Implementing Graduation Counts | State Progress to Date, 2009

NGA Center for
BEST PRACTICES

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Implementing Graduation Counts

State Progress to Date, 2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Implementing Graduation Counts | State Progress to Date, 2009

Executive Summary

In 2005, all 50 state governors made an unprecedented commitment to voluntarily implement a common, more reliable formula for calculating their states' high school graduation rates by signing the National Governors Association (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact. The Compact contained four key commitments:

- **Use a common, four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate formula;**
- **Build state data collection and reporting capacity;**
- **Develop additional student outcome indicators; and**
- **Report annually on their progress toward meeting these commitments.**

More details of the Compact formula are outlined in the companion report, *Graduation Counts: A Report of the National Governors Association Task Force on State High School Graduation Data.*

Four years later, progress is steady.

- Twenty states now report that they use the Compact formula to calculate their high school graduation rate and publicly report the data.
- Five more states plan to report the Compact rate later in 2009, eight more in 2010, and 12 more in 2011.
- Three additional states have not indicated to NGA a date by which they will report using the Compact rate, but will presumably meet a new federal reporting deadline of 2011.
- Two others have requested a waiver extending the federal deadline beyond 2011.
- Twelve of the 20 states reporting the Compact rate also report that they use the Compact Rate to meet the graduation rate requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).
- Up by six since 2008, 42 states now report they have the data systems needed to track individual students and more accurately calculate the high school graduation rate using the NGA Compact rate. Not all of those have tracked a cohort the full five years from eighth grade (which identifies first-time ninth graders) to high school graduation.
- Eighteen of the 20 states that are reporting the Compact graduation rate also report additional indicators of student outcomes.
- Nineteen of the 20 states report disaggregated graduation rate data for different student subgroups, such as minorities, disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.

As states continue working to implement the Graduation Counts Compact, and to meet the federal requirements for high school graduation data, the NGA Center for Best Practices will continue to track and report state progress.

Introduction

In 2005, the governors of all 50 states signed the Graduation Counts Compact and made an unprecedented commitment 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 set out the rationale for developing a common graduation rate formula and formed the basis for the Compact.[1]

The governors undertook the commitment to use a more consistent and more accurate graduation rate formula because they understand that better information on student outcomes is imperative for ensuring that all students graduate from high school and that they 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 and comparable high school graduation data, governors agreed to do the following:

The Compact Formula

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

- 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 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 (see box).
- Lead efforts to improve state data collection, strengthen reporting and analysis, and link data systems throughout the education pipeline, from preschool 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.

Given the state progress to date, and the importance of a single, universal graduation rate calculation, the U.S. Department of Education approved new regulations in October 2008 requiring all states to implement a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to fulfill graduation rate requirements under NCLB. The department now requires all states to report the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate at the state, district, and high school levels beginning with report cards providing results of assessments administered during the 2010–2011 school year. Further, to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), states must use the four-year adjusted cohort rate at the state, district, and high school levels, including disaggregated graduation rates for all required student subgroups, following the 2011–2012 school year.

State Progress Reporting the Compact Rate

Twenty states already calculate and publicly report a graduation rate consistent with the formula agreed to in the NGA Graduation Counts Compact. By the end of 2009, five more states plan to use the Compact formula to calculate and report their high school graduation rates. Eight more plan to do so in 2010. Another 12 states report they will use the Compact formula in 2011. Hawaii, Idaho, and Illinois have not indicated a date by which they will use the Compact rate; however, it is presumed they too will meet the federal reporting deadline in 2011. Two states—Kentucky and Wisconsin—have requested an extension from the U.S. Department of Education and plan to report later than 2011.[2]

Twelve states report already using the Compact rate to meet the graduation rate requirements under NCLB. In addition, Arkansas and Minnesota already report the Compact rate data on the federally mandated state, district, and school report cards and plan to begin using it for AYP determinations in 2009–2010. Oregon publicly reported the Compact rate in June 2009 and will add it to their report cards and AYP determinations in 2009–2010.

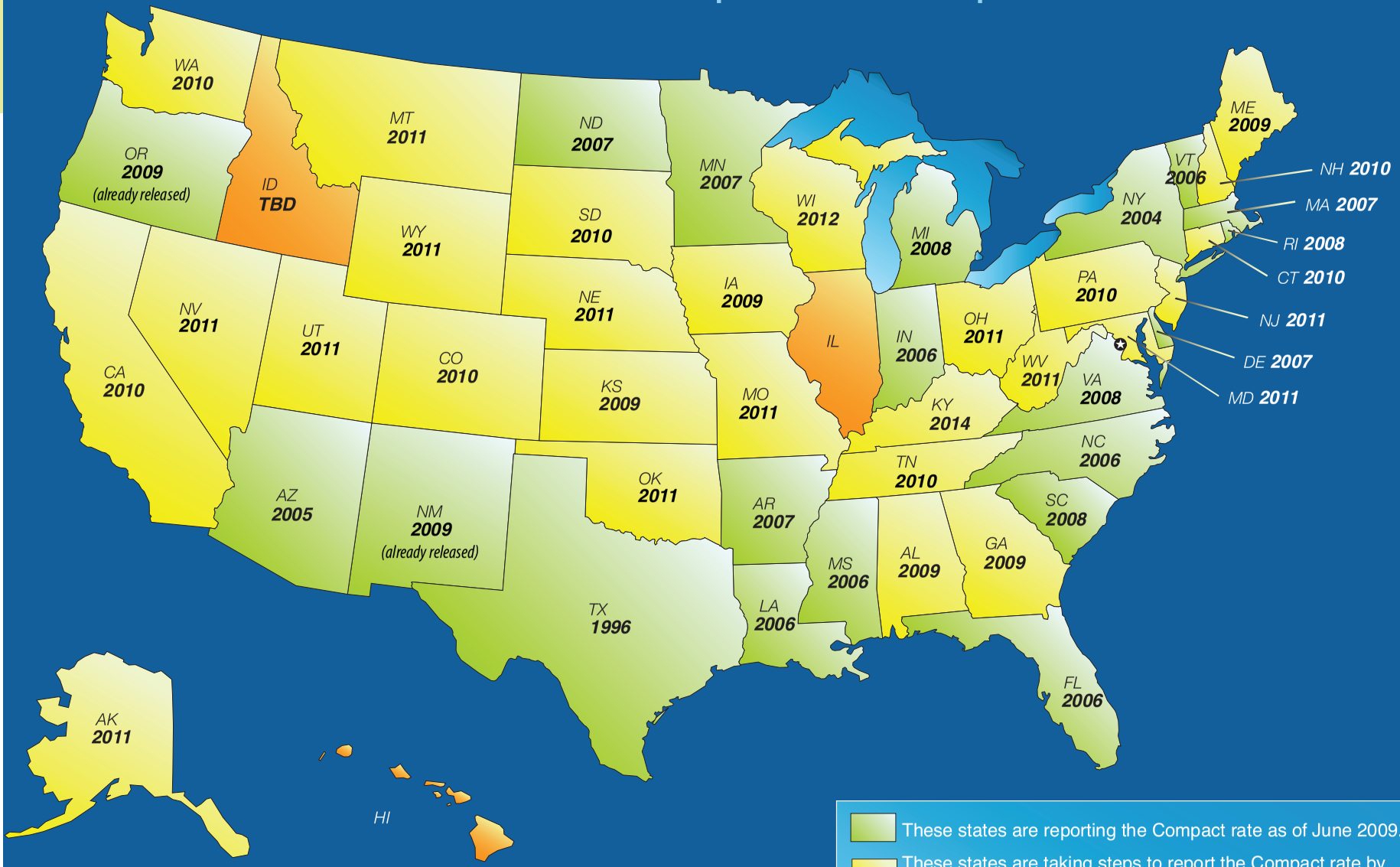
Under the Compact, states could choose to assign a limited number of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, for whom it is determined to be educationally appropriate, to a cohort graduating more than four years after they entered ninth grade. Of the 20 states reporting the Compact Rate, four states allow cohort reassignment for students with limited English proficiency and seven allow reassignment for students with disabilities. In contrast to the NGA Compact, under the new federal regulations, states cannot reassign students to a different cohort to allow them extra time to graduate "on time." All students will have to be assigned to the cohort with which they enter high school.

The accompanying map illustrates state plans for reporting the graduation rate according to the Compact formula. The appendices provide additional information about state progress and policies on calculating and reporting the Compact high school graduation rate and other graduation or proxy measures.

Adequate Yearly Progress

With the passage of NCLB, the federal government required all states to establish a definition of "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) to measure the annual achievement of each school and school district. A state's calculation of AYP is primarily based on academic assessments and, for high schools, graduation rates. Under NCLB, states must create AYP targets whereby all student subgroups will reach 100 percent proficiency in reading and math by the 2013–2014 school year. States also had to set targets for graduation rate improvement; however, for graduation rates, states were able to count even the slightest improvements as adequate progress. The Department of Education changed the requirements for AYP in the 2008 regulations, which included a requirement that states adopt a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. States are now required to set a graduation rate goal and annual targets that reflect "continuous and substantial improvement" from the previous year beginning in 2010. The Department has indicated that targets such as "any improvement" will not be acceptable.[3] Finally, states now must also include graduation rates for student subgroups, such as minorities, disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities, in their AYP determinations.

When Will the State Report the Compact Rate?



The Data Quality Campaign (DQC), a partnership of national organizations that supports state efforts to create longitudinal data systems, has defined 10 essential elements of statewide longitudinal data systems. The DQC surveys states annually on their implementation of those 10 elements. The DQC identifies 4 of the 10 as integral to a state's ability to calculate its graduation rate using the Compact formula: a unique statewide student identifier; student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; student-level graduation and dropout data; and a state data audit system. The DQC report provides a more extensive description of state data systems than is possible in this publication. The DQC report is available at http://wwwdataqualitycampaign.org.

According to the 2008 DQC report, 42 state data systems contain the four elements that are integral to calculating the high school graduation rate using the NGA Compact rate, an increase of six states since 2008 (Appendix B). Forty-seven states assign students a unique statewide identifier, 48 states collect student enrollment data, 49 collect annual records on individual graduates and dropouts, and 45 states have instituted state data audit systems. Even so, not all of those states are yet able to use the Compact formula because they have been tracking students entering high school for fewer than five years. The DQC survey results are consistent with what states are telling the NGA Center about their developing capacity to use the Compact formula.

For the present report, the NGA Center asked states whether they had longitudinal data systems, for how long they have had such systems, when they would have enough data in the system to calculate the Compact graduation rate, and whether they have data to report other indicators. Thirty-one states now report that they have longitudinal data systems and at least four or five years of student data. Several others have the necessary data system but do not yet have four or five years of data for any cohort of high school students.

The Compact and NCLB Graduation Rate Regulations

In 2005, the NGA Task Force on State High School Graduation Data did not want to create a formula for calculating graduation rates that would pose an unnecessary additional burden on states. Therefore, the task force was careful to recommend a formula for the Compact that was compatible with the requirements for graduation rate calculations in NCLB. At that time, the federal regulations gave states considerable flexibility on their graduation rate formulas. Through the Compact, governors voluntarily agreed to a more consistent and accurate formula than was required by the federal regulations.

In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Education released new regulations on how states must calculate high school graduation rates to meet requirements for these data under NCLB. The department relied heavily on the groundwork already laid and progress already made by states in the wake of the Compact. On federally mandated state, district, and school report cards and for determining AYP at the high school level, all states now must now use the adjusted four-year cohort rate adopted through the Compact, but with two potentially significant differences. The NGA Compact allowed states to choose to reassign students with significant learning disabilities or severe limited English proficiency to later cohorts of entering ninth graders based on an adjusted timeline for graduation. The NGA Compact also allowed states to count some modified diplomas as acceptable for meeting the definition of a graduate. The new federal regulations do not allow for such cohort reassignment or modified diplomas. Any state calculating the high school graduation rate under the tighter definitions now prescribed by the federal regulations also meets the requirements of the NGA Compact. However, the reverse is not necessarily true. States should consult with the U.S. Department of Education to ensure compliance with the new regulations.

Additional Actions to Improve Data Quality

In addition to using an accurate and consistent formula, it is critical that states 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 recordkeeping.

States vary widely in the number and types of exit codes they use and whether they are even determined at the state level. Among those that have set codes at the state level, the number varies from as few as 3 to as many as 65. Forty-six states report that dropout is the default code used for students whose status is unknown, though the policy is complied with unevenly.

Forty-seven states report some effort to verify transfers, but their methods vary. Many states encourage or direct schools and districts to verify transfers with transcript request or other documentation from the receiving school. However, few states have established procedures for ensuring that such documentation is sought and retained, but as more sophisticated data systems have come online, paper transfer records are becoming a thing of the past.

Twenty-seven states report using their student-unit-record, longitudinal data systems to track and verify transfers. Ten states report relying on districts to verify transfers. Twelve states report relying on state audits either alone or in tandem with the longitudinal data system. In such a data system, a student cannot be removed from the rolls of one school until he or she enrolls in another. Further, the system will not allow one student to be coded as attending multiple schools at the same time. If a student transfers without notifying the previously attended school, the record system should catch the problem when the new school enrolls the student. These systems effectively force schools to reconcile their data and correctly identify the student at one school or another. Likewise, if a student leaves a school to transfer to another but never actually enrolls at a new school, the data system will flag that student for the sending school to investigate or code him or her as a dropout.

Using Student Exit Codes

To accurately track students who transfer in and out of a state or district, a state must have student-level data tracked using a statewide student identifier, enrollment records, and counts of graduates, transfers, and students who leave the system for other reasons. Ideally, states create and use a set of codes that identify the reason each exiting student left a particular school or district. The codes vary widely in number and detail and may include marriage, death, transfer out of state, transfer to a home school, transfer to another country, transfer to a private school, incarceration, obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, being hospital-bound, and others.

Other Types of State Reporting

As part of the Graduation Counts Compact, the nation's governors agreed to take steps to report additional indicators that will provide richer information and understanding about outcomes for students. In addition to the four-year high school graduation rate, states should calculate and report:

- Five- and six-year adjusted cohort graduation rates;
- Completion rates for those earning alternative credentials;
- In-grade retention rates;
- A college readiness rate; and
- A high school dropout rate.

As with the Compact graduation rate, the ability to collect, calculate, and report these additional indicators depends on the development and use of longitudinal statewide data systems.

Eighteen of the 20 states that are reporting the Compact graduation rate are already reporting additional indicators, and the other two states are in the process of developing additional indicators. Many states also report disaggregated graduation rate data for different minority groups and disadvantaged students. Nineteen of the 20 states using the Compact rate also report disaggregated graduation rates for students groups, such as minority groups, economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and/or limited-English-proficient students. Various recent reports, including a study conducted by Education Week's Research Center, which used a graduation index different than the Compact formula, have shown broad disparities in graduation rates for these and other subgroups. By publishing disaggregated rates for different student groups, states not only raise awareness about the problem, but also allow students, teachers, parents, state officials, and community members to work together to improve the graduation rates of these groups, which otherwise might be overlooked.

Other Formulas States Are Currently Using

Of the states that do not yet calculate and report their high school graduation rate using the Compact formula, two are reporting a cohort rate similar to the Compact definition but different in potentially significant ways. Hawaii calculates the percentage of first-time ninth graders who earn a regular diploma four years later, but the state adjusts the denominator only for transfers out of the system-not for transfers into the state's schools. Illinois divides the number of graduates by the number of ninth graders four years earlier and adjusts for transfers in and out of the system. However, the state does not distinguish graduates finishing in four years from those taking longer. Neither Hawaii nor Illinois has indicated when it will make changes to comply fully with the Compact formula or the new federal regulations.

Twenty-eight states are reporting the National Center for Education Statistics (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 years, or longer, to complete high school. The leaver rate also relies on graduate and cumulative dropout counts, not actual enrollment counts, to estimate the ninth-grade class four years earlier.

Some states are further refining estimated ninth-grade enrollment by adding alternative completers and retained students. Although this refinement improves the estimate of the ninth-grade cohort, it is still an estimate and one 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.

Even as states have begun reporting graduation rates using the Compact formula, the number of states using the NCES leaver rate remains high because it is still used for meeting the federal requirements under NCLB. Under the new federal regulations issued in 2008, states will have to use the adjusted four-year cohort rate formula, presumably making the leaver rate formula obsolete.

Conclusion

Governors are continuing to fulfill the commitments made in the Graduation Counts Compact, and the evidence shows that states remain committed to improving the quality and accuracy of the high school graduation rate they report. Many more states are now reporting a graduation rate calculated using a consistent, high-quality measure than did so when the Compact was signed in 2005. Further evidence suggests that a significant majority of the states—33—plan to fulfill the commitment by the end of 2010. Given the current federal regulations, 48 states will report a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate by 2011.

Even once a state has the data necessary to calculate the Compact rate, there are additional challenges. It is critical that states 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 that students whose status is unknown be coded as dropouts. State leaders must also create policies and procedures for monitoring, verifying, and auditing data. And finally, state leaders must then use the data to craft policy strategies for helping more students to graduate from high school and to do so with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

Current fiscal constraints could pose a serious challenge. However, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) contains significant funding to help states continue to build their data systems for tracking student progress and outcomes. ARRA included $245 million specifically for state data systems, and even states that have already received data system grants from the Institute of Education Sciences will be eligible.[6] Even in the current economy, states should maintain their efforts to collect the necessary data, ensure its accuracy, and report as soon as they are able a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

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 will also continue to report state progress toward full implementation of the Graduation Counts Compact, including the common formula for a four-year cohort 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 that students graduate ready for college, career, and civic life.

States See Changes in Graduation Rates

One of the major concerns expressed by states grappling with a move to the NGA Compact rate was that the new, more accurate calculation would produce numbers significantly below previous estimates. Though a valid concern, the numbers do not always bear out negatively. In 2007, using the NCES Leaver Rate, Virginia reported a state graduation rate of 80 percent.[4] In 2008, using the NGA Compact rate, the state's graduation rate was calculated to be 82.1 percent.[5] While some states have seen rates rise, others have seen a drop in the rate. However, in both cases the more accurate data are quite valuable. The NGA Compact rate allows states to more accurately assess the scope of the graduation problem and consequently, target resources and support to the students and schools most in need.

Moreover, states that are currently using the NGA rate have considerable leverage to highlight their successful education efforts. For example, after only two years using the NGA Compact formula, Rhode Island has improved its graduation rate by four points, from 70 to 74 percent. Because of a more reliable longitudinal data system and graduation rate calculation, students, parents, educators, and policymakers can start to see improvement and have increased confidence in the data.

Notes

[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). Available at: http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0507GRAD.pdf.

[2] Letter from Elaine Farris, Kentucky Interim Commissioner of Education, to Joseph Conaty, U.S. Department of Education, February 27, 2009; and Letter from Elizabeth Burmaster, Wisconsin State Superintendent of Education, to Arne Duncan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, March 2, 2009. Letters obtained from the U.S. Department of Education.

[3] U.S. Department of Education, High School Graduation Rate: Non-regulatory Guidance (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, December 22, 2008). Available at: http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf

[4] Virginia Department of Education, "School, School Division and State Report Cards" (database). Available at: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/report.do?division=All&schoolName=All

[5] Virginia Department of Education, "New High School Cohort Reports Account for All Students Reports on VDOE Web Site Include Graduation, Completion & Dropout Data," (News Release), March 31, 2009. Available at: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/NewHome/pressreleases/2009/mar31.html

[6] National Governors Association, *State Opportunities under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: K-12 Education*, March 24, 2009. Available at: http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/ARRAK12.PDF.

Appendix A: 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?	Has the state passed legislation or state board regulations that approve or make official use of the Compact graduation rate?	Does the numerator count diploma recipients only?*	Does the numerator count on-time graduates only?*
Alabama	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Alaska	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Arizona	2005	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	No	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	2007	Public Reporting	NA	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No, though the Arkansas DOE has made the Compact graduation rate formula official	Yes	Yes
California	2010	NA	Composite Ratio and NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and State Accountability (Composite) Federal Accountability (NCES)	Yes - state legislation (2006)	Yes	Yes
Colorado	2010	NA	Cohort Rate	NR	Yes—State Board Regulations (2006)	Yes	No
Connecticut	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	Yes—State Board of Education	Yes	No
Delaware	2007	Public Reporting	NCES Leaver Rate and Cohort Completion Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Florida	2006	Public Reporting	Cohort Completion Rate and NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes - State Law (2006)	Yes	Yes
Georgia	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Idaho	To Be Determined	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	No	No
Illinois	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Indiana	2006	Public Reporting	Persistence Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes—State Law (2007)	Yes	Yes
Iowa	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes—State Law (2006)	Yes	No
Kansas	2009	NA	NCES Leaver Rate and AYP Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Kentucky	2014***	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	2006	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes—State Board Regulation	Yes	Yes
Maine	2009	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	No—accountability workbook	Yes	Yes
Maryland	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	Yes—State Legislation (2006)	Yes	No

Appendix A: 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?	Has the state passed legislation or state board regulations that approve or make official use of the Compact graduation rate?	Does the numerator count diploma recipients only?*	Does the numerator count on-time graduates only?*
Massachusetts	2007	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	No	Yes	Yes
Michigan	2008	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	No—accountability workbook	Yes	Yes
Minnesota	2007	Public Reporting	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	2006	Public Reporting	Cohort Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes—State Board Regulations (2007)	Yes	Yes
Missouri	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Montana	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Nevada	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	2010	NA	Completer Rate	Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
New Jersey	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
New Mexico	2009 (already released)	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	No	Yes	Yes
New York	2004	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	2006	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes—Accountability Workbook	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	2007	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	No	Yes	Yes
Ohio	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Oklahoma	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes
Oregon	2009 (already released)	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Rhode Island	2008	Public Reporting and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes—Accountability Workbook	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	2008	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Specified by state education oversight committee and accountability workbook	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Tennessee	2010	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	Yes

Appendix A: 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?	Has the state passed legislation or state board regulations that approve or make official use of the Compact graduation rate?	Does the numerator count diploma recipients only?*	Does the numerator count on-time graduates only?*
Texas	1996	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes—State Law	Yes	Yes
Utah	2011	NA	Modified cohort rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Vermont	2006	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	NA	NA	Yes—State Board Regulation	Yes	Yes
Virginia	2008	Public Reporting and State Accountability	NCES Leaver Rate	Federal Accountability	Yes—State Board Regulation (2006)	Yes	No
Washington	2010	NA	Cohort Estimate Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	No	Yes
West Virginia	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Wisconsin	2012***	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	No
Wyoming	2011	NA	NCES Leaver Rate	Public Reporting, State and Federal Accountability	No	Yes	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

*** State will request a waiver from the federal deadline.

SUR means student-unit-record

NA means not applicable

NR means no response

Appendix A: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

	If using the Compact rate, does the state allow students with disabilities to be assigned to different cohorts?	If using the Compact rate, does the state allow students with limited English proficiency to be assigned to different cohorts?	Does the state have a student-unit-record system with at least four years of data?	How does the state verify transfers?	Is the default code for unknown student status "dropout?"	How many student exit codes does your state have for students that leave school?
Alabama	NA	NA	Developing	Districts	Yes	14
Alaska	NA	NA	Yes	SUR and districts	Yes	16
Arizona	No	No	Yes	SUR	No	11
Arkansas	No	No	Yes	Electronic and Paper Systems	Yes	16
California	NA	NA	Developing	Districts	Yes	District
Colorado	NA	NA	Yes	Districts	Yes	26
Connecticut	NA	NA	Developing	SUR	Yes	23
Delaware	Yes	District	Yes	SUR	Yes	NR
Florida	No	No	Yes	State Audit and SUR	Yes	33
Georgia	NA	NA	Developing	SUR	Yes	24
Hawaii	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Idaho	NA	NA	Developing	NA	Yes	NR
Illinois	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Indiana	No	No	Yes	SUR/State Audit	Yes	30
Iowa	Yes	No	Yes	State Student ID/SUR	Yes	26
Kansas	NA	NA	Developing	SUR	Yes	20
Kentucky	NA	NA	No	Districts	Yes	15
Louisiana	Yes	No	Yes	SUR/State Audit	Yes	34
Maine	Developing	Developing	Yes	SUR	Yes	27
Maryland	NA	NA	Developing	State Audit	Yes	30

Appendix A: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

	If using the Compact rate, does the state allow students with disabilities to be assigned to different cohorts?	If using the Compact rate, does the state allow students with limited English proficiency to be assigned to different cohorts?	Does the state have a student-unit-record system with at least four years of data?	How does the state verify transfers?	Is the default code for unknown student status "dropout?"	How many student exit codes does your state have for students that leave school?
Massachusetts	No	No	Yes	SUR	Yes	NR
Michigan	No	No	Yes	SUR	Yes	21
Minnesota	No	No	Yes	Financial Data	NR	65
Mississippi	Yes	No	Yes	District and State Review	Yes	NR
Missouri	NA	NA	Developing	Developing	Yes	19
Montana	NA	NA	Developing	SUR	Yes	26
Nebraska	NA	NA	Developing	District	Yes	7
Nevada	NA	NA	Yes	SUR	Yes	33
New Hampshire	NA	NA	Developing	District	Yes	12
New Jersey	NA	NA	Developing	NR	Yes	23
New Mexico	Yes	Yes	Yes	District	Yes	12
New York	Yes	No	Yes	SUR	Yes	28
North Carolina	No	No	Yes	SUR	Yes	17
North Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes	SUR and Financial Data	No	3
Ohio	NA	NA	Yes	SUR	Yes	18
Oklahoma	NA	NA	Developing	State Audit	Yes	4, moving to 33
Oregon	NA	NA	Yes	District	Yes	9
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	Developing	Districts	Yes	12
Rhode Island	No	No	Yes	District and State Audit	Yes	37
South Carolina	No	No	Yes	State Audit	Yes	19
South Dakota	NA	NA	Yes	SUR	Yes	12
Tennessee	NA	NA	Developing	SUR	Yes	15

Appendix A: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

	If using the Compact rate, does the state allow students with disabilities to be assigned to different cohorts?	If using the Compact rate, does the state allow students with limited English proficiency to be assigned to different cohorts?	Does the state have a student-unit-record system with at least four years of data?	How does the state verify transfers?	Is the default code for unknown student status "dropout?"	How many student exit codes does your state have for students that leave school?
Texas	No	No	Yes	State Audit/SUR	Yes	14
Utah	NA	NA	Yes	State Audit	Yes	NA
Vermont	No	No	Yes	SUR	Yes	17
Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes	SUR	Yes	10
Washington	NA	NA	Yes	SUR	Yes	20
West Virginia	NA	NA	Yes	SUR	Yes	17
Wisconsin	NA	NA	Developing	SUR	Yes	11
Wyoming	NA	NA	Developing	Audit	Yes	3

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

*** State will request a waiver from the federal deadline.

SUR means student-unit-record

NA means not applicable

NR means no response

Appendix A: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

	Does the state report disaggregated graduation rate data for different minority groups and disadvantaged students? If so, for what groups?	If the state is reporting the 4-year cohort rate defined in the Compact, is it also reporting additional indicators (such as a 5- or 6-year cohort graduation rate, high school dropout rate, etc.)?	In what school year will the state begin to include the federal 4-year graduation rate in its report card?	In what school year will the state begin to include the federal 4-year graduation rate for AYP?	At what level will the state set its graduation rate goal?
Alabama	Developing—race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficiency (LEP) and students with disabilities	NA—though it is reporting completer rates, dropout rates, and retention and promotion rates by grade	2009-10	2011-12	90%
Alaska	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant students and students with disabilities	NA—though it is reporting dropout and attendance rates	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Arizona	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant students and students with disabilities	Yes—AZ reports a 5-year cohort graduation rate, a completion rate that includes those earning alternative credentials, a high school dropout rate, a "still enrolled after the 4th year rate", and a "status unknown" rate	2004-05	2004-05	TBD
Arkansas	No	Yes—dropout rate, completion rate, retention rate, and college remediation rate	2006-07	2009-10	TBD
California	Yes	NA—though legislation passed to include 5– and 6-year cohort rates in future accountability decisions	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Colorado	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant, homeless, gifted and talented and students with disabilities	NR	2009-10	2009-2010	TBD
Connecticut	Yes—by race/ethnicity and gender	NR	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Delaware	Yes	Plans to in the future	TBD	TBD	TBD
Florida	Yes—reported for each race/ethnicity, students with disabilities, LEP, economically disadvantaged students, and migrant students	Yes - high-school dropout rates, in-grade retention rates, 5-year graduation rates, and college readiness	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Georgia	Yes—by race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and students with disabilities	NA	2008-09	TBD	75% with steps to 100%
Hawaii	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Idaho	Yes - will report graduation rates for ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, migrant, homeless, LEP, and students with disabilities once 2007 data collected	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD
Illinois	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Indiana	Yes—reported by gender and race/ethnicity, students with disabilities, LEP, and economically disadvantaged	Yes—5- and 6-year cohort graduation rates	2010-11	2010-11	TBD
Iowa	Yes—reported by gender and race/ethnicity, and students with disabilities in the future will report for economically disadvantaged students	NA—though it reports college readiness and high school dropout rates, and intends to report 5– and 6-year graduation rates	TBD	TBD	TBD
Kansas	Yes	NA—though it reports dropout rates	TBD	TBD	TBD
Kentucky	No	NA	2013-14	2014-15	TBD
Louisiana	Yes—by race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and students with disabilities	Yes—5– and 6-year cohort rates	2007	2007	TBD
Maine	No—internal calculation only	Developing 5– and 6-year cohort rates	2007-08	2007-08	90%
Maryland	Yes	NA	2010-11	2010-11	TBD

Appendix A: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

	Does the state report disaggregated graduation rate data for different minority groups and disadvantaged students? If so, for what groups?	If the state is reporting the 4-year cohort rate defined in the Compact, is it also reporting additional indicators (such as a 5- or 6-year cohort graduation rate, high school dropout rate, etc.)?	In what school year will the state begin to include the federal 4-year graduation rate in its report card?	In what school year will the state begin to include the federal 4-year graduation rate for AYP?	At what level will the state set its graduation rate goal?
Massachusetts	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—reports dropout rates, grade retention rates, and 5– and 6-year cohort rates	2007	2007	TBD
Michigan	Yes—by race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged, migrant, and students with disabilities	Yes—reports dropout rates, and 5– and 6-year cohort rates	2007-08	2007-08	80%
Minnesota	Yes—by race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—5– and 6-year cohort rates, and completion rate	2008-09	2008-09	TBD
Mississippi	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—5– and 6-year cohort graduation rates, completion rate including alternative credentials, and a high school dropout rate	TBD	TBD	TBD
Missouri	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	NA—though it reports dropout rates	2010-11	2010-11	TBD
Montana	Yes	NA—though it reports dropout rates	2011-12	2011-12	TBD
Nebraska	Developing	NA	2011-12	2011-12	TBD
Nevada	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	NA	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
New Hampshire	Yes—by race/ethnicity and students with disabilities	NA	2009-10	2010-11	TBD
New Jersey	Yes—by race/ethnicity and gender	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD
New Mexico	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Developing 5– and cohort rate	2008-09	2008-09	90%
New York	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—5– and 6-year cohort graduation rates, and dropout rates	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
North Carolina	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—5-year cohort graduation rate and annual high school dropout rate	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
North Dakota	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—dropout rate	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Ohio	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant and students with disabilities	NA	2010-11	2010-11	TBD
Oklahoma	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantages, and students with disabilities	NA	2010-11	2010-11	TBD
Oregon	Yes—by gender and race/ethnicity	Yes—though it reports a high school completion rate, which includes alternative credentials and high school dropout rates	2009-10	2009-10	TBD
Pennsylvania	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantages, LEP, and students with disabilities	NA	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Rhode Island	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	Yes—5-year gradaution rate	2007-08	2007-08	90%
South Carolina	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant and students with disabilities	Yes—dropout rate	2007-08	2007-08	88.3%
South Dakota	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant and students with disabilities	NA	2009-10	2009-10	TBD
Tennessee	Yes—by race/ethnicity, economically disadvantages, LEP, and students with disabilities	NA—though it reports event and cohort dropout rates	2010-11	2011-12	90%

Appendix A: State Policies to Measure High School Graduation

	Does the state report disaggregated graduation rate data for different minority groups and disadvantaged students? If so, for what groups?	If the state is reporting the 4-year cohort rate defined in the Compact, is it also reporting additional indicators (such as a 5- or 6-year cohort graduation rate, high school dropout rate, etc.)?	In what school year will the state begin to include the federal 4-year graduation rate in its report card?	In what school year will the state begin to include the federal 4-year graduation rate for AYP?	At what level will the state set its graduation rate goal?
Texas	Yes—by race/ethnicity and economically disadvantaged for state accountability also report on gender, LEP, at-risk, and students with disabilities	Yes—5– or 6-year cohort graduation rate, completion rate that includes those earning alternative credentials, in-grade retention rates, a high school dropout rate, and college readiness indicators	2009-10	2009-10	TBD
Utah	Yes	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD
Vermont	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant and students with disabilities	Yes—event dropout and completion rates	2005-06	2005-06	TBD
Virginia	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, migrant, homeless and students with disabilities	Yes—5– and 6-year cohort graduation rate and dropout rate	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Washington	Yes—by race/ethnicity, gender, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities	NA	2009-10	2010-11	TBD
West Virginia	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	NA—though it reports dropout rate	2010-11	2011-12	TBD
Wisconsin	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities	NA—but it does report high school completion rates	2010-11	2010-11	TBD
Wyoming	Yes—by gender, race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, LEP, and students with disabilities. Developing—migrant, homeless	NA	2010-11	2011-12	TBD

Notes

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*** State will request a waiver from the federal deadline.

SUR means student-unit-record

NA means not applicable

NR means no response

Appendix B: Ten Essential Elements of Longitudinal Data Systems: State Status

State	State data system features a unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across years	State data system features student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information across years	State data system has the ability to match individual students' test records from year-to-year to measure academic growth	State data system includes information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested	State data system features a a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students across years
Alabama	√	√	√	√	√
Alaska	√	√	√	√	
Arizona	√	√	√	√	
Arkansas	√	√	√	√	√
California	√	√	√	√	
Colorado	√	√	√	√	
Connecticut	√	√	√	√	
Delaware	√	√	√	√	√
Florida	√	√	√	√	√
Georgia	√	√	√		√
Hawaii	√	√	√		√
Idaho				√	
Illinois	√	√	√	√	
Indiana	√	√	√	√	
Iowa	√	√	√		
Kansas	√	√	√	√	
Kentucky	√	√	√	√	√
Louisiana	√	√	√	√	√
Maine	√	√	√		
Maryland		√			
Massachusetts	√	√	√	√	
Michigan	√	√	√		
Minnesota	√	√	√	√	
Mississippi	√	√	√	√	√
Missouri	√	√	√	√	√
Montana	√	√	√		
Nebraska	√	√	√	√	
Nevada	√	√	√	√	
New Hampshire	√	√	√	√	
New Jersey	√	√	√	√	
New Mexico	√	√	√	√	√
New York	√	√	√	√	
North Carolina		√	√	√	√
North Dakota	√	√	√	√	
Ohio	√	√	√	√	√
Oklahoma	√	√	√	√	√
Oregon	√	√	√	√	
Pennsylvania	√	√	√	√	√
Rhode Island	√	√	√	√	√
South Carolina	√	√	√	*	√
South Dakota	√	√	√	√	
Tennessee	√	√	√	√	√
Texas	√	√	√	√	
Utah	√	√	√	√	√
Vermont	√		√	√	
Virginia	√	√	√	√	
Washington	√	√	√	√	
West Virginia	√	√	√	√	√
Wisconsin	√	√	√	√	
Wyoming	√	√	√		√

Source: Data Quality Campaign, at http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/elements.cfm

Note: highlighted columns are those data elements needed to most accurately calcuate the high school graduation rate using the Graduation Counts Compact formula

Key: √ indicates state had this element according to 2008 DQC survey and report

* indicates state reported to NGA Center it had this element as of June 2008

Appendix B: Ten Essential Elements of Longitudinal Data Systems: State Status

State	State data system features student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned across years	State data system includes student-level college-readiness test scores across years	State data system includes student-level graduation and dropout data across years	State data system has the ability to match student records between the P–12 and higher education systems across years	State data system includes a data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability across years
Alabama	√	√	√	√	√
Alaska			√	√	√
Arizona			√	√	√
Arkansas	√	√	√	√	√
California			√		√
Colorado		√	√	* (2010)	√
Connecticut		√	√		√
Delaware	√	√	√	√	√
Florida	√	√	√	√	√
Georgia	√	√	√	√	√
Hawaii	√	√	√	√	
Idaho		√			
Illinois		√	√		√
Indiana		√	√	√	√
Iowa		√	√	√	√
Kansas			√		√
Kentucky	√	√	√	√	
Louisiana	√	√	√	√	√
Maine		√	√	√	√
Maryland			√		√
Massachusetts			√	√	√
Michigan		√	√		√
Minnesota		√	√	√	√
Mississippi	√		√	√	√
Missouri			√	√	√
Montana			√		√
Nebraska			√		√
Nevada	√		√	√	√
New Hampshire			√		√
New Jersey		√	√	√	√
New Mexico	√		√	√	√
New York			√		
North Carolina	√		√	√	√
North Dakota			√		√
Ohio		√	√		√
Oklahoma		√	√		√
Oregon			√	√	√
Pennsylvania			√		√
Rhode Island			√		
South Carolina	√	√	√		√
South Dakota		√	√		√
Tennessee			√	√	√
Texas	√	√	√	√	√
Utah	√	√	√	√	√
Vermont			√	√	√
Virginia		√	√		√
Washington			√	√	√
West Virginia	√	√	√		√
Wisconsin		√	√		√
Wyoming		√	√	√	√

Source: Data Quality Campaign, at http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey_results/elements.cfm

Note: highlighted columns are those data elements needed to most accurately calcuate the high school graduation rate using the Graduation Counts Compact formula

Key: √ indicates state had this element according to 2008 DQC survey and report

* indicates state reported to NGA Center it had this element as of June 2008

NGA CENTER DIVISIONS

The NGA Center is organized into five divisions with some collaborative projects across all divisions.

- **Education** provides information on early childhood, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, including teacher quality, high school redesign, reading, access to and success in postsecondary education, extra learning opportunities, and school readiness.
- **Health** covers a broad range of health financing, service delivery and policy issues, including containing health care costs, insurance coverage trends and innovations, state public health initiatives, obesity prevention, Medicaid and long-term care reforms, disease management, health information technology, health care quality improvement, and health workforce challenges.
- **Homeland Security & Technology** supports the Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council and examines homeland security policy and implementation, including public health preparedness, public safety interoperable communications, intelligence and information sharing, critical infrastructure protection, energy assurance, and emergency management. In addition, this unit assists governors in improving public services through the application of information technology.
- **Environment, Energy & Natural Resources** analyzes state and federal policies affecting energy, environmental protection, air quality, transportation, land use, housing, homeownership, community design, military bases, cleanup and stewardship of nuclear weapons sites, and working lands conservation.
- **Social, Economic & Workforce Programs** focuses on policy options and service delivery improvements across a range of current and emerging issues, including economic development, workforce development, employment services, criminal justice, prisoner reentry, and social services for children, youth, and low-income families.

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