

Local school boards are responsible for establishing high school graduation requirements. A regular high school diploma is defined as the diploma awarded to students who complete the graduation requirements as established by the district. It does not include certificates of achievement/attendance, alternative awards or General Education Diplomas (GED). The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) uses data submitted via Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS). The NDE uses the following graduation rates.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Graduation Rate

The NCES graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of high school diploma recipients by the total number of high school diploma recipients plus dropouts. The high school diploma recipients are completers who graduate with a regular high school diploma. The graduation rate definition allows for high school diploma recipients who graduate in the summer following grade 12. The graduation rate definition does not allow for the exclusion of dropouts or a dropout to be considered as a transfer.

$$\frac{\text{High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR 4)}}{\text{Dropouts [Grade 9 (YEAR 1) + Grade 10 (YEAR 2) + Grade 11 (YEAR 3) + Grade 12 (YEAR 4)] + High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR 4)}}$$

AYP Graduation Rate

For Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reporting as required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the graduation rate from the previous year is used because graduation rate data for the current year is not available in time to allow for the release of AYP data under the law's requirements. The high school diploma recipients are completers who graduate with a regular high school diploma. The graduation rate definition allows for high school diploma recipients who graduate in the summer following grade 12. The graduation rate definition does not allow for the exclusion of dropouts or a dropout to be considered as a transfer.

Nebraska Department of Education

Graduation Rate Definitions

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The AYP graduation rate will continue to be used for 2009-10 graduation data. NCLB requires districts to exclude any student who takes longer than four years to graduate but Nebraska has received approval in the Nebraska Accountability Workbook (Critical Element 7.1) to include the following students in the calculation of the graduation rate.

- Students with disabilities who graduate with a regular diploma in a program described in their Individualized Educational Program that may take five, six or seven years.
- English Language Learners who enroll for the first time in a U. S. School at some point in the middle or high school grades and graduate with a regular diploma in the fifth year of high school. Inclusion of ELL students must be made on a case-by-case basis determined by the district.

$$\frac{\text{High School Diploma Recipients [(YEAR 4) + ELL(YEAR 5) + SPED(YEAR 5,6,7)]}}{\text{Dropouts [Grade 9 (YEAR 1) + Grade 10 (YEAR 2) + Grade 11 (YEAR 3) + Grade 12 (YEAR 4)] + High School Diploma Recipients [(YEAR 4) + ELL (YEAR 5) + SPED (YEAR 5,6,7)]}}$$

Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate

The cohort four-year graduation rate will be used by NDE to calculate and report the graduation rate at the high school level starting with the 2011 cohort using NSSRS longitudinal data. A cohort represents the set of students sharing an expected graduation year. The expected graduation year is determined by adding four years to the school year when the student reaches 9th grade for the first time and remains unchanged. The 2011 cohort is the group of students who entered 9th grade for the first time in the 2007-08 school year.

The four-year graduation rate follows a cohort, or a group of students, who begin as first-time 9th graders in a particular school year and who graduate with a regular high school diploma (High School Diploma Recipients) in four years or less. The cohort is “adjusted” by adding any students transferring into the cohort and by subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die during the years covered by the rate. The graduation rate definition allows for high school diploma recipients who graduate in the summer following grade 12. The graduation rate definition does not allow for the exclusion of dropouts or a dropout to be considered as a transfer.

$$\frac{\text{High School Diploma Recipients (YEAR X)}}{\text{FIRST – TIME ninth graders [(YEAR X) – 4] + (transfer in) – (transfer out)}}$$

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