![Chicago Public Schools logo]

Fact Sheet on the
CPS Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate

What is the difference between the 2020 method and the prior method?

In the past few years, the Department of School Quality Measurement and Research (SQMR) has made improvements in tracking student enrollment to better understand the trajectory of students beyond freshman year. As a result, this year SQMR will be implementing several improvements to graduation rate calculations to overcome limitations of the former method. These include:

- Including as graduates students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who remain enrolled to receive ongoing support after meeting graduation requirements.
- Improve the process of identifying first-time freshmen.
- Use "annualized" grade level rather than end-of-year grade level.
- Assign students to their "annualized" school rather than 20th-day school.
- Give schools more time to verify out of district transfers before the final year of calculation.
- Give schools a "grace period" for unverified out of district transfers after February 1st of the final year of calculation, similar to other metrics.

What is the CPS Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate?

The five-year cohort graduation rate follows a group of students who enter Chicago Public Schools (CPS) as freshmen and calculates the percent of these students who graduate within five years of the start of their freshman year. For example, the 2020 rate tracks ninth grade students who started in CPS in the 2015-16 school year and graduated from CPS by August of the 2019-20 school year.

How is the rate calculated?

The rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who graduated over the five year time period by the adjusted ninth grade cohort.

Who is included in the adjusted ninth grade cohort?

This cohort includes all CPS 9th graders who:

- Were annualized to a CPS high school
- Had an annualized grade level of 9
- Were marked as present at least one day in the first-time ninth-grade annualized school
- Were first-time ninth grade students
- Did not permanently transfer out of CPS during the five years following their freshman year (verified transfers).

Who is counted as a graduate?

- Students who graduated from CPS by the end of the most recent summer school session
- Students who meet graduation requirements but remain enrolled for transition services in accordance with their IEPs

Who is not counted as a graduate?

- Students who dropped out
- Students who were still actively enrolled in CPS as of the end of the fifth year
- Students whose transfer remains unverified

Who is an unverified transfer?

An unverified out of district transfer is a student who left a CPS school and was entered into the district's student information system as a transfer to a school outside of CPS, but for whom enrollment in the new school has not yet been confirmed. An unverified within district transfer is a student who left a CPS school and was entered as a transfer to another CPS school, but the new CPS school did not enroll the student. If a student is still in this status at the end of the five-year cohort period in which the transfer was supposed to take place, s/he is converted into a dropout.

Example Calculation

School A had 725 ninth grade students annualized to it during the 2015-16 school year. Twenty of these were repeating the ninth grade. Twenty-five of them transferred out of CPS and were verified in a new school during the five years following the start of the 2015-16 school year. The adjusted ninth grade cohort for this school was:

9th Grade Adjusted Cohort = 725-20-25 = **680**

During the five years starting with the 2015-16 school year, 250 of these 680 students dropped out, 10 completed their requirements to graduate but remained enrolled in transition programs for diverse learners, and 390 graduated. Of the remaining 30 students, 5 were unverified transfers (who exited before Feb 1 2020), and twenty-five were still enrolled in CPS as of the end of the 2019-20 school year. School A's Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rate in 2020 was:

5 Year Graduation Rate = (390+10)/680 = **58.8%**