

# ACCOUNTABILITY & RESEARCH

# THE GRADER

## February 2021 Edition

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# News & Fun Facts

## Students Withdrawn to be Home Taught, but Returned This Year Compared to Last

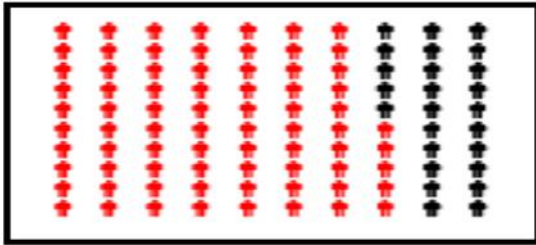


COVID-19 fundamentally altered the way that schools operate during the 2020-2021 school year. Parents were confronted with a range of difficult choices about which educational environment was best for their students. The enrollment data shows that a large number of students changed schools both at the start of the school year and throughout the school year.

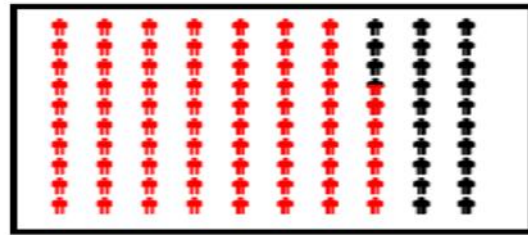
This large amount of mobility inspired us to monitor where students were attending school. One of the interesting results was the behavior of home school students in the first half of each school year. During the 2018-2019 school year, 3,332 students were withdrawn for homeschool, which was roughly the same as the 3,379 students that were withdrawn during the 2019-2020 school year. However, during the 2020-2021 school year, 9,678 students were withdrawn for homeschool, or almost triple the amount in either of the two previous years.

Another interesting finding was the rate of re-enrollment into public schools after a period of homeschooling. In a typical year, the number of students that are re-enrolled after homeschooling is approximately one quarter of the students that are withdrawn to attend homeschool in that same year. Despite the large number of students being withdrawn to attend homeschool in 2020-2021, the percent of them that have returned to schools later this year is still 25%. The figure below illustrates both the increase in the number of students withdrawn to be homeschooled in the first half of each year, and the constant rate of return.

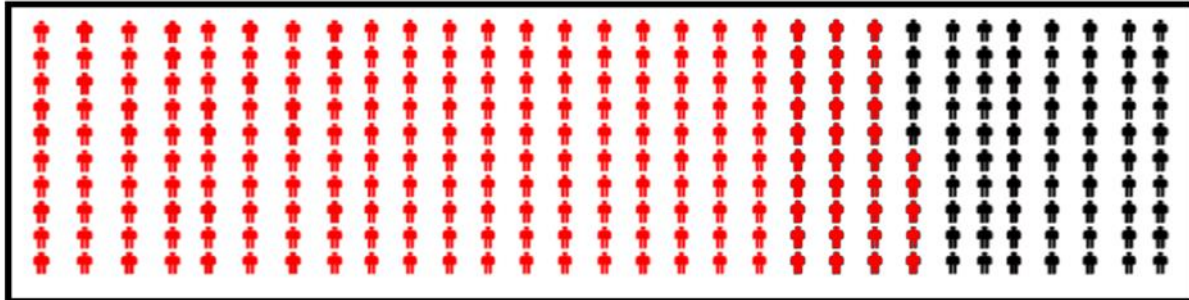
2019





2020



2021



 = Students who withdrew to attend homeschool  
(approx. 30 students per figure)

 = Students who returned to the classroom



## Alternative School Applications

All schools that would like to be considered for Alternative School Status for Fiscal Year 2022 (2021-2022 school year) **MUST** complete and submit an Alternative School Application. Keep in mind that schools must apply every year to be considered for Alternative School status, even if they have been previously approved. **We will be announcing the window and link for submitting Alternative School Applications within the next week.** Please keep an eye out for updates on our website with the

submission link! If you have questions in the meantime, please contact [Achieve@azed.gov](mailto:Achieve@azed.gov).



## Alternative Schools On-Track to Graduate

The Fiscal Year 2021 (2020-2021 school year) Alternative School On-Track to Graduate Initial Submission page is now open. You may want to review your spreadsheet from last year in preparation for this year's submission. Links to this year's submission page as well as for the spreadsheet template can be found [here](#) and on our website's [Alternative Schools page](#). **The deadline for this initial submission is Monday, March 15 2021, at the close of the business day.** For any questions or concerns please email [Achieve@azed.gov](mailto:Achieve@azed.gov).



## Pupil Withdrawal Monitoring Begins Soon

Schools will be selected from a pool of LEAs identified by participating in this year's Title I Programmatic Cycle 4 Monitoring. The initial ten schools will be notified through their superintendent and federal program's personnel in the month of February. The monitoring is specific to the "Official Notice of Pupil Withdrawal" form. A link to that document, which includes "Guidance and Procedures", can be found [here](#). Using the proper withdrawal codes ensures the accurate reporting of graduation, dropout, and persistency rates. Schools that serve students in grades 6 through 12 may want to review the [Graduation, Dropout, and Persistence Rate Technical Manual](#) to understand how exit codes affect these measurements.

Schools that are selected can expect the following steps for the monitoring:

- District and Charter Holders will be notified via their federal program personnel and superintendents.
- Contacts on whom to work with for the monitoring will be established
- Materials will be shared on the process to include help documents, contacts, and forms to be used
- A technical review will be conducted
- Schools not meeting a threshold of 95% accuracy during the technical review will go through more analysis
- If the second analysis does not result in an 80% accuracy or higher threshold, the schools will be asked to meet additional criteria for the following year

The process has been completed with pilot schools not selected for the actual monitoring. We expect to continue to improve the processes when working with identified schools through the remainder of the year.

### **Improving Processes for Pupil Withdrawal Forms and Guidance**

Three items have been identified to help improve the accuracy and ease of accurately coding students when they withdraw from a school. More information will follow when the items are ready to go live.

1. W4 will be split into two separate categories:
  - a. S4/W4 — 10-day consecutive unexcused absence, no contact
  - b. S41/W41 — withdrawn with parent signature, no verification of subsequent enrollment in another school
2. Plan to implement a separate process than 15-915 for withdrawal code changes that do not have financial impact
3. Improve Drop-out Tracker reporting that will alert schools in the event of a subsequent enrollment

### **Pupil Withdrawal Form and Coding Training**

Trainings are going to be made available through a variety of platforms to help staff understand the forms and the codes and how they are used. The training will discuss the federal and state laws that require withdrawal codes and the research the code's impact. The trainings will be offered through live webinars for those who are not meeting compliance, as well as for those want additional training. On-demand webinars will also

be available to those who can not make scheduled live events. We are currently putting the final touches on the training and will be working with a group of volunteers to fine tune the materials for broader presentations. We will include in next month's Grader a link to a survey asking when is the best time to offer the live events for your new staff or a refresher course for established team members. Please be on the lookout for next month's issue.



## State Board Meeting Update

### **ADE Accountability Welcomes Our Newest Technical Advisory Group – CTED TAC**

A.R.S. § 15-393.01 directs the Arizona Department of Education to include Career Technical Education Districts in the annual achievement profile utilizing an A-F Letter Grade, subject to the final adoption by the State Board of Education (Board). The methodology to determine the A-F letter grade must be research-based and developed in collaboration with a coalition of qualified technical and policy stakeholders.

Statute requires the Board to appoint the members of the stakeholder group. Board staff worked with ADE to compile a list of qualified technical and policy stakeholders for consideration to serve on the Career Technical Education District Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (CTED ATAC). CTED ATAC members serve three-year terms and may be removed by the Board at any time.

On January 25, 2021 during the State Board meeting the following members were officially appointed:

- Greg Donovan, Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC)
- Kevin Imes, Southwest Technical Education District of Yuma (STEDY)
- Joel Todd, Cochise Technology District
- Matt Weber, Northern Arizona Vocational Institute of Technology (NAVIT)

We look forward with meeting with our newest group the first week in March.



## October 1 Enrollment Report Available Mid-March

The annual Enrollment Report for school year 2020-2021 will be available before March 15, 2021. Annual Enrollment Reports include the number of students enrolled on October 1st of each school year. The enrollment counts are available at the following levels: Statewide, County, LEA (school district), and School. The report will be available [here](#).



## Accountability Update

### State

Current legislation pending for HB 2402 and SB 1165 regarding School Letter Grades for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 are currently making their way through the process. The legislation, if passed, would not assign letter grades for the next two years, however, continue to report data that is available. The State Board of Education will work with ADE to determine a way to identify low performing schools during this period of no grades for possible support and interventions.

The legislature is also considering HB 2301, which would exclude CTEDs from receiving a letter grade.



As more information is made available on the fate of these bills, it will be provided through the Grader.

### Federal

Arizona Department of education submitted to the United States Department of Education a waiver for the 2020-2021 school year for accountability determinations. Any information on updates can be found on [School Improvement's Website](#). Once more information is available, it will also be shared through the Grader.



## Timeline

<b>February 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>02/04</b> Alternative Schools 2020-2021 A-F Initial On-Track to Graduate Submission opens</li><li>• Alternative School Status Application opens (date pending)</li></ul>
<b>March 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2021 October 1 Enrollment Public Report Released</li><li>• <b>03/15</b> Alternative Schools 2020-2021 A-F Initial On-Track to Graduate Submission closes</li><li>• <b>03/31</b> Alternative School Status Application closes</li></ul>