

## Sample Graduation Press Release

A federally mandated change in the way graduation rates are calculated has resulted in (a slight shift, a significant shift, little change) in the (insert name) School District graduation rate, which is now reported at (insert data) percent.

The 2010-11 school year was the first year in which the U.S. Department of Education's mandated four-year adjusted cohort calculation method was in effect for all states. The mandate is an attempt to standardize the graduation rate calculation across states.

The new calculation method tracks the movement of all students entering high school in a given year and determines how many graduate with a regular high school diploma four years later, adjusting for the number of students who transfer in and out of the cohort during those four years. Previously, the graduation rate in Kansas looked only at the total number of graduates as compared to the number of graduates plus students who had dropped out in years one through four of high school.

The new four-year adjusted cohort formula counts many students as "non-graduates" who would not have factored into the graduation rate before. Those new non-graduates include students who do not graduate within four years — even if they are still enrolled in school — and students who transfer to a home school or a private school that is not accredited by the state.

The new four-year adjusted cohort calculation method, which is used for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability, caused the state graduation rate to move from 89.1 percent in 2008-09 to 80.9 percent in 2009-10. Because it can track individual students, the new calculation method provides an accurate measure of the percentage of students who graduate in four years or less, but the U.S. Department of Education also allows states the option to calculate an extended-year graduation rate. Kansas chose to calculate a five-year adjusted cohort rate to capture students who take five years to graduate. By publishing five year rates, those students who remain in school even though they do not graduate in the standard number of years can also be accounted for.

For more information, visit the graduation page of the KSDE website:  
<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4606>.