

The Grader

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W4 Withdrawals in Light of COVID-19 School Closures

Per the School Finance guidance [here](#) schools should not report student absences after March 15, 2020 for the 2019-2020 school year.

As a result, schools additionally should not use the W4 withdrawal code for students with 10 consecutive unexcused absences since absences are no longer being accrued. A W4 withdrawal code can still be used as a temporarily placeholder for students that have withdrawn until such time as appropriate documentation is received to code the student with a more appropriate withdrawal code. The required documentation is outlined in the Official Notice of Pupil Withdrawal Form ([here](#)).

For example, in the event that a student is withdrawing from a school during the 2019-2020 school year to attend another school, the withdrawing school should code the student as a W4 withdrawal until they receive a records request from the receiving school. At that point they would update the student's W4 withdrawal to a W1.

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A-F Self-Reporting

As a reminder, at the special State Board of Education (SBE) meeting on March 31st, the State Board determined that 2019-2020 letter grades for schools will use the school's final 2018-2019 letter grade. While a determination has not yet been made regarding the submission of self-reported A-F components (CCRI, On-Track to Graduate, and Credits Earned), schools are welcome to continue working on these self-reported components if they have the available resources and capacity. Regardless of reporting requirements for A-F Letter Grades, we hope these self-reported measures provide you with helpful data about your school and your students. If you do not have the current resources or capacity to work on these self-reported components, please **DO NOT** worry about them for the time being. We know your priority is supporting your students and teachers as they continue to navigate the difficulties of distance learning and the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

It is expected that the SBE will discuss data collection at a future meeting so feel free to tune into their meetings online and find more information [here](#). Additional guidance will be provided once decisions are made by the SBE.

Alternative School Applications

As previously shared, the deadline to apply for Alternative School Status for Fiscal Year 2021 has been extended to May 29th. Any school that would like to be considered for Alternative School Status for Fiscal Year 2021 must submit an application [here](#), **no later than 5:00pm on Friday, May 29th**.

Please note that schools applying for Alternative School Status for Fiscal Year 2021 will be using data from the current Fiscal Year (2020) in their application. Arizona state statute supports 6th through 12th grade alternative school programs for accountability purposes and it is the intent of the Arizona Department of Education to be in alignment with this statute ([Section C of 15-795](#)).

Additional information about Alternative School Status and the application process is available in our Alternative School Status FAQ page [here](#). Please contact Achieve@azed.gov with questions.

Collecting Income Eligibility 1 & 2 Data

Several schools/LEAs have reached out with questions regarding the collection of Income Eligibility 1 & 2 data for students, please feel free to use the below guidance as you work to collect this important data for your students.

- **Can the Income Eligibility 1 & 2 Data be collected electronically (i.e. through an online form)?**
 - Yes. You are welcome to create and use an online form to collect Income Eligibility 1 & 2 data for your students. You will want to be sure to include all the fields shown in the paper form, a checkbox where parents certify that the information provided is accurate and a field to type out their name (in place of the signature required in the paper form).
- **If a student is directly certified, do they still need to receive the form?**
 - Yes. Regardless of how you collect Income Eligibility 1 & 2 data (paper form or electronic), ALL students must receive the form to ensure that they are not identified as Income Eligibility 1 & 2 by their omission from the data collection.
- **Can records of Income Eligibility 1 & 2 data be maintained electronically?**
 - Yes. You may maintain Income Eligibility 1 & 2 data either in paper form in securely stored student records or in digital form in a secure system.

Memo from Health and Nutrition Services

During this time, it is especially important that students' Income Eligibility 1 & 2 status be collected and reported appropriately in your Student Information System (SIS). This facilitates eligible students/families to receive Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefits through the Department of Economic Security.

For more information, please see the memo from Health Nutrition Services ([here](#)) on the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer per the Families First Coronavirus Response Act Guidance for Public Schools Participating in the National School Lunch Program.

Accountability 101 Guidebook

In an effort to better support school/LEA staff members who are new to Accountability processes and A-F Letter Grades, an Accountability 101 Guidebook has been created and is available [here](#). This document has also been posted on our website under the “Guides & FAQ” tab. The Accountability 101 Guidebook is intended to provide a high-level overview of A-F Letter Grades, share important contacts and resources, and cover some important terms. If possible, we encourage you to include this in training materials for any new staff members expected to work on Accountability/A-F Letter Grade related items.

EL vs. EL Cohort Subgroups

In several reports (i.e. Grad Rate Report, Dropout Rate Report, etc.) information reported at the subgroup level includes both EL and EL Cohort subgroups. While similar, these two subgroups may include different students. The **EL subgroup** includes students that were identified as an English Learner with a need. For example, a student who is an English Learner (with a less than proficient score on the AZELLA) during Fiscal Year 2020 is included in the English Learner subgroup. The **EL Cohort subgroup** is made up of students that were identified as an English Learner at any point since they entered high school and had their cohort year assigned. To be included in the EL Cohort subgroup, a student may have been an English Learner in their cohort year or they could have previously been identified as a English Learner sometime during high school, even if they later reclassified.

The same is true for the other subgroups with a cohort subgroup (i.e. Income Eligibility 1 & 2, Homeless, Special Education, etc.). These cohort subgroups only occur for program-based subgroups that a student can enter and exit but not for race/ethnicity subgroups because a student’s race/ethnicity does not change the way their enrollment in a program may.

For questions regarding these subgroups and identifications please contact Achieve@azed.gov.