

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE  
Los Angeles Unified School District

INFORMATIVE  
June 26, 2012

TO: Members, Board of Education  
John Deasy, Superintendent

FROM: *Cynthia*  
Cynthia Lim, Executive Director  
Office of Data and Accountability

SUBJECT: 2010-11 GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES

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This informative provides statistics on the four year cohort graduation rate, both the District's calculation and the California Department of Education's (CDE) calculation for the 2010-11 school year. On June 27, 2012, the CDE will release graduation and dropout data for the **2010-11** school year (last year) based on student level data captured in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). The CDE matched student level data statewide to determine dropouts and graduates for each district. The calculation includes graduates up to August 15, 2011. **This information is embargoed until June 27.**

LAUSD released a preliminary four year cohort graduation rate based on data captured on June 30, 2011. Internal calculations have been updated to include graduates for the 2010-11 school year up to August 15, 2011 and reflects corrections in the Student Information System (SIS) by schools.

The statistics show:

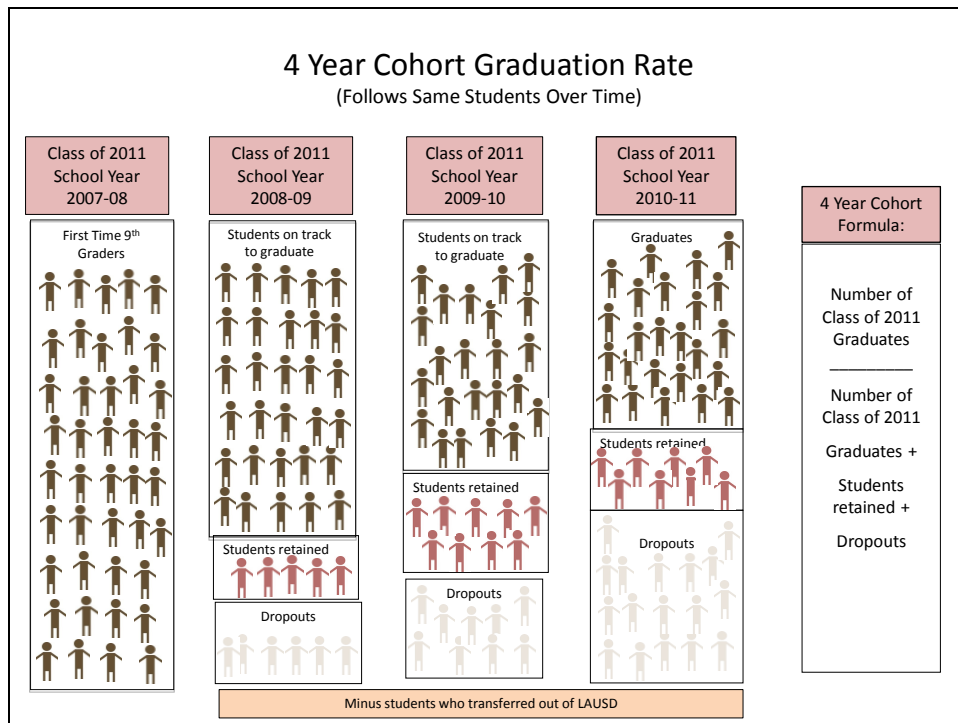
- **The state's calculation of a four year cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2011 was 61.6, slightly lower than the previous year's state calculation of 62.4%.**
- **Compared to other urban districts in California, LAUSD's cohort graduation was higher than Oakland Unified.** However, LAUSD had the highest percentage of students in the cohort that were still enrolled for a fifth year (17.5%), compared to other urban districts.
- **According to the state calculation, Asian and White students had the highest graduation rates, followed by African American and Latino students.** English learners and students with disabilities had the lowest graduation rates.
- **LAUSD's internal calculations yielded a higher Four Year Cohort Graduation rate for comprehensive high schools than previously reported due to data corrections and summer graduations. The graduation rate for comprehensive high schools increased from 56% to 62%.** The increase is the result of the addition of more graduates between June 30 and August 15, 2011 and from data corrections at school sites.

## Calculation of the Cohort Graduation Rate

All states are converting to the use of a four-year cohort graduation rate for more accurate reporting. California will use the four-year cohort graduation rate for NCLB purposes in the 2011-12 school year.

The cohort graduation rate uses a unique student identifier to determine first time 9<sup>th</sup> graders, then tracks individual students to determine which students graduated four years later. Students who transferred to other schools and re-enrolled are subtracted from the cohort and students who transfer in are added to the cohort. At the end of four years, the graduation rate includes the number of students who began as first time 9<sup>th</sup> graders and the number of students that received a diploma.

Figure 1 illustrates the Four Year Cohort Rate, which follows the same group of students over time, beginning with first time 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2007-08. In each successive year, students who transfer out of LAUSD are taken out of the cohort. Students who transfer into LAUSD are added to the cohort. Students who dropped out or are still actively enrolled remain in the cohort. At the end of four years, the graduation rate is determined by dividing the number of graduates in the cohort by the number of graduates plus students who have dropped out and students who remain enrolled for a fifth year.



## **CDE Cohort Graduation Rate for 2010-11**

The CDE is reporting a cohort graduation rate based on student level data collected through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). The CDE uses the same methodology as LAUSD; first time 9<sup>th</sup> graders are counted and followed for the next four years. This graduation rate will replace the previous calculation used by the CDE for NCLB purposes. Using the CALPADS dataset, the CDE is able to match student records across the state determine dropouts. If a student was counted as a dropout in LAUSD but re-enrolled in another California district, the CDE removed that student from the four year cohort.

According to the CDE, the cohort graduation rate in LAUSD was 61.6%, lower than nine urban districts in California. Cohort graduation rates ranged between 54.7% and 82.9% among urban districts in California. LAUSD ranked lower than most urban districts at 61.6%, except for Oakland at 58.9%. However, LAUSD had the highest percentage of students in the cohort that were enrolled for a fifth year at 17.5%, followed by Oakland (11.9%) and Pasadena (11.5%).

Table 1: *CDE Cohort Graduation Rates Among Urban Districts in California*

School District	2009-10 Cohort Grad Rate	2010-11 Cohort Grad Rate	Still Enrolled
San Jose Unified	82.9%	83.9%	7.9%
San Diego Unified	80.9%	83.7%	8.2%
San Francisco Unified	77.3%	82.2%	7.4%
Santa Ana Unified	80.0%	82.2%	4.0%
Long Beach Unified	79.8%	77.9%	5.8%
Pomona Unified	71.1%	76.5%	6.2%
Pasadena Unified	74.5%	75.0%	11.5%
Sacramento City Unified	67.4%	73.8%	8.5%
Fresno Unified	68.7%	70.8%	9.9%
LAUSD	62.4%	61.6%	17.5%
Oakland Unified	54.7%	58.9%	11.9%

When disaggregated by subgroups, Asian and White students had the highest graduation rates in LAUSD. The same pattern was observed across urban districts in California. In LAUSD, graduation rates for African-American students (63.2%) was higher than for Latino students (59.8%). Higher graduation rates for African-American students compared to Latino students were also observed in San Jose, Santa Ana, Long Beach, Pasadena, Pomona and Oakland.

Table 2: 2010-11 CDE Cohort Graduation Rates by Ethnicity

School District	All Students	Latino	Afr. Am.	White	Asian
San Jose Unified	83.9%	76.1%	84.9%	91.6%	95.6%
San Diego Unified	83.7%	75.8%	80.3%	91.4%	92.1%
San Francisco Unified	82.2%	67.8%	64.0%	84.4%	90.7%
Santa Ana Unified	82.2%	81.8%	84.0%	89.8%	89.5%
Long Beach Unified	77.9%	73.7%	75.2%	85.9%	86.8%
Pomona Unified	76.5%	75.0%	76.1%	82.7%	89.8%
Pasadena Unified	75.0%	73.1%	72.9%	78.0%	79.4%
Sacramento City Unified	73.8%	69.3%	61.4%	74.4%	86.1%
Fresno Unified	70.8%	68.6%	63.9%	74.3%	79.3%
LAUSD	61.6%	59.8%	63.2%	74.9%	84.2%
Oakland Unified	58.9%	51.8%	55.1%	72.7%	78.5%

English learners and Students with Disabilities had the lowest graduation rates in LAUSD, compared to other subgroups. A similar pattern was apparent among other urban districts in California.

Table 3: 2010-11 CDE Cohort Graduation Rates by Subgroup

School District	All Students	English Learners	Students with Disabilities	Socio Dis.
San Jose Unified	83.9%	67.6%	62.7%	76.2%
San Diego Unified	83.7%	61.5%	47.4%	78.2%
San Francisco Unified	82.2%	70.6%	58.0%	81.7%
Santa Ana Unified	82.2%	69.4%	68.4%	82.0%
Long Beach Unified	77.9%	51.6%	44.4%	79.0%
Pomona Unified	76.5%	67.0%	66.9%	75.2%
Pasadena Unified	75.0%	49.0%	49.2%	76.4%
Sacramento City Unified	73.8%	70.6%	61.9%	75.7%
Fresno Unified	70.8%	62.5%	41.7%	69.4%
LAUSD	61.6%	42.8%	42.3%	60.7%
Oakland Unified	58.9%	40.8%	39.4%	58.6%

Female students had higher graduation rates than male students. This trend was observed among all urban districts in California. The gender gap ranged between 2.5 to 11.4 percentage points.

The gender gap was 8.9 percentage points in LAUSD: 66.1% of females graduated in four years compared to 57.2 of males.

Table 4: 2010-11 CDE Cohort Graduation Rates by Gender

School District	All Students	Male	Female	Gender Gap
San Jose Unified	83.9%	80.1%	87.7%	7.6
San Diego Unified	83.7%	79.9%	87.7%	7.8
San Francisco Unified	82.2%	78.6%	85.9%	7.3
Santa Ana Unified	82.2%	79.7%	84.8%	5.1
Long Beach Unified	77.9%	74.1%	81.8%	7.7
Pomona Unified	76.5%	75.2%	77.7%	2.5
Pasadena Unified	75.0%	72.0%	78.1%	6.1
Sacramento City Unified	73.8%	71.6%	76.3%	4.7
Fresno Unified	70.8%	65.6%	76.0%	10.4
LAUSD	61.6%	57.2%	66.1%	8.9
Oakland Unified	58.9%	53.1%	64.5%	11.4

When examined by gender and ethnicity in LAUSD, graduation rates were higher for females across all major ethnic groups. The gender gap was highest among African-American students at 9.5 and lowest among white students at 7.9.

Table 5: 2010-11 Cohort Graduation Rates Gender and Ethnicity for LAUSD

	All Students	Male	Female	Gender Gap
Latino	59.8%	55.4%	64.2%	8.8
African-American	63.2%	58.4%	67.9%	9.5
White	74.9%	71.3%	79.2%	7.9
Asian	84.2%	80.0%	88.5%	8.5
All Students	61.6%	57.2%	66.1%	8.9

### **LAUSD Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate**

LAUSD has been publishing a four-year graduation rate for comprehensive high schools since the 2007-08 school year on the School Report Card. This rate is calculated for comprehensive high schools only and excludes options schools and special education centers. In previous years, the graduation rate was published in October or November after the end of the school year, and included summer graduates. In the 2010-11 school year, for the first time, data on graduates was captured on June 30, 2011, at the close of the school year. In August 2011, LAUSD released a

preliminary four-year cohort graduation rate based on that data, which yielded a graduation rate of 56% for comprehensive high schools, up one percentage point from the previous year.

After publication of the preliminary graduation rate, Superintendent Deasy asked for an audit and study as to why LAUSD’s cohort graduation rate was so low. Graduation statistics were also analyzed at Executive Cabinet meetings to determine appropriate strategies. One area of needed improvement was the accuracy of the data. Staff polled other school districts in California about their data collection and management procedures. The Office of Data and Accountability and the Division of Special Education worked with school sites on correcting data errors in the Secondary Student Information System (SSIS). Lists of potential dropouts and 2010-11 graduates were provided to schools to check for accuracy of coding.

Corrected data was captured and reported to the CDE as of the end of February 2012. The corrected data showed fewer students in the cohort (meaning more students had transferred out of the cohort with legitimate leave codes) and more graduates (which included students who graduated between June 30 and August 15, 2011.) **The corrected data show an increase in the four-year cohort graduation rate from 56% to 62% at comprehensive high schools.**

Table 6: *Comparison of Preliminary and Revised Graduation Rates by Type of School*

	Preliminary as of June 30, 2011			Revised as of June 2012			
	# in Cohort	# Grads	Grad. Rate	# in Cohort	# Grads	Grad. Rate	% Still Enr.
Comprehensive High Schools	46,133	25,997	56.4	45,679	28,235	61.8	5.4
Options	4,765	568	11.9	4,765	598	12.5	32.5
Special Education Centers	310	15	4.8	310	15	4.8	77.1
All Schools	51,208	26,580	51.9	50,754	28,848	56.8	8.4

When viewed over time, the four-year cohort graduation rate has increased from 55% in 2009-10 to 62% in 2010-11. This updated data will be reflected in the Performance Meter in August 2012.

Table 7: *LAUSD's Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate*

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Number of First Time 9th Graders Four Years Prior	47,605	45,436	47,379	45,679
Percent that Graduated in Four Years	48%	52%	55%	62%

**Differences Between CDE and LAUSD Graduation Rates**

The calculation of a four-year cohort graduation rate is a relatively new process that is still being refined at the state level and among districts. The CDE continues to make adjustments to the defined four-year cohorts based on enrollment and leave dates of students. Districts continue to make changes to enrollment and leave dates for students that are submitted to the state. There are several reasons why the graduation rates calculated by CDE are higher than internal calculations made by LAUSD:

1. The state has fewer students identified as “first time ninth graders” than LAUSD. We are working with CDE to identify discrepancies in terms of which students are counted as first time ninth graders.
2. The state is able to identify students that were counted as dropouts in LAUSD but have subsequently re-enrolled in another California public school, thus reducing the size of the cohort.

While this leads to a more accurate count of students in the cohort, the data released by CDE is usually an entire year after the end of the school year, e.g., data for the 2010-11 school year is being released at the end of the 2011-12 school year. To determine graduation rates in a timely manner, LAUSD calculates graduation rates earlier than the timeline used by CDE. The following table illustrates the differences between LAUSD’s Four Year Cohort Rate and the CDE rate.

Table 8: *Comparison of CDE and LAUSD's Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate*

	CDE Calculation				LAUSD Calculation			
	# in Cohort	# Grads	Grad. Rate	% Still Enr.	# in Cohort	# Grads	Grad. Rate	% Still Enr.
Comprehensive High Schools	35,680	24,905	69.8	14.0	45,679	28,235	61.8	5.4
Options	7,482	1,879	25.1	31.7	4,765	598	12.5	32.5
Special Education Centers	361	18	5.0	68.7	310	15	4.8	77.1
All Schools	43,523	26,802	61.6	17.5	50,754	28,848	56.8	8.4

**Dropouts**

In the years prior to the use of the Cohort Graduation Rate, the state used a four-year derived dropout rate which estimated the number of dropouts over four years using a single year of data. The Four-Year Derived rate is no longer in use. Dropout rates are now calculated as a Cohort Dropout rate (the number of students who dropped out of the cohort over the four year period or did not graduate in four years) or a One Year Dropout rate (the number of students in grades 9-

12 who drop out in a one year period). Year to year fluctuations may be due to inconsistency of data from year to year as the state is adjusting the calculations in the statewide database.

The Cohort Dropout Rate ranged from 5.9% to 27.7% among major urban districts. Compared to other urban districts in California, LAUSD's Cohort Dropout rate was the second highest at 20.6%. Oakland's cohort dropout rate of 27.7% exceeded LAUSD's.

The statewide average for the one year dropout rate was 3.4% in 2009-10 and increased to 4.4% in 2010-11. LAUSD was above the state average with a one year dropout rate of 7.1%.

Table 9: Cohort Dropout Rates and One Year Dropout Rates

	Cohort Dropout Rate		One Year Dropout Rate	
	2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11
San Diego Unified	8.4%	5.9%	1.8%	1.9%
San Jose Unified	10.4%	7.9%	3.0%	2.5%
San Francisco Unified	11.3%	10.4%	2.9%	3.2%
Pasadena Unified	15.9%	13.3%	5.5%	6.4%
Santa Ana Unified	12.5%	13.0%	1.8%	3.6%
Long Beach Unified	13.2%	14.7%	1.9%	3.4%
Pomona Unified	21.1%	17.3%	3.8%	4.5%
Sacramento City Unified	23.0%	17.5%	0.6%	2.9%
Fresno Unified	20.3%	17.5%	4.1%	6.3%
LAUSD	24.8%	20.6%	4.5%	7.1%
Oakland Unified	33.1%	27.7%	12.7%	8.9%
California	--	--	3.4%	4.3%

Attachment A displays school lists with the CDE Cohort Graduation Rate (which will be used for Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB) and LAUSD's Corrected Four Year Cohort Graduation Rates for the 2010-11 school year. Additional information can be found at the following website after June 27: <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp>.

If there are additional questions, please contact me or Grace Pang Bovy at (213) 241-2460.

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