



## **E-message #9 – College and Career Ready Measures: Graduation Rate and Postsecondary Transition to School, Military, or Work**

### **Re: Future Ready PA Index E-messages**

Colleagues,

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is committed to providing regular updates on the implementation of its recently approved [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Consolidated State Plan](#) and the Future Ready PA Index, a comprehensive, public-facing school progress report that increases transparency around school and student group performance. This e-message is the ninth in a series to provide timely information on the transition to the Future Ready PA Index.

As outlined in previous Future Ready updates, indicators fall into three main categories:

1. Statewide Assessment Measures
2. On-Track Measures
3. College and Career Ready Measures

This e-message provides additional details and support on the **Graduation Rate** and **Postsecondary Transition to School, Military, or Work** indicators, two of the six College and Career Ready Measures.

Detailed descriptions of these two indicators, including data element descriptions and measurement rules, follow.

### **I. Graduation Rate**

Graduation Rate is one of two College and Career Ready Measures, along with Career Readiness, that serve as federal accountability indicators.

Graduation rates will be determined based on an adjusted cohort calculation – i.e., the percentage of students who graduate with a high school diploma in four- and five-year cohort groups. A school's four-year cohort will be presented in the context of year-over-year performance and in relation to the statewide average; the five-year cohort will also be reported on Future Ready PA as an informational item. Data used for calculating and reporting the graduation rate is from one year prior to the reported year due to availability of this data.

Frequently asked questions about graduation rate and associated answers appear below.

### **How were the Statewide 2030 goal and yearly interim targets for graduation rate set?**

Graduation rates will be displayed in the context of two targets, as required by the state's ESSA Plan:

Statewide Interim Target: ESSA requires every state to set long-term goals for student graduation. Pennsylvania's goal is to reduce, by half, the statewide percentage of non-graduating students by the end

of the 2029-30 school year. This timeline will allow planning and programming to support a cohort of students across the full span of their public education experience, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Statewide Interim Targets represent the annual gain—across all public schools—required to close these gaps for the All-student group and for each student group as detailed in the State Plan, Appendix B.

Individual School Improvement Target: Every school will be assigned an Individual School Target for graduation rate, based on the overall state goals set for 2030 and each school’s individual baseline graduation rate. After assigning the 2030 goal for each school, yearly individual school interim progress targets will be established.

### **What is the formula for calculating graduation rate?**

$$\frac{\text{Attributed number of students graduating with a high school diploma on or before the reporting year}}{\text{Number of students entering 9th grade four (or five, for five-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate) years prior to the reporting year}}$$

### **How will school performance on graduation rate be displayed on the Future Ready PA Index?**

Performance will be displayed on the Future Ready PA Index to reflect the percentage of students who graduated within the 4-year and, separately, the 5-year cohort. Performance will also be reported at the student group level.

The graduation rate indicator will be depicted based on meeting either the statewide interim goal or the individual school improvement target as follows:

- **BLUE**: Meets or exceeds statewide All-student 2030 goal
- **GREEN**: Meets statewide interim goal or school improvement target
- **RED**: Does not meet interim goal/improvement target

In addition to the Blue, Green, and Red Performance designations, year-over-year performance will be depicted by:

- An upward ARROW for an increase in performance from the previous year
- A solid CIRCLE for maintaining the same performance from the previous year
- A downward ARROW for a decrease in performance from the previous year

## **II. Postsecondary Transition to School, Military, or Work**

This indicator reflects the percentage of high school graduates (from two years’ prior) who have enrolled in an institution of higher education, enlisted in the military, or entered the workforce within 16 months of receiving a high school diploma. This is a lagging indicator, with all data collections occurring 16 months after graduation.

Frequently asked questions about postsecondary transition to school, military, or work and associated answers appear below.

## **What sources of data are collected for the Postsecondary Transition Indicator?**

The graduating cohort data will be gathered from the frozen Graduate/Completer data in PIMS. The first data reported will be based on 2015-16 graduates, who had until October 2017 to enroll in postsecondary education, enlist in the military, or enter the work force. Other sources of information will be collected from:

- National Student Clearinghouse for college and postsecondary enrollment;
- Defense Manpower Data Center database developed for the Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA) for military enlistment; and
- Department of Labor and Industries Data Mart for entering the workforce.

This is an informational indicator; in other words, school performance will be presented as a percentage only and not compared to the performance of other public schools statewide, The Statewide average will be provided.

## **What is the formula for calculating the post-secondary transition measures?**

$$\frac{\text{Sum of the \# of graduates}^1 \text{ enrolled in higher education, serving in the military, or entered workforce}}{\text{Total number of graduates/completers for the reporting year}}$$

In addition to reporting the total percentage of students who make meaningful postsecondary transitions, we will also report on the percent participation in each of the three categories - postsecondary, military and workforce.

The next Future Ready PA Index e-message will provide a summary of key information from each of the twelve indicators.

Questions or comments on the PA Future Ready Index can be sent to [ra-edfuturereadypa@pa.gov](mailto:ra-edfuturereadypa@pa.gov).

Thank you for your continued work with Pennsylvania students, and your partnership in implementing the Future Ready PA Index.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Stem  
Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Education

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The numerator reflects a unique count of students—i.e., a graduate is counted one time, even if multiple post-secondary transition activities are completed.