**Part B Exiting Data Notes**

**2020-21 Reporting Year**

This document provides information or data notes on the ways in which states collected and reported data differently from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data formats and instructions. In addition, the data notes provide explanations of substantial changes or other changes that data users may find notable or of interest in the data from the previous year.

**Alabama**

- On August 1, 2009, Alabama enacted Alabama Act 2009-564, which raised the minimum age that a student could drop out of school to age 17. As a result, students with disabilities ages 14-15 years are not collected or reported for Dropped out. However, students who are age 16 may be reported as Dropped out if they turn age 17 anytime during the reporting period.

- Students with disabilities who have not earned an AL High School Diploma and who have not reached 21 by August 1 may receive services up to age 21. A student who turns 21 on or after August 1 is entitled to begin and complete the school year.

**Alaska**

-If an eligible student is age 21 on the 1st day of the school term, special education services continue for the entire school year, even if the student's 22nd birthday occurs during the school year.

- Any student in Alaska can exit with a certificate of achievement, completion, or attendance (4AAC 06.790).

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* During SY 2019-20 a large school district in Alaska updated their reporting practice and included additional students marked as exiting special education in group Received a Certificate (RC). Due to this, for SY 2020-21 and subsequent years, they expect the number reported as RC to level off and remain consistent.

# American Samoa

- Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who do not meet full requirements of a regular education diploma and are of maximum age to graduate are issued certificates of completion.

# Arizona

- Exiting with a certificate is not a recognized exit category given that Arizona statute does not address a certificate option for any student. However, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may grant certificates if their governing board policies permit.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* While the increase for the Reached Maximum Age (RMA) category is amplified heavily from low N-Counts, some of the students may have had disruptions within their school calendar due to COVID-19. This may have caused delays for certain students who did not graduate or exit prior to turning 22. A significant number of students in Arizona landed in the “Dropped Out” category due to COVID-19 in SY 2020-21; however, many of these students re-enrolled over time and counts appear comparable in SY 2021-22.

# Arkansas

- Students may exit as a graduate at age 16, but be age 15 on December 1. We use the December 1 date to calculate age for School Age (SA) Exits.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Since all buildings went to virtual in March 2020, the number of dropouts declined.

# Bureau of Indian Education

- Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) has LEAs with high schools in 20 states. Our LEAs follow the statutory regulations that govern the State in which the school is located.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The BIE reported more dropouts in SY 2020-21 than in SY 2019-20. Due to COVID-19, fewer students enrolled in school in SY 2020-21 and therefore were reported at dropouts.
* The BIE reported fewer graduates in SY 2020-21 school year than in SY 2019-20 due to fewer students enrolled.
* The BIE had fewer students who moved and were known to be continuing in an educational program.
* The BIE provided remote learning for the majority of students; therefore it was difficult to know whether students had moved.

# California

- Students who are age 16 by the end of the school year, will have their Federal age in December as 15.

- Effective SY 2019-20, the California Department of Education collects a third gender option, 'X' Nonbinary. In files where gender is a required data element, the education unit total (EUT) and the sums of the subtotals that includes sex/gender will not match.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* We believe this is a byproduct of COVID-19 which negatively affected timely review of IEP and holding eligibility evaluation. We have received a high number of tickets from parents who requested to postpone their evaluation.

# Colorado

- A Technical Assistance (TA) document regarding diploma and certificate is available here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/ta\_graduationdiplomas

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Given the similar amount of decrease in the number of students who dropped out, it seemed like students received certificates rather than dropped out in SY 2020-21. This was a trend seen in many Administrative Units (AU) rather than a few particular AUs.

# Connecticut

- Students are reported by their age at the time of the most recent child count which means it is accurate to report 20-year-olds as Reached Max Age.

- Connecticut (CT) allows for a standard high school diploma or Certificate of Completion; CT does not allow for a modified diploma or similar document; LEAs have authority to outline requirements for the Certificate of Completion, however, the Certificate of Completion cannot not count as a standard high school diploma (Sec. 10-221 & 10-221a)

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* With the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer families chose to exit their students with a special education certificate of completion. Presumably this decision was due to fewer job opportunities for youth during the pandemic. Furthermore, more families chose to withdraw consent for special education, thereby returning their student to general education during the pandemic.

# Delaware

- During our Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) State Supplemental Survey (SSS) submission the State of Delaware Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards regulatory policy was inadvertently placed under the Alternate Diploma section. Although "no" was the answer for having an Alternate Diploma aligned with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Delaware does have an Alternate Diploma. We provided clarification of the Delaware Alternate Diploma under the comment section within the Alternate Diploma section of the Survey. Upon re-examining the questions, we should have answered yes within the Certificate section and stated Delaware does have an Alternate Diploma. This Alternate Diploma does not align with the requirements under ESSA hence it would fall under the “similar document” of the Certificate section. Clarification should have been provided under the comments section within the Certificate section.

- Beginning with the graduating class of 2019, a public school student shall be granted a State of Delaware - Diploma of Alternate Achievement Standards when such student has met the requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) but will not complete the High School graduation course credit requirements established by the State, district, or charter school for a State of Delaware High School Diploma.

# District of Columbia

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* There were fluctuations, which may be due to the effects of the pandemic and the vast majority of instructional days in SY 2020-21 being remote.

# Florida

- Section 1003.438 Florida Statutes, was repealed in 2014. Students who began ninth grade before the 2014-15 school year and whose IEP designated that they would work toward a special diploma may continue to work toward a special diploma should they choose to do so. Section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes, now contains high school diploma and certificate of completion requirements for all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities. These are further defined and described in Rule 6A-1.09963, Florida Administrative Code.

# Georgia

- The Alternate Diploma option began with students entering high school beginning with during SY 2020-21.

# Guam

- Students with disabilities graduate with a regular high school diploma.

- Guam Department of Education (DOE) is a unitary school system. It is both a State Education Agency (SEA) and LEA. Guam DOE also has the capacity of collecting data for students who have moved off-island and have enrolled in an off-island school.

# Hawaii

- A child is eligible for special education services up until the age of 22. Upon reaching the age of 22, the child is no longer eligible for services. Hawaii Revised Statutes Section 302A-1134(c), also known as Act 163 (SLH 2010). Exceptions to this would include due process hearing or court settlements that requires the student be serviced past the maximum age.

# Idaho

- Idaho moved forward to aggregate students coded as Completed Adapted Requirements into the Received a Certificate category for FS009 - Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* In March of 2020, Idaho went into a COVID-19 soft closure. LEAs were required to continue to provide educational and special education services, but the majority operated through virtual and distanced layouts for the remainder of the school year. This format change resulted in process changes to attendance data collection and made it more challenging to determine dropout status. LEAs also indicated that students more prone to dropping out from traditional face-to-face format were less apt to drop out when in the virtual or distance format. COVID-19 closures in Idaho reduced the availability of entry-level job openings in the labor market Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE) anticipates this reduced the incentive for ending educational services. Students who may have been on a trajectory to exit through the Received a Certificate category for SY 2019-20 chose to stay and continue services in SY 2020-21 to make sure they completed their goals.
* Idaho's year-to-year change for SY 2020-2021 data reflects more normalized data incorporating regular processes around data collection, attendance and enrollment, and re-evaluation. The normalizing effect is visible when comparing the year-to-year report between SY 2018-19 and SY 2019-20. Reviewers will note a substantial decrease in the categories of Dropped out, Moved, known to be continuing, and Received a certificate. These categories are all now showing substantial increases.
* The category of Reached maximum age showed increases primarily due to an LEA level reporting error which Idaho addressed through a change in pull logic. Idaho has provided additional guidance and validations to address future coding.

# Indiana

- Student must not turn 22 years before the beginning of the school year. Students who turn age 22 during a school year may finish that school year.

# Iowa

- Students may be approved through 24 by director of special education.

# Kansas

- Kansas does not have a minimum age for graduation with a regular high school diploma.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Kansas confirms the increase of IDEA Dropouts for SY 2020-21. This increase is representative of the overall state-wide increase of all students Dropping Out in SY 2020-21. This increase coincides with a declining enrollment trend, increased truancy, and chronic absenteeism.

# Kentucky

- A student with a disability is entitled to special education through age 20 as long as they have not graduated with a standard diploma. Districts may provide services to a student over age 20 if they desire and must if there is an order from a Hearing Officer for compulsory education.

- Kentucky offers an alternate diploma for students with disabilities. However, this diploma is not in accordance with Section 8101(23) and (25) of ESEA (A)(ii)(l)(bb) and students receiving this diploma remain eligible to receive special education and related services until they reach Kentucky's maximum age of 21.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The number of students who reached maximum age was down in Kentucky due to the pandemic. Many parents chose not to send their children back to school in the midst of COVID-19 due to health concerns. The students may have met transition goals virtually or may have returned the following year when schools were back in session face-to-face.

# Louisiana

- If a student turns 22 after the first day of school, they can complete that school year.

- The minimum age for graduation with a regular high school diploma is 16.

# Maine

- A student can receive special education services while age 20, however, if a 19-year-old student, at the time of the October child count, turns 20 during the school year (after the October child count), the student will be ineligible for services the following year and will be marked as reached maximum age at the close of the school year. Therefore, reached maximum age is a permissible value for 19-year-olds on relevant ED*Facts* reports.

# Maryland

- Services provided the entire school year the student turns 21.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The number and percent of students moved and known to be continuing, and transferred to general education, decreased during this timeframe due to school closures, virtual instruction, and hybrid instruction related to the COVID-19 virus. These students often began either home instruction or were parentally placed in a private school.

# Massachusetts

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The decrease in the “Receiving a certificate” category can be explained by the increase in the number of students graduating with a regular high school diploma.

# Michigan

- Department of Corrections serves to students until the age of 21. Michigan serves all other students not more than 25 years of age as of Sept. 1 of the school year of enrollment, who have not completed a normal course of study, and who have not graduated from high school (HS). A student who reaches the age of 26 years after Sept. 1 is a student with disabilities (SWD) and entitled to continue a special education (SE) program or service until the end of that school year.

- The legislation clearly stipulates that a diploma shall not be awarded unless the pupil successfully completes all of the credit requirements in Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1278a and 380.1278b. This does not prevent districts from issuing alternative certificates such as a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or certificate of completion for students who do not meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). A certificate of completion, however, has no legal standing as a substitute for a diploma. For students with a disability, only a diploma ends the entitlement to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* There was a decrease in students in special education dropping out of school between SY 2019-20 and SY 2020-21. The COVID-19 pandemic had a great impact on this number. Students were not educated in-person during SY 2020-21.

# Mississippi

- State law mandates FAPE to all children residing in the State from age three (3) through age twenty (20). It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Education MDE that the provision of FAPE will continue for a student with a disability through the school year in which the student reaches age twenty-one (21), if the student was enrolled in a public agency and was age twenty (20) on or before September 1.

- §37-16-11. Special diploma or certificate of completion for students with disabilities; alternate diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- Alternate diploma applies to incoming 9th graders in SY 2018-19

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Mississippi saw an increase in dropouts due to several factors, including challenges with remote learning and health and safety concerns caused by COVID-19.
* Mississippi saw fluctuations in special education populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Missouri

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The increase in dropouts from the prior year is due to an unusually low number of dropouts reported for SY 2019-20 related to COVID-19 school closures in spring 2020. The SY 2020-21 dropout counts are very similar to years prior to SY 2019-20.

# Montana

- While the state's maximum age is 21, state law allows individual districts to also set a maximum age, and most of those are set at 19 on or before Sept. 10 of the current school year, which can then allow a 19 year old to be reported for exiting if they were 18 on the last child count and turned 19 during the school year. For purposes of DQ reviews, the maximum age is being reported as 18.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many changes for LEAs, including the ability to change the modality of instruction - allowing students to learn in different ways and different locations. For students who were at risk of dropping out, this gave many of them the flexibility to remain in school, learning in an environment and modality that was better suited to their learning style. This, in turn, decreased the number of dropouts.

# Nebraska

- Nebraska did not have students ages 14, 15, and 16 graduate nor receive a certificate.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* With the move across the nation to remote instruction, many districts found the benefit of inclusive education for students. This resulted in an increase in the number of transfers to regular education students in Nebraska. This explains the greater than 20% shift from prior years reporting.
* Although Nebraska believes the dropout rate increase is due partially, in part, to the pandemic, there is also a hypothesis that remote instruction did not work for all students and especially some students with disabilities. With the shift in instructional methodology came an increase in needed supports, especially for students who had IEPs that required life skills instruction, work based learning, and other technical or job-based skill training. Nebraska is working to track the students with disabilities that were indicated in the rise of the dropout rate to ensure proper due process and procedural safeguards were provided to all students and families. This accounts for the shift in numbers from the previous years.

# Nevada

- Consistent with guidance provided in file specs, students who do not identify as either male or female cannot be included in counts where sex is a required category but are included in all student counts where sex is not a required category.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The year-to-year decrease in the number of students who received a certificate and the year-to-year increase in the number of students who dropped out or who moved but were known to be continuing reflect the effects COVID-19 had on student enrollments and attendance in the midst of a pandemic.

# New Jersey

- New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) introduced a new exiting category "Received Certificate" and also the reporting requirements have changed as per ESSA requirements.

# New Mexico

- Section 22-8-2(M)(3)(c), NMSD 1978:

* M. "qualified student" means a public school student who:

(1) has not graduated from high school;

(2) is regularly enrolled in one-half or more of the minimum course requirements approved by the department for public school students; and

(3) in terms of age:

(a) is at least five years of age prior to 12:01 a.m. on September 1 of the school year;

(b) is at least three years of age at any time during the school year and is receiving special education services pursuant to rules of the department; or

(c) has not reached the student's twenty-second birthday on the first day of the school year and is receiving special education services pursuant to rules of the department.

- 6.29.1.9 (K)(13)(i) of the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC).

* K. Graduation requirements.

(13) Graduation requirements for issuance of a conditional certificate of transition for students with an IEP. The development of a program of study and the granting of a diploma, or use of a conditional certificate of transition in the form of a continuing or transition individualized educational program (IEP) for students receiving special education services, includes the following governing principles:

(a) The IEP team is responsible for determining whether the student has completed a planned program of study based on the student's strengths, interests, preferences, identified educational and functional needs and long-term educational or occupational goals, making the student eligible to receive either a diploma or a conditional certificate of transition. A conditional certificate of transition allows the student to participate in graduation activities. If a student receives a conditional certificate of transition, the student shall then return to the program specified in the IEP to complete the student's secondary program and meet the requirements for a diploma. In addition, all IEPs shall provide a description of how the student's progress toward meeting annual goals and graduation requirements will be measured, and at what intervals progress will be reported to parents or guardians. A student shall be awarded a diploma upon completion of a planned program of study that meets the requirements of paragraph (b).

(b) A student may be awarded a diploma (Section 22-13-1.1 New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 1978) using any of the following programs of study described in (i) through (iii). All IEP team discussion points and decisions identified herein, including the identification of the student's program of study and any student or parent proposals accepted or rejected by the IEP team (if the student has not reached the age of majority), shall be documented on the student's IEP and in the prior written notice (PWN) of proposed action.

(i) A standard program of study is based upon meeting or exceeding all requirements for graduation based on the New Mexico standards for excellence (Subsection [J] K of 6.29.1.9 NMAC) with or without reasonable accommodations of delivery and assessment methods. In addition, a student shall pass all sections of the current state graduation examination(s) administered pursuant to Section 22-13-1.1(I) NMSA 1978 under standard administration or with state-approved accommodations, and shall meet all other standard graduation requirements of the district.

# New York

- Students who are 20 years of age at the beginning of the school year may remain in school until they finish that school year, even if they will become 21 years of age during the year. Students who are age 21 at the beginning of the school year are not entitled to educational services as per State law and regulations.

# North Carolina

- Students who turn 22 during the school year may remain in services.

- Students who have exited but haven't received a high school diploma are allowed to re-enroll through age 21.

- In North Carolina the minimum age for drop out is 16.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* North Carolina Public Schools were almost completely virtual for SY 2020-21 and COVID-19 impacted the movement and drop out of students. North Carolina anticipates that data will stabilize in the next year or two as schools return to in-person instruction.

# Ohio

- There is not a different diploma, certificate of completion, or any other non-diploma document, but Ohio Revised Code (ORC) permits students to receive a regular diploma meeting alternative requirements.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, state legislation (HB 164, Section 12) allowed eligible students in the class of 2020 and 2021 to substitute a final course grade in an eligible course for the corresponding high school end-of-course examination. These course grade substitutions increased the opportunity for students with disabilities to graduate by the same requirements as students without disabilities, thus earning a regular diploma rather than a certificate. As a result, fewer students with disabilities graduated by earning a certificate.
* After review, the Ohio Department of Education did not identify any specific factors contributing to the year-to-year increase of students with disabilities exiting by transferring to regular education during SY 2020-21.

# Oklahoma

- Students can exit at the age of 22 but must have been 21 on the October 1 Child Count.

- Oklahoma has minimum requirements that would make it difficult to graduate before the age of 16 but not legislation that states an age.

# Oregon

- Starting with SY 2018-19, Oregon allows for three permitted values in the Gender (Sex) category. Per United States Education Department (USED), the count of the third permitted value has been removed from all category sets that include Gender (Sex) thus sums of category sets that include Gender (Sex) will not add up to other category sets or totals.

- A student with disabilities must be under 21 years on September 1 (Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 581-015-2040). The student is eligible to receive special education and related services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 21.

- A student may complete requirements in less than four years but must attend at least three years and have parent/guardian or adult student consent.

- With parent/guardian or adult student consent, an LEA may award a regular high school diploma to a student who has satisfied all the requirements.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Due to COVID-19 and in compliance with the Governor's executive orders, schools were closed to in-person instruction for much of SY 2020-21. It is thought that distance learning provided an alternative to students who would have otherwise dropped out in SY 2020-21.

# Pennsylvania

- Students who exit programs with other than a high school diploma may return to school to receive an educational program to the age of 21. If students do not meet the graduation requirements by age 21 they exit as Reached Max Age.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Based on school being remote for long duration of time and lack of in person instruction, students aged out without meeting their IEP goals or returning for an extra semester.

# Puerto Rico

- FS009 includes students from public as well as private schools.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The year to year decrease in the numbers is attributable to there being a significant period of school closures during SY 2020-21 school year in Puerto Rico due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As previously reported, Puerto Rico schools were shut down effective March 13, 2020, as part of a government lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools remained closed for not only the remainder of SY 2019-20 but also the majority of SY 2020-21. A limited number of schools began to open for in-person learning on March 15, 2021. Unfortunately, Puerto Rico experienced a significant spike in COVID-19 cases shortly thereafter, and all schools island-wide were again closed by government order issued April 8, 2021. A small group of schools reopened for in-person learning in early May through the end of SY 2020-21 the first week of June.

# Republic of the Marshall Islands

- To signify a student's completion of the secondary program, a diploma shall be awarded. Students who do not meet the required Grade Point Average (GPA) for high school graduation but have completed all required secondary courses shall be awarded a certificate of completion.

# Rhode Island

- Special education services under the IDEA must be provided until a student's 22nd birthday.

- A free appropriate public education must be available to all eligible children residing in the LEA, between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive (until the child's twenty-first birthday or until child receives a regular high school diploma).

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* "Reached max age" had a decrease. The number of students who "Reach max age" can vary greatly from year to year. COVID-19 seems to have magnified this in the data.
* "Transferred to regular education" had an increase over the previous year. This number can vary greatly from year to year and despite COVID-19, this data moved in a positive direction.

# South Carolina

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Due to the COVID-19 virtual instruction setting, there was a decrease in the number of students reported as a dropout.

# South Dakota

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* South Dakota had a significant increase in dropouts. The increase in dropouts is attributed to enrollment and attendance directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Districts have been provided additional technical assistance on engaging students in a variety of ways and truancy policy.

# Tennessee

- SY 2020-21 was the first year in which Tennessee students with disabilities were able to graduate with an alternate academic diploma.

- A student is defined as Moved, Known to be Continuing at the SEA and LEA level if the LEA has received a request for records from another education entity or notification that the student is enrolling in a homeschool, homeschool consortia, on-line education program, etc.

# Texas

- Exiting age can extend beyond 21 if student begins school year at age 21 and subsequently turns 22 before end of school year.

- Students who received a high school diploma but did not meet the same standards for graduation as students without disabilities earn the same diploma as non-disabled students based on criteria aligned with the student's IEP. The State does not provide an alternative degree not fully aligned with the State's academic standards.

# Vermont

- If a student on an IEP turns 22 within 3 months of graduation, local education agencies may apply for a waiver to the Secretary of Education that allows the entitlement of FAPE to be extended to the graduation date.

# Virginia

- Due to students that are non-binary in both SEA and LEA files, the total gender count will be slightly less than the EUT.

- Virginia is considering adjusting to the requirements for the Applied Studies Diploma in order to include this diploma in the Federal Graduation Indicator (FGI) calculation; however, the Applied Studies Diploma will not be included in the FGI at this time.

- A student continues to be entitled to FAPE until graduating with a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma or reaching the age of eligibility.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Virginia dropout rate has decreased in part due to the programs and continued support Virginia is providing to their students in the Commonwealth.

# Washington

- Washington's count of Moved, Known to be Continuing indicates that the student has one of the following: (1) a confirmed transfer out of the enrolled school to attend another school within that district; or (2) a confirmed transfer out of the enrolled school and district to attend another school within the State of Washington; or (3) a confirmed transfer out of the enrolled school and district to attend a school in another state.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Students with IEPs exiting in Washington State at the end of SY 2020-21 decreased in most of the reported exit categories. The trend identified in SY 2019-20 of the number of students staying in school continued in SY 2020-21.

# West Virginia

- West Virginia has moved from modified diplomas, or certificates, to alternate diplomas based on alternate state achievement standards. These alternate diplomas were earned by students with disabilities for the first time during SY 2020-21. West Virginia decided to keep the option of a certificate available to LEAs that may have students that were not placed on the alternate standards, were still under the previous modified curriculum, and would be exiting with a certificate.

- Beginning with the 9th grade cohort that entered in SY 2017-18, West Virginia began offering an alternate diploma option for students with significant cognitive disabilities. As of SY 2020-21, students may receive a State-defined alternate diploma.

- Students beginning a cohort prior to SY 2017-18 will receive a modified diploma. SY 2019-20 will be the last cohort to graduate with a Modified Diploma.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* Exiting data were significantly impacted by COVID-19. In West Virginia, SY 2020-21 was delayed by an emergency order of the governor through September 7, 2020. There was one additional emergency closure by the governor for November 30, 2020, through December 2, 2020.
* School districts opened in traditional, blended, or remote learning models on September 8, 2020. The options available for general education varied by district based on local board of education decisions. The blended model was an attempt to reduce class size and maintain proper social distancing in the school setting. Blended models involved half of the students attending in a traditional setting with the other half in a remote learning setting for the day. Students would switch days during the week between the two settings. Many students took advantage of an additional option of a virtual school model made available on an individual basis statewide.
* The Department of Health and Human Resources developed a Metrics map to reflect the COVID-19 infection rate and percent positivity in each county in the state. Each of West Virginia’s counties is a separate school district. Under the direction of the governor, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) used the Saturday Metric map to determine which counties should be in remote learning for the upcoming week. This remained in effect for elementary and middle schools through the middle of January 2021, and through late March 2021, for high schools.
* Although certainly far from a normal and traditional school year, all days regardless of settings were considered instructional days. Many districts were able to bring special education students into a traditional school setting for more days than their non-disabled peers based on the need to receive IEP services. These decisions were determined locally in conjunction with parents and within any of the guidelines established by local health departments.
* Due to the increased availability of options for students to complete coursework and their high school programs, the number of students dropping out decreased significantly, but is accurate. Similarly, due to the variability in instructional delivery models and uncertainty of support availability, fewer students were transferred back to regular education.

# Wisconsin

- The Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) data collection, which includes the exiting special education reporting, does accept student records with a missing gender, missing race/ethnicity, or missing English language learner status resulting in category set and subtotals not being equal. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction includes these students with missing demographics in its reporting of students who exited special education.

- The age for a student reaching the maximum age for services may be reported as age 20 because of the age calculated as of the date of the most recent child count prior to exiting.

- The minimum age at which a student may receive a high school completion certificate other than a regular high school diploma is age 17. The age for a student receiving a certificate may be reported as age 16 because of the age calculated as of the most recent child count prior to exiting.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* The increase in the number of students who dropped out and the decrease in the number of students who received a certificate can both be attributed to the largest local educational agency (LEA) in the state. The largest LEA in the state also saw the largest decrease in the percent of students who transferred to regular education. For SY 2020-21, the state included a data quality indicator specific to students who transferred to regular education as a means for LEAs to review their exiting data prior to the data snapshot used for reporting purposes. The state also added errors within WISE data, the reporting application used to collect the exiting data, to identify potential mismatches between exit reason and exit dates that in the past would have resulted in a student being reported as transferred to regular education. These changes have resulted in more accurate reporting of transferred to regular education. Some students who in the past may have been reported as transferred to regular education are now being reported as dropouts or are students who continue to receive special education services.

# Wyoming

- If a student turns 21 during the school year the student may complete the current school year.

- The State provided the following response(s) to large Year to Year change(s):

* SY 2019-20 was a year when much of the data across the board was impacted due to COVID-19 and school closures. The SY 2019-20 data was not typical in many areas. The largest count difference was "moved, known to be continuing" with fewer students state-wide who moved. In SY 2019-20 a large number of students moved when the pandemic shut down the energy industry in Wyoming. There were many families who left the state to seek other employment. In SY 2019-20, there were fewer students who were formally counted as having dropped out because schools were scrambling to find ways in which to teach remotely.