

2011-117 AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES—High School Graduation and Dropout Data

The audit by the Bureau of State Audits will provide independently developed and verified information related to the collection of school dropout data and will include, but not limited to, the following:

1. Review and evaluate the laws, rules, and regulations significant to the audit objectives.
2. Based on a sample of four to five small and large local educational agencies (LEAs):
 - a. Determine what guidance and assistance the LEA received from California Department of Education (CDE) regarding dropout data collection and reporting through the California Basic Educational Data System and the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS).
 - b. Review and evaluate the policies and procedures used by LEAs to collect and report dropout data to the CDE.
 - c. Determine whether a consistent definition of “dropout” is applied within and among LEAs.
 - d. Determine which entity at the local level, if any, is responsible for classifying a student as a “dropout” and determine how this classification is made. In addition, determine whether controls exist to monitor and ensure the proper classification of a student as a “dropout.”
 - e. Determine to what extent the dropout and graduation information reported by the LEAs to the CDE takes into account the following:
 - i. Students who transfer from one LEA to another during the school year. Also, determine whether and how the LEA confirms the transfer.
 - ii. Students who may have transferred into an alternative education program. Also, determine whether and how the LEA confirms the transfer.
 - iii. Students who are not attending school but have not formally informed the school that they have dropped out. Also, determine whether and how the LEA confirms the students’ status.

- f. To the extent data is available, assess the impact of race, culture, and language on the collection and coding of transfer and dropout data.
 - g. Determine whether LEAs share dropout information with parents, school boards, and the general public. If so, determine the manner in which this information is shared (e.g., public meetings, Web sites, mailings, etc.) and the source of the information the LEA shared.
 - h. Determine if schools have appropriate capabilities and resources committed to graduation and dropout data collection and reporting.
 - i. Determine whether the LEAs offer dropout prevention programs and what steps they take to engage teachers, parents, students, and the community in these programs.
3. Determine whether the state calculation of the school dropout rate differs for various purposes such as the state accountability act and the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, and if so, how the calculations differ.
4. To the extent data is available, determine how dropout and graduation rates vary between urban, suburban, and rural school districts.
5. To the extent data is available, determine how dropout and graduation rates vary among different demographic categories (e.g., gender, ethnicity, household income level, English language learner, special education services).
6. To the extent data is available, assess the impact of the high school exit exam on dropout rates. Specifically, to the extent possible, assess the relationship between failing the high school exit examination and dropping out of school.
7. Review and assess any other issues that are significant to the collection and reporting of dropout data.