

Dear Colleagues,

We are approaching the end of the verification period for accountability and other 2008–09 school year data. As you know, new federal requirements mandate that accountability status determinations be released publicly no later than 14 days prior to the start of the school year. Your hard work has allowed New York to remain on track to meet that challenge. Thank you for being so diligent!

Accountability status determinations for the 2009–10 school year will be based on data in the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) as of July 31, 2009. Your local Regional Information Center (RIC) or Big 5 data center will share a final deadline for submitting data that is **prior to July 31** to allow sufficient time for processing. Superintendents and charter school principals must certify the data using the 2008–09 Statement of Certification of Verification Report(s) found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/nystart/certification.html> and fax this form to your RIC Director or Big 5 Data Coordinator. Information on accountability status determinations using the new differentiated accountability model can be found at http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyc/APA/Differentiated_Accountability/DA_home.html.

Accountability status determinations will be released via the IRS Portal prior to the public release of this information. If you have not already done so, please create accounts in the IRS Portal for the member(s) of your data team who will retrieve these status determinations for your school/district prior to public release. More information on setting up an account for the IRS Portal can be found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/irs-portal/>.

Common Data Reporting Errors

In previous years, schools and districts have encountered difficulties correctly reporting the following data elements:

- **Graduates** must be reported with the correct diploma type code **and** corresponding reason for ending enrollment code;
- All students, including **students with disabilities**, must be included in the final submitted file;
- **Limited English Proficient eligible** students must be reported correctly with a Program Service Code 0231;
- Students eligible to use the **NYSESLAT in lieu of the NYSTP ELA** for participation for accountability purposes must be reported correctly with a Program Service Code 0242;
- **Grade 8 students who took a science Regents exam** for accountability purposes must be reported with the appropriate assessment record for the Regents exam taken;
- All schools required to submit **backmapping** data (schools with grades 1, 2, 1–2, K–1, or K–2 only) must do so. Failure to submit these data will result in the school not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP);
- All special education students to be included in Verification Reports 11-15 in the PD data system (due November 4, 2009) must be coded correctly with their demographic, enrollment, and program service data by the July 31 deadline.

Reasonableness Report

During the data verification process, you may find the new Level 2 “Reasonableness Report” useful to identify 2008–09 data reporting errors. The Reasonableness Report provides counts of this year’s and last year’s data (2007–2008 in column A and 2008–2009 in column B), the difference between these counts (column C), and the percent change between the counts (column D) of students by various category types (e.g., enrollment ending code).

Significant changes between data reported in 2007–08 compared to those reported in 2008–09 may flag a reporting error, which can be further investigated via one of the available student-level detail reports.

Particular attention should be paid to percent changes equal to or greater than 10% and reporting issues known to have caused difficulties in previous years. For smaller districts, a 10 percent change may not be significant; for larger districts, a smaller percent change may be significant.

Reporting errors discovered as a result of a review of these reports should be corrected in the local student management system and reported to the repository.

Final Documentation

Please save a copy of all verification reports (especially the elementary/middle and high school accountability verification reports) based on data in the SIRS as of the July 31 reporting deadline, which will be available on nySTART on August 4. In addition, save the preview Accountability and Overview Report (preAOR) based on these data, which will be available on nySTART on August 6. When saving the August 4 verification reports, be sure you retain a copy of the aggregate reports (Reports A and B), as well as the student-level report (Report C). If you have difficulty saving Report C on nySTART, you may retain the student-level report in either the Level 2 Reports system or the IRS Portal as a substitute.

These reports will be necessary for documentation if your district files an appeal of its assigned accountability status determination. Please remember that failure to submit complete and accurate data is **not** a valid basis for an appeal.

Again, all of us at the State Education Department thank you for your efforts. Our staff will be working hard over the next few weeks to prepare for the public release of accountability status determinations in August.

Sincerely,

Alan Ray
Assistant Commissioner
Policy and Strategic Planning, P-16