

Exit Status, Drop Out Rate and Graduation Rate Audits

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Effective April 1, 2008

INTRODUCTION

Section 18(7) of the State School Aid Act requires an audit of pupil exit statuses and other pupil data used in calculating annual graduation and pupil dropout rates.

This is a temporary procedure to be used until the implementation of the Student Data System (SDS), expected in the fall of 2009. At that time, the GAD audit procedures will be discontinued and the other audit procedures will be reformatted to complement the SDS.

Audits of the GAD, 2007 and 2008 Cohorts

The Graduation/Dropout Review and Comment (GAD) system permits districts to request changes to records and to view audit changes. This system will be opened in April 2008 and 2009 for districts to request after-the-fact changes in 2007 and 2008 cohort pupils' exit statuses. Districts will be expected to provide documentation supporting each change to the ISD auditors who will review the documentation and either approve or deny the changes. The auditor will either approve or deny the changes during April and May of each year. Districts are responsible for pulling the reports to review their data. The auditors' findings will be reported in the GAD system which the districts will be able to view.

Audits of End of Year and End of Summer submissions for the graduating cohorts

The end of summer (EOS) submission will collect summer graduates and will replace the submission of summer graduates in the fall collection. Due to the timing of EOY and EOS submissions and ISD field audits of high schools, these populations will be audited if statistical analysis reveals that the district's submission exceeds preset thresholds in any exit status category. If the district's submission exceeds preset thresholds, CEPI will prepare an alpha list of the pupils by building for any outlier exit statuses. These audits are due October 31.

Audits of SRSD submissions

This includes the September, February and end of year (EOY) submissions. These audits will be performed along with the pupil membership audits for that submission, using the same rotation schedule as the high school field audit schedule. High school pupil's exit statuses will be audited as part of the field audit for the high school. These audits will include the previous year EOY submissions for 9th, 10th and 11th grades. Because there isn't an EOY pupil count, the auditor will include the most recent EOY submission in the field audit of the September or February submission.

Audits of SRSD submissions exceeding preset thresholds

The rotation schedule will result in most of the SRSD submissions being unaudited. In order to provide assurance for the unaudited submissions, CEPI will analyze submissions and identify district's whose exit statuses exceed preset thresholds. If a district's submission exceeds preset thresholds, CEPI will prepare an alpha list of the pupils by building for the outlier exit statuses. ISD auditors will audit these threshold reports regardless of whether a field audit is scheduled.

(March 2008)

Technical Summary

Following is a summary of the audit process and reporting of findings over the next year for the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 cohorts:

1. CEPI will update the GAD application after each submission to reflect current cohort status for each of the cohort classes.
2. ISD auditors will be given year-round access to the GAD.
3. The GAD will be opened in April 2008 and 2009 for districts to make changes in the 2007 and 2008 cohort pupils' exit statuses.
4. An audit finding function is currently available in the GAD, in which the ISD auditor can select the student and then enter an audit finding for that student. ISD auditors will be able to remove findings if districts provide them with the appropriate documentation to substantiate a change.
5. Other than in April 2008 and 2009, districts will have read-only access to the GAD to review audit findings and review their cohort reports.
6. Districts will be expected to make changes in the SRSD based on the audit findings.
7. For the 2008 cohort, CEPI will compare final student exit status as reported in the SRSD as compared to what ISDs entered in the audit findings.

SECTION 1 – AUDITS OF THE GAD 2007 AND 2008 COHORTS

The Graduation/Dropout Review and Comment (GAD) system permits districts to request changes to records and to view audit changes. This system will be opened in April 2008 and 2009 for districts to request after-the-fact changes in 2007 and 2008 cohort pupils' exit statuses. Districts will be expected to provide documentation supporting each change to the ISD auditors who will review the documentation and either approve or deny the changes during April and May. Districts are responsible for pulling the reports to review their data. The auditors' findings will be reported in the GAD system which the districts will be able to view.

The pupils for whom the district requested after-the-fact changes in the pupils' exit statuses via the GAD application are considered high risk pupils for audit purposes.

CEPI first provided cohort reports to districts in November 2006. As of February 2008, the districts have received 3 cohort reports and have had the opportunity to submit corrections through the SRSD. The Graduation/Dropout Review and Comment (GAD) system will permit districts to request changes to records and to view audit changes starting in April 2008. Districts are responsible for pulling the reports to review their data. The ISD determinations will be reported in the GAD system which the districts will be able to view.

Audit steps

1. ISD auditors should make arrangements with the district person making the GAD corrections to ensure that he/she submits documentation supporting each change or make other arrangements to review the district's documentation.
2. Beginning April 1, pull the attached "Pending Approval List" from the GAD. Districts can continue to submit requests through April 30, at which time change requests will no longer be accepted.
3. Review supporting documents for all exit status changes for compliance with the Table of Acceptable Exit Status Documentation.
4. On or before May 31, disapprove those without acceptable supporting documentation and select a reason from the drop down menu in the comment section.
5. On or before May 31, approve changes that are supported with acceptable documentation. Auditors may add comments such as, "the documentation reviewed."
6. From the GAD, pull the alpha report that lists the pupils approved, denied, and the reason by building. As a courtesy, provide that to the district.
7. Any appeals will be included in the school report card appeal process.

Note: If this audit is performed by an audit firm rather than the ISD auditor, the ISD will provide the firm with the necessary GAD reports and will enter the audit results into the GAD system. Audit firms should request this data timely.

SECTION 2 – AUDITS OF END OF YEAR AND END OF SUMMER SUBMISSIONS FOR THE GRADUATING COHORT

The end of summer (EOS) submission will collect summer graduates and will replace the submission of summer graduates in the fall collection. Due to the timing of EOY and EOS submissions and ISD field audits of high schools, these populations will be audited if statistical analysis reveals that the district's submission exceeds preset thresholds in any exit status category. If the district's submission exceeds preset thresholds, CEPI will prepare an alpha list of the pupils by building for any outlier exit statuses. This population is considered high risk.

Audit steps

1. Randomly select a representative 20% sample of pupils for testing. CEPI will provide an alpha list by building by exit statuses exceeding the preset threshold to be used for pulling the sample. Provide the sample list of pupils to the district and request supporting documentation.
2. Review supporting documents for compliance with the table of Acceptable Exit Status Documentation.
3. Determine the error rate. If it is above 5%, pull an additional 10% sample and test. Continue this process until the cumulative error rate is 5% or lower or all records on the threshold report are reviewed.
4. Prepare a report listing those pupils without acceptable supporting documentation and provide the correct exit status based on the definitions in the SRSD manual. (Form to be provided by CEPI) Submit that report to the district and to CEPI. These audits are due October 31.
5. Appeals should be directed to the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability.

Note: If this audit is performed by an audit firm rather than the ISD auditor, the ISD will provide the firm with the necessary threshold reports. Audit firms should request this data timely.

Note: Due to the high risk nature of this population, ISD auditors may choose to audit it even if the district's submission does not exceed thresholds.

SECTION 3 – AUDITS OF SRSD SUBMISSIONS

This includes the September, February and end of year (EOY) submissions. These audits will be performed along with the pupil membership audits for that submission, using the same rotation schedule as the high school field audit schedule. High school pupils exit statuses will be audited as part of the field audit for the high school. The exit statuses reported in that submission and the most recent EOY submission are subject to audit. These audits will include the previous year EOY submissions for 9th, 10th and 11th grades. Because there isn't an EOY pupil count, the auditor will include the most recent EOY submission in the field audit of the September or February submission. The audit of the current graduating cohort EOY submission is limited to those that exceed preset thresholds. See Section 2 of this manual.

This population includes both low risk and high risk exit statuses. Graduation and completion exit statuses are considered low risk and will be audited similar to Population I pupil audits. Exit statuses in which pupils leave the district without graduating or completing but are exempt from being counted as dropouts are considered high risk. These high risk pupils will be audited similar to Population III pupil audits.

Graduates and completers

These are pupils that the district reported that graduated or completed with the following exit statuses:

Definition	Exit Status
Graduated from general education with a diploma	01
Graduated from general education with a diploma and applied to a degree-granting college/university	02
Graduated from an alternative program with a diploma	03
Graduated from general education and applied to a non-degree-granting institution	04
Completed general education with an equivalency certificate (GED)	05
Completed general education with other certificate (e.g., certificate of attendance, district competency test)	06
Received special education certificate of completion and exited the kindergarten through 12 th grade (K-12) system	20
Special education – reach maximum age and exited the K-12 system	21

Audit steps for graduates and completers

1. Randomly select a representative 2% sample of pupils for testing. The sample should be selected from exit statuses for the count date being audited as well as exit statuses from the most recent end of year submission. CEPI will provide an alpha list by building by exit status for both populations to be used for pulling the sample. Provide the list to the district and request supporting documentation.

2. Review supporting documents for compliance with the Table of Acceptable Exit Status Documentation.
3. Determine the error rate. If it is above 5%, pull an additional 10% sample and test. Continue this process until the cumulative error rate is 5% or lower or all graduate and completer records are reviewed.
4. Prepare a report listing those pupils without acceptable supporting documentation and showing the correct exit status based on the definitions in the SRSD manual. (Form to be provided by CEPI) Submit that report to the district and to CEPI.
5. These audits are due in accordance with the schedule set by the SRSD submission (e.g. same time as the DS4120, fall SRSD audit due in March).
6. Appeals should be directed to the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability.

Note: If this audit is performed by an audit firm rather than the ISD auditor, the ISD will provide the firm with the necessary CEPI reports. Audit firms should request this data timely.

Exempt Pupils

These are pupils that are “exempt” from the graduation rate calculation, that is, the district reported as the following exit statuses:

Definition	Exit Status
Moved out of state	09
Deceased	12
Enrolled in home school	14
Enrolled in non-public school	15

Audit steps

1. Randomly select a representative 10% - 20% (based on a risk analysis) sample of pupils from each category for testing. The sample should be selected from exit statuses for the count date being audited as well as exit statuses from the most recent end of year (EOY) submission. CEPI will provide an alpha list by building by exit status for both populations to be used for pulling the sample. If a pupil has had more than one exit status and the pupil’s exit status has changed between submissions, audit the most recent exit status. Provide the sample list of pupils to the district and request supporting documentation.
2. Review supporting documents for compliance with the table of Acceptable Exit Status Documentation.
3. Determine the error rate. If it is above 5%, pull an additional 10% sample and test. Continue this process until the cumulative error rate is 5% or lower or all exempt records are reviewed.
4. Prepare a report listing those pupils without acceptable supporting documentation and provide the correct exit status based on the definitions in the SRSD manual. (Form to be provided by CEPI) Submit that report to the district and to CEPI.
5. These audits are due in accordance with the schedule set by the SRSD submission (e.g. same time as the DS4120, fall SRSD audit due in March).
6. Appeals should be directed to the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability.

Note: If this audit is performed by an audit firm rather than the ISD auditor, the ISD will provide the firm with the necessary CEPI reports. Audit firms should request this data timely.

SECTION 4 – AUDITS OF SUBMISSIONS EXCEEDING PRESET THRESHOLDS

The rotation schedule will result in most of the SRSD submissions being unaudited. In order to provide assurance for the unaudited submissions, CEPI will analyze submissions and identify district's whose exit statuses exceed preset thresholds. If a district's submission exceeds preset thresholds, CEPI will prepare an alpha list of the pupils by building for the outlier exit statuses. ISD auditors will audit these threshold reports regardless of whether a field audit is scheduled. This population is considered high risk.

Audit steps

1. Randomly select a representative 20% sample of pupils for testing. CEPI will provide an alpha list by building by exit statuses exceeding the preset threshold to be used for pulling the sample. Provide the sample list of pupils to the district and request supporting documentation.
2. Review supporting documents for compliance with the table of Acceptable Exit Status Documentation.
3. Determine the error rate. If it is above 5%, pull an additional 10% sample and test. Continue this process until the cumulative error rate is 5% or lower or all records on the threshold list are reviewed.
4. Prepare a report listing those pupils without acceptable supporting documentation and provide the correct exit status based on the definitions in the SRSD manual. (Form to be provided by CEPI) Submit that report to the district and to CEPI.
5. These audits are due in accordance with the schedule set by the SRSD submission (e.g. same time as the DS4120, fall SRSD audit due in March).
6. Appeals should be directed to the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability.

Note: If this audit is performed by an audit firm rather than the ISD auditor, the ISD will provide the firm with the necessary threshold reports.

ACCEPTABLE EXIT STATUS DOCUMENTATION

Exit Status	Definition	Allowable Documentation
01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 20, 21	Graduated or completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official transcript or diploma. • Official alpha list of graduates/completers from the student management software which includes pupil's name, UIC, date of birth and SRSD completion status. Sorted by building, then by completion status then by pupil's last name.
09	Moved out of state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for the pupil's records (on official letterhead) from an out of state school, • Pupil withdrawal form signed by the parent/guardian or qualified student and authorized district representative indicating where pupil is moving or name of school district the pupil will attend. • Written contemporaneous documentation of an oral statement by the parent/guardian or qualified student signed and dated by an authorized district representative (can be a log.) • Written contemporaneous documentation of an oral statement by a neighbor, parent's employer or colleague or other adult that would have knowledge of the family's move (can be a log.)
12	Deceased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation from student management software that student is listed as deceased in the software. • Obituary, other newspaper article. • Program from the funeral/memorial service. • Written statement from the parent or guardian. • Death certificate.
14	Enrolled in home school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written parental statement. • Pupil withdrawal form signed by the parent/guardian or qualified student indicating pupil is being home schooled. • Written contemporaneous documentation of an oral statement by the parent/guardian or qualified student signed and dated by an authorized district representative (can be a log.) • Parental record request. • Statement by attendance officer (truancy

		officer.)
15	Enrolled in non-public school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written request for the pupil's records from a nonpublic school.• Pupil withdrawal form signed by the parent/guardian or qualified student indicating name of nonpublic school the pupil will attend.• Written contemporaneous documentation of an oral statement by the parent/guardian or qualified student signed and dated by an authorized district representative (can be a log.)