

# NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09

File Version 1a



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**Robert Stillwell**  
National Center for  
Education Statistics

**Amber M. Noel**  
**Christopher Plotts**  
**Jennifer Sable**  
Education Statistics Services Institute –  
American Institutes for Research

**U.S. Department of Education**

Arne Duncan  
*Secretary*

**Institute of Education Sciences**

John Q. Easton  
*Director*

**National Center for Education Statistics**

Jack Buckley  
*Commissioner*

**Elementary/Secondary & Libraries Studies Division**

Jeffrey A. Owings  
*Associate Commissioner*

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1990 K Street NW  
Washington, DC 20006-5651

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**Content Contact**

Robert Stillwell  
(202) 219-7044  
[robert.stillwell@ed.gov](mailto:robert.stillwell@ed.gov)

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
List of Tables .....	iv
I. Introduction .....	1
II. The CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09 .....	2
A. Sources of Data Used to Construct the File .....	2
B. Data Collection Methods .....	2
C. Who Is a Dropout? .....	2
D. Information on High School Completers and the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate .....	3
E. Comments About the Data File .....	5
F. Comments About the Data Items .....	8
G. Special Characteristics of This File .....	11
III. User Guidelines for Processing the CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09 .....	11
A. File Characteristics .....	11
B. Linking This File to Other CCD Files .....	11
C. Guidelines for Using the Flat ASCII Data File .....	11

## Appendixes

A. Record Layout .....	A–1
B. Response Rates and State Specific Notes .....	B–1
C. Value Distribution and Field Frequency Tables .....	C–1
D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines .....	D–1
E. Computation Instructions .....	E–1

## List of Tables

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. State and other jurisdiction American National Standards Institute (ANSI) codes and abbreviations used in CCD datasets.....	10
C-1. Distribution of responses of character variable data, by response value: School year 2008-09 .....	C-2
C-2. Minimum, maximum, and mean for continuous variables, by variable: School year 2008-09 .....	C-3

## I. Introduction

This document provides information about the Common Core of Data (CCD) Public-Use Local Education Agency (LEA) Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09. The CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File is one of several data files released through the CCD nonfiscal survey system. This file contains district-level counts of students who drop out of or complete public high school.

The CCD nonfiscal surveys consist of data submitted annually to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) by state education agencies (SEAs) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the four U.S. Island Areas (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), the Department of Defense (DoD) dependents schools (overseas and domestic), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). In order to provide data comparable across states, NCES staff and representatives of the SEAs have worked since the 1950s to develop and accept common data items and definitions. SEAs report agency- and state-level dropout and completion data for the CCD through the U.S. Department of Education's *EdFacts* collection system. CCD survey staff<sup>1</sup> edits the data to produce a clean data file, which NCES uses to produce general-purpose publications and specialized reports. The principal users of CCD nonfiscal data are the federal government; the education research community; state and local government officials, including school boards and LEA administrators; and the general public.

This documentation for the CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09 contains information on CCD dropout and completion reporting methodology, as well as information on the data file. There are five appendixes, as follows:

- **Appendix A. Record Layout** gives the variable names and labels of the data items discussed throughout the documentation, as well as their locations in the data file.
- **Appendix B. Response Rates and State Specific Notes** presents information pertaining to item non-response. States and jurisdictions submit data in different ways. Any information that is not captured in the actual data items that may aid in the interpretation of the results is presented in this section.
- **Appendix C. Value Distribution and Field Frequency Tables** presents the minimum, maximum, and mean value of each numeric variable, and the number of districts for which data are missing, not applicable, and suppressed. For categorical and text variables, appendix C also lists the frequency of responses for each variable.
- **Appendix D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines** presents the instructions given to SEAs for reporting dropouts to NCES.
- **Appendix E. Computation Instructions** provides the data user with information on the computation of enrollment base fields (used as the denominator to calculate dropout rates) and the computation of dropout and completion rates in NCES data reports.

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<sup>1</sup> CCD survey staff collectively refers to staff that are employed by NCES as well as staff who are employed by other organizations who perform collection, editing, and processing tasks on behalf of NCES. For 2008–09 these organizations included staff at the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Institutes for Research.

## **II. The CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

### **A. Sources of Data Used to Construct the File**

The CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File is a product of the following CCD nonfiscal surveys: the Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey and the Local Education Agency Universe Survey. The file contains numbers of high school diploma recipients and the student membership data that comprise the denominator for the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR), as well as dropout counts and the membership data that comprise the enrollment bases that are used in calculating dropout rates.

### **B. Data Collection Methods**

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported their dropout and high school completer data for 2008–09 during the collection of CCD data through the *EDFacts* data collection system.

### **C. Who Is a Dropout?**

The CCD provides an event dropout count that represents the number of students dropping out each year. According to the CCD definition, a dropout is an individual who

1. was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year;
2. was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year;
3. has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program; and
4. does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions: transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program; temporary absence due to suspension or school-recognized illness; or death. See Appendix D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines for more details.

The following statements apply for the purpose of this definition:

- The school year is the 12-month period of time from the first day of school (operationally set as October 1), with dropouts from the previous summer reported for the year and grade in which they fail to enroll;
- Individuals who are not accounted for on October 1 are considered dropouts;
- A school completer is an individual who graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved educational program upon receipt of formal recognition from school authorities. A state- or district-approved educational program may consist of special education and district or state-sponsored GED preparation.

See Appendix D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines for a further description of the dropout definition.

Treatment of ungraded students in calculating dropout rates—The dropout rate denominator is based on enrollments by grade. However, some states report ungraded students and/or ungraded



dropouts (students who are not assigned a regular grade designation). Overall high school counts (grades 9–12 in aggregate) and rates include a proportion of ungraded students. Ungraded student enrollments are distributed into grades proportionally based on the graded enrollment. These serve as the denominator for the high school event dropout rate. Ungraded dropouts are distributed into grades proportionally using the graded dropout counts. These counts serve as the numerator for the high school event dropout rates. The grade detail is used to construct the overall dropout and enrollment counts, but is not presented separately on this file as part of the CCD disclosure analysis plan. For more details please see “Precautions to prevent disclosure of individuals who drop out of school or fail to graduate” (section II.E).

Caution in interpreting the dropout rates—There are two situations that cause problems in interpreting these LEA-level dropout counts and rates. The first is based on the difference between reporting levels for enrollment data and for dropout data. The enrollment data is reported at the school level whereas the dropout data is reported at the school district level. In some cases a state may not have been able to report enrollment data for all associated schools within a district. This may lead to an underrepresentation of the class size of the school district when compared to a complete reporting of the dropout count resulting in an inflated dropout rate for the district. If the opposite is true and a state neglects to report dropouts for a district but includes data for one or more schools within that district, a deflated dropout rate would be the result. If either of these situations occurs frequently within a state it could affect the state-level rates.

The event dropout rates presented on this file are approximations and are not cohort rates. The enrollment data is reported early in the school year and is representative of the October 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment for that school year while the dropout data is cumulative across the entire school year and subsequent summer. Thus the dropout data is affected by in- and out-transfer and the enrollment data does not include any adjustments for transfer students. This issue is of greater importance at the school district-level where net transfer rates are higher than at the state-level.

#### **D. Information on High School Completers and the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate**

For each record in the data file, the CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File contains counts of regular diploma recipients, the AFGR, enrollment data used to calculate the AFGR, and counts of other high school completers.

What is a regular diploma?—The CCD defines a regular diploma as the high school completion credential awarded to students who meet or exceed coursework and performance standards set by the state or other approving authority. There are differences in what a high school diploma represents across states. State and local policies can affect the numbers of diploma recipients reported. Some states award regular diplomas to all students who meet completion requirements, regardless of the extent to which these requirements address state or district academic standards. For example, some states have in-school GED programs that require fewer credit hours than a regular high school track, but lead to the award of regular diplomas. Other states award some form of alternative credential to students who meet some, but not all, requirements. For example, special education students who complete their individual education programs or regular education students in some alternative programs may receive a certificate of completion. As a result of different policies, students who receive a certificate of completion in one state might be awarded a regular diploma in another.

Calculating the AFGR—The AFGR is the number of regular diploma recipients in a given year divided by the average of the memberships in grades 8, 9, and 10, reported 5, 4, and 3 years earlier, respectively. For example, the denominator of the 2008–09 AFGR is the average of the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade membership in 2004–05, 9<sup>th</sup>-grade membership in 2005–06, and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade membership in 2006–07. Ungraded students are prorated into these grades. Averaging these three grades provides an estimate of the number of first-time freshmen in the class of 2005–06 freshmen in order to estimate the on-time graduation rate for 2008–09.

Treatment of ungraded students in calculating the AFGR—The AFGR denominator is based on enrollments by grade. However, some states report ungraded students (students who are not assigned a regular grade designation). To adjust for this, the data for ungraded enrollment counts were redistributed across grades in proportion to the graded enrollment of the state. The redistributed counts of ungraded enrollments were added to the reported enrollment counts for the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. Ungraded enrollments account for approximately 1 percent of enrollments each year.

Caution in interpreting the AFGR—Although the AFGR was selected as the best of the available alternatives, several factors make it fall short of a true on-time graduation rate. First, the AFGR does not take into account any imbalances in the number of students moving in and out of the nation or individual states over the high school years. As a result, the averaged freshman class is at best an approximation of the actual number of freshmen, where differences in the rates of transfers, retention, and dropping out in the three grades affect the average. Second, by including all graduates in a specific year, the graduates may include students who repeated a grade in high school or completed high school early and thus are not on-time graduates in that year.

While the AFGR is a reasonable proxy at the aggregate national or state level, the potential effects of three factors should be taken into account when interpreting the results for individual districts or groups of students. First, if more high school students moved out of a population than transferred in during the high school years, the number of graduates in the numerator would be smaller and the estimated graduation rate would be lower than the actual on-time rate for that group of freshmen. On the other hand, if more high school students moved into a population than moved out during this 4-year period, the number of graduates in the numerator would be increased and the estimated on-time graduation rate would be higher than the actual rate for that group of freshmen. This can lead to estimated graduation rates of more than 100 percent for small groups; such cases have been adjusted to 100 percent in this data file.

Second, including the estimate of 8<sup>th</sup>-graders from the previous year in order to remove the effect of freshmen who were retained (and, thus, are not first-time freshmen) ignores the fact that in some cases there may be a real change in the number of 8<sup>th</sup>-graders relative to counts of 9<sup>th</sup>-graders due to transfers between public and private schools. If more students transfer to public schools at this point, using a count of 8<sup>th</sup>-graders that does not include those students would serve to artificially decrease the estimated number of 9<sup>th</sup>-graders and, as a result, increase the graduation rate for that class. Conversely, if more students were to transfer out of public schools between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades, using the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade count that includes students leaving the population would artificially increase the estimated number of 9<sup>th</sup>-graders and, in turn, decrease the graduation rate.

Third, there may be a tradeoff between the adjustment for retentions and grade-specific differences in the number of dropouts. The use of the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade enrollment count also helps to

dampen the effect of 9<sup>th</sup>-grade retentions, but ignores the fact that 9<sup>th</sup>-grade dropouts result in a smaller 10<sup>th</sup>-grade population. Excluding these 9<sup>th</sup>-grade dropouts lowers the estimate of freshmen and, as a result, increases the graduation rate.

What is an “other high school completer”?— The CCD defines an other high school completer as a student who has received a certificate of attendance or other certificate of completion in lieu of a diploma during the previous school year and subsequent summer school. Other high school completer credentials are not awarded in every state. See section F. Comments About the Data Items for a list of states that do not award other high school completer credentials.

### **E. Comments About the Data File**

Data users should be aware of certain characteristics of the data file.

Methodology— The *EdFacts* data collection system is the primary collection tool for the CCD. NCES works collaboratively with the Department of Education’s Performance Information Management Service to develop the CCD collection procedures and data definitions. Coordinators from State Education Agencies (SEAs) submit the high school dropout and completion data at agency and state levels to the *EdFacts* collection system. Prior to submitting CCD files to *EdFacts*, SEAs must collect and compile information from their respective Local Education Agencies (LEAs) via established administrative records systems within their state or jurisdiction. Once SEAs have completed their submissions, the CCD survey staff analyzes and verifies the CCD for quality assurance. CCD survey staff routinely verified data through SEA coordinators and did not contact LEAs or individual schools to verify data except in unusual circumstances. After performing edit and consistency checks, CCD survey staff referred discrepancies to SEA coordinators for resolution. It is CCD policy to accept the judgment of the respondent unless there is a clear conflict or unacceptable inconsistency.

States report data to the *EDFacts* collection system through multiple file groups that are submitted on a reporting schedule at different dates throughout the year. The 2008–09 school year *EDFacts* collection of CCD dropout and high school completer submissions opened in January 2010. NCES extracted data from *EDFacts* between April 2010 and January 2011. CCD processed these file groups on a flow basis, so the date of the extract for each file group and each state may vary depending on when SEAs completed their submission for each file group. Once a file group was edited and verified for a particular state, CCD survey staff did not continue to incorporate late reports or updates unless these late reports or updates resulted in a major change of the reported data. Late reports or updates from SEAs may be included in subsequent file releases.

Response. Forty-eight states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported usable high school completion and dropout data during the CCD data collection period for the 2008-09 school year. Unit response rate information and state specific notes are include in Appendix B. Item response is described in Appendix C—Value Distribution, Field Frequencies, and Data Tables. This appendix lists the minimum, maximum, and mean value of each numeric variable as well as the total number of units and the number of units with missing data. Appendix C also lists the frequency of responses by option for each of the categorical values.

Nonsampling error. Nonsampling error is the error in an estimate arising at any stage in the survey from sources exclusive of sampling error. Nonsampling error includes nonresponse error;

data processing or data entry errors, or reporting error because respondents misinterpret survey questions or do not follow survey instructions or do not follow the item definitions correctly. State education policies may differ in such a way that does not allow them to map their data exactly to the CCD definitions. For example, some states issue several kinds of high school credentials, while other states issue a regular diploma to every student who meets requirements (which may also vary). Another source of nonsampling error may be variations in the reference period for the reported data. For example, CCD requests membership data for October 1 of each school year, but a state may report their membership data for another date because they were not able to capture these data for October 1.

Coverage error and vertical consistency— Coverage error is another source of nonsampling error; for example, the same school could be reported twice (overcoverage) or a school could be omitted (undercoverage). Although CCD coverage of traditional public schools and school districts (those schools and districts typed as regular<sup>2</sup>) is virtually 100 percent, the same cannot be said for publicly funded education outside of traditional settings and organizations. The CCD asks states to report all free public education in the state regardless of who administers the schools or districts. However, some states do not report schools and districts that are administered by state organizations other than SEAs (such as health and human services or corrections departments). Unreported schools may include those for the deaf and blind, university lab schools, and other schools not covered by the authority of the SEA.

NCES attempts to minimize nonsampling error through the use of annual training of SEA coordinators, extensive quality reviews, and survey editing and imputation procedures.

Accuracy of data—The degree of rigor with which SEAs verify their dropout data is not uniform. Agencies that collect dropout and membership data through student-level record systems are better able to verify students' enrollment status than are agencies that collect aggregate reports of dropouts from schools or districts. NCES requires SEAs to confirm or amend any numbers that appear considerably out of line with other states' data or with data from previous years. However, NCES does not audit a state's dropout or completion data except where explicitly stated in the previous section and in response to the disclosure mitigation procedures discussed in the following section.

Precautions to prevent disclosure of individuals who drop out of school or fail to graduate—The data file has undergone disclosure risk analysis to eliminate the possibility of the data being used to identify individuals who dropped out of school or those who did not receive a diploma at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Due to the hierarchical nature of the CCD collections, CCD survey staff examine each record was examined individually, in combination with the other records in the file, and across reporting levels due to the hierarchical nature of the CCD collections.

As these data are being presented on a public data file at the school district level, the NCES Disclosure Review Board and CCD team has determined that presenting dropout and completion data by race/ethnicity and gender (and grade, in the case of dropouts) presented too large a disclosure risk. Dropout data presented on this file are reported in aggregate form, grades 9–12 combined. Completion data is reported separately for regular diplomas and other high school

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<sup>2</sup> Regular school districts are operated by a local authority and offer instruction to students within their service areas. They exclude local supervisory unions, regional education service agencies, state and federally operated school districts, and other agencies that do not fall within these groupings.

completers but is not disaggregated by race/ethnicity or gender.

CCD survey staff have applied perturbation to the data on this file. A perturbation is an adjustment to one or more counts in the file and is done to protect the identity of students. Only data fields containing dropout counts and high school diploma counts have been perturbed. In the case of perturbations done to dropout counts, the perturbation was necessary to prevent the disclosure of individual students who dropped out of school. In the case of perturbations done to regular high school diploma counts, the perturbation was necessary to prevent the disclosure of individual students who did not receive a regular high school diploma at the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade. These changes were done in such a way as to minimize their impact on the analytical value of the data file.

Data suppression has also been employed as part of the CCD disclosure mitigation plan. Dropout counts of 1, 2, or 3 have been suppressed. These counts are presented on the data file with the value -3. Dropout counts that are 1, 2, or 3 students less than the membership count have also been suppressed. These counts are represented on the file with the denoted value of -4. In order to prevent data users from backing out these suppressed values and determining the real value of the cell, complimentary suppression has also been employed. Any complementary suppression performed on the file is denoted with the same value as a missing count, -1. These suppressed cells are not distinguishable from the cells that contain missing values.

Suppression has also been employed to protect against the individual disclosure of anyone that did not receive a regular high school diploma following their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. These, and the counter-suppressions made to protect the primary suppressions, are denoted as -1 on the data file. These suppressed cells are not distinguishable from cells that contain missing values.

Data values— All data elements are presented as reported by the state coordinator or have been filled with codes “-1,” “-2,” “M,” or “N” by NCES. Descriptions of zero or other codes are listed below.

- 0: A zero value represents a report of no occurrences of a data element. A value was expected and measured, but zero cases were found in the category. (For example, a K–12 district having no 12<sup>th</sup>-graders would report “0.”)

- M (or -1 for numeric values): A value of M (or -1) indicates that data are missing. A value was expected, but none was measured. (For example, a district that has at least one 12<sup>th</sup>-grader but cannot measure the number of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders would report “-1.”) This value also denotes a suppressed high school diploma count or dropout count.
- N (or -2 for numeric values): A value of N (or -2) indicates that data are not applicable. A value was neither expected nor measured. (For example, an elementary school district would report “-2” for 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.)
- -3: A value of -3 indicates a dropout count of 1, 2, or 3. These cells have been suppressed such that the true value of the cell cannot be identified. All cells with a value of -3 have a plausible value of 1, 2, or 3.
- -4: A value of -4 indicates a dropout count that is equal to or exceeds the 3 less than the membership count. These cells have been suppressed such that the true value of the cell cannot be identified. All cells with a value of -4 have a plausible value of 3 less than the membership.

#### **F. Comments About the Data Items**

The CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09 contains the following data items for each record: the school year for which the data are reported; the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)<sup>3</sup> State Code; the NCES Assigned Local Education Agency Identification Code (LEAID); an aggregate count of dropouts in grades 9–12, including a prorated proportion of ungraded dropouts; a membership count for grades 9–12 in aggregate; a high school (grades 9–12) dropout rate; a count of regular high school diplomas awarded; the enrollment base associated with the AFGR; the AFGR; and a count of other high school completers. Data users should take note of certain conditions regarding each data item in the file, as follows:

(SURVYEAR) School Year. The school year in which students dropped out of school or graduated from high school (the 2008–09 school year is represented as “2008–09” in the data file). It is important to use this field when comparing dropout data from different files.

(FIPST) ANSI Codes. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) state code. Please see table 1 for a list of state codes and state names.

(LEAID) NCES Local Education Agency ID. The NCES assigned LEA identification code is a 7-digit code that allows the linkage between this file and the CCD School and LEA Universe Files which contain data on district and school categorization, student counts, staff counts, address, and locale information. This file should be considered as a supplement to these files, not a stand-alone data file.

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<sup>3</sup> American National Standards Institute (ANSI) codes replace the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) codes previously issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Island Territories. ANSI code values map directly to the retired FIPS code values.

(TOTD912) High School Dropout Count. The dropout count is presented as an overall grade 9–12 count. This count is based on data collected at the school district level by grade, race/ethnicity, and gender. A proportion of the dropouts reported to the ungraded categories are included in the 9–12 aggregate counts based on the proportion of graded dropouts that are in grades 9–12. The high school dropout count is used as the numerator for the high school dropout rate.

(EBS912) High School Enrollment Count. The high school enrollment count serves as the denominator to calculate the high school dropout rate. The enrollment count has been aggregated to the LEA level from the associated schools that make up each LEA. This count includes the students reported for grades 9–12 and a proportion of the ungraded students equal to the proportion of the graded enrollment in a school district that is in grades 9–12. Appendix D describes the computation procedure.

(DRP912) High School Dropout Rate. The High School Dropout rate is the percent of students enrolled in grades 9–12 (and a proportion of the ungraded enrollment) that dropped out of school during the specified school year. This is an event dropout rate.

(TOTDPL) Regular Diploma Count. The regular diploma count is the total number of regular diplomas awarded in the specified school year. This serves as the numerator for the AFGR.

(AFGEB) Enrollment Base for Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate. The AFGR enrollment base variable is used as the denominator in the calculation of the AFGR and represent estimates of the number of first-time freshmen in the class of 2005–06 freshmen in order to estimate the on-time graduation rate for 2008–09. See appendix D for the computation procedure.

(AFGR) Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR). The AFGR is an estimate of the percentage of students that began 9<sup>th</sup> grade four years earlier that graduated school with a regular high school diploma in the expected four-year time span.

(TOTOHC) Other High School Completers. Some states grant a certificate of attendance or completion in lieu of a diploma. Other high school completer credentials are not offered by the following states and jurisdictions: Arkansas, California, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Table 1. State and other jurisdiction American National Standards Institute (ANSI) codes and abbreviations used in CCD datasets

State name/jurisdiction	ANSI <sup>1</sup>	Abbreviation <sup>2</sup>	State name/jurisdiction	ANSI <sup>1</sup>	Abbreviation <sup>2</sup>
Alabama	01	AL	Oregon	41	OR
Alaska	02	AK	Pennsylvania	42	PA
Arizona	04	AZ	Rhode Island	44	RI
Arkansas	05	AR	South Carolina	45	SC
California	06	CA	South Dakota	46	SD
Colorado	08	CO	Tennessee	47	TN
Connecticut	09	CT	Texas	48	TX
Delaware	10	DE	Utah	49	UT
District of Columbia	11	DC	Vermont	50	VT
Florida	12	FL	Virginia	51	VA
Georgia	13	GA	Washington	53	WA
Hawaii	15	HI	West Virginia	54	WV
Idaho	16	ID	Wisconsin	55	WI
Illinois	17	IL	Wyoming	56	WY
Indiana	18	IN			
Iowa	19	IA	Department of Defense		
Kansas	20	KS	dependents schools		
Kentucky	21	KY	(overseas)	58 <sup>3</sup>	DO
Louisiana	22	LA			
Maine	23	ME	Department of Defense		
Maryland	24	MD	dependents schools		
Massachusetts	25	MA	(domestic)	61 <sup>3</sup>	DD
Michigan	26	MI			
Minnesota	27	MN	Bureau of		
Mississippi	28	MS	Indian Education	59 <sup>3</sup>	BI
Missouri	29	MO			
Montana	30	MT	American Samoa	60	AS
Nebraska	31	NE			
Nevada	32	NV	Guam	66	GU
New Hampshire	33	NH			
New Jersey	34	NJ	Commonwealth of the		
New Mexico	35	NM	Northern Mariana		
New York	36	NY	Islands	69	MP
North Carolina	37	NC			
North Dakota	38	ND	Puerto Rico	72	PR
Ohio	39	OH			
Oklahoma	40	OK	U.S. Virgin Islands	78	VI

<sup>1</sup>American National Standards Institute codes (01–78).

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Postal Service state abbreviation codes.

<sup>3</sup>Not official U.S. ANSI code. The state abbreviations for Department of Defense dependents schools (overseas) are AA, AE, and AP to indicate schools located in Asia, Europe, and the Pacific, respectively. For Department of Defense dependents schools (domestic) and Bureau of Indian Education schools, state abbreviations correspond to the state in which the school is located.

SOURCE: Geography Division, Geographic Standards and Criteria Branch. (2010). "Codes for the Identification of the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Insular Areas of the United States (INCITS 38:2009)." Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.



## **G. Special Characteristics of this File**

Data users should be aware of the following special characteristics of the CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09.

1. The reported data were examined to identify any instance in which the identity of an individual dropout might be disclosed when aggregated to the state level. To protect against the possibility of disclosure, data in some cells have been perturbed and/or suppressed. See “Precautions to prevent disclosure of individuals who drop out of school or fail to graduate” (section II.E above) for more information.
2. Unless confirmed as accurate by the state CCD coordinator, reports of zero dropouts for any LEA enrolling 400 or more students in grade 9–12 were changed to missing (-1).

## **III. User Guidelines for Processing the CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

### **A. File Characteristics**

The CCD Public-Use LEA Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09 is provided in two file formats: a SAS file (dr08p1a.sas7bdat); and a tab-delimited ASCII text file (dr08p1a.txt). The first two characters of the file name indicate the type of file (dr = dropout and completer file), the third and fourth characters indicate the school year (08 = 2008–09), the fifth character, “p”, indicates that this is a public release of the data file, and the sixth and seventh characters indicate the version number (1 = official release file, a = first version). The record layout (containing field name, field position, field length, field type, and field description) is located in appendix A.

### **B. Linking This File to Other CCD Files**

Data users can easily link this file to any other survey in the CCD Survey System. The FIPST variable provided on the file can be used as a direct link to any CCD data file reporting state-level data and the LEAID can be used as a direct link to other CCD School- and LEA-level data files. Data from the other non-fiscal and fiscal data files contain many useful items, including categorical information, address, contact, and locale data, and numbers of staff and enrollment data.

Users should note that the enrollment counts in this file may not match the enrollment counts in other CCD files because enrollment bases are derived from the Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey and ungraded students are prorated into grades for grade 9–12 aggregate reporting (see appendix D for information regarding the enrollment field calculations in the dropout file).

### **C. Guidelines for Using the Flat ASCII Data File**

When using the flat ASCII data file, care should be taken to label the identification number variables (e.g., FIPST) as character fields. This is necessary in order to retain the leading zero in many of the identification numbers when merging these data with other files. This can be accomplished in Excel by using the ‘Import Wizard’ to select the ID fields and set them as text fields.

## **APPENDIX A. Record Layout**

**APPENDIX A. Record Layout**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and  
Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

Number of Variables = 10  
Number of Observations = 18,350

The file contains data for school year 2008–09 sorted by the NCES Local Education Identification Number (LEAID). “AN” and “N” indicate alphanumeric and numeric data, respectively. Data presented in this release are available in two formats—SAS datasets (.sas7bdat) and tab-delimited values text files (.txt). An asterisk (\*) in the order column indicates that the field has one explicit decimal place.

<b>Variable name</b>	<b>Order</b>	<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
SURVYEAR	1	AN	Year Corresponding to Survey Record
FIPST	2	AN	Two Digit American National Standards Institute (ANSI) State Code
LEAID	3	AN	NCES Assigned Local Education Agency Identification Number
TOTD912	4	N	Total Dropouts, Grades 9–12
EBS912	5	N	Dropout Enrollment Base, Grades 9–12
DRP912	6 *	N	Dropout Rate, Grades 9–12
TOTDPL	7	N	Total Diploma Count
AFGEB	8	N	Total Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) Enrollment Base
AFGR	9 *	N	Total AFGR
TOTOHC	10	N	Total Other High School Completion Certificate (OHC) Recipients

## **Appendix B. Response Rates and State Specific Notes**

**APPENDIX B. Response Rates and State Specific Notes**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and**  
**Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

State-wide Item Non-Response—California, Nevada, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (overseas and domestic), the Bureau of Indian Education, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, American Samoa, and Guam did not report completion data for the 2008–09 school year.

California, Nevada, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools, the Bureau of Indian Education, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands did not report dropout data for 2008–09. Puerto Rico reported dropout counts that would have resulted in dropout rates below 1 percent, an unreasonably low rate for any state or jurisdiction, and were thereby suppressed.

Vermont suppressed any dropout count below 10 prior to submitting data to the Common Core of Data (CCD). This resulted in more missing data than available data. Because of their suppression, the CCD has suppressed all dropout and completion data for the state of Vermont, for the 2008–09 school year.

For the 2008–09 dropout data collection, it was not always possible to distinguish true zero counts of dropouts from missing data (see appendix E, Data values, for more information about zero counts and missing data). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identified all districts with zero reported dropouts and a 2008–09 student membership in grades 9–12 of 400 or more students. These zero values of dropouts were changed to missing except in cases for which the state CCD coordinator confirmed that there were zero dropouts for the district. NCES also identified all districts with 20 or more students enrolled in grade 12 and zero reported diplomas. These zero values for diplomas were changed to missing unless the state CCD coordinator confirmed the reported zero.

## **APPENDIX C. Value Distribution and Field Frequency Tables**

**Appendix C. Value Distribution and Field Frequency Tables**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Dropout and**  
**Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

Table C–1. Distribution of responses of character variable data, by response value: School year 2008–09

Variable	Label	Missing	Not applicable	Reported
SURVYEAR	School year	0	0	18,350
FIPST	American National Standards Institute (ANSI) state code	0	0	18,350
LEAID	NCES Assigned Local Education Agency Identification Number	0	0	18,350

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Dropout and Completion Data File," School Year 2008–09, Version 1a.

**Appendix C. Value Distribution and Field Frequency Tables**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Dropout and**  
**Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

Table C–2. Minimum, maximum, and mean for continuous variables, by variable: School year 2008–09

Variable name	Label	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Missing (-1)	Not applicable (-2)	Suppressed	
							Low count (-3)	High count (-4)
TOTD912	Total Dropouts, Grades 9–12	0	17564	51.9	1,371	5,642	2,349	30
EBS912	Dropout Enrollment Base, Grades 9–12	0	209,672.0	1,213.7	590	5,386	0	0
DRP912	Dropout Rate, Grades 9–12	0	90.7	4.1	1,374	5,753	2,349	30
TOTDPL	Total Diploma Count	0	29,286.0	234.7	1,345	5,639	0	0
AFGEB	Total Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) Enrollment Base	0	62,252.0	331.3	589	6,536	0	0
AFGR	Total AFGR	0	100.0	81.7	1,243	6,690	0	0
TOTOHC	Total Other High School Completion Certificate (OHC) Recipients	0	1,566.0	9.9	1156	11,942	0	0

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Dropout and Completion Data File," School year 2008–09, Version 1a.



## **APPENDIX D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines**

**APPENDIX D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and**  
**Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

## **Definition of Dropouts**

### **Dropouts**

For purposes of this collection, a dropout is defined as a student who:

1. was enrolled in school at some time during the school year and was **not** enrolled on October 1 of the following school year, **or**
2. was **not** enrolled on October 1 of the school year although was expected to be in membership (i.e., was not reported as a dropout the year before), **and**
3. has **not** graduated from high school or completed a state or district–approved educational program, **and**
4. did **not** meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
  - a) transfer to another public school district, private school, or state– or district–approved educational program;
  - b) temporary school–recognized absence due to suspension or illness; or
  - c) death.

For the definition above, the following applies:

- The phrase “graduated from high school or completed” means individuals who graduated from high school or completed some other education program that is approved by the state or local education agency.
- The phrase “state or district-approved education program” means one that leads to the receipt of formal recognition of completion from school authorities. It may **INCLUDE** special education programs, home-based instruction, and programs administered by a secondary education agency (but **NOT** adult or postsecondary education) leading to a GED-based diploma or some other certification differing from the regular diploma. Programs recognized as legitimate by the state are considered approved even if the public education system does not directly administer them; home schooling and charter schools are examples of such programs.
- In determining whether the exclusionary condition of “transfer to another ...” applies SEAs may confirm by a method selected by the state or school district. A transcript request, withdrawal notice signed by a parent that includes assurances the student will be enrolled elsewhere, and the like are acceptable. States are discouraged from accepting hearsay reports or unsubstantiated statements of intent from departing students.

### **How do I handle students who transfer to adult education?**

Students who enroll in adult education programs are counted as dropouts **unless the elementary/secondary school system remains responsible for the student**. The intent of this guideline is to ensure that students who do not complete a program, and for whom the district no longer takes responsibility, are counted as dropouts.

- Transferring to an alternative education setting, if it is part of the elementary/secondary education system, is not considered dropping out. For example, students enrolled in elementary/secondary education in prisons, hospitals, “store front” locations or other nontraditional locations are not dropouts if the program is part of the elementary/secondary system. This means that a student who enrolls in a school-operated

**APPENDIX D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

program for high-risk students **is not a dropout**, even if the program is preparing the student to take the GED examination.

- A student who leaves the public elementary/secondary school and enrolls in adult education **is a dropout**. The exception is when the public school system monitors the student’s enrollment and reports the student as a dropout if the student drops out of the adult program. An example is a cooperative arrangement between a public school district and a local technical institute that provides GED preparation for students referred directly by the district. The district counts as dropouts the referred students who do not complete the GED study program.
- Students who drop out during the 2008-09 school year but who have obtained a completion credential, such as a GED-based diploma or certificate of completion, on October 1, 2009 are **NOT** reported as dropouts for SY 2008-09.

**How do I count early college admissions students?**

An early college admissions student (i.e., one who transfers to a postsecondary program leading to a baccalaureate or associate’s degree) is **NOT** a dropout.

**How do I count students that completed 12<sup>th</sup> grade but did not complete all graduation requirements?**

Students who fail to meet some graduation requirements, and who leave school without a diploma or other credential, are dropouts even if they have completed the 12th grade.

**How do I count students that have left the United States?**

Students who leave the United States are not considered to be dropouts even if the school district cannot document the student’s subsequent enrollment in school.

**How can I determine if the student is a dropout?**

The following chart summarizes how to determine if a student is a dropout:

<b>A Student Who:</b>	<b>Dropout?</b>
Graduated or received some other recognized credential, such as a certificate of attendance or GED.	No
Only attended summer school in this school district (i.e., was not enrolled during the regular school year).	No
Left school without diploma or other certification after passing age up to which the district was required to provide a free, public education.	Yes
Died.	No
Is gone; status is unknown.	Yes
Moved to another district in this or some other state, not known to be in school.	Yes
Moved out of the United States, enrollment status not known.	No
Transferred, enrolled in another public school, a private school, or charter school.	No
Transferred, enrolled in home schooling.	No
Transferred, enrolled in early college (baccalaureate or associate’s program).	No

**APPENDIX D. Dropout Reporting Practices and Guidelines**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and**  
**Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

Is in an institution that is <b>NOT</b> primarily academic (military, possibly Job Corps, corrections, etc.) and offers a secondary education program.	No
Is in an institution that is <b>NOT</b> primarily academic (military, possibly Job Corps, corrections, etc.) and does not offer a secondary education program.	Yes
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be planning to enroll late (e.g., extended family vacation, seasonal work).	No
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be ill, verified as legitimate.	No
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be ill, <b>NOT</b> verified as legitimate.	Yes
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be suffering long-term illness and <b>NOT</b> receiving education services (residential drug treatment, severe physical or mental illness).	No
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be suspended or expelled and their term of suspension or expulsion is <b>NOT</b> yet over.	No
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be suspended or expelled and their term of suspension or expulsion is over.	Yes
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be expelled with <b>NO</b> option to return.	Yes
Is <b>NOT</b> in school but known to be expelled and enrolled in another school and/or district.	No
Is in a nontraditional education setting, such as hospital/homebound instruction, residential special education, correctional institution, community or technical college where the program is administrated by an agency that is considered a special school district or extension of a regular school district.	No
Is in a nontraditional education setting, such as hospital/homebound instruction, residential special education, correctional institution, community or technical college where the program is an off-campus offering of regular school district.	No
Is in a nontraditional education setting, such as hospital/homebound instruction, residential special education, correctional institution, community or technical college where the program is classified as adult education that is <b>not</b> approved, administered or tracked by a regular school district.	Yes

## **APPENDIX E. Computation Instructions**

**APPENDIX E. Computation Instructions**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

**COMPUTATION OF DROPOUT AND ENROLLMENT COUNT FIELDS**

Dropout enrollment counts and enrollment base fields are composed of enrollment data from the same year as the dropout count (e.g., dropout enrollment base fields for school year 2008–09 dropouts are computed from school year 2008–09 enrollment data).

Dropout counts are reported at the school district level. Enrollment counts are reported at the school level. These enrollment counts are aggregated to the district level from the schools associated with each school district.

**COMPUTATION OF DROPOUT COUNTS (AGGREGATE GRADES 9–12):**

*Proration of ungraded students.* To compute numerator fields for the dropout rates that represent the aggregate of grade 9–12 grade dropouts only, ungraded dropouts within each district are redistributed across other grades in proportion to the graded dropouts.<sup>1</sup> The following steps are used to prorate ungraded dropouts into all 9–12 graded dropouts:

1. Calculate the ratio of grade 9–12 dropouts (aggregate) to grade 7–12 dropouts (aggregate).
2. Allocate ungraded dropouts to all the aggregate grade 9–12 dropout counts based upon the ratio calculated in step 1. For example, if grade 9–12 grade dropouts account for 90 percent of all dropouts in grades 7–12, allocate 90 percent of ungraded dropouts into the grade 9–12 dropout count.

**COMPUTATION OF DROPOUT ENROLLMENT BASE FIELDS (AGGREGATE GRADES 9–12):**

*Proration of ungraded students.* To compute enrollment base fields for the grade 9–12 aggregate dropout rates only, ungraded enrollment within each district is redistributed across other grades in proportion to the graded enrollment. The following steps are used to prorate ungraded enrollments into all aggregate 9–12 graded enrollments:

1. Calculate the ratio of grade 9–12 enrollment (aggregate) to the total of graded enrollment (grades prekindergarten, kindergarten, and 1–12).
2. Allocate ungraded enrollments to all the aggregate grade 9–12 enrollment counts based upon the ratio calculated in step 1. For example, if grade 9–12 grade enrollments account for 30 percent of all enrollments in grades prekindergarten through 12, allocate 30 percent of ungraded enrollments into the grade 9–12 enrollment count.

**COMPUTATION OF DROPOUT RATE FIELDS**

The following method is used to compute dropout rates in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) CCD reports, unless otherwise noted:

$$R_{(g)} = D_{(g)} / E_{(g)}$$

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<sup>1</sup> Seventh grade, eighth grade, and ungraded dropout counts are not reported on this file in order to protect against disclosure.

**APPENDIX E. Computation Instructions**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

where  $R_{(g)}$  = the dropout rate (rounded to a single decimal place),  $D_{(g)}$  = the number of dropouts, and  $E_{(g)}$  = the associated enrollment count (grade-level rate) or enrollment base (aggregate 9–12 rate). For dropout rates representing a single grade (e.g., the grade 9 dropout rate), both  $D_{(g)}$  and  $E_{(g)}$  exclude the processing that allocates ungraded dropouts and ungraded students described in the previous sections. For dropout rates representing an aggregate of grade 9–12, ungraded dropouts are allocated into  $D_{(g)}$  and ungraded students are allocated into  $E_{(g)}$ .

**COMPUTATION OF AVERAGED FRESHMAN GRADUATION RATE (AFGR) FIELDS**

The AFGR is the number of regular diploma recipients in a given year divided by the average of the membership in grades 8, 9, and 10, reported 5, 4, and 3 years earlier, respectively. For example, the denominator of the 2008–09 AFGR was the average of 8th-grade membership in 2004–05, 9th-grade membership in 2005–06, and 10th-grade membership in 2006–07. Ungraded students are prorated into grades 9 through 12. Averaging these three grades provides an estimate of the number of first-time freshmen in the class of 2005–06 freshmen in order to estimate the on-time graduation rate for 2008–09.

The following method is used to compute AFGRs in CCD reports, unless otherwise noted:

$$AFGR_{(y)} = \text{Regular Diplomas}_{(y)} / \text{mean}(8^{\text{th}}\text{-grade prorated enrollment}_{(y-4)}, 9^{\text{th}}\text{-grade prorated enrollment}_{(y-3)}, \text{ and } 10^{\text{th}}\text{-grade prorated enrollment}_{(y-2)})$$

where  $y$  = the school year for which diploma recipients were counted.

**COMPUTATION OF AFGR ENROLLMENT BASE FIELDS**

*Proration of ungraded students.* Student membership data that comprise the denominators for the AFGR are taken from the CCD Public School Universe Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education data file.

To compute enrollment base fields for the AFGRs, ungraded enrollment within each district is redistributed across other grades in proportion to the graded enrollment. The following steps are used to prorate ungraded enrollments into graded enrollments:

1. Calculate the ratio of a single grade level enrollment (e.g., grade 8, grade 9, grade 10) to the total of graded enrollment (grades prekindergarten, kindergarten, and 1–12).
2. Allocate ungraded students to a single grade level enrollment count (e.g., grade 8) based upon the ratio calculated in step 1. For example, if 8th grade students account for 8 percent of all students in grades prekindergarten through grade 12, allocate 8 percent of ungraded students into the grade 8 enrollment count.

AFGR enrollment base fields are an estimate of first-time freshmen 4 years prior to the graduation count (e.g., the AFGR enrollment base field for school year 2008–09 is an estimate of first-time freshman in school year 2005–06). Therefore, to compute the AFGR enrollment base fields, the proration of ungraded students as described above is performed for 8th-grade

**APPENDIX E. Computation Instructions**  
**NCES Common Core of Data Public-Use Local Education Agency Dropout and**  
**Completion Data File: School Year 2008–09**

membership in 2004–05, 9th-grade membership in 2005–06, and 10th-grade membership in 2006–07. Averaging these three grades provides an estimate of the number of first-time freshmen in the class of 2005–06 in order to estimate the on-time graduation rate for 2008–09.