



Understanding Drop Out: Accuracy of Reporting and Risk and Protective Factors

For more information, contact:
Mike Barney - mbarney@rcoe.us
Shannon Wells - Shannon@KeyDataSys.com

Drop-Out Information

Dropouts pose significant problems to society as a whole, as well as impair their personal futures. It has been found that those who drop out of school have significantly lower lifetime earnings and are three and a half times more likely to commit crimes than those who remain in school and receive a high school diploma. Based on the state's data, we estimate that each week in Riverside County alone, three busloads of students in grades 7-12 drop out of school (see Riverside County drop-out data provided on p. 6). Because this problem is so pervasive, it is imperative that information get out to districts and school sites to help ensure they (a) accurately report who drops out, (b) understand factors that increase a student's risk or protect against dropping out, (c) put safety nets into place to minimize a child's chances of dropping out, and (d) alternative programs be offered to students who have dropped out to get them back into school.

Key Findings

- Dropping out is a result of many factors potentially over a long period of time.
- Student's background information is important to understand to determine if students are at-risk.
- Many factors can be influenced by schools and districts by implementing policies that reduce drop-out rates.
- Students identified at-risk should be provided additional support or alternative programs such as Come Back Kids.
- Using correct exit codes should help reduce drop-out rates.
- Minimize data errors and track students to gain an accurate picture of the drop-out problem.

Accurate Reporting of Exit Codes to Reduce Drop-Out Rates

It is important to ensure appropriate policies and procedures are used when exiting a student from a school. When incorrect exit codes are used, one cannot know the true state of the drop-out problem. Thus, it is hard to know what steps to take to remedy it. Currently, there is considerable variability in codes used when students "leave" school. In Riverside County, we have found in many schools, it is commonplace to report some students who leave a school, as leaving with no known enrollment. The use of this code automatically reports the student to the state as a dropout. There have also been a number of students reported to have enrolled in another California public school, where the state is unable to verify such enrollment. This is referred to as a "lost transfer," which is also considered a dropout. The percent of students determined by the state to be a "lost transfer" increased by 126% in Riverside County in one year. In both of these cases, it is unlikely that the school will continue to look for the students, and if they truly dropped out, offer alternative programs to get them back in school.

Possible Data-Related Actions

Below is a list of possible actions that can be taken to have more accurately reported drop-out rates. For more information on specific exit codes, see the attached Exit Code form.

1. A weekly review of all students with drop-out exits should be conducted.
 - a. All site dropouts should be reviewed by a site administrator. Schools should interview students and other staff that might know the student and their whereabouts.
 - b. District drop-out lists should be shared with all schools on a weekly basis to make sure no student has dropped out of school and reenrolled or graduated from another school in the same district (surprisingly, this was noted in several districts).
 - c. A district administrator should have final sign off on all students with a drop-out exit code before a drop-out exit code is reported to the state.

2. If there is a major change in graduation or drop-out rate, data should be reviewed for errors. A loose guideline that can be used is plus or minus 3 percentage points from one year to the next. For more information, please see the drop-out and graduation data below.
3. If there is a large increase in “lost transfers” or 9-12 reenrollments, the data should be reviewed (check which exit codes are being used). For an example of reenrollment data, see the table on page 5.
4. 5th or 6th year seniors that have completed all district courses but did not pass the CAHSEE could be enrolled in an adult school (program). In this case, the adult school exit code (T260) should be used. These students will not be considered a dropout but not a graduate. This is a problem that has been noticed in many districts, likely because the data systems for K-12 and adult school do not typically interact.
5. The district should create a team responsible for student information systems and academic data. There should be a student information expert and an academic accountability expert on the team so that the accountability and technical ends of drop-out reporting can be covered. Drop-out and graduate-related data should be reviewed by the team before reporting to CALPADS.
6. All new students should be researched in CALPADS before assigning an SSID. In some cases, it was found that students who returned to a district were given the SSID from a previous enrollment in the district, even though a new SSID was assigned to them in CALPADS. It is important that district staff research all new students to make sure they have the correct SSID. If a student is assigned two different SSIDs, they could show up as a “lost transfer” at their previous school/district.
7. Create a graphic organizer of all those responsible for the data. This should include anyone who has access or updates student information.
8. Don’t wait for a requested cum to determine where a student goes. For example, if a student has left your school and the parents reported they would be going to another California public school, contact the school immediately in order to ensure that the student made it to that school. If the student has not, the student could be considered a “lost transfer” and would count as a dropout. Further investigation should occur to determine the student’s whereabouts.
9. “Lost transfer” and drop-out lists can be pulled directly from CALPADS. These lists should be reviewed weekly to look for all students who have been determined to have dropped out, either by the district or as the result of being reported as a “lost transfer” by CALPADS, within CALPADS, to ensure a new SSID was not assigned to them by a new school.

Using a systematic process and understanding data-related issues can help identify students that have dropped out.

Drop-Out Risks and Protective Factors

There are many risks and protective factors that need to be understood to ensure the best possible outcomes for students. There are many factors that increase a student’s chance of dropping out of school that schools should be aware of so that students who are at-risk of dropping out are provided support and monitoring. We know, for example that students with certain family characteristics, such as low socioeconomic status and being from some ethnic backgrounds have higher likelihood of dropping out. Students who are on-track (i.e., accumulated the expected number of credits) at the end of their freshman year are about four times more likely to graduate than their peers who are not on-track. Armed with this information, students with known “drop-out risk factors” can be placed in intervention/mentoring programs that will work to decrease the likelihood that they will drop out. Those who do end up dropping out can be offered the opportunity to attend alternative programs, such as RCOE’s Come Back Kids program (see the attached documentation for more information).

Factors That May Affect a Student's Decision to Drop Out

Some factors that contribute to a student's decision to drop out are not always school related. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the process of dropping out in order to identify and potentially provide assistance to students that are at-risk of dropping out. Risk factors include:

1. Community characteristics, such as higher unemployment and crime rates, and lower socioeconomic status.
2. Family characteristics, such as parents with lower levels of education, single parents, or the primary spoken language is different from the school's primary language.
 - Further family characteristics include having a pregnant teenager in the house, familial disputes, family health problems, and lack of educational support in the form of parents being engaged and aware of school-related activities, events, and programs.
3. Student demographics and responsibilities also play a significant role in increasing the likelihood a student will drop out, including:
 - Students who are ethnic minorities, especially African American, Hispanic, and American Indian.
 - Male students.
 - Students with disabilities.
 - Students with adult responsibilities, such as parenting responsibilities and working more than 20 hours a week.
4. Students with behavioral problems, such as drug and alcohol use, violent behavior, and committing crimes.
5. Academic performance can signal a student is at-risk. If a student is behind in credits, they may feel that they do not have a chance to graduate, and therefore will decide to drop out. As a result, credit monitoring at the high school level can play a critical role in helping identify potential students that are at-risk.
6. Students with high amounts of absences are also more at-risk of dropping out. Students that are absent often miss essential instruction making it difficult for them to keep up. Furthermore, students that drop out are usually found to have a string of absences before dropping out.

Students who fall into high-risk categories should be identified and provided with the tools and resources they need to graduate.

Although many of the aforementioned characteristics are factors that schools have little control over, there are many factors that schools and districts can directly impact. Armed with the knowledge of these factors, schools and districts can provide assistance to students.

Protective Factors Schools Can Control:

1. Relationships with adults play a critical role in a student's decision to drop out. If a student feels that there is at least one adult at the school that cares about them, be it a teacher, administrator, or support staff, they are considerably less likely to drop out.
2. Student involvement in extracurricular activities and sports help decrease a student's chance to drop out.
3. School violence can influence a student's decision to drop out. With a safe school environment, students are more likely to come to school and are less likely to drop out.
4. Discipline policies enforced at a school also play a role in a student's decision to drop out. For example, harsh discipline policies and suspension as a discipline strategy increase a student's chance to drop out.
5. Educational policies such as grade retention are one of the most significant predictors of a student's chance to drop out.



If students feel there is at least one person at their school who cares about them, they tend to have better educational outcomes and are less likely to drop out.

- Retaining a student one grade increases a student’s drop-out risk by 40-50% and retaining a student two grades increases a student’s chance to drop out by a staggering 90%.
- Most students also drop out in the 12th grade. Knowing this, schools and districts could implement preventative policies such as targeted assistance programs for at-risk students.

2008 to 2009 Drop-Out Information

The drop-out rate information that was posted by the California Department of Education is the first drop-out report using data from the new California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System

(CALPADS). As with many new systems of this size and this many varied organizations providing data input, it would not be unexpected that there may be some number of data issues.

Two years ago, all LEAs in the state were first required to input data into the California Schools Information Services (CSIS) system, reporting student movement between schools and LEAs. When drop-out information was first reported using the CSIS data, the drop-out rates jumped compared to previous years. In response, LEAs learned and began using the appropriate exit codes, made corrections, and the drop-out rates came down. It is expected that a similar response to the new CALPADS data will occur.

With CSIS, beginning in 2007, the state had the ability to verify whether students who left one district enrolled in another district, through the use of the State Student Identifier (SSID). Previously, districts could report that a student enrolled in another California public school, thus, not a dropout, without the state verifying the accuracy for such reports. Now students reported to have enrolled in another California public school, which the state does not find, are labeled “lost transfers,” and districts have the ability to look for these students in other districts.

It has been found that oftentimes, SSIDs do not match from one district to the next, which would result in the student being labeled a “lost transfer,” when in fact they are enrolled in another California public school. When comparing “lost transfer” numbers from 2008 to 2009, at the district, county, and state level, huge increases in these numbers can be seen. In fact, the “lost transfers” in Corona-Norco increased by 673%. Across the county, there was a 126% increase and at the state level, there was a 94% increase in “lost transfers.” With increases of this magnitude, it makes looking at the drop-out data suspect—this could likely only happen due to data reporting errors.

Conversely, the state also has the ability to “find” students in other California public schools that the district reported to have dropped out of school (dropouts reenrolled). These are students that would have counted

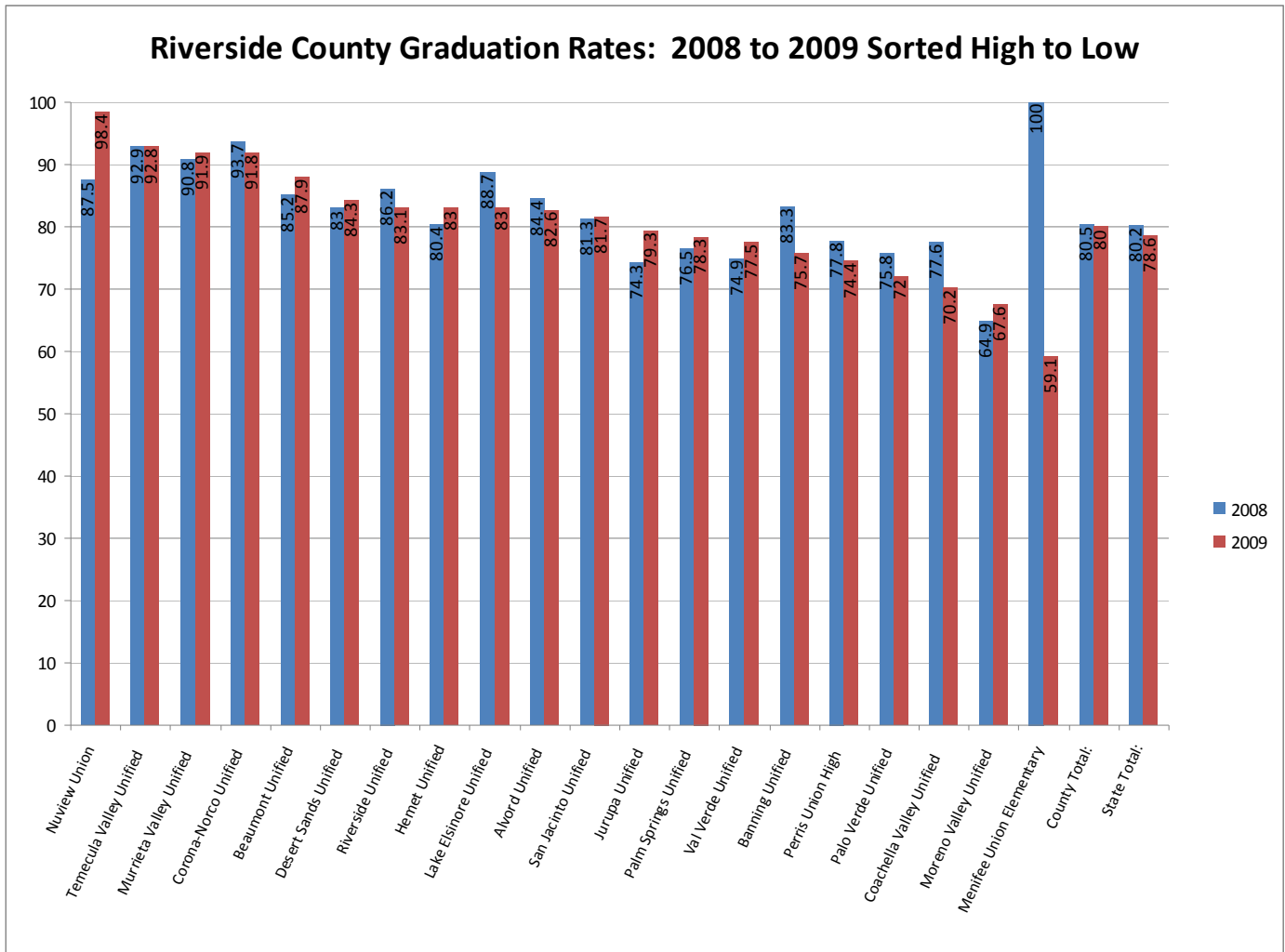
9-12 Dropouts Reenroll			
District	2008	2009	Difference
Alvord Unified	0	12	12
Banning Unified	0	1	1
Beaumont Unified	1	5	4
California School for the Deaf	0	0	0
Coachella Valley Unified	0	8	8
Corona-Norco Unified	23	45	22
Desert Sands Unified	0	2	2
Hemet Unified	2	273	271
Jurupa Unified	1	7	6
Lake Elsinore Unified	0	33	33
Moreno Valley Unified	8	152	144
Murrieta Valley Unified	21	63	42
Nuvew Union	0	0	0
Palm Springs Unified	0	14	14
Palo Verde Unified	4	19	15
Perris Union High	0	34	34
Riverside Unified	1	106	105
San Jacinto Unified	0	17	17
Temecula Valley Unified	0	9	9
Val Verde Unified	5	82	77
County Total:	94	905	811
Statewide	3,525	20,721	17,196
<i>*Data updated as of 2/22/2011</i>			

as dropouts, had the state not determined they enrolled in another California public school. In 2008, few students were reported to have dropped out, that the state was able to find in other districts. However, in 2009, these numbers skyrocketed. Across the county, there was an 875% increase and at the state level there was almost a 500% increase in students who were reported by a district to have dropped out, that the state subsequently found in another California public school. Again, with increases of this magnitude, it makes looking at the drop-out data suspect—this could likely only happen due to data reporting errors. Based on what happened with data reporting problems, it is not surprising that drop-out figures rose from 2008 to 2009. Corona-Norco had an increase in their four-year drop-out rate of 281% and across the county we saw an increase of close to 27%. Increases from one year to the next of this magnitude are unlikely to be accurate, and very likely to be a function of data reporting problems. For this reason, attributing the 2009 drop-out rates to what is happening on school campuses should be done with extreme caution.

	4 Year Adjusted Drop-Out Rate			1 Year Adjusted Drop-Out Rate		
	2008	2009	Diff 4-Year Drop Out	2008	2009	Diff 1-Year Drop Out
Alvord Unified	21.80%	22.30%	0.50%	5.30%	5.80%	0.50%
Banning Unified	11.80%	14.00%	2.20%	3.00%	3.60%	0.60%
Beaumont Unified	10.60%	17.60%	7.00%	2.40%	4.80%	2.40%
California School for the Deaf	18.70%	16.70%	-2.00%	4.90%	5.00%	0.10%
Coachella Valley Unified	23.40%	28.50%	5.10%	5.70%	6.60%	0.90%
Corona-Norco Unified	5.80%	22.10%	16.30%	1.50%	5.90%	4.40%
Desert Sands Unified	15.90%	15.90%	0.00%	4.00%	4.10%	0.10%
Hemet Unified	17.40%	18.60%	1.20%	4.60%	4.90%	0.30%
Jurupa Unified	18.10%	15.30%	-2.80%	4.60%	3.70%	-0.90%
Lake Elsinore Unified	11.80%	16.90%	5.10%	2.80%	4.20%	1.40%
Moreno Valley Unified	26.80%	26.70%	-0.10%	7.00%	7.10%	0.10%
Murrieta Valley Unified	9.60%	12.40%	2.80%	2.40%	3.20%	0.80%
Nuvview Union	3.40%	0.00%	-3.40%	0.70%	0	-0.70%
Palm Springs Unified	13.00%	12.60%	-0.40%	3.30%	3.30%	0.00%
Palo Verde Unified	27.30%	22.50%	-4.80%	7.20%	6.10%	-1.10%
Perris Union High	17.50%	28.40%	10.90%	4.10%	7.20%	3.10%
Riverside Unified	14.00%	23.00%	9.00%	3.40%	6.10%	2.70%
San Jacinto Unified	15.10%	16.10%	1.00%	3.80%	4.20%	0.40%
Temecula Valley Unified	5.70%	6.70%	1.00%	1.50%	1.60%	0.10%
Val Verde Unified	17.80%	21.30%	3.50%	4.50%	5.60%	1.10%
County Total:	17.30%	21.90%	4.60%	4.40%	5.70%	1.30%
Statewide	18.90%	21.50%	2.60%	4.90%	5.70%	0.80%

**Data updated as of 2/22/2011*

Riverside County Districts 2008 and 2009 Graduation Rates and 2010 AYP Graduation Rate Targets



*Data updated as of 2/22/2011

About half of districts in Riverside County had a decrease in their graduation rate from 2008 to 2009. These decreases are likely, at least partly, due to it being the first year in which CALPADS was used for graduation and drop-out reporting. Large changes in graduation rates from one year to the next are likely a function of data reporting.

For AYP in 2010, districts either needed to have 90% of their students (class of 2009) graduate or make ten percent of the difference between their 2008 graduation rate and 90%. In 2009 (class of 2008), districts only had to have 83.1% of students graduate or have a .1 percentage point increase in graduation rate from the prior year. Because of this large difference in graduation rate targets, only half of the districts responsible for making AYP Graduation Rate did so (Menifee has a graduation rate, but is not required to make AYP Graduation Rate due to having less than 50 12th grade students; the graduation rate is for Santa Rosa Academy, a direct funded charter). Red font in the "Grad Rate and AYP Target Difference" column indicates the district did not make AYP Graduation Rate, thus cannot make Safe Harbor in 2010.

Exit Code Form

CALPADS often requires a combination of school completion status codes and student exit category codes when changing a students' status. This document is not intended to be a CALPADS tutorial. Rather, it is intended to identify which codes are considered drop-out codes and which ones are not. When determining an exit code, one should consider **all** codes in the completer column first. If no completer code is appropriate, only then should drop-out codes be considered. *Codes 100, 106, and 108 are the only codes that indicate a student is both a completer (non dropout) and graduate.*

Completer/Transfer (Non-Dropouts)	Dropout
<i>100 – Graduated with a High School Diploma.</i>	104 – Left school, passed all requirements except for CAHSEE.
106 – Graduated SWD with waiver and passed the CAHSEE with modifications.	E140 – Left school and not known to be enrolled in an educational program working towards a diploma. Includes students who left for a job, marriage, etc.
108 – Graduated SWD with waiver and is exempt from passing the CAHSEE.	T270 – Enrolled in an Adult Education program but has subsequently dropped out of the Adult Education program.
120 – Student with exceptional needs received a certificate indicating they met the requirements of Education Code section 56390.	E300 – Withdrawn for disciplinary reasons but did not arrive at the destination educational institution.
E125 – Exited a Special Education transition program and was a completer.	360 – Completed grade 12 but did not graduate or receive a diploma and not in an academic program working towards a diploma.
E130 – Died.	T380 – Same as T370 but not working towards a diploma.
T160 – Transferred to another California public school – with documentation.	E400 – Other (unknown reason).
T165 – Transferred to another California public school for disciplinary reasons – with documentation.	N420 – Completed a school year but did not return to that school.
T167 – Transferred to another California public alternative education or independent study school.	T460 – To home school setting not affiliated with a private school or independent study program at a public school.
T180 – Enrolled in a private school in California – with documentation.	
T200 – Enrolled in a public or private school in the U.S. – with documentation.	
E230 – Reached maximum age – without enough credits.	
T240 – Moved to another country.	
250 – Enrolled in Adult Education and received a diploma.	
T260 – Enrolled in Adult Education and is working towards GED or diploma.	
T280 – Entered college and is working towards a college degree – with documentation.	
T310 – Entered a health care facility.	
320 – Completed GED.	
330 – Passed CHSPE.	
T370 – Entered an institution not primarily academic in nature (military, job corps, etc.) but is in a program working towards a diploma.	
E410 – Left for medical reasons.	
E450 – Infant, PreK, K-6 – withdrew from the school.	
N470 – Student was pre-enrolled in a school but did not show and is not a N420.	
480 – Matriculated to another school.	
E490 – Summer or Intersession Exit – expected to return to the same school after the break.	



Come Back Kids



Are you ready to come back?

We're open and ready for YOU!

CBK Vision: *To immediately reduce the drop-out rate, provide a graduation and GED program for drop-outs, assist every student with an ILP and Career Plan, create a safe environment where communication and success is fostered....and celebrate accomplishments.*

Come Back Kids is a program that offers prevention/intervention services to students of all ages who wish to re-enroll in an educational program. Students who have fallen through the cracks are offered an opportunity to make up credits, find classes they need, and get special training.

Students receive the opportunity to:

- Complete high school graduation requirements/credits
- Walk in a formal graduation ceremony
- Prepare and test for the General Educational Development (GED)
- Prepare to take the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
- Enroll in Workforce Development and Career Tech Ed (CTE)
- Learn about and join Youth Opportunity Programs
- Work with a team of caring adults who help build student plans!

*President Obama said in his Address to Congress February 2009:
"Hope is found in unlikely places"*

*We hope that you call one of our centers and allow CBK to be **your new found place.***

To make an appointment call: 877-RCOE-CBK or 877-726-3225