

## Part B Exiting Data Notes

### 2014-15 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.

#### Colorado

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Reached maximum age:

Among a number of LEAs that decreased the count of students who received maximum age, 2 LEAs in particular showed a significant decrease. Their significant decrease seems to be due to their increased the number of graduates and dropout.

Received a certificate:

We decreased the number of students who received a certificate as state as a whole; no particular LEA was responsible for this decrease. The decrease seems to be due to the increased graduation with diploma. CO has been encouraging LEAs to graduate students with IEPs with regular diploma rather than awarding them with an alternate certificate.

#### Georgia

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This data note is being submitted to address the increase of 2988 students (57.31%) with disabilities in GA who received a regular high school diploma in 2014-2015 as compared to 2013-2014. School districts in GA have worked diligently to increase the graduation rate for all their students including students with disabilities through the implementation of the SSIP.

Additionally GA had policy changes which require that all students satisfy the requirements for graduation which includes earning a minimum of 23 credits in specific content areas. Students are no longer required to take and therefore not required to pass the GA High School Graduation Test. This policy change may have contributed to the increase in the graduation rate.

This data note is being submitted to address the decrease of 2004 (65.47%) students with disabilities in GA who received a certificate or special education diploma in 2014-2015 as compared to 2013-2014.

School districts in GA have worked diligently to increase number of students who exit with a regular education diploma. Additionally GA had policy changes which require that all students satisfy the requirements for graduation which includes earning a minimum of 23 credits in specific content areas, but students are no longer required to take and therefore not required to pass the GA High School Graduation Test. Because they successfully completed course work and earned credits, more students earned a regular education diploma and not a certificate. This policy change may have contributed the decrease in students who received a certificate.

## **Mississippi**

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Students who graduated with regular high school diploma increased due to greater efforts to provide services to students with disabilities in the general education environment and providing the necessary supplementary aids and services to provide access to the general education curriculum. This effort is supported by high quality, intense professional development opportunities focused on Co-Teaching, Inclusion, Universal Design for Learning, and Differentiated Instruction.

Students who received a certificate decreased due to greater efforts to provide services to students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment with a focus on serving students with disabilities in the general education environment to a greater extent and providing the necessary supplementary aids and services to provide access to the general education curriculum. This effort is supported by high quality, intense professional development opportunities focused on Co-Teaching, Inclusion, Universal Design for Learning, and Differentiated Instruction.

## **Montana**

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Although Montana does not offer a certificate of completion, due to new specifications from OSEP, students who received a regular high school diploma with a modified or waived requirements were reported as having received a certificate of completion, rather than having graduated with a regular high school diploma. That explains both the increase in the number of students receiving a certificate of completion and the decrease in the number of graduates for the 14-15 school year. The increase in the number of students who transferred to regular education just puts us back on par with our typical numbers, after a decrease for the 13-14 school year.

## **Oregon**

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In April 2014, after further clarification from the US Department of Education, the Oregon Department of Education issued an executive numbered memorandum 008-2013-14 which allows students who have earned a modified diploma to apply for federal financial aid due to the modified diploma denoting a successful completion of required courses and specific achievement on state assessments. Because of a student's successful completion of required courses and their specific achievements on state assessments, students who receive a modified diploma are now reported as "Graduated with regular high school diploma" in the 009 – Exiting report. The differences in the categories "Graduated with regular high school diploma" and "Received a certificate" are due to this change.

Oregon also offers an Extended Diploma. Students who achieve the extended diploma are still reported under the "Received a certificate" category.

## **South Carolina**

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Graduated with a regular high school diploma – Act 155 passed by the South Carolina General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Nikki R. Haley on April 14, 2014 states in part "Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students are no longer required to meet the exit examination requirements set forth in in this section and State Regulation to earn a South Carolina high school diploma." The

elimination of the exit exam requirement was deemed retroactive to the graduating class of 1990. As a result, the number of students graduating with a diploma increased.

Received a certificate – As a result of Act 155 (noted above), the number of students receiving a certificate decreased due to meeting the requirements of being able to graduate with a regular high school diploma.

## **Utah**

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Utah reported an increase in the number of students with disabilities exiting due to “reached maximum age” from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. This increase is the result of increased technical assistance provided to Utah LEAs by the USOE regarding appropriate use of exit codes. Prior to 2013-2014, some students were reported by LEAs as receiving a certificate when the student was no longer eligible for services due to age. The USOE clarified that although students may participate in graduation type ceremonies and receive documents during those ceremonies, if the reason the student leaves services is because s/he has reached the maximum age, then the appropriate code must be used.