



Calculating Graduation

The North Star system is Minnesota's accountability system under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and World's Best Workforce (WBWF). When identifying schools and districts for support, North Star uses two separate graduation indicators: four-year graduation rate and seven-year graduation rate. Each will be calculated using a federally required adjusted cohort rate known as the Exclusion-Adjusted Cohort Graduation Indicator (EACGI) methodology.

The five-year and six-year graduation rates are not used for accountability, but are calculated and reported for informational purposes.

Questions about this document or the calculation can be directed to [the ESSA inbox](#).

Defining and Including Districts and Schools

Districts can be classified into many different types. Among the most common types are independent districts (sometimes referred to as traditional school districts), intermediate districts, and charter schools. These three types of districts, along with state operated schools, cooperatives, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, are included as districts in North Star.

Schools can also be classified into many different types. Elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, Area Learning Centers (ALCs), and most alternative programs are included in North Star accountability calculations.

Students in correctional facilities or care/treatment centers are only included in state-level calculations. Those schools are not evaluated by North Star, nor are they included in district-level calculations.

Defining and Including Students

The Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) tracks the enrollment and several characteristics (mostly demographic) of students in Minnesota public schools. These characteristics are tracked using different codes and indicators within the MARSS system.

Based on these characteristics, students are identified as belonging to specific groups. For accountability purposes, these groups include racial and ethnic groups, English Learner status, disability status, and economic status.

Minimum Group Size

For a student group to be included as a distinct group in a school or district's calculation for accountability, at least 20 students in the group must qualify for inclusion.

Four-, five-, six, and seven-year graduation rates will also be reported outside of the context of accountability. When this happens, either on the Minnesota Report Card or through publicly available spreadsheets, a minimum size of 10 students will be used.

Racial and Ethnic Groups

The following seven racial and ethnic groups have been defined at the federal level, and are tracked in MARSS:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- Hispanic
- Black
- White
- Two or More Races

Special Populations

For the purposes of calculating graduation, any student who has ever been in a special population (English Learners, students with disabilities, and/or students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) during or after grade nine will be counted in that population. For example, if a student was identified as eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRP) during grades 10 and 11, they would be included in the FRP group in the school's graduation rate.

Foreign Exchange

Foreign exchange students are not included in accountability calculations.

Cohorts

At the beginning of grade nine, each student is placed in a graduation cohort at their school expected to graduate at the end of four school years, and which is tracked for seven years. For example, a student in grade nine in the fall of the 2018-19 school year is expected to graduate from grade 12 by the end of the 2021-22 school year. That same student would be included in the 2024-25 seven-year rate.

When a student transfers from one Minnesota public high school to another, they transfer to their new school's cohort (and out of their previous school's cohort). When a student enters the Minnesota public school system after grade nine, they are placed in the graduation cohort of whichever grade they enter.

For example, a student who enters the Minnesota public school system in grade 10 in the 2019-20 school year is expected to graduate from grade 12 by the end of the 2021-22 school year and is included in the 2024-25 seven-year rate.

End Status

For the purposes of this calculation, a student can have one of five end status types:

- Graduate
- Dropout
- Continuing education into following year (“Continuing”)
- Ending status unknown (“Unknown”)
- Stopped, either because they were unable to attend school or because they transferred out of the Minnesota public school system

A student’s end status is based on the most recent end code reported in the MARSS system. A complete list of end codes and their corresponding end status can be found in Appendix A. Unless the Dropout Rule applies, a student will be counted at the last school to report an end code for them.

The Dropout Rule

If a student drops out after less than half an academic year at a high school, they will be counted as a dropout in the graduation rate of whichever high school they have attended for the most time. Note that this only applies to students who drop out, and not to students who have graduated, are continuing, or whose status is unknown.

Example: Joey Student was enrolled at New Albion High School for all of ninth grade, transferred to Quail Lake High School in April of 10th grade, and dropped out in May. Joey would count as a dropout in New Albion High School’s graduation rate.

Summer Graduates in the Four-Year Rate

Minnesota includes students who graduate during the summer in the four-year rate of whichever school they ended up graduating from. A student must have a status end code of “Graduate” by September 15, and this must be reported in the district’s Fall MARSS submission to the state.

For example, a student is marked as “Continuing” by Quail Lake High School at the end of the 2021-22 school year, but goes on to graduate from the Quail Lake ALC that summer. That student is counted as a graduate in the ALC’s four-year rate, and they are removed from the cohort at Quail Lake High School (meaning their “Continuing” record longer applies to Quail Lake High School).

Calculating the Graduation Rate for a Student Group

For each student group, the graduation rate is the number of graduates divided by the total number of graduates, dropouts, continuing students, and unknown students.

Example:

There are 40 Hispanic students in Quail Lake High School’s four-year graduation rate cohort. Of these, 36 graduated, one dropped out, two are continuing, and one is unknown. (Two additional students transferred out of Minnesota public schools, so they are marked as “Stopped” and are not included in this calculation.)

$$36 \text{ graduates} / 40 \text{ students} = 90\%$$

Therefore, Quail Lake Middle School’s four-year graduation rate for Hispanic students would be 90 percent.

Calculating the Graduation Rate when Identifying Schools for Support

When North Star identifies schools for support, a school’s graduation rate for a cohort (four-year or seven-year) is the average of student group graduation rates for that timespan.

Example:

When identifying schools for support, five groups at Quail Lake High School met the 20-student minimum for four-year graduation rate last year.

Group	Four-Year Graduation Rate
All Students	91%
Hispanic	90%
White	92%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	84%
Not Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	94%
Average	$(91\% + 90\% + 92\% + 84\% + 94\%)/5 = 90\%$

Therefore, Quail Lake High School’s four-year graduation rate for the school overall would be 90 percent for that year. When identifying schools for support, the average of the three most recent years will be used.

Appendix A: MARSS Status End Code Definitions

Full definitions of the MARSS Status End Codes can be found on the web at:

[MARSS Reporting Instructions webpage.](#)

01 - Change in students' grade level.

02 - Transferred to another public school in the same district.

03 - Transferred to an approved nonpublic school.

04 - Students moved outside of the district.

05 - Students moved outside of the state or country.

*06 - Students left school after reaching compulsory attendance age without written election

*07 - Students left school after reaching compulsory attendance age with written election.

08 - Students graduated.

11 - Died.

12 - Students excused from attending school for a physical or mental disability;

does not include treatment centers if instruction is provided.

13 - Students committed to a correctional facility.

*14 - Students withdrawn after 15 consecutive days absence - expected back.

*15 - Students left school because of marriage.

*16 - Students were expelled and did not return to school during the year.

*17 - Students leave school due to pregnancy.

*18 - Students withdrew, no transcript requested, or

transferred to a non-approved nonpublic school.

20 - Students transferred to another district or state but did not move.

21 - Early Childhood withdrawal; IEP, IFSP or IIIP objectives were met.

22 - Students withdrew to enter a care and/or treatment program; instruction is provided.

23 - Kindergarten withdrawal, expected back next year.

24 - Withdrew to Receive Homebound Services.

25 – EC (early childhood) students evaluated only.

26 – EC students withdrawn by parents.

27 – EC students that transition at age three.

*31 - Students left school for social reasons.

*32 - Students left school for financial reasons.

*33 - Students left school for family environment reasons.

*34 - Students left school for reasons unknown.

*35 - Students left school after attaining age 21 and did not graduate.

36 - Students enrolled in a postsecondary institution (baccalaureate credit)
without receiving a high school diploma.

*37 - Students left school to attend a GED program or withdrew after
taking the GED Exam.

40 - End-of-year, students were enrolled the last day of school.

41 - Students dropped out of school during the current school year but re-enrolled
somewhere by the following October 1.

42 - Students met the district's graduation requirements but did not pass
one of the required basic standards tests.

50 – Students special education data has changed

99 - Students enrollment status has changed necessitating the closing
of one status record and the opening of a new one.

*Dropout Codes