Implementing Graduation Counts: State Progress to Date

NGA Center for BEST PRACTICES

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The Compact Formula

Graduation Rate = [students graduating within four years with a regular or advanced diploma] ÷ [(first-time entering ninth graders four years earlier) + (transfers in) − (transfers out)]

In 2005 governors of all 50 states signed the Graduation Counts Compact and made an unprecedented commitment to a common method for calculating each state's high school graduation rate. In addition to agreeing to a common formula for calculating the graduation rate, the governors committed to leading efforts to improve state data collection, reporting, and analysis; reporting additional indicators of outcomes for students; and reporting annually on their progress toward improved high school graduation, completion, and dropout data. The governors undertook this commitment because they understand the imperative to gather more accurate, comparable data on how many of their students graduate from high school on time. They also understand the need to ensure all students graduate from high school and do so ready for college, work, and civic life. Governors know, however, they cannot fulfill this commitment to their students without a clearer understanding of the scope of the problem. The National Governors Association (NGA) supported the development of the Graduation Counts Compact through its Task Force on State High School Graduation Data and a companion Graduation Counts task force report.

To fulfill the final element of the Graduation Counts Compact—reporting progress annually—the NGA Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) gathered information from governors' offices and state education agencies about their plans and actions to implement the Compact graduation rate. The NGA Center will continue to provide reports on state implementation to highlight state progress and help build public and political will where progress has been slow. To acknowledge progress as it occurs, the NGA Center will post updates on state progress on the NGA Center Web site as new information is provided.

In 2006 13 states will report their graduation rate publicly according to the Compact formula; two states are using the Compact formula with local cohort data; and one state is reporting a sophisticated estimate consistent with the recommendations in the Graduation Counts task force report. By 2010, 39 states plan to report a graduation rate using the Compact definition. These states will begin reporting as they develop four or five years of longitudinal data capable of tracking students' progress from their first-time entry into the ninth grade through their exit from high school. Several states still are determining in what year they will report. Two states do not plan to report according to the Compact formula. Two states have codified the Compact rate: Colorado did so through state board regulations and Maryland did so through legislation.

Although many states already were taking steps to improve their high school graduation data before their governors signed the Graduation Counts Compact, the agreement has provided impetus for some states to start reporting a more accurate rate immediately, for other states to redouble their efforts to get a longitudinal data system fully operational, and for most states to seek comparability in the nuances of how they implement and calculate the Compact graduation rate. As the NGA Center gathered information about implementation, many state officials asked questions about certain aspects of the Compact formula and definitions and were eager for guidance to help ensure comparable implementation across states. This report also provides that additional guidance.

INTRODUCTION

In 2005 governors of all 50 states signed the Graduation Counts Compact, agreeing to a common formula for calculating each state's high school graduation rate. The NGA Task Force on State High School Graduation Data, which included researchers, national experts, and representatives from governors' offices and state education agencies, issued a companion report that provided the rationale for developing a common graduation rate formula and presented recommendations for the Compact rate, complementary indicators, improved state data systems, and communication strategies for building public support and understanding.[1]

The task force concluded the most accurate and reliable way of calculating the high school graduation rate is to count actual graduates relative to first-time entering ninth graders four years earlier using longitudinal, student-unit-record data. However, states do not need to have instituted fully a statewide data system with individual student level data to calculate the graduation rate using the Compact formula. States immediately can begin collecting the data necessary to calculate the Compact definition by asking schools and districts to report aggregate data on the number of students enrolled in ninth grade, the number of diploma recipients, and the number of students transferring in and out of the school. The state also can require, as many do, that transfers are verified with transcript requests from the receiving school. The state then can compile the numbers and produce a reasonably accurate estimate of the graduation rate without individual student data in the state data system.

Recent debates among national researchers have focused on which data sources and calculations provide the best *estimates* of high school graduation rates. The formula and method agreed to in the Graduation Counts Compact move beyond that debate by counting actual graduates. State-level student-unit-record data provide the most accurate way to count graduates and enrollment, but school reports aggregated at the state level can provide more reasonable proxies than most of the estimate methods states now are using.

The governors undertook the commitment to report an accurate, comparable graduation rate because they understand more accurate information on student outcomes is imperative for ensuring all students graduate from high school and do so ready for college, work, and civic life. As governors and other state leaders focus on improving high school outcomes, few factors are as important as knowing how many students graduate, complete alternative credentials, drop out, or otherwise leave the system. State leaders can craft effective strategies for solving a problem only if they have a clear understanding of its scope.

To reach the goal of improved, comparable high school graduation data, governors agreed to do the following.[2]

- Take steps to implement a standard, four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. States agreed to calculate the high school graduation rate by dividing the number of on-time graduates in a given year by the number of first-time entering ninth graders four years earlier. Graduates are those receiving a high school diploma. The denominator can be adjusted for transfers in and out of the system, and data systems ideally will track individual students with a longitudinal, student-unit-record data system. Special education students and recent immigrants with limited English proficiency can be assigned to different cohorts to allow them more time to graduate.
- Lead efforts to improve state data collection, strengthen reporting and analysis, and link data systems across the education pipeline, from preschool education through postsecondary education.
- Take steps to implement additional indicators that provide richer information and understanding about outcomes for students and how well the system is serving them. Additional indicators include five- or six-year cohort graduation rates, completion rates for those earning alternative credentials, in-grade retention rates, a college-readiness rate, and a high school dropout rate.
- Report annual progress on the improvement of their state high school graduation, completion, and dropout rate data.

States Codifying the Compact Rate

In 2006 the Colorado State Board of Education approved new regulations that codify the Compact formula for calculating a high school graduation rate. The graduating class of 2007 will be the first group of students tracked individually from 8th through 12th grade. The regulations establish formulas for calculating a dropout rate and a four-year graduation rate as well as five- and six-year graduation and completion rates. The state board defined when students with disabilities or limited English proficiency can be assigned to cohorts other than those graduating four years after entry into the ninth grade. The regulations address the documentation of transfers and direct schools to code as dropouts students whose transfer cannot be verified. Graduates are those who have completed all locally determined requirements for a high school diploma.

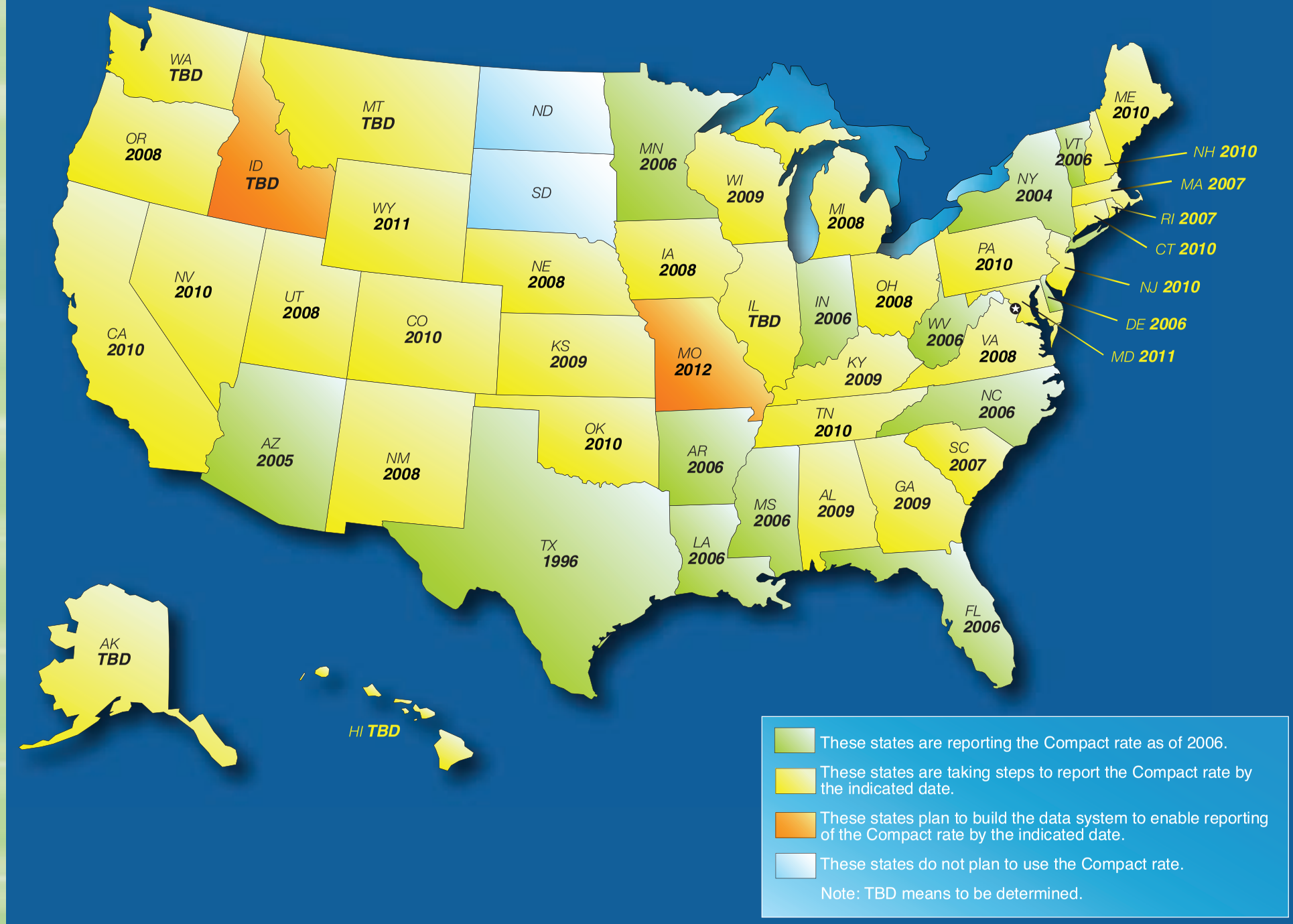
In the 2006 legislative session, the Maryland legislature passed and the governor signed into law a bill codifying the Compact graduation rate formula and defining key terms. The legislation also requires the state department of education to report the graduation rate and other indicators publicly, provide training, and implement a system for verifying the accuracy of the data collected and reported by schools and districts. It specifies graduates are regular diploma recipients and do not include those receiving a GED or other completion credential not aligned with state standards. Because the state data system will not allow the state to report the Compact rate using student-unit-record data until 2011, the legislation also includes a requirement for an estimated rate to be reported in the interim for state and NCLB reporting requirements. In addition, the law specifies that adjustments in cohort assignments are permissible for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

To fulfill the fourth element of "Graduation Counts: A Compact on State High School Graduation Data," the NGA Center for Best Practices gathered information from governor's offices and state education agencies about the progress states are making to implement the Compact rate. Before signing the Graduation Counts Compact, many states already were developing a longitudinal, student-unit-record data system with unique, statewide, student identifiers. Moreover, many already intended to begin employing more accurate graduation rate calculations using their student-unit-record data. However, the agreement has provided impetus for some states to start reporting a more accurate rate immediately, for other states to redouble their efforts to get a longitudinal data system fully operational, and for most states to seek comparability in the nuances of how they implement and calculate the Compact graduation rate.

Unfortunately, state data systems take time to construct and become fully operational. Once unique student identifiers are assigned and a state starts collecting data, it will be four years before the ninth graders in that year reach their expected graduation date. To ensure only first-time ninth graders are included in the cohort, states need to track students from the eighth grade. Consequently, states really need five years of individual student data to get the most accurate graduation rate calculation.

At least 39 states already are collecting the data and plan to report within four years; many will report sooner than that. In the meantime, most states are reporting their graduation rate using a formula known as the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) leaver rate. States could be using more accurate methods of estimating the graduation rate in the interim, but few have chosen to do so. Two states have no plans to report their high school graduation rate using the Compact formula. The map illustrates state plans for reporting the graduation rate according to the Compact formula. The Appendix provides additional information about state progress and policies on calculating and reporting the Compact high school graduation rate and other graduation or proxy measures.

State Use of the Compact Graduation Rate



States Ready to Report

Arizona, New York, and Texas already publicly report a graduation rate consistent with the rate agreed to in the Graduation Counts Compact. Ten states—Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Vermont, and West Virginia—will begin reporting the Compact rate publicly in 2006 for the class of 2005 or 2006. Florida has been reporting a similar rate that uses the same formula and student-unit-record data, though General Educational Development (GED) recipients are included as graduates. In 2006 Florida will report the Compact rate publicly for the class of 2005—counting regular diploma recipients only—alongside its traditionally calculated rate.

Arizona, New York, and Texas already report a rate consistent with the Compact definition for purposes of meeting the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) graduation rate requirements. Several other states are planning to start using the Compact formula to meet the NCLB requirements, including Arkansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Vermont. At least two additional states—Georgia and Virginia—plan to follow once they have the data to start reporting the Compact rate. Other states are considering the change.

Of the states ready to report, only three—Delaware, New York, and West Virginia—allow exceptions for special education or limited-English-proficient students. A limited number of these students, for whom it is determined to be educationally appropriate, can be assigned to a cohort graduating more than four years after the students enter ninth grade. States must take precautions to ensure the allowances do not permit or create incentives for schools to assign all at-risk or even all special education and limited-English-proficient students to later cohorts. The other 10 states reporting this year—Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas, and Vermont—will report a straight four-year graduation rate without allowing exceptions for any students. Among the states planning to report in later years, many are waiting to see what approach other states take and hoping to ensure greater comparability by following other states' lead.

Other States' Progress

To estimate its graduation rate more accurately, Washington is using a sophisticated method that is consistent with the recommendations in the Graduation Counts task force report. The state has taken important steps in policy and methodology that are described more fully in a later section. Washington officials already are using statewide student identifiers to collect individual student-unit-record data, which they will be able to use to calculate the graduation rate in 2009. Officials have not decided yet whether they will use the Compact formula or the state's current method once those data are available.

Three more states—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and South Carolina—plan to report the Compact graduation rate in 2007. Massachusetts will release data for the class of 2006 by early 2007. The others plan to report data for the class of 2007 later in the year. Eight more states—Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Utah, and Virginia—plan to report in 2008. By 2009 five more states plan to report and by 2010 another 10 states.

In the interim, Colorado and South Carolina are calculating a four-year cohort graduation rate that divides four-year graduates earning regular diplomas by first-time ninth graders four years earlier, adjusted for transfers. However, both states are using data collected at the local level to determine aggregate graduate, enrollment, and transfer counts. Each state is implementing a statewide data system with unique student identifiers that will be able to track individual students more

accurately. South Carolina plans to report using the more accurate data in 2007, and Colorado will do so in 2010.

Hawaii and Illinois are reporting a cohort rate that differs from the Compact rate in potentially significant ways. Hawaii calculates the percentage of first-time ninth graders who earn a regular diploma four years later, but it adjusts the denominator only for transfers out of the system—not for transfers to the state's schools. Illinois divides graduates by ninth graders four years earlier and adjusts for transfers in and out of the system. However, the state includes as graduates students receiving any type of diploma and does not distinguish graduates finishing in four years from those taking longer to graduate. Neither Hawaii nor Illinois has indicated whether it will make changes to its calculation to bring the state's rate more in line with the Compact formula.

Maryland and Wyoming plan to report in 2011, and Missouri estimates it will be ready by 2012. Maryland and Wyoming will have unique student identifiers assigned by fall 2007 and will track that year's ninth graders through high school. Missouri plans to have its data system fully operational to start collecting data on entering ninth graders in September 2008.

Alaska, Idaho, and Montana plan to switch to the Compact rate, but they have not determined a timeline for doing so. Two states—North Dakota and South Dakota—have no plans to change their graduation rate calculations to match the agreed-upon formula.

The State of State Data Systems

Nineteen states now have longitudinal, student-unit-record data systems with statewide student identifiers and at least four years of student data, which is the minimum required for calculating a four-year graduation rate. Five or more years of data are needed to count first-time ninth graders accurately. The remaining 31 states are developing their data systems and assembling four to five years of data for the first cohort, but each of these states is at a very different point in the process. Many states already have the system built, are collecting student data, and plan to report the Compact graduation rate as soon as they have four or five years of data by which they can track a cohort's progress through high school. A few states still are struggling to fully build their data systems, assign unique student identifiers, and begin collecting the necessary data.

The National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) surveys states annually on the status of longitudinal, student-unit-record data systems. The NCEA report provides a more extensive description of state data systems than is possible in this publication. For this report, the NGA Center asked states whether they had such systems, for how long they have had such systems, and when they would have enough data in the system to calculate the Compact graduation rate. The 2005 NCEA report is available but already out of date for many states. NCEA expects to report the results of the most recent survey in November 2006. For more information about the status of state longitudinal, student-unit-record data systems, visit *http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/.*

What States Are Reporting in the Interim

Of the states that cannot report using the Graduation Counts Compact formula as of 2006, a few are reporting a cohort rate similar to—but different in significant ways from—the Compact definition. As previously noted, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, South Carolina, and Washington report a cohort rate. The rate calculation in Illinois does not limit graduates to those graduating in four years. Hawaii does not add student transfers to the state. Washington has a unique method for calculating a cohort estimate rate.

Thirty-eight states are reporting the NCES leaver rate instead of or in addition to the Compact rate. The leaver rate divides the number of graduates by an estimated cohort constructed by adding the sum of graduates plus other completers and cumulative dropouts for the previous four years. In calculating this rate, most states only count regular diploma recipients. However, this formula typically does not measure the percentage of ninth graders graduating within four years; it includes all graduates in a given year, regardless of whether they have taken four or more

years to complete high school. The formula also uses graduate and cumulative dropout counts, not actual enrollment counts, to estimate the ninth-grade class four years earlier. Some states are refining estimated ninth-grade enrollment further by adding alternative completers and retained students. Although this refinement improves the estimate of the ninth-grade-cohort, it is still an estimate and based on dropout counts. These calculations tend to inflate the graduation rate because the dropout and completer data exclude from the denominator all students who leave the system without official notice or whose whereabouts are unknown.

Among the most inaccurate rates is one that expresses high school graduates as the percentage of 12th graders in the fall who receive a diploma in the spring. One state currently reports a 12th-grade graduation rate, which does not account for the significant number of students dropping out before they reach the 12th grade. Recognizing the limitations of the leaver rate, 12th-grade completion rates, and other similar calculations, most states are moving toward implementation of the formula agreed to in the Graduation Counts Compact.

Short-Term Action to Improve Data

The Graduation Counts task force report noted some short-term actions states could take to improve their graduation data more immediately if the student-unit-record data would not be available for more than a year. For example, states could develop guidelines for schools and districts on how to collect and code student data, adopt a policy that students whose status is unknown be coded as dropouts, and conduct audits of local recordkeeping and data collection. As previously noted, states also could adopt interim methods of calculation that do not require statewide student identifiers and a student-unit record data system but instead rely on aggregate enrollment and graduation data. For more information, see the full report at *http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0507GRAD.PDF.*

Most states have a policy that considers and codes as a dropout any student whose location or status is unknown, though this policy is complied with unevenly. It is critical for states to create guidelines and standards for the use and documentation of student exit codes, provide training in their application, analyze data to flag and investigate suspicious patterns in how students are being coded, and establish data audits to check local data collection and recordkeeping. Transfers to private schools, home schools, or out-of-state schools are harder to verify, and schools may be tempted to report missing students as transfers to these types of schools rather than identify them as dropouts or commit resources to tracking these students' status. States should monitor school data and investigate unusually high percentages, or increased percentages, of transfers to private, home, or out-of-state schools.

Many states encourage or advise schools and districts to confirm transfers with transcript requests or other documentation from the receiving school. Few states have established procedures for ensuring such documentation is sought and maintained. However, many are developing those checks and audit procedures as their student-unit-record data systems come online. In such a data system, a student cannot be enrolled in more than one school at a time. If a student transfers without notifying the previous school, the record system will catch the problem when the new school enrolls the student. The system will force the two schools to reconcile their data and correctly identify the student with one school or the other. States also are setting up systems to flag for investigation students one school says have transferred out but who have not shown up in the system as enrolled elsewhere. States then can ensure the school where the student was last enrolled verifies the transfer or counts the student as a dropout.

Few states are reporting estimate measures, such as the Cumulative Promotion Index created by Christopher Swanson and most recently reported in *Education Week's* Diplomas Count report, the method used by Jay Greene at the Manhattan Institute and the University of Arkansas, or the Average

Freshman Graduation Rate recently calculated and reported by the National Center for Education Statistics. Nor are most states using school-reported data for ninth-grade enrollment, diploma counts, and transfers—all of which schools currently have and already report—to calculate estimates that would be more accurate than the estimate measures most now are using. Colorado and South Carolina are the exceptions.

Virginia is reporting an estimated completion measure along with the NCES leaver rate. The state calculates the estimate using the number of actual completers in a given year divided by the number of students enrolled in grade nine four years earlier. This rate does not exclude students who take more than four years to graduate or earn alternative credentials, and it is not adjusted for transfers in and out or for students who are repeating the ninth grade, which can be a significant number of students.

Washington has its own method for estimating the graduation rate. Beginning with the class of 2002, it began using new methods for calculating on-time and extended graduation rates. Recognizing district limitations in maintaining data on students who drop out, the state decided to use current-year dropout data as proxies for previous years. The assumption is that the current year's dropout rate is the same as that which occurred in previous years when the students in the cohort were in those grades. The calculation also accounts for transfer students. By also enacting strict policies for transfer verification that require schools to code as a dropout any student whose status cannot be verified and documented, the state has created a more accurate estimate. State officials have found their estimated results are consistent with those found by other researchers who have used different and more complex methods to estimate cohort graduation rates. However, the rate is still an estimate. Washington will have a full cohort in its longitudinal, student-unit-record data system by 2008, and the state will calculate its graduation rate using that data in 2009, at the very least as a check on the estimate measure.

Additional Guidance on Implementation of the Compact Rate

In collecting information for this progress report, the NGA Center for Best Practices discovered that states are anxious for additional guidance on how to implement the Compact formula to help ensure comparability across states. The NGA Center joined forces with the Council of Chief State School Officers to convene a working group of state education agency personnel to develop consensus on some of the outstanding issues and concerns.

States differ greatly in their policies, standards, course content and rigor, and interventions for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency. Most significantly, state and local requirements for graduation vary considerably and are never likely to be uniform. The graduation rate calculation cannot and should not demand or create uniformity in all areas of state education policy. However, states with longitudinal student data systems can produce a graduation rate that is generally comparable across states. For calculations and comparisons at the state level, variations in how certain elements are defined or treated at the school level will not affect comparability across states. For example, every state does not need to define a school in the same way, and states can make individual decisions about how to count transfers at the school level, especially when there are high-stakes accountability measures attached to the calculation.

States can follow certain guidelines to help ensure greater uniformity and comparability in the graduation rate.

- The numerator should include all students who graduate within four years of entering the ninth grade. Students who graduate in less than four years should not count against a state or school in the calculation of the graduation rate.
- The numerator also should include students receiving regular and advanced diplomas, but it should not include students receiving a nondiploma credential, such as a GED, a certificate of completion, or a certificate of attendance.

- Summer graduates (i.e., those graduating in the summer of the fourth year) may be counted as finishing high school within four years.
- States do not need to have a longitudinal, student-unit-record data system to calculate the Compact graduation rate. Individual student data are preferable. However, since it takes time to build these data systems and collect full data for the first cohort of entering ninth graders, states can use school-based enrollment, diploma, and transfer counts. Schools already have these data and usually already report them to the state. A state then can aggregate these data to get an estimated graduation rate that is more reliable than other estimate calculations. Once a state has individual student data in its system, it can switch to calculating the rate with those data. To ensure greater reliability, states calculating this estimate should require schools to document transfers with transcript requests from the receiving school.
- A few states are choosing to allow limited exceptions for special education and limited-English-proficient students. Limited numbers of students in these groups expected to take more than four years to graduate can be assigned to the cohort with whom they are expected to graduate rather than the cohort with whom they entered ninth grade. To provide complete transparency, states planning to allow these exceptions should report the number and percentage of students to whom the exceptions apply. Other states and outside observers can weigh that information as they compare rates among states using the exceptions and those not using them. States using the exceptions should exercise caution to ensure the allowances do not create incentives for schools to assign more students to these groups and give them more time to graduate as a way to avoid lower four-year graduation rates. The exceptions, if used at all, should not apply to all special education or limited-English-proficient students, but to a limited number for whom it is deemed educationally appropriate.
- Each state should include in state-level calculations of the graduation rate all students enrolled in the state's schools, even students who arrive late in the senior year. Any student who transfers to a school within the state, even if just for one day, should be added to the appropriate cohort; if the student transfers out again, he or she should be removed from the cohort. The state should count that student as a graduate if he or she graduates and as a dropout or continuing student if he or she does not graduate. Late transfers should not be left out of a cohort altogether.
- When considering transfers, a state or district receiving a student does have the right to classify the student's year in high school according to the state's or district's own requirements. If a student arrives without enough credits to be classified as a sophomore, even if the student had been promoted to the 10th grade in another state or district, the receiving state or district legitimately can classify the student as a ninth grader.
- The most formidable challenge for states is students who leave the state system by moving out of state or out of the country, transferring to a private school, transferring to a home school, or dropping out. Because schools in other states, private schools, and home schools have no obligation to confirm the enrollment of students coming from a state's public schools, it is difficult to document such transfers. Even states that have established requirements and procedures concede the status of students who leave their public schools is difficult to track and document. Consequently, states also must monitor data and investigate unusual patterns and high numbers of transfers that are hard to document. States also should use random audits to check local recordkeeping.

- Another category of transfers includes students who leave school to enter the juvenile justice system. Generally, if an incarcerated student receives educational services that lead to a standard high school diploma, that student can remain in the state-level cohort and could potentially be included as a graduate. If an incarcerated student is not receiving services, that student should be considered a dropout. If the student returns to a public school, he or she should be reclassified as an enrolled and continuing student.
- States should not assume that students not graduating within four years are dropouts. The task force recommended and the Graduation Counts Compact specifies that additional indicators—such as five- and six-year graduation rates, alternative completion rates, and dropout rates—are necessary to account for multiple outcomes and capture the number of students who graduate late, receive alternative credentials, or drop out. A complementary five-year graduation rate would add members of the cohort graduating within five years to the numerator; a six-year rate would add students graduating within six years. A complementary completion rate would add students earning alternative credentials, such as a GED or certificate of attendance. It also is critical for states to examine in-grade retention rates to shed light on the numbers of students retained in grades eight and nine.

CONCLUSION

Governors are taking the lead—and states are making progress—in improving the quality and accuracy of the high school graduation rate they report. However, much remains to be done. All states could begin reporting a graduation rate based on school- and district-reported diploma, enrollment, and transfer counts. However, longitudinal data collected using unique, statewide student identifiers are the most accurate. Most states are waiting for these more accurate data to report a graduation rate using the Compact formula. States that had a head start developing their student identifiers and data systems already report the Compact graduation rate or will do so by the end of 2006.

Even when a state has the data necessary to calculate the Compact rate, there are additional challenges. It is critical for states to provide guidance and training to school and district personnel who collect and enter student information. In addition, state leaders should enact and enforce state policies that promote accurate data collection and analyses, such as one requiring students whose status is unknown be coded as dropouts. State leaders also must create policies and procedures for monitoring, verifying, and auditing data.

The NGA Center for Best Practices will continue to work with states to provide guidance, share lessons learned, and facilitate access to national experts. It also will continue to report state progress toward full implementation of the Graduation Counts Compact, including the common formula for a four-year high school graduation rate, as well as commitments to improve data systems and report additional indicators. Finally, the NGA Center will continue to collaborate with other national organizations and experts to help governors and other state leaders enact the policies and build the data systems they need to ensure higher quality graduation data, all with an eye toward improving high school graduation rates and ensuring students graduate ready for college, career, and civic life.

1 National Governors Association, *Graduation Counts: A Report of the National Governors Association Task Force on State High School Graduation Data* (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association, 2005), at: http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0507GRAD.PDF.

2 Graduation Counts: A Compact on State High School Graduation Data at: http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0507GRADCOMPACT.PDF.

Appendix: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

State	When will the state report the Compact rate?	For what does the state use the Compact rate?	If not the Compact rate, what graduation rate formula or other measure is the state using? **	For what does the state use the non-Compact rate?	Does the numerator count standard diplomas only? *
Alabama	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Alaska	To Be Determined	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Arizona	2005	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes
Arkansas	2006	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes
California	2010	NA	Composite Ratio and NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and State Accountability (Composite) Federal Accountability (NCES)	Yes
Colorado	2010	NA	Cohort Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes
Connecticut	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes
Delaware	2006	Public Reporting	NCES Leaver Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes
Florida	2006	Public Reporting	Cohort Completion Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Georgia	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Hawaii	To Be Determined	NA	Cohort Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Idaho	To Be Determined	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No
Illinois	To Be Determined	NA	Cohort Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Indiana	2006	Public Reporting	Persistence Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Iowa	2008	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Kansas	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Kentucky	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes
Louisiana	2006	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes
Maine	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting	Yes
Maryland	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Massachusetts	2007	NA	NA	NA	NA
Michigan	2008	NA	Retention Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Minnesota	2006	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Mississippi	2006	Public Reporting	Cohort Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes
Missouri	2012	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No
Montana	To Be Determined	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes

State	When will the state report the Compact rate?	For what does the state use the Compact rate?	If not the Compact rate, what graduation rate formula or other measure is the state using? **	For what does the state use the non-Compact rate?	Does the numerator count standard diplomas only? *
Nebraska	2008	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting	Yes
Nevada	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes
New Hampshire	2010	NA	Dropout Rate and Completer Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
New Jersey	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
New Mexico	2008	NA	12th Grade Graduation Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
New York	2004	Public Reporting (2004) State and Federal Accountability (2007)	NA	NA	Yes
North Carolina	2006	Public Reporting (2006) State and Federal Accountability (2007)	On-time Rate	State and Federal Accountability	Yes
North Dakota		NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Ohio	2008	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Oklahoma	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Oregon	2008	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes
Pennsylvania	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes
Rhode Island	2007	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes
South Carolina	2007	NA	Cohort Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
South Dakota		NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Tennessee	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Texas	1996	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes
Utah	2008	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Vermont	2006	State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes
Virginia	2008	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes
Washington	To Be Determined	NA	Cohort Estimate Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
West Virginia	2006	Public Reporting	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Wisconsin	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes
Wyoming	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes

NOTES: * *If a state currently reports the Compact rate, its response to the question applies to that rate. If not, the response applies to the rate that is currently reported.*
** *Some states reporting the Compact rate also continue to use another measure for accountability requirements.*
SUR means student-unit-record
NA means not applicable

State	Does the numerator count on-time graduates only?*	Do the states using the Compact rate allow students with disabilities and limited English proficiency to be assigned to different cohorts?	Is the default code for unknown student status "dropout?"	Does the state have a student-unit-record system with at least four years of data?	How does the state verify transfers?
Alabama	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Alaska	No	NA	Yes	Yes	Districts
Arizona	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NA
Arkansas	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Developing
California	No	NA	Yes	Developing	Developing
Colorado	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Connecticut	No	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Delaware	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SUR
Florida	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	State Audit
Georgia	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Hawaii	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	State Audit
Idaho	No	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Illinois	No	NA	Yes	Developing	Districts
Indiana	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	SUR/State Audit
Iowa	No	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Kansas	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Kentucky	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR/State Audit
Louisiana	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	State Audit
Maine	No	NA	Yes	Developing	Districts
Maryland	No	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Massachusetts	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	Developing
Michigan	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Minnesota	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Financial Data
Mississippi	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	State Audit
Missouri	No	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Montana	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	Developing

State	Does the numerator count on-time graduates only?*	Do the states using the Compact rate allow students with disabilities and limited English proficiency to be assigned to different cohorts?	Is the default code for unknown student status "dropout?"	Does the state have a student-unit-record system with at least four years of data?	How does the state verify transfers?
Nebraska	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
Nevada	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	Districts
New Hampshire	No	NA	Yes	Developing	Developing
New Jersey	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	NA
New Mexico	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
New York	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SUR
North Carolina	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	State Audit
North Dakota	Yes	NA	No	Yes	Financial Data
Ohio	No	NA	Yes	Yes	NA
Oklahoma	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	State Audit
Oregon	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Pennsylvania	No	NA	Yes	Developing	Districts
Rhode Island	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
South Carolina	No	NA	Yes	Yes	State Audit
South Dakota	No	NA	Yes	Yes	NA
Tennessee	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Texas	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	State Audit
Utah	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Vermont	Yes	No	Yes	Developing	NA
Virginia	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Washington	Yes	NA	Yes	Developing	State Audit
West Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SUR
Wisconsin	No	NA	Yes	Developing	SUR
Wyoming	No	NA	Yes	Developing	Developing

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