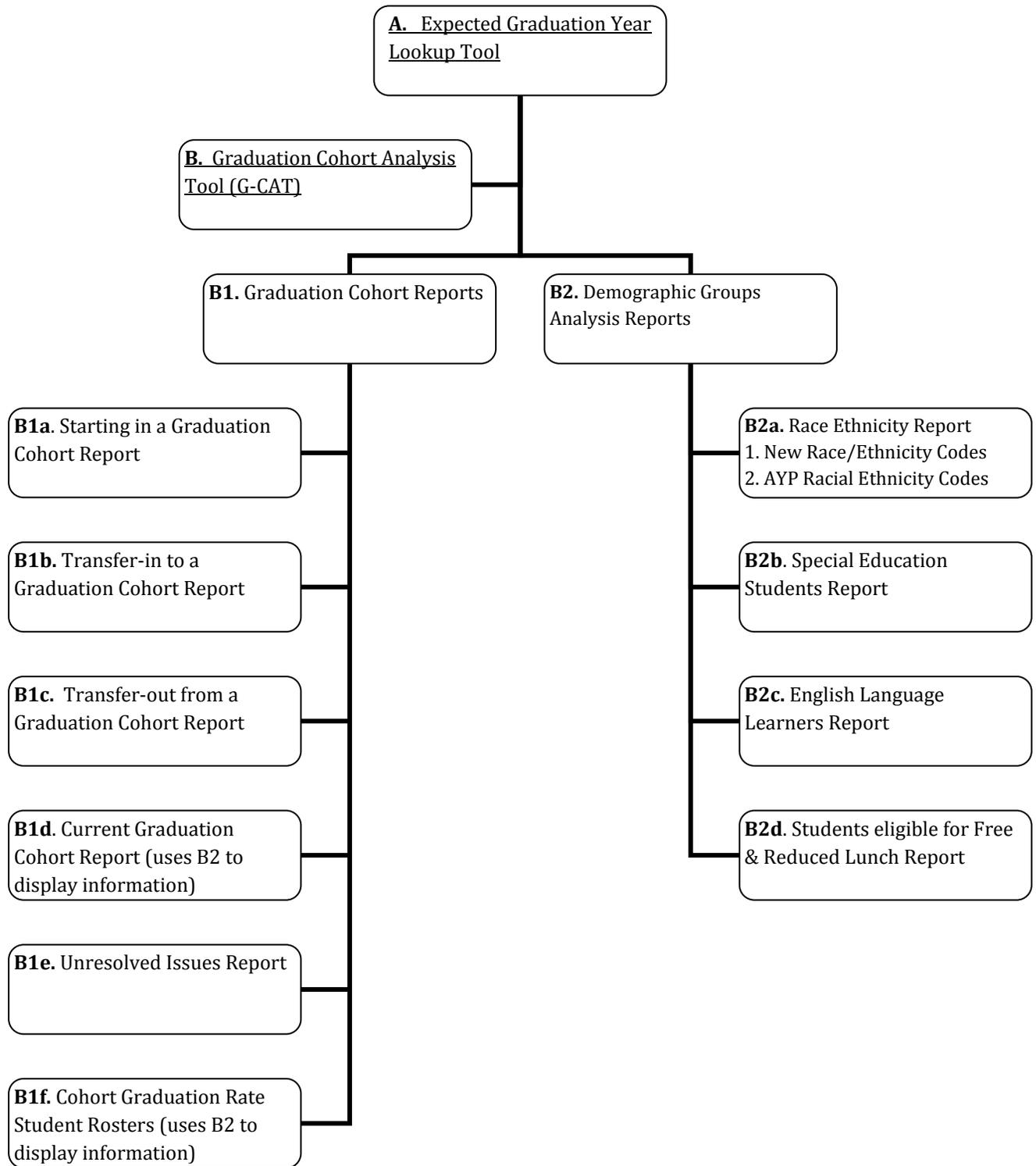
**Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate Student Roster:**

The students in the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate Student Roster displays the students who are included in the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate, the student's demographic group, and the school enrollment status.

**B2. Demographic Groups Analysis Reports in the Current Graduation Cohort**

The demographic groups for the current Graduation Cohort and the Cohort Graduation Rate Student Rosters are determined by the district. The report derives the data from previously uploaded records to NSSRS by districts based on the School Enrollment status of the students and the student's demographic group. The demographic groups report displays the district or school level current demographic group status for the student. The display also includes the Cohort Graduation rate and count.

**Figure 4. Graduation Cohort Determination Process Features Layout**



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **A -1 What is the Expected Graduation Year?**

The Expected Graduation Year is assigned by the district. The district adds four years to the fall of the school year when the student enters grade level nine for the first time and it remains unchanged. For example, the district assigns a 2016 Expected Graduation Year to a student entering grade level nine for the first time in the 2012-2013 school year.

### **A -2 Which students are assigned an Expected Graduation Year and how is it calculated?**

If a student enters grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12, the district adds four years to the fall of the school year (*[Year X - 4]*) when the student enters grade level nine for the first time and it remains unchanged. For example, the district staff assigns a 2016 Expected Graduation Year for a student entering grade level ten if the student entered grade level nine for the first time in the 2012-2013 school year.

If a student enters ninth grade for the first time in the spring or summer of a school year, the district must calculate the Expected Graduation Year from the fall of the same school year (*[Year X-4]*).

### **A -3 What is the Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X])?**

The Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) is the Expected Graduation Year. The Nebraska district assigns the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) to the student in the Student template record for a student in grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12.

### **A -4 What is a Graduation Cohort?**

A Graduation Cohort is the group of students sharing the same Expected Graduation Year either at a school, district, or state level. The Expected Graduation Year becomes the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) based on the Graduation Determination Process and it remains unchanged. For example, the 2016 Graduation Cohort is the group of students entering grade level nine for the first time in the 2012-2013 school year (*[Year X-4]*). A student can be added to, removed from, or remain in a Graduation Cohort depending on the maximum (most recent) School Enrollment record.

### **A -5 Does the Expected Graduation Year (Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X])) determine the graduating class or grade level?**

No, the district is responsible for assigning a student to a grade level. The graduating class is established when the district awards the student a high school diploma.

### **A -6 What is the difference between the class of 2011 and the 2011 Graduation Cohort?**

The Graduation Cohort is group of students at a high school sharing the same Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*). The Expected Graduation Year becomes the

Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) based on the Graduation Cohort Determination Process. The Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) does not change when a student graduates from high school. For example, a student belonging to the 2016 Graduation Cohort could graduate with the class of 2015, class of 2016, class of 2017, etc, depending on when he or she receives a regular high school diploma.

**A -7 Is the Expected Graduation Year assigned to a student by the district or NDE and when is a Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) established for a student?**

A district assigns an Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) to a student based on the student's first-time in grade level nine. The Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) becomes the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) based on the Graduation Cohort Determination Process.

**A -8 What is the Expected Graduation Year if the student enrolls in spring of a school year or summer school?**

The district assigns the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) to the student based on the calculation for a student entering grade level nine in the fall of the same school year (*[Year X-4]*). For example, a district assigns a 2016 Expected Graduation Year to a student enrolling on March 18 in the 2012-2013 school year if he or she is in grade level nine for the first time.

**A -9 If a student is promoted to grade level nine in the middle of the school year, what is the Expected Graduation Year for the student?**

The district assigns the Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) to the student based on the calculation for a student entering grade level nine in the fall of the same school year (*[Year X-4]*). For example, the Expected Graduation Year is 2016 if a student is promoted to grade level nine during the 2012-2013 school year (*[Year X-4]*).

**A -10 Before assigning an Expected Graduation Year, can a district allow for the first quarter for student testing to determine if grade level nine is appropriate?**

No.

**A -11 Can the Expected Graduation Year be updated during a period of time if a student in grade level nine gets demoted to grade level eight?**

No.

**A -12 How is the first-time in grade level nine determined for home-schooled students (i.e. students enrolled in an exempt (home) school)?**

Assigning students to grade levels remains a district responsibility. For exempt (home-schooled) students, a district must add four years to the fall of the school year (*[Year X-4]*) that the student would have been in grade level nine for the purpose of assigning the student's Expected Graduation Year.

**A -13 What if the student enters high school in grade levels 10, 11, or 12 but the student does not have a Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X])?**

The district enrolling a student without a Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) must assign an Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) to the student. The district can use the Expected Graduation Year lookup tool on the NSSRS Validation page to find a student's Graduation Cohort Year if another district in Nebraska has assigned the Expected Graduation Year. The Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) for a student is calculated based on the first-time the student enters grade level nine. The receiving or transfer in district may contact the previous public or nonpublic system, or use the official transcripts to determine when the student was in grade level nine for the first time. For example, a student without a Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) enters high school in the tenth grade level in the 2012-2013 school year. The district assigns the student a 2015 Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)]) because the student was enrolled in grade level nine for the first time in the 2011-2012 school year (*[Year X-4]*). This Expected Graduation Year becomes the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) and the student belongs to the 2015 Graduation Cohort.

**A -14 A student is in grade level nine in another state and transfers into a Nebraska school. Can the district review the student's credits before assigning the appropriate grade level and the Expected Graduation Year to the student?**

The district should check transcripts to see when the student was in grade level nine for the first time. Then, the district can add four years to the fall of that school year (*[Year X-4]*) for the purpose of assigning the student's Expected Graduation Year.

Under the current federal guidance, no provision exists to allow districts to use credits or age to re-assign a Graduation Cohort Year. The district is responsible for assigning grade levels to students.

**A -15 Can a district apply a deadline date or create a business rule to exclude a student from a Graduation Cohort after a specific date?**

No. Currently, no provision exists for a business rule or deadline date to exclude a high school student based on the entry School Enrollment date. For example, if a student belonging to the 2016 Graduation Cohort and the student transfers into a Nebraska high school in grade level twelve during the 2015-2016 school year, he or she is included in the 2016 Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate at the receiving district and school.

**A -16 Must a district need to sign an assurance form when assigning an Expected Graduation Year?**

No.

**A -17 If a Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]) (Expected Graduation Year) is not accurate, is there a correction process? For example, a tenth grade level student in 2009-2010 school year has an Expected Graduation Year of 2008.**

Yes, the Graduation Cohort Year (*[Year X]*) (Expected Graduation Year) may be corrected if the district that assigned the Graduation Cohort Year to the student

requests the correction and the NDE Helpdesk verifies the school enrollment for the student. If the Graduation Cohort Year was assigned by another district, the district may contact the other district to request a change to the Expected Graduation Year. Contact the NDE Helpdesk for assistance.

**A -18 What if a student transfers out from a Nebraska high school to another district/system? Does the student become a member of the Graduation Cohort at the sending or receiving high school?**

The student is a member of the Graduation Cohort at the receiving district/system and removed from the Graduation Cohort at the sending district. For example, a student was assigned an Expected Graduation Year of 2016 from high school A and the student transfers to high school B. He or she becomes part of the 2016 Graduation Cohort at high school B. The student cannot be in two different districts at the same time.

**A -19 What if a part-time student is enrolled in a public district but receiving the majority of his or her instruction from an exempt (home) school or nonpublic system?**

The public district can transfer out a student who completes his or her education at an exempt (home) school or nonpublic system. The district can upload a '201' School Enrollment record (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) to NSSRS to remove the student from the school's Graduation Cohort at the end of the school year and before the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate is calculated.

**A -20 What if a student is enrolled in multiple high schools within a district?**

The district is responsible to ensure the student is assigned to a single Graduation Cohort and place into only one high school before the Cohort Graduation Rates are calculated. The district can either upload a more recent School Enrollment record (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) to NSSRS to include the student from a school's Graduation Cohort or contact the NDE Help Desk to remove the incorrect school enrollment record.

**A -21 What if a student is enrolled in multiple high schools in more than one district?**

The district is responsible to ensure the student is assigned to a single Graduation Cohort. With the appropriate written documentation, the district can upload a '201' School Enrollment record (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) to NSSRS to remove the student from a school's Graduation Cohort and place the student into only one high school before the Cohort Graduation Rates are calculated.

**A -22 What is a Regular High School Diploma?**

A regular high school diploma is defined as the diploma awarded to students completing the graduation requirements as established by the district. It does not include certificates of achievement or attendance, alternative awards or General Education Development diploma or credential (GED). A student receiving a Regular

High School Diploma is coded as a '203' (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) on the School Enrollment template.

**A -23 What is the difference between a Regular High School Diploma, a General Education Development diploma or credential (GED), high school equivalency diploma, letter of attendance, or letter of certification?**

A regular high school diploma is awarded to students completing the graduation requirements as established by the state and district. The School Enrollment record for this student is coded as a "completer: diploma" (Enrollment code [School Enrollment: Enrollment Code (7)]) and is not eligible to be re-enrolled).

Under 92 NAC 81, a High School Equivalency Diploma is given to a person at least sixteen years of age who has. He or she officially withdrawn from mandatory attendance at a school, pursuant to Statute 79-202 R.R.S. and enrolls in the adult education classes. The General Education Development diploma or credential (GED) is also offered without enrolling in review classes to anyone eighteen years of age and older, has been a Nebraska resident for thirty days and out of school for at least sixty days. If it has been less than sixty days since withdrawal, he or she must have a waiver letter from the last school attended in order to test. Those persons receive their GED upon successful completion of the tests when they reach the age of eighteen or older. The student may re-enroll until he or she passes the age for which the state guarantees a free, appropriate public education.

The student who receives a GED, letter of attendance, or a letter of certification is a "Completer: No Diploma" (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 204). The student may re-enroll until he or she passes the age for which the state guarantees a free, appropriate public education.

If the district gives the student a high school diploma in exchange for his or her letter of successful completion of the GED tests, the School Enrollment record can be updated to a "Completer: No Diploma" (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 204).

**A -24 What documentation is required to confirm that a student has emigrated to another country?**

A school 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 emigrating 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. The note from an administrator is placed in student's cumulative file at the district. The file is not sent

to NDE. A note from an administrator is not official documentation for students transferring out to another district or state.

With the appropriate written documentation, the district can upload a "Transfer out" School Enrollment record (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 201) to NSSRS to remove the student from a school's Graduation Cohort.

**A -25 If a district contacts a high school to which a student has transferred and receives a verbal confirmation of a student's enrollment, what are the options for the school documenting the enrollment when the receiving school does not send written documentation?**

The student is considered a transfer out if the district creates a written record of the response from the official in the receiving school acknowledging the student's enrollment. An official in the receiving school is someone the institution has employed, contracted with, or has an official relationship with the school and he or she can access educational data to perform designated job functions. The written record containing enough specific information about the student should be included in the student file. The written record should serve as an audit trail to verify the student is a transfer out. At a minimum, NDE recommends sending a letter to the receiving high school indicating when the verbal confirmation of the student's enrollment occurred, the enrollment date of the student in the receiving district, and the name of the official who responded about the student's enrollment.

**A -26 Does the official documentation for a transfer out or transfer in need to be submitted to the State?**

No, the documentation is maintained at the district. The district must maintain a file in case of audit purposes. NDE does not need to receive the documents.

**A -27 Is a student part of a Graduation Cohort if the student completes the requirements for grade level 8 but does not enroll in the same district for grade level 9 in the following school year?**

Yes, the student becomes part of a Graduation Cohort at the high school if the district does not receive the appropriate written documentation to transfer the student. The student is enrolled as "not enrolled, eligible to return" or '205' (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) for the following school year but is considered a grade level 9 dropout or '202' (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) if the student does not return to school before the last Friday in September of the following year. For example, a student completes the requirements for grade level 8 in 2009-2010 school year but does not enroll the entire 2010-2011 school year or before the last Friday in September in 2011. The student is a ninth grade level dropout in the 2010-2011 school year.

**A -28 Does a foreign exchange student get assigned to a Graduation Cohort?**

Yes, an Expected Graduation Year must be assigned to all foreign exchange students served in high school. Foreign exchange students remain in the Graduation Cohort as do all other students. By definition, foreign exchange students enter into an “agreement” that they will return to their original school.

The district can decide to:

Upload a transfer out or ‘201’ (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) when the student leaves the district (even if the foreign exchange student receives a certificate of attendance, completion or regular high school diploma). This will remove the student from the cohort.

A consideration for the district and the student is that if a diploma is not the objective, it frees the student to take a variety of classes that provide multiple experiences to which most exchange students should be exposed;

Or

The district can decide if the transcripts are aligned with local classes. Assessments could be administered to determine mastery of core content and combining these results with the performance in classes taken at the district, it could be determined whether the student could receive a formal "official" regular high school diploma. The district will upload a school enrollment template with [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 203. If mastery is not demonstrated, an "honorary diploma" or certificate may be issued and the district will upload a school enrollment template with [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 204.

**A -29 How is a student’s enrollment record evaluated as a transfer in, transfer out, or remaining in a Graduation Cohort?**

The status of the School Enrollment record for a student at each high school determines if a student belongs to the Graduation Cohort. If the student’s maximum (most recent) School Enrollment date is an entry School Enrollment record; “Drop Out” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]= 202); “Not Enrolled, Eligible to Return” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] =205), he or she remains part of the Graduation Cohort; “Completer: No Diploma” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]= 204); or “Completer: Diploma” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]= 203).

The students who are removed from the Graduation Cohort include students who are a “Transfer out” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]=201) or has “Exiter:Deceased” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 206) are removed from the high school’s Graduation Cohort. With proper documentation (refer to A-24) a student who emigrates to another country can be reported as a transfer out.

**A -30 What if a student has a School Enrollment record with an entry and exit record on the same day at the same school, where is the student placed in the Graduation Cohort at a school?**

The student is included in the Graduation Cohort at the school. The district can upload a School Enrollment record with a more recent enrollment date to correct the school enrollment status of the student or contact the NDE Helpdesk to request a delete of one of the School Enrollment record.

**A -31 Can a student who turns 22 years of age or older during the year of their expected graduation be removed from a school's graduation cohort?**

No, the student remains in the Graduation Cohort. The enrollment of older students may create a situation where the student cannot graduate prior to reaching the age when the state is no longer required to provide services. Under the current regulations, there is no provision to permit states to remove such students from the graduation cohort. The district can upload the Maximum Age or '208' (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) school enrollment record to NSSRS. Students may be removed from a Graduation Cohort only upon written confirmation that a student has transferred, emigrated to another country, or deceased (34 C.F.R. 200.19(b)(1)(ii)(B)).

**A -32 How is the Graduation Cohort Year used in high school for the NeSA assessment?**

Starting in the 2010-11 testing administration of NeSA assessments, high school students were tested in their third year of high school. Testing occurs in the year prior to their Expected Graduation Year rather than their assigned grade level. A student's Expected Graduation Year or Graduation Cohort is determined by adding four years to the school year in which the student enters grade level nine for the first time. For example, a student with a Cohort Year of 2012 will take his/her assessment tests in 2011.

**A -33 Why retire the NDE Student ID for a student?**

NDE Student IDs are most often retired because a student is assigned more than one NDE Student ID. One of the student's NDE Student IDs is identified as the active NDE Student ID and the others are retired. An association is created by linking the retired NDE Student ID to the active NDE Student ID to track a student in NSSRS regardless of the number of unique NDE Student IDs associated to a student. The Graduation Cohort Determination Process evaluates the student's active NDE Student ID to avoid multiple NDE Student IDs representing a single student.

**A -34 Do special education students belong to the Graduation Cohort at a public district if they receive services to the age of 21 and they will not receive a regular high school diploma in the four year time frame of the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate?**

Yes, all students must be assigned an Expected Graduation Year ([Student: Expected Graduation Timeframe (53)] in the Student template. The district assigns the Expected Graduation Year to the student based on their determination of the grade level for the student. When the student has been determined to be a ninth grader

for the first time, the Expected Graduation Year would be set four years from the fall the student enters ninth grade level even if the student will not graduate in that timeframe. The Graduation Cohort Determination Process uses the Expected Graduation Year to place the student in a Graduation Cohort. The student's school enrollment record determines if a student belongs to a district/school's Graduation Cohort.

**A -35 Does a student belong to a Graduation Cohort if he or she is attending a high school with an FTE (Full Time Equivalence) less than one hundred percent?**

Yes, the student is part of a Graduation Cohort until the student is transferred out. The student should be included in the high school's Graduation Cohort where he or she is receiving a majority (51% or more) of his or her instruction. The percentage of FTE may or may not equal the majority of instruction. To remove a student from the graduation cohort at a district, the student's school enrollment status must be changed to a "Transfer Out" ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 201) because the majority of their instruction is at another district, nonpublic or exempt (home school),

The FTE field does not determine if a student belongs to a Graduation Cohort. The only way to remove a part time student from a Graduation Cohort is to "Transfer Out" ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 201) or "Exiter:Deceased" ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]) = 206.

**A -36 If a nonpublic or exempt (home school) student is receiving services or instruction from a public district, does this student belong to the high school's graduation cohort?**

Yes, the student belongs to the cohort until the public district transfers out the student by uploading a [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]=201 School Enrollment Template at the end of the school year to remove the student from the calculation of the Cohort Graduation Rates.

**A -37 Can a student return to the public district after completing their education at the exempt (home) school or nonpublic system and before age 21?**

Yes, when the student returns, the district can upload a "Transfer In" record ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] =102) School Enrollment Template at the time they return and the student will be included in the Cohort for the public district for any extended Cohort Graduation Rate calculations.

**A -38 If a student does not graduate in the Expected Graduation Year at district A and transfers into another school at district B, does a student belong to a school's Graduation Cohort?**

Yes, the student belongs to the Graduation Cohort at district B and will be included in any extended Cohort Graduation rate calculations but not in district B's Cohort Four-Year Graduation rate. The student will belong to district A's Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate but not in the extended Cohort Graduation Rate calculations.

**A -39 If a student is a dropout in the previous school year but found in current school year, can the student be transferred out of the district?**

Yes, the student can be transferred out and removed from the cohort, but may remain as a dropout in the previous school year.

If the district receives the appropriate documentation after the last Friday in September, the student remains a dropout. For example, a student was a dropout in the 2010-11 school year. The student remains a dropout even if the district receives a request for transcripts or determines the student is enrolled after the last Friday in September in the 2011-12 school year. However, the district can upload a “Transfer Out” record ([School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] =201) for the student after the last Friday in September in the 2011-2012 school year.

If the district receives the appropriate documentation on or before the last Friday in September, the district can upload a School Enrollment record of a “Transfer Out” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)] = 201) in the current school year.

**A-40 What are the rules regarding students of families who transfer out because of their parents military assignment?**

If the student meets all the criteria below and both states are members of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, the student can be counted as a regular diploma recipient at the sending district:

- Student transfers out during their senior year due to parent military assignment.
- Student does not meet the receiving district’s graduation requirements upon completion of the school year of the receiving district
- The student would have been able to meet the graduation requirements of the sending district.

The sending and receiving districts should work together to allow the student to fulfill the graduation requirements of the sending district. The student should be able to complete the necessary courses at the receiving district to accomplish the sending districts graduation requirements. The sending district would then award the student a diploma.

IF THE NEBRASKA DISTRICT IS THE:	ON THE ENROLLMENT DATE:	RECORD THE ENROLLMENT CODE:
<b>RECEIVING DISTRICT</b>	Student arrives at district	102 Transfer In
	End of the school year	201 Transfer Out
<b>SENDING DISTRICT</b>	Student moves to other state	201 Transfer Out
	Student receives diploma	203 Completer: Diploma

The Department of Education does not need to be involved in these discussions. The issue should be worked out between the school districts.

This does NOT apply if both the sending district and the receiving district are Nebraska school districts.

**A-41 If a student is taking 9<sup>th</sup> grade course work but has not yet been assigned as grade level nine, should this student be counted in the cohort?**

The student will not be included in a cohort until the student is assigned to grade level 9 by uploading a Student and School Enrollment record indicating the student is in the 9th grade.

**A-42 Can a student graduate with a regular high school diploma from two different districts?**

No, the district needs to contact the other district to determine when and where the student initially received a regular high school diploma. The district that needs the record removed can contact the NDE Help Desk.

**Graduation Cohort Reporting**

**B-1 When calculating the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate, is the demographic status of the student used for LEP, ELL, what year and Free and Reduced lunch?**

The final status of the student is determined by the district reporting the student in the Current Graduation Cohort. The Student template is used to evaluate the demographic status.

**B-2 Are summer school completers with high school diploma included in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate?**

Yes, the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate includes completers who earned a high school diploma up to the last Friday in September of the Graduation Cohort Year ([Year X]). This time frame allows summer school graduates to be included in the Graduation Cohort.

For example, a student in the 2016 Graduation Cohort completing high school with a regular high school diploma “Completer:Diploma” (Enrollment code [School Enrollment:Enrollment Code (7)]=203) on August 15, 2016 is in the numerator of the 2016 Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate. The addition of a student to the numerator improves the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate. \*The enrollment record needs to be uploaded within the End-of-the-Year collection for the school year when the student is expected to graduate in order to be counted in the numerator for the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate.

(\*Please reference the NSSRS Calendar for possible resubmission windows.)

### **B-3 What demographic groups are reported for the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate?**

The demographic groups reported at the final status for the student are:

- Race/Ethnicity,
- Special Education,
- English Language Learners, and
- Students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch.

### **B-4 How is a student identified for Race/Ethnicity?**

Beginning in 2010-2011 race/ethnicity is being reported in seven categories so that a student will be reported in only one of the categories. If a student is reported as Hispanic, the student will be included in this category. If the student is reported with more than one race category, the student will be reported in Two or More Races. The other categories are: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White.

For AYP purposes, NDE had to bridge the 2010-2011 school year data back to the five race/ethnicity categories. For more information on this process, see AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) on the NDE Federal Programs located at <http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Index.html>.

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, the seven race/ethnicity categories will be used for reporting data. The bridging back to the five race/ethnicity categories is no longer reported.

### **B-5 How is a student identified in Final Status as a Special Education Student?**

In the 2007-08 school year, a student record with a “Yes” value in the Student template (Verification Disability Flag [School Student:Special Education(38)]) is recognized as a Special Education Student.

After the 2007-08 school year, a student either has a Year-End Special Education Snapshot (Snapshot Date [Special Education Snapshot:Snapshot Date (35)]) and no exit date (Exit Date [Special Education Snapshot:Special Ed Exit Date (34)]) or a Year-End Special Education Snapshot (Snapshot Date [Special Education Snapshot:Snapshot Date (35)]) with an exit date (Exit Date [Special Education Snapshot:Special Ed Exit Date (34)]) but did not return to a full-time regular education program (Exit Reason [Special Education Snapshot:Primary Exit Reason Code (52)]).

**B-6 How is a student identified in the demographic groups for ELL and Students Eligible Free and Reduced Lunch?**

The district where the student remains in the cohort determines the ELL and Free and Reduced Lunch Status. Based on the student’s maximum school enrollment record, the ELL and Free and Reduced lunch status is identified from the corresponding Student Template

**B-7 Does a district need to consider the re-designation status of the ELL students in the Graduation Cohort demographic groups?**

No, the student’s ELL (English Language Learners) category is determined by the maximum (most recent) school enrollment status and the student template. The final status of the student is determined by the district reporting the student in the Current Graduation Cohort.

**B-8 Why does the Cohort Four Year Graduation Rate display differ on the State of the Schools Report (SOSR), Data Reporting Services (DRS) and the G-CAT?**

The reporting tools in the NSSRS Validation website (including the G-CAT) are meant to be dynamic and will change anytime data is uploaded. It should be noted that the graduation cohort determination process occurs nightly. Students reported in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate can be reviewed in the Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate Student Roster link on the G-CAT. Students reported in the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate can be reviewed in the Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate Student Roster link on the G-CAT.

The SOSR and DRS are static reports that are updated on specific dates or on demand.

**B-9 What does “lag” refer to when calculating graduation rates for AYP purposes?**

The “lag” for graduation rates allows states to use the previous year’s graduation data so that summer school graduates are included in the graduation rate calculation for reporting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). For example, a state would announce AYP determinations for the 2011-2012 school year prior to the start of the 2012-2013 school year using the graduation rate from the 2010-2011 school year (which includes students graduating in summer 2011). Lagging the graduation rate provides a state with a more complete picture of the on-time graduation rate and allows additional time to review and ensure the accuracy of the graduation rate data without delaying AYP determinations.

**B-10 What graduation rates will be used for future school years?**

Table 3 displays which graduation rate is used for a graduating class and if the rate is used for the AYP Determinations.

**Table 3. Regulatory Graduation Rate for School Years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15**

Graduation Cohort Rates	School Year for AYP Determination			
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate</b>	2011 Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate	2012 Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate	2013 Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate	2014 Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate
<b>Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate</b>		2011 Cohort Graduates plus 2011 Cohort 5 <sup>th</sup> year graduates	2012 Cohort Graduates plus 2012 Cohort 5 <sup>th</sup> year graduates	2013 Cohort Graduates plus 2013 Cohort 5 <sup>th</sup> year graduates

**B-11 What is the calculation for the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate?**

High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR X) + High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR X) +1

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FIRST-TIME [(YEAR X - 5)] ninth graders + (transfer in) - (transfer out)]

## **References**

Nebraska Department of Education. May 3, 2012. *Student Templates Instruction Manual*. Version 7.0.1 .

Nebraska Department of Education. September 30, 2009. *Who Reports What*.

U.S. Department of Education. October 2008. *A Uniform, Comparable Graduation Rate. How the final regulations for Title I hold schools, districts, and states accountable for improving graduation rates*. Washington: Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Education. December 22, 2008. *No Child Left Behind; High school Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance*. Washington: Department of Education.

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Federal Register Rules and Regulations. Title I – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Final Rule October 29, 2008. 34 CFR Part 200. Part III. Washington: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## **Appendix A - Change Summary**

### **Version 3.0.0**

**September 13, 2012**

1. Added references to the Cohort Extended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Rate.
2. Added FAQ A40, A41, A42, A43 and B-11.

### **Version 2.0.0**

**January 3, 2012**

1. Significant formatting changes.
2. Updated “grade” to “grade level” to distinguish the difference between a number, letter, or symbol indicating a student's level of accomplishment and a level of academic development in an elementary, middle, or secondary school.
3. Added additional information to “B1c. Transfer-Out Report” regarding option enrollment.
4. Replaced “subgroup demographics” with “demographic groups”.
5. Added FAQ: A-2, A-18, A-34, A-35, A-36, A-37, A-38, A-39, B-1, B-4, B-5, B-6, B-8.