North Carolina Data Reporting and Procedures Manual:
Dropout Data

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Introduction

All Public School Units (PSUs) in North Carolina are required to report dropout data on all dropouts in ***Grade One and higher*** to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) annually. This manual includes definitions, procedures, and other information needed for uniform reporting of dropout data. Dropout data for a given school year is submitted in the fall of the following school year. Throughout this manual, the "reporting year" refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the "submission year" is the following school year when the data is submitted.

State Board of Education Policy DROP-001 states that the board has established the goal of reducing dropout rates and requires all PSUs to set a goal for reducing their dropout rates.

> In this policy, a dropout is defined as: "any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school."

G.S. 115C-47(32) requires each PSU to establish procedures for referring dropouts to alternative education programs. When public school programs are not available, the law requires school officials to refer dropouts to the community college systems or other appropriate services.

In State Board of Education Policy DROP-000, the SBE delineates the dropout referral process for schools and PSUs. When it has been determined that a student plans to drop out of school, schools should hold exit conferences with students and parents/guardians. During this exit conference, school personnel should provide guidance on alternative education options and attempt to determine the underlying reason for the student dropping out. If the student chooses to drop out, then schools and PSUs should refer the students to appropriate education services. This policy also includes the reporting of dropouts and students who have withdrawn to attend an Adult High School program.

Additionally, North Carolina General Statute 115C-12(27) requires the SBE to compile annual reports of dropout rates, suspensions, expulsions, uses of corporal punishment, and placements in alternative programs. These reports are compiled from the dropout data entered by the schools and submitted to the NCDPI.

Note: Throughout this manual, the "reporting year" refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the "submission year" is the following school year when the data is submitted.

Dropout Data Definitions and Exceptions

Throughout this manual, the “reporting year” refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the “submission year” is the following school year when the data is submitted. For example: when reporting on students who dropped out in the 2025–2026 school year, the reporting year would refer to 2025–2026. The submission year would refer to 2026–2027 since schools and PSU would submit the data in the fall of 2026–2027.

Definition of a Dropout

All Public School Units (PSU) and schools in North Carolina are to use the following definition for a dropout. To ensure accuracy and consistency in reporting dropouts, dropout data coordinators should become thoroughly familiar with the definition and its interpretations based on state laws and policies.

A "dropout" is an individual who:

- was enrolled in school at some time during the reporting year;
- was not enrolled on day 20 of the following submission year;
- has not graduated from high school or completed a state or district approved educational program; and does not meet any of the following reporting exclusions:
    1) transferred to another public school district, private school registered with the NC Department of Non-Public Education, home school registered with the NC Department of Non-Public Education, or state/district approved educational program (not including programs at community colleges),
    2) temporarily absent due to suspension or school approved illness, or
    3) death.

Additional Definitions for Determining Dropouts

For purposes of applying the state's dropout definition, the following additional definitions also apply:

1. A school year is defined as the period of time beginning with the first day of the reporting school year to the last day of summer vacation.
2. All students receiving dropout status are counted as dropouts from the last grade and school in which they were actually enrolled. Even **one** day in membership at a school places the student in membership for the year.
3. *A student who attends school until the end of the reporting year* does not count as dropouts in the reporting year if they enroll in school anytime during the first 20 days of the following submission year.
4. *A student who drops out before the end of the reporting year* must be enrolled on the 20th day of the following submission year in order not to be counted as a dropout.
5. A school completer is defined as having graduated from high school or completing an approved education program upon receipt of formal recognition from school authorities.
6. A state- or district-approved program may include special education programs, home-based instruction, and ***school-sponsored*** elementary or secondary programs leading to some other certification differing from the regular diploma, ***if***:

Note: Throughout this manual, the “reporting year” refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the “submission year” is the following school year when the data is submitted.

a. At a minimum, a district-approved program must meet state standards. Therefore, a student who withdraws from high school and enrolls in a district-sponsored GED prep program must be reported as a dropout.

7. Transfer to another public school district, private school registered with the NC Department of Non-Public Education, home school registered with the NC Department of Non-Public Education, or state/district approved educational program may be demonstrated through a transcript request or other documentation giving evidence of continuing elementary or secondary education. Such evidence may include correspondence with, or notes taken during a conversation with an official at the student's new school or school district.
8. Refer to the *Appendix A* for a list of special schools in North Carolina that have state approved educational programs. Students participating in these programs are not dropouts.

Community College Adult High School Programs Exemption

In 2015, the State Board Education (SBE Policy DROP-000) approved an exemption from counting as dropouts students who attend local Community College Adult High School programs. These students are to be verified as dropouts using special codes to identify them. Such dropouts should have withdrawal code W2T and dropout reason code CCAHS.

Schools who code Adult High School students as W2T are required to track the students to determine if they maintain continuous enrollment (in both fall and spring semesters). If a W2T-coded student does not maintain continuous enrollment, the withdrawal code must be changed to W2, and the student must be reported as a dropout. Therefore, a dropout who is reported as W2T in the reporting year (and not counted in dropout statistics for that year) may have to be counted in the statistics in a future dropout collection if the student does not maintain continuous enrollment.

See Appendix B for Questions and Answers regarding the use of the W2T designation.
Schools are not required to participate in the process of special coding and tracking of these students. Instead, schools may choose to continue coding students leaving for Adult High Schools with dropout reason code COMM without using the W2T designation. Such students will be counted as regular dropouts.

Home School Programs Exemption

Since home school instruction qualifies as an exemption, it is important for school officials to be knowledgeable about basic program requirements. General Statute 115C-563 establishes the framework for operating home school programs in North Carolina. The program is regulated by the Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE), 325 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC (1309 Mail Service Center 27699-1309).

A home school is defined as a "nonpublic school consisting of the children of not more than two families or households, where the parents or legal guardians or members of either household determine the scope and sequence of academic instruction, provide academic instruction, and determine additional sources of academic instruction."

Any student who receives instruction in a certified home school program is not a dropout.
Students who transfer to a certified home school should receive a W1 withdrawal code.

Note: Throughout this manual, the "reporting year" refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the "submission year" is the following school year when the data is submitted.

For directory and other program information on home schools, contact the Division of Non-Public Education at 984-236-0110. A current list of home schools can be found here: https://www.dnpesys.nc.gov/NPEPublic/HSCountySearch.aspx.

School Accreditation Exemption

Students who maintain a North Carolina residence and transfer to legitimate online or correspondence schools outside the state are not to be counted as dropouts if the schools are appropriately accredited. For students to be excluded from dropout status, such schools must be accredited by one of the following agencies (or the high school divisions of these agencies):

1) Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
2) Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
3) Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
4) Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS)
5) New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
6) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
7) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
8) Cognia (Elementary and Secondary Schools Accreditation)
9) Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

If students are under 16 years of age, the parent or guardian also must register with DNPE as a home school program in order to use this dropout exemption.

This exemption also applies to students of any age residing in North Carolina and transferring to a private school in another state, for example, a student residing in Charlotte and attending a private school in Fort Mill, SC. Out-of-state private schools are not registered with the Division of Non-Public Education.

The exemption also applies to special high school diploma programs and dropout recovery programs in North Carolina such as Job Corps and Tarheel ChalleNGe Academy. These transfers would be exempt from dropout reporting if the student enrolls in a high school diploma program and is expected to receive a high school diploma.

Initial Enrollee Status Exemption

Another dropout reporting exemption is Initial Enrollee status. An initial enrollee is a student who has never been enrolled in a particular PSU and, after enrolling for the first time ever, he/she drops out within twenty days of enrollment. The following four factors are critical when classifying a student as an initial enrollee and excluding the student from the dropout count:

- It applies to the initial enrollment in a **PSU**, not the initial enrollment in an **individual school** within the PSU.
- This policy does not apply to the state student accounting procedures. It applies **only** to the dropout data report.

Note: Throughout this manual, the “reporting year” refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the “submission year” is the following school year when the data is submitted.

- If the qualifications for the initial enrollee status cannot be **proved and documented**, the student should be included in the dropout count.
- The initial twenty-day enrollment period can occur at any point during the school year. In other words, an initial enrollee can enroll and leave during ANY 20-day period of the school year. This ruling does not apply exclusively to the first 20 days of school.

This exemption is allowed to avoid holding PSUs unfairly accountable for highly transient students.

Application of the Dropout Definition

Dropout Categories

When applying the dropout definition, dropout events may be categorized into the following groups:

1. Early Leavers
2. End-of-Year Completers Who Failed to Return
3. Expelled Students
4. Previous Year Community College Adult High School Students

Early Leavers

Students who withdrew, or were withdrawn, before the last day of school in the reporting year.

- An early leaver should be reported as a dropout in the reporting year if they do not meet an exemption **and** are not enrolled on the 20th day of the following submission year.
- Students who dropped out before the end of the reporting year should be coded as "W2" on their last enrollment record at the school.

End-of-Year Completers Who Failed to Return

Students who completed the reporting school year and who were expected to maintain school enrollment in the following submission year but did not.

- Completers who fail to return should be reported as a dropout in the reporting year if they do meet an exemption AND are not enrolled on or before the 20th day of the following submission year.
- Even one day in membership at a school places the student in membership for the year.
- Students who completed the school year should be coded as an "EYCN" or "EYC" on their last enrollment record.

Expelled Students

Students who were expelled during the reporting year.

- Expelled students who are not enrolled in school *elsewhere* on Day 20 of the following submission year should be reported as dropouts.
- Students who were expelled should be coded as "W2" on their last enrollment record at the school.
- These students should be reported as a dropout using the EXPL dropout reason code.
- Expelled students are counted as dropouts for federal reporting.
- For North Carolina reporting, however, expelled students will be excluded in compliance with G.S. 115C-12(27).

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Previous Year Community College Adult High School Students

Students who have dropped out in previous school years and are attending an Adult High School Program at a Community College with which the PSU has a signed Agreement of Affiliation.

- These students should be reported as a dropout each school year using the CCAHS dropout reason code.until they successfully complete the Adult High School program
- Students who maintain enrollment in the program are not included in the dropout rate calculation for that year.
- These dropouts will be included in federal reporting.
- See the Community College Adult High School Programs Exemption, Tracking Dropouts, and Appendix B for more information.

Common Scenarios and Applications

The following examples may be useful in interpreting and applying the state's uniform definition of a dropout.

Is a student who…a dropout?

A. Dropped out of school last spring at age 16 and did not return to school on Day 20 of the following school year (early leaver).

Yes.

B. Completed the previous school year at a middle school but did not enroll at any high school in the PSU during the first twenty days of the following year (completer who failed to return).

Yes. The student is a dropout for the reporting year at the middle school.

C. Completed the previous school year, returned in the fall, but dropped out before Day 20 of the following submission year (completer who failed to return).

No / Yes. Since the student completed the school year and returned to school in the fall prior to Day 20, he/she was not a dropout for the reporting year. Even one day in membership at a school places the student in membership for the year.

However, if the student does not return to school by Day 20 of the following year, **the student would be reported as a dropout for the following submission year** when dropouts are reported in next year's dropout data collection.

D. Completed all of the school year but transferred to another school that had not opened before the original school's twentieth day (following submission year).

No. The student can be omitted from the dropout report if the reporting school has verified both the later starting date and the student's actual enrollment in the other school prior to the date for the initial transmission of dropout data to NCDPI

E. Dropped out during the reporting year but returned in the following submission year and is in school on Day 20.

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No.

F. Did not complete the school year, returned for a few days in the fall of the following submission year, but dropped out again before Day 20 (early leaver).

Yes. The student did not complete the previous school year and was not there on Day 20 of the following submission year; therefore, the student is a dropout for the reporting year.

In addition, if the student does not return to school and is not in attendance on Day 20 of the following submission year, he/she should be counted as a dropout again when dropouts are reported in next year's data collection.

G. Dropped out from School A last March (in the reporting year) but returned to School B in the same PSU the following fall (in the following submission year) and then on the tenth day of the following submission year withdrew from School B (early leaver).

Yes. A returning dropout (early leaver) must be enrolled on the twentieth day of the following submission year in order to be exempted from the dropout count.

The student withdrew from only one school, School A, during the reporting year and was not in school on Day 20 of the following submission year; hence, School A should report the student as a dropout for the reporting year.

If the student does not return to school before Day 20 of the following submission year, School B should report the student as a repeat dropout for the following submission year when dropouts are reported in the data collection the next fall.

H. Returned to Mexico, or their home country, after attending a North Carolina school for four months, as documented by the school social worker and based on information provided by the student's father.

No. In 2003, the State Board of Education included the following in its statewide plan to improve tracking of dropout data: Do not count as dropouts students who leave the U.S., as documented by a responsible adult, e.g., dropout prevention coordinator, social worker, or migrant recruiter.

I. Dropped out during the year and died during the summer.

No. Because the student died before Day 20 of the following submission year, the exemption for death applies.

J. Was to be home schooled according to parents, but school officials learned that the student was not engaging in educational activities during normal school hours.

Yes. A response should be sought from the Division of Non-Public Education. Administrators of home schools must file a Notice of Intent with the Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE). If public school officials have valid reasons to suspect violation of any statutory requirements, DNPE should be informed. Upholding compulsory attendance laws in North Carolina continues to be viewed as the responsibility of public schools.

K. Completed all graduation requirements in the middle of junior year and finished the year with a private tutor; enrolled in college during the summer.

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No.

L. Started school late due to major surgery and parents notified school officials of the situation.

No. A student who receives approval for the late enrollment may be provided with homebound instruction if such services are available. This provision prevents a student from regressing academically and allows the assigned school to earn average daily membership credit.

M. Left school to enter a Teacher-in-Treatment Program.

No. This reporting exemption is based on the student's need for recovery independent of direct classroom instruction.

However, in accordance with the School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual the student who attends any of the state's Teacher-in-Treatment Programs should remain in membership in their home (sending) school. Their days of participation should be posted as absences and coded 1H. Therefore, if the student does not return to their home school after treatment, it is the home school's responsibility to report the student as a dropout.

N. Requested late enrollment until she delivers her child in late September. Acting on her own behalf as the "responsible adult," age 18, she has requested approval from school officials to enroll late. After conferring with her doctor, the PSU approved the request.

No.

O. Dropped out of school and enrolled in a community college GED program.

Yes. According to State Board of Education policy, students who leave school prior to graduating and enroll in community college programs must be counted as dropouts.

P. Enrolled in a community college Adult High School (AHS) Diploma Program.

Yes. These students must be reported as verified dropouts, but SBE policy allows a school district to exempt these dropouts from counting in state dropout counts and rates.

If a student does not maintain continuous enrollment in an AHS program, the student must be counted as a dropout in the year that the break in enrollment occurs, and the dropout would then be included in the dropout rate.

Q. Dropped out last spring and is taking the GED course through Job Corps.

Yes. However, if the student is taking courses to earn a ***high school diploma*** the student would ***NOT*** be reported as a dropout.

R. Dropped out of school but is enrolled in the Tarheel ChalleNGe Academy dropout recovery program to earn a high school diploma.

No. However, if the student is taking courses to earn a GED the student would be reported as a dropout.

Note: Throughout this manual, the "reporting year" refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the "submission year" is the following school year when the data is submitted.

S. Is placed in a youth correction center, where students receive daily instruction from the NC Standard Course of Study and will also participate in the state testing program.

No. Students in youth facilities are considered transfers from public schools since these facilities follow the NC Standard Course of Study.

However, minors who are sentenced to adult correction facilities are counted as dropouts with reason code INCR.

T. Was suspended from school last March with an option to return in the fall and was enrolled in a community college program on Day 20 of the following submission year.

Yes. A student who enrolls in a community college program prior to graduating must be reported as a dropout.

U. Was suspended from school for 365 days last January with an option to return at the end of this period; consequently, the student is not in school on Day 20 of the following submission year.

No. If the student has an option to return at the end of the disciplinary period (which is still in effect), he/she is not a dropout.

However, if the suspension period is over and the student has not returned, then he/she is a dropout.

V. Refused an option to attend an alternative school or alternative learning program in lieu of a long-term suspension that began prior to the following submission year and was not in school on day 20 of the following submission year.

Yes.

However, if a student is under 16 years old and the long-term suspension is scheduled to end prior to the student's 16th birthday, parents or guardians should receive notices of their legal obligation to return the student to school.

W. Was permanently expelled with no option to return and not enrolled elsewhere on Day 20 of the following submission year.

Yes. Expelled students should be reported as dropouts to NCDPI using the EXPL (expulsion) dropout reason code. These dropouts will be included in federal reporting. For North Carolina reporting, however, expelled students will be excluded in compliance with G.S. 115C-12(27).

X. Was permanently expelled from one PSU but successfully enrolled in another.

No. Student is regarded as a transfer for the purposes of dropout reporting.

Y. Was a new student who had never before been enrolled in the PSU and dropped out of school during the second week of the school year.

No. The purpose of the "Initial Enrollee Status Exemption" is to avoid penalizing PSUs for students who are highly transient.

However, if school officials know the whereabouts of the student, they should continue efforts to get the student back in school.

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Z. Is a student in a self-contained program whose parents have indicated their desire to withdraw their child from school since her developmental needs have surpassed the school's capacity to adequately serve her; after consulting with the School-Based Committee, her parents withdrew her from public school and placed her in a more appropriate program.

No.

AA. A foreign exchange student who completes grade 12 and returns to their home country to complete their high school education.

No.

Note: Throughout this manual, the “reporting year” refers to the year the student is considered a dropout and the “submission year” is the following school year when the data is submitted.

Dropout Data Reporting Procedures

By November 4th of the submission year, schools and PSUs are required to enter, review, and verify all students who dropped out in the reporting year in the NCSIS.

Best Practices for Accurate Reporting

To help assure that dropout data submitted to NCDPI are accurate, dropout data coordinators should:

- become thoroughly familiar with the dropout definition, application of the definition, and the entire reporting process.
- have a process for documenting the whereabouts of students who transfer to other PSUs and other states.
- explain the data collection and reporting process to all appropriate school-level personnel.
- clarify the responsibilities of school and PSU personnel in the dropout reporting process.
- report all dropouts in grades 1−13.
- account for all dropouts/no-shows in all schools in a PSU.
- review all data for accuracy and completeness.

Reporting and Tracking Dropouts

Student Enrollment Records

Please see the Student Attendance and Student Accounting (SASA) Manual and NCSIS Knowledge Base for definitions and detailed instructions on tracking student enrollment during the school year.

Dropout Program Records

Schools and PSU should use the Dropout Program tool in the NCSIS to track dropouts throughout the school year and to report dropouts to NCDPI by November 4th of the submission year. Below is a description of each field on a dropout program record. Detailed instructions can be found here.

- **Start Date (Required)**: the start date of the record should be the day the student drops out.
    - For early leavers, enter the day the student withdrew.
    - For completers who failed to return, this would be the day after last day of the reporting school year.
    - For expelled students, enter the first day of the expulsion.
- **End Date**: when a student re-enrolls, schools should enter the day the student re-enrolled or the date the appropriate documentation or evidence was received that the student met one of the above exemptions. Records without end date are considered to be active dropout records.
- **School (Required)**: Enter the last school the student was enrolled.
- **Grade (Required)**: Enter the last grade level the student was enrolled.
- **Dropout Year (Required)**: Enter the last school year the student was enrolled.

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- **Dropout Reason**: Enter the dropout reason that is considered the underlying reason for the student's dropping out. See Dropout Reason Codes for more details.
    - When reporting verified dropouts, this field is required.
- **Exemption Code**: Enter an exemption code to record that a student meets one of the dropout exemptions and is not a verified dropout in the reporting year. Exemption codes should not be added to records that do not have program end date.
- **Verified Dropout**: Check box to record that a student did not meet any exemptions and are verified as a dropout for the reporting year.
- **Comment**: Free form text box for schools to use.

Dropout Reason Codes

In State Board of Education Policy DROP-000, the SBE delineates the dropout referral process for schools and PSUs. When it has been determined that a student plans to drop out of school, schools should hold exit conferences with students and parents/guardians. During this exit conference, school personnel should provide guidance on alternative education options and attempt to determine the underlying reason for the student dropping out.

When selecting the dropout reason code, select the dropout reason that is considered the underlying reason for the student dropping out. Accurate reason codes are critical for tracking dropout trends and planning interventions to prevent students from dropping out. Coding accuracy is supported by vigorous prevention, intervention, and recovery efforts in schools and PSUs.

Code	Reason Code Description
ABUS	Suspected substance abuse.
ACAD	Academic problems.
ATTD	Attendance. Dropped out due to excessive absences that caused the student to become ineligible to receive course credits or placed the student in jeopardy of same.
CCAHS	Enrollment in a community college Adult High School program.
CHLD	Need to care for children.
COMM	Enrollment in a community college (not an AHS program).
DISC	Discipline problem.
EMPL	Employment necessary.
ENGA	Lack of student engagement with teachers, students, and school activities.
EXPC	Expectations of others. Cultural, family, or peer expectations or beliefs that education beyond a certain age or grade is not necessary.
EXPL	Expulsion (permanent).
HEAL	Health problems.
HOME	Unstable home environment or homeless.
INCR	Incarcerated in adult facility.
LANG	Frustrations arising from difficulties adapting to English language or culture of English speakers.
LTSU	Failure to return after a long-term suspension.
MARR	Marriage.

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Code	Reason Code Description
MOVE	Moved, school status unknown.
PREG	Pregnancy.
PSEM	Psychological or emotional problem.
RNAW	Runaway.
WORK	Choice of work over school.
UNKN	Unknown or other. There is no evidence for any of the listed reasons.

The COMM dropout reason code should be used to designate students who leave school prior to graduation to attend a community college program, however the CCAHS code may be used if the student enrolls in an affiliated Adult High School program at the community college and the PSU commits to monitoring student progress in the program.

The LTSU reason code should be used for dropouts who fail to return at the end of a long-term suspension. According to the dropout definition, students who are absent due to a suspension on day 20 of the following year (submission year) should not be reported as dropouts.

The EXPL reason code should be used only for dropouts who have been permanently expelled and are not in other approved educational programs. **Expelled students should be verified as dropouts; they are counted as dropouts for federal reporting but are not included in the state dropout rate calculation**.

Per State Board of Education Policy DROP-000, schools are to hold exit interviews with students, aged 16 and older, who are planning to drop out of school. During this interview, school personnel should provide guidance on alternative education options and attempt to determine the underlying reason for the student dropping out.

NCDPI recognizes that exit interviews will not be possible for all dropouts. In these cases, school officials must use the available evidence to determine a dropout reason. Evidence might consist of a discussion with a school official who is familiar with the dropout's life circumstances. If there is some evidence pointing to a particular reason, that reason should be selected, even if the evidence is less than conclusive.

Every effort should be extended to identify the underlying reason for a dropout. For example, if a student states that they are dropping out because they are 17 and most of their classmates are one or two years younger, the school official should determine why the student is so much older than their classmates. After investigating the particulars of the situation, one of the reason codes shown in the table below might be assigned.

Situation	Code
Student was retained one or more times due to failing grades.	ACAD
Student was retained primarily due to too many unexcused absences.	ATTD
Student's retention(s) stemmed from discipline problems, which resulted in poor concentration in class and/or days lost to suspension.	DISC
Student's retention(s) stemmed from unstable home environment or homelessness.	HOME

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Dropout Exemption Codes

Code	Exemption Code Description
ACCR	Out-of-state/Online Accredited High School Enrollment (not-GED)
DSPM	District-approved High School Education Program Enrollment (not-GED)
DTH	Death
ENRL	Returned within Allotted Time
ENRP	Enrollment in another PSU within Allotted Time
FRGN	Foreign Exchange Student to Complete High School in Home Country
GRAD	Graduated/Received High School Diploma
HOME	Registered Home School Enrollment
INTL	PSU Initial Enrollee Exemption
LATE	Approved Late Enrollment
LTUS	Left the United States
PRIV	Registered Private School Enrollment
STPM	State-approved High School Education Program Enrollment (not-GED)
SUSP	Currently serving Long-term Suspension

Enrollment Records and Withdrawal Codes

Appropriate withdrawal and dropout reason codes must be assigned for each student who drops out. Only students dropping out prior to last day of the reporting year will have W2 codes. Students completing the reporting year and not returning in the following year (submission year) will have other withdrawal codes. See the Student Attendance and Student Accounting Manual for more information.

Researching and Verifying Potential Dropouts

There are a number of tools/resources available to PSUs and schools to aid in the verification and research process.

- State Student Locator tool
- NCSIS Dropout Data Collection Validation

State Student Locator

The State Student Locator is a collection of tools that can be used to determine a student's most recent enrollment in any PSU in the state or to find if a student has overlapping or duplicate enrollments in one or more PSUs. Information on how to access and use the State Student Locator can be found here.

NCSIS Dropout Data Collection Validation

The Dropout Reporting and Verification report produces a set of sub-reports that can be used to track dropouts during the school year and can be used to research and report verified dropouts for

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state and reporting in the following submission year. The report is available in the NCSIS Reporting Module → Data Validation Report → (NC) Dropout Data Collection.

This report looks at student enrollment and dropout records based on the school year selected in the context menu and will look forward to the next school year when checking for potential dropouts and later enrollments. The report should be run under the reporting year calendar. Therefore, after June 30th of the reporting year, the calendar in the NCSIS context menu will need to be changed to the reporting year.

Key Terms and Definitions

- Reporting School and grade level - All students receiving dropout status are counted as dropouts from the last grade and school in which they were actually enrolled. Even **one** day in membership at a school places the student in membership for the year. When entering the reporting school and grade level in the dropout record, the reporting school and grade level should match with the last enrollment for the student at that school (and PSU, if the student did not re-enroll before the end of the year or before the 20th day of the following submission year.)
- Reporting Year columns - report data from enrollment records and dropout records in the school year the student dropped out of school.
- Current Year columns - report data enrollment records columns refer to enrollment records following submission year.
- "Day20th Compare" column – this column provides the estimated 20th day of the following submission year that should be used when researching if a student was enrolled in the following submission year by or on the 20th day. This estimated 20th day was determined by comparing the last day (day 20) of School Month 1 reported in the NCSIS for the reporting school and following school and selecting the latter of the two. In cases where both schools were missing data, was the most frequent calendar day 20 across all school calendars in the state is substituted.

Running the Report:

- This report must be run under the reporting year calendar. After June 30 of the reporting year, users need to update the NCSIS context menu to reflect the reporting year rather than the new school year. For example, when entering and verifying dropouts for the 2025–2026 school year, the Year field in the NCSIS context menu should be set to “25-26.” The report is designed for use at both the PSU and school levels.
- Run this validation using the "State Dataset" under the *Report Data Source*.
- It is recommended to select "Excel" as the *Format Type*

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Determining the Dropout Rate

For its Annual Report on Dropout Rates, NCDPI calculates dropout rates for grades 1−13, grades 7−13, and grades 9−13 (i.e., high school dropout rate). The method North Carolina uses to count dropouts is called an event count. It counts the number of dropouts during a school year, beginning on the first day of the school year and ending on the last day of school vacation (or one day prior to the first day of the next school year).

The method used to calculate dropout rates measures the proportion of students who drop out in the student population during a single reporting year. Dropout rates are often expressed by rate per one hundred students. Rate per 100 students represents how many dropouts there were for every 100 students during the reporting year.

STEP 1: Determine the Number of Dropouts

- Total count of all cases of reported dropouts (in grades 9-13 for this example) for the reporting year.
- This count will be used as the numerator and will also be used to calculate the student population.

STEP 2: Determine the Student Population

- Add the twentieth day membership (1st month MLD; see NCDPI's Student Accounting Data website) for the reporting year and the number of reported dropouts (same count from Step 1) in the reporting year.

STEP 3: Calculate the Dropout Rate

- Divide number of dropouts (Step 1) by the student population (Step 2).
- Round to the nearest one hundredth.

$$\frac{Total\ Count\ of\ Dropouts}{20th\ Day\ Membership\ +Count\ of\ Dropouts}$$

STEP 4: Calculate the Rate per 100 Students

- Divide number of dropouts (Step 1) by the student population (Step 2) and multiple the resultant by 100.
    - Rates per 100 students can also be calculated by multiplying the number of dropouts by 100 and then dividing the resultant by the student population.
- Round to the nearest one hundredth.

$$\left(\frac{Total\ Count\ of\ Dropouts}{20th\ Day\ Membership\ +Count\ of\ Dropouts}\right) * 100$$

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Dropout Rate Example

Public School Unit A counted 120 dropouts for the reporting year in grades 9−13. The 20th Day Membership (1st month MLD) for the reporting year was 5,000 students in grades 9-13.

STEP 1: Determine the Number of Dropouts

- 120 dropouts during the reporting year in grades 9−13

STEP 2: Determine the Student Population

$$(5{,}000 + 120) = 5{,}120$$

STEP 3: Calculate the dropout rate

$$\frac{120}{5{,}120} = .02343$$

STEP 4: Calculate the rate per 100 students

$$\left(\frac{120}{5{,}120}\right) * 100 = 2.34 \ \boldsymbol{or} \ \frac{120 * 100}{5{,}120} = 2.34$$

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Questions and Resources

For questions involving the dropout data collection and reporting procedures, contact:
NCDPI Technical Support

For questions on entering Dropout records in the NCSIS, review the information found here:
Campus Community
NCSIS Knowledge Base

Additional Resources
Student Attendance and Student Accounting (SASA) Manual
Cohort Graduation Rates

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Appendix A – North Carolina Special Schools

Schools for the Deaf and Blind/Visually Impaired Children	
Eastern NC School for the Deaf 1311 Hwy 301 South Wilson, NC 27893 (252) 237-2450	**NC School for the Deaf** 517 West Fleming Drive Morganton, NC 28655 (828) 432-5200
The Governor Morehead School for the Blind 301 Ashe Avenue Raleigh, NC 27606 (919) 733-6382	

Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse Services	
Broughton Hospital 1000 South Sterling St. Morganton, NC 28655 (828) 608-4000	**J. Iverson Riddle Development Center** 300 Enola Road Morganton, NC 28655 (828) 433-2731
Caswell Developmental Center 2415 W. Vernon Avenue Kinston, NC 28504 (252) 208-4000	**Julian F. Keith Alcohol & Drug Abuse Treatment Center** 201 Tabernacle Road Black Mountain, N.C. 28711 (828) 257-6200
Central Regional Hospital 300 Veasey Dr. Butner, NC 27509 (919) 764-5806	**Walter B. Jones Alcohol & Drug Abuse Treatment Center** 2577 W. Fifth St. Greenville, N.C. 27834 (252) 830-3426
Cherry Hospital 201 Stevens Mill Road Goldsboro, NC 27530 (919) 731-3317	**The Whitaker School** 1003 12th Street Butner, NC 27509 (919) 575-7927
Murdoch Developmental Center 1600 East C Street Butner, NC 27509 (919) 575-1000	**Wright School** 3132 Roxboro Road Durham, NC 27704 (919) 560-5790

Also see: https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/state-operated-healthcare-facilities/facilities

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Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Youth Development Centers	
Cabarrus Youth Dev. Center 850 Holshouser Road Concord, NC 28027 (704) 652-4300	**Lenoir Youth Development Center** 3055 Dobbs Farm Road Kinston, NC 28504 (252) 208-4920
Chatham Youth Development Center 560 Progress Blvd. Siler City, NC 27344 (919) 742-6220	**Rockingham Youth Development Center** 424 Elliot Rd Reidsville, NC 27320 (336) 520-6200
Edgecombe Youth Development Center 78 Positive Way Rocky Mount, NC 27801 (252) 544-5730	

For more information on Youth Development Centers, see https://www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/juvenile-justice/juvenile-facility-operations/youth-development-centers

Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Detention Centers	
Alexander Juvenile Detention Center 928 NC Highway 16 S. Taylorsville, NC 28681 (828) 632-1141	**Pitt Regional Juvenile Detention Center** 461 Belvoir Rd. Greenville, NC 27834 (252) 544-5730
Cabarrus Regional Juvenile Detention Center 822 McWhorter Road Concord, NC 28027 (704) 652-4300	**Richmond Jenkins Juvenile Detention Center** 1573 McDonald Church Road Hoffman, NC 28347 (910) 683-3120
Cumberland Regional Juvenile Detention Center 1911 Coliseum Drive Fayetteville, NC 28306 (910) 486-1399	**Wake Regional Juvenile Detention Center** 700 Beacon Lake Drive Raleigh, NC 27610 (919) 212-3104
Dillon Regional Juvenile Detention Center 100 Dillon Dr. Butner, NC 27509 (919) 575-3166	**Brunswick County Juvenile Detention Center** P.O. Box 9 Bolivia, NC 28422 (910) 253-2760

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Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Detention Centers	
New Hanover Regional Juvenile Detention Center 3830 Juvenile Center Rd. Castle Hayne, NC 28429 (910) 675-0594	**Durham County Youth Home** 2432 Broad Street Durham, NC 27704 (919) 560-0840
Perquimans Juvenile Detention Center 125 Jessup St Hertford, NC 27944 (252) 741-6070	**Guilford County Juvenile Detention Center** 15 Lockheed Court Greensboro, NC 27409 (336) 641-2600

For more information on Detention Centers, see https://www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/juvenile-justice/juvenile-facility-operations/juvenile-detention-centers

Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention NC Eckerd Therapeutic Camps	
Eckerd Connects | Boys Residential Academy at Boomer 4654 High Rock Road Boomer, NC 28606 (336) 921-3300	**Eckerd Connects | Girls Residential Academy at Kerr Lake** 633 Shepard's Way Lane Manson, NC 27553 (252) 366-9380
Eckerd Connects | Boys Residential Academy at Candor 500 E-Ku-Sumee Road Candor, NC 27229 (910) 974-4183	

Department of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Teacher-in-Treatment Programs	
PORT Aberdeen Adolescent (910) 944-2189	**PORT** Greenville Adolescent (252) 413-1950

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Appendix B – W2T Questions & Answers

GENERAL QUESTIONS
1. In which situations may schools take advantage of the policy on reporting students in Adult High School (AHS) programs? *The policy specifically designates students enrolling in an AHS program at a community college with which the school district has an Agreement of Affiliation.*
2. This is only for AHS programs and not GED, right? *Correct.*
3. Would a SACS-accredited on-line AHS program (such as National High School) qualify a student for W2T status? *No. The State Board of Education has approved the use of W2T for NC Community College Adult High School programs.*
4. Do students who complete AHS programs count toward the school's and PSU's graduation rates? *Yes, for 4-year and 5-year cohort rates.*
5. How do we indicate that a particular dropout is attending AHS? *Use withdrawal code W2T and dropout reason code CCAHS.*
6. What happens if a student begins AHS during the fall but does not return in the spring? Or attends both fall and spring and doesn't return the following fall? *In this instance, the student is initially coded W2T. However, for the second fall semester, the student must be transitioned to W2 due to failure to maintain continuous enrollment.*
7. What happens if an AHS student receives the W2T coding one year, but in a later year does not maintain continuous enrollment? *The student must then be reported as a regular dropout (W2). If the student later completes the AHS program it would not count as a graduate toward the school and PSU graduation rate.*
8. If a student fails to maintain continuous enrollment in an AHS program, is counted as a dropout, and later continues in the AHS program, should we recode the student as a W2T? *No, once a student has been counted as a W2 dropout, there is no advantage for the school to use the W2T coding. However, the student should always be encouraged to persist in educational endeavors.*

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9. Must a PSU participate in W2T coding?

No, a PSU can decide to not participate and continue reporting students leaving the traditional public high school program for community college Adult High School programs with dropout reason code COMM.

10. Who at the PSU level is responsible for monitoring?

The local school district has sole responsibility for administration of the W2T coding process, including assigning the appropriate personnel.

11. When can we begin to provide the special codes for students attending Adult High School programs?

Districts may begin using the codes for the 2015-2016 academic year.

12. Do all Community Colleges offer Adult High School programs?

No. The following website has a list of community colleges that do not offer Adult High School programs:
http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/college-and-career-readiness/adult-high-school-ahs

AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES

13. Can a PSU have an agreement with more than one community college?

No. A district may have an Adult High School Agreement of Affiliation with only one community college.

14. What happens to those students who attend a community college with which the school lacks an Agreement of Affiliation?

Report these students as regular dropouts using dropout reason code COMM.

15. Does the W2T rule apply to charter schools?

Yes, but only if there is a signed Agreement of Affiliation between the school and the community college.

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16. We have three different community colleges in which our students typically enroll, but none are in our district. Would we need an agreement with all three colleges?

    The Agreement of Affiliation should be created with the community college that serves your county. For a list of Community College services areas, visit: http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/service-area-assignments-service-areas

17. Our local community college doesn't have a program. Can we use the next closest one?

    Community colleges welcome the opportunity to provide programs and services to their communities. If the college serving a district does not have an Adult High School diploma program, a local administrator should contact the college's Basic Skills director and discuss the possibilities of a collaborative effort.

18. Who will issue the diploma? Transcript?

    The diploma is issued by the community college and signed by the local district superintendent and the community college president. This practice may vary from campus to campus. Students can receive transcripts from the high school for the courses taken there but will need a transcript from the community college as well.

19. If Adult High School students re-enroll with us (public school), can we count their credits from the community college?

    The decision to count credits earned in Adult High School is one made at the district level.

20. Does it cost students to attend these programs?

    The local community college determines fee structures.

21. A student who lives in another county attends our county public schools. What if that student withdraws and goes to their county's community college AHS program, which is not the one we have our affiliation agreement with?

    The district would not be allowed to use the W2T code in this instance. For the purposes of AHS, districts may affiliate with only one community college.

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COHORT QUESTIONS
22. If a student goes to the AHS after the year of his/her 5th year cohort, can we still use the W2T coding? *No. The policy restricts the use of the W2T to students in the 5th cohort year or earlier.*
23. If a student was retained several times prior to 9th grade, it is entirely possible that they are 19, 20, or 21 by their senior year in high school. If they leave school to enroll in AHS, can they be counted in the W2T reporting? *Yes. North Carolina General Statute 115C-366 allows students to remain in school until they are 21 years of age. Therefore, students may be coded W2T provided all other statutory and policy conditions are met.*

TRACKING STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN AHS PROGRAMS
24. Will the Community College let us know when the student completes the AHS program? *Not necessarily. The local school district must make inquiry with the community college regarding the status of W2T Adult High School enrollees. Verification of enrollment and completion status is the responsibility of the school district.*
25. Who at the PSU level is responsible for monitoring? *The local school district has sole responsibility for administration of the W2T coding process, including assigning the appropriate personnel.*
26. Is it the student's responsibility to provide documentation that they are still in the Adult HS program or does the PSU contact the community college? *No, the local school district solely is responsible for verifying and documenting AHS enrollment. Therefore, the district should contact the community college each quarter or semester to verify continuous enrollment.*
27. We keep manual admit/withdraw logs for our schools. Do we need to enter them? *That is a local decision.*

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REPORTING IN NCSIS
28. Is there a QRD on how to change withdrawal codes when students graduate or fail to maintain continuous enrollment? *Yes, you can find the Quick Reference Document at: https://files.nc.gov/NCDPI/documents/student_info/PS_UG_CCAHS_Community_College_Adult_High_School_Program.pdf*
29. If we have students this school year that are already enrolled in an Adult High School Program, can we go back and code them as W2T for this school year? *Yes, with verification of enrollment.*
30. When a student's exit code is changed from W2T to W2, either because enrollment in the AHS discontinues or the 5-year cohort has passed, are they then reported as a dropout during that year? *Yes. Students are to be reported as dropouts for the year in which the W2T code is changed to W2.*
31. If a PSU does not use the W2T process but keeps track of dropouts who complete AHS (through affiliation with the community college), can the PSU code a W2 dropout as W6 if the PSU has documentation that the student graduated from AHS within the 4- or 5-year cohort? *No. You must use the W2T reporting process for exempting the AHS dropouts from counting toward school and district dropout rates and counts.*
32. The Quick Reference Document says to code all eligible AHS graduates as W6. What about students who graduate from AHS in December? *All eligible AHS graduates are to be coded W6.*
33. If the student graduates with their cohort group, and the W2T is then changed to W6, what audit trail do we have to showing the student was ever coded W2T? *The W2T code does not go away. It stays in the tracking system.*
34. How are AHS graduates identified? *An AHS graduate is identified as a regular high school graduate at the end of the school year.*

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