High School Graduation Appeals Frequently Asked Questions

<mark>**Please note: The 2019 Graduation Snapshot will be captured on Friday, August 30th as August 31st falls on a weekend.**</mark>

1. **Question: The data in the Official Snapshot taken on August 31st regarding my High School Graduation Cohort Status profile is incorrect. Can I fix it?**

   Answer: Districts are encouraged to monitor and maintain their graduation data throughout the school year by using Official Snapshot and local data mart (LDM) High School Graduation Cohort Status Profiles. However, after each release of the August 31st Snapshot Profile (in early September), a graduation appeals period opens for that year's four-year and five-year graduation rates. District users can submit appeal requests to the NJDOE for individual student records; each request is evaluated by an NJDOE official and decided upon. Any approved requests are incorporated into the Official Snapshot graduation data.

2. **Question: Where do I go to appeal graduation data?**

   Answer: Users should navigate to the "Graduation Appeals" page in the NJ SMART portal to make an appeal request. This page can be found under the Reporting menu tab, and is available to any user with "District Reports" access. Contact your district's Homeroom Administrator to request this access. On this page, you will be able to view a list of your "Cohort Students." If you click on an individual student's local identification number (LID), you will drill down to a Student Details page, through which you can submit an appeal request. In addition, you will be able to view a list of your "Appeal Requests" to track and monitor submitted requests.

3. **Question: Can I appeal a record for a student that graduated in Cohort 2017?**

   Answer: No, only cohort years 2018 and 2019 can be appealed.

4. **Question: What happens if I forget to inactivate my 12th graders before the August 31st snapshot? Will I be able to appeal?**

   Answer: Yes. You will need to contact the NJ SMART Help Desk by calling (800) 254-0295 or e-mailing NJSMART@pcgus.com to obtain instructions for completing the Mass Appeals template.

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Student Transfer Questions

5. **Question: I have a transfer card verifying a student transferred to another public school district in New Jersey. However, she is still counted in my district's cohort. Can I appeal?**

    Answer: Yes. You will need to contact the receiving district to determine if they uploaded the student. If this was not done, instruct them to upload the student immediately. It is also possible that the receiving district assigned the student a different state identification (SID) number. If so, you will need to acquire that SID number to submit an appeal so we can merge the two records.

6. **Question: Why is my appeal being rejected by the NJ SMART system if he/she transferred to another NJ SMART submitting district?**

    Answer: For a student to be transferred, his/her current status in SID Management must be Inactive. The student's current status in SID Management is likely Active. In order to submit the appeal the student must first be inactivated in SID Management.

7. **Question: A student transferred out of my district to a school that is not a NJ SMART submitting district (e.g., NJ nonpublic, out of state or country, parental instruction, private facility). He is still counted in my district's cohort. Can I appeal?**

    Answer: Yes, but if you request exit code of T3 (transfer to nonpublic school within NJ), T8 (transfer out of state or country), T9 (transfer to parental instruction), or TP (transfer to private facility) you will be asked to provide documentation to verify the request. Valid documentation requirements are outlined in the NJ SMART Graduation Appeals User Guide.

8. **Can I appeal a record for a student if I entered the incorrect School Exit Withdrawal Code of T4 (transfer to any public school outside the district and within NJ)?**

    Answer. Yes, but if you request exit code of T3 (transfer to nonpublic school within NJ), T8 (transfer out of state or country), T9 (transfer to parental instruction), or TP (transfer to private facility) you will need to provide documentation to verify the request. Valid documentation requirements are outlined in the NJ SMART Graduation Appeals User Guide.

9. **Question: Can I appeal a record for a student that is showing as a Transferred Unverified but they transferred to an adult education school as a TA?**

    Answer: No. Adult education schools do not report data to NJ SMART.

10. **Question: Why am I receiving an error that the School Exit Date is after August 31st?**

    Answer: A student's School Exit Date must be on or before August 31st to be considered a part of the August 31st Graduation Snapshot. Students that transferred or exited after August 31st are considered to be a part of the next school year and those changes do not impact the 4 year graduation rate for the 2019 cohort or the 5 year graduation rate for the 2020 cohort.

Cohort Questions

11. Question: I have an 11th grade student who is graduating early. Can I appeal to change his cohort from next year to this year's cohort?

Answer: No. The student will remain with the original cohort and will positively affect next year's graduation percentage.

12. Question A: Can I change the student's cohort year?

Answer: The student's cohort year can only be changed if the student was incorrectly assigned to the wrong cohort year. The SID Management system would need to reflect that the student belonged in a different cohort year. For example, the student's Assessment Record clearly shows that the student completed grade-level assessments that align to a different cohort year.

Question B: Why am I receiving an error message when I request a cohort year change?

Answer: An appeal cannot be accepted if:

  A. You are trying to change the cohort year to the year that it is already set to.
  B. You are trying to change the cohort year to one that is too far in the future or too far into the past.

13. Question: Can I change the cohort year for students who are part of the Special Education subgroup and will not graduate with their original cohort (either On Track Continuing or Off Track Continuing)? We are required to educate them until age 21.

Answer: No. Special Education students are treated the same as any other student when it comes to assigning their cohort year. The NJDOE is provided with subgroup information such that they will be able to see what percentages of your continuing students are Special Education classified. Please note that this reflects the Federal policy: High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance.

14. Question: Can I appeal a student that is showing as a dropout but he/she received their general equivalency diploma (GED)?

Answer: No. For the purposes of calculating the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), under 34 C.F.R. §200.19(b)(1)(iv), a "regular high school diploma" means the standard high school diploma awarded to students in a State that is fully aligned with the State's academic content standards and does not include a GED credential, certificate of attendance, or any alternative award. Therefore, a student who leaves school to obtain their GED is counted as a dropout in NJ SMART. Please note that this reflects the Federal policy: High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance.

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Miscellaneous Questions

15. Question: Why is my appeal being rejected for a student that is Inactive in my SID Management?

Answer: The student's School Exit Date is greater than June 15ᵗʰ of the current year and the student's cohort year equals the current cohort year. Therefore, the student finished the year in your district and is in your cohort.

16. Question: Where can I view New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and Foster Indicator data in NJ SMART?

Answer: You can access NJSLA and Foster Indicator data through the Student List within the District Reports page. To access District Reports, your NJ SMART account must have District Reports access.
- Navigate to the Reporting tab of the NJ SMART portal and select District Reports.
- Select Student List.
- On the Report Parameters page, use the drop down menus to select the students that you wish to view by a variety of parameters such as School, Gender, Grade Level, and others.
- Click Run Report.
- The Student List will display any students that met your outlined parameters. You can click the Export to Excel link to download an Excel file with the students' data for analysis.

17. Question: How can I appeal a student that was submitted with the incorrect ELA Graduation Pathway Indicator and/or Math Graduation Pathway Indicator?

Answer: You should select Reason for Appeal G on the Graduation Appeals form and complete all required sections to change one or more Graduation Pathway Indicator for a student.

If you are appealing to change a student's status (Reason for Appeal A or B) and a change to the Graduation Pathway Indicators is also required, please select G for Reason for Appeal (2).

18. Question: Do the graduation rates posted on the NJDOE website and in the New Jersey School Performance Reports reflect approved appeals?

Answer: Yes, approved appeals are applied to the August 31ˢᵗ Graduation Snapshot data available through the NJ SMART Graduation Profiles and this will match the data displayed on the NJDOE website and the School Performance Reports.