



**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**STATE DEPARTMENT**  
**OF EDUCATION**

# **PowerSchool Procedures for Early Graduates**

## **Including Guidelines for All Graduates**

Office of Research and Data Analysis/PowerSchool Information  
Office of Federal and State Accountability  
Office of Student Intervention/School Counselors  
2018-2019, Version 1.0

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## Introduction

This document provides a set of standard procedures to follow when entering and maintaining grade data for all SC students. Our graduating seniors and/or early graduates rely on school, district and state-level administrators to capture accurate information within the student information systems used – including but not limited to coursework completed, final scores earned, grade point averages calculated, class ranks reported and awards administered for their hard work. Persons closest to entering, maintaining and reporting such data must follow rigorous standards so that all data values accurately reflect truth for each individual student.

The first section provides steps to take when using the PowerSchool Student Information System to “graduate” the student from the active directory to the graduated school directory. The second part of this document provides a set of guidelines for districts to review when setting their own graduation policies. The information has been compiled over many years with the help of many experienced school counselors, registrars, teachers and administrators at school, district and state levels.

## How to Graduate a Student Early Using PowerSchool

When students graduate from a school at the end of the school year, PowerSchool uses the End of Year process to properly move students from their final school enrollment into the Graduated Students School. However, PowerSchool does not have a function that allows administrators to graduate a student prior to the end of the school year (i.e. early graduates). This document describes how a PowerSchool school administrator can select a student who has met all high school requirements to receive a high school diploma based on *SBE Regulation 43-234 Defined Program grades 9-12* and graduate that student before the end of the school year. This process involves archiving the student's final school enrollment as a previous enrollment and then modifying a new school enrollment to reflect the student's graduated status.

**IMPORTANT:** PowerSchool does not allow users to easily undo changes made by the following process. This process involves manual changes to a student record using the Student Field Value group function. It is recommended that users backup and archive the PowerSchool database before proceeding with this process.

**NOTE:** Special considerations are in place for early graduates. Review the information in the section Early Graduates: Issues and Resolutions.

## Grade Level for Graduates: Early (Winter), Spring, Summer or Fall

When the school or district level administrator(s) responsible for students who are ready for graduating high school has determined the term that a student has met the requirements for graduation, the student may apply for early graduation. The grade level for a student who requests to graduate early must be changed to [senior status \(grade 12\)](#) during the term he/she is expected to complete the requirements. The date of graduation and last date of enrollment may be as early as the date on which the district determined the student has met the requirements, but no later than the last day of the semester in which the student is actively enrolled in a course.

## CHE: Early Graduate Application

The Commission on Higher Education requests that all districts shall develop an early graduate application which outlines for parents and students the implications for State scholarships and establish a district-wide deadline to apply for early graduation.



these students who will not graduate with their class. A suggest timeframe for the following verification would be when completing the late/early high school diploma order:

- Do not check the “Include early graduates” box for any Class Rank Methods.
- Enter “EG” in the “Early graduation exit code” dialog box. (Note: entering “Exit Code=EG” in the student search box allows for a listing of early graduates).

Class Rank Method: 2017-18 Weighted GPA Calculation (Round)

## Class Rank Method

**General**

Description	<input type="text" value="SC GPA UGP Round Class Rank"/>
GPA Calculation Method	<input type="text" value="SC_GPA_UGP_Round"/>
GPA result is	<input type="text" value="Numeric"/>
Only include grades	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> that count in class rank (overrides GPA setting)
Exclude students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> that are excluded from class rank
Include early graduates?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early graduation exit code	<input type="text" value="EG"/>

**A note on Transcripts:** The SC\_GPA\_UGP\_Round Class Rank calculation (based on the weighted GPA calculation) must display on the standard SC transcripts for students who complete high school graduation requirements at the end of their spring term (May/June). The class rank based on the unweighted GPA calculation method should not display on the transcripts. Since administrators and guidance staff need to be aware of a student’s cumulative and current grade information, these data may be accessed by viewing the Cumulative Information page. This page can be set to display a variety of calculated values through its configuration in the GPA Student Screens page:

## GPA Student Screens

**Quick Lookup**

Type of Current GPA to display under schedule:

**Cumulative Info**

	Row Title	Data
1.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="SC_GPA_UGP_Round"/>	<input sc_gpa_ugp_round")"="" style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="~(*gpa method="/>
2.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="SC_GPA_4.0_Round"/>	<input sc_gpa_4.0_round")"="" style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="~(*gpa method="/>
3.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Total Credits Earned"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="~(*credit_hours)"/>
4.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="Total Credits Attempted"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="~(*potential_credit_hours)"/>
5.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="SC_GPA_UGP_Round Class Rank"/>	<input )"="" result="rankoutof" sc_gpa_ugp_round"="" style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="~(*classrank method="/>
6.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text" value="SC_GPA_4.0_Round Class Rank"/>	<input )"="" result="rankoutof" sc_gpa_4.0_round"="" style="width: 95%;" type="text" value="~(*classrank method="/>
7.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
8.	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>





c. Select the “Exit Code”: “EG (Early Graduate)”.

PowerSchool

Start Page > Student Selection > Functions > Transfer Student Out

### Transfer Student Out

Test, Student HS 12 27720 CHS

**Who will be transferred out**

Transfer comment

**Date of transfer**  
(should be the day after the student's last day in class)

Exit code

Check here if student(s) intend to enroll in school during next school year.\*

- W10 (Transfer/In-District)
- W20 (Withdrawn/Unknown Status)
- W21 (Graduated)
- W22 (Transfer/Out of District)
- W23 (Transfer/Adult Education)
- W24 (Moved Out of District/ School Unknown)
- W25 (Withdrawn/Home Schooled)
- W26 (Withdrawn/Health or Pregnancy)
- W27 (Withdrawn/Tech School)
- NS (No-Show/Never Enrolled)
- W28 (Withdrawn/4-Year College)
- W29 (Withdrawn/Work)
- W30 (Withdrawn/Military)
- W31 (Withdrawn/Juvenile Corrections)
- W32 (Withdrawn/Adult Corrections)
- W33 (Withdrawn/Expulsion)
- W34 (Withdrawn/Charter School)
- W35 (Deceased)
- W36 (Dropout)
- W37 (Re-enrolled Next School Year)
- P (Promoted (For End of Year Process))
- R (Retained (For End of Year Process))
- GC (Grade Level Change)
- EG (Early Graduate)**
- W39 (Exceeded maximum age for attendance)
- W38 (Adult Ed/Diploma Tracking)
- W40 (Adult Ed/GED Tracking)

d. Click Submit.

### Transfer Student Out

Test, Student Twelve 12 720010001918 THS1

**Who will be transferred out** Test, Student Twelve

**Transfer comment** Early Grad -- from Test High School 1 Diploma ordered through DOTS and student set as EG

**Date of transfer** (should be the day after the student's last day in class) 1/6/2017

**Exit code** EG (Early Graduate)

Check here if student(s) intend to enroll in school during next school year.\*

\* If the box is NOT checked, be advised that all scheduling related data for next year will be cleared. The values cleared will be next school, schedule this student indicator, and all future course requests.

✓ No attendance records found on or after 1/6/2017.

3. Verify the student was successfully transferred out of school. Search for the student by typing “/lastname” (where *lastname* is the last name of the graduated student) and click search. The words "Transferred Out" should be displayed at the top of the student’s page.

### Start Page

Students Staff Parents

/test

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

9 10 11 12 M F All Stored Searches Stored Selections







**Start Page**

PowerSchool Mastery in Minutes  
The December Mastery in Minutes tutorials are available. [Click here to view.](#)

Students | Staff | Parents | District Search

Advanced View Field List [?]

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

9 10 11 12 M F All Stored Searches Stored Selections

**Current Student Selection (1)**

Student	Grade Level
Test, Student Twelve	99

Select By Hand Student Field Value [?]

**Fields**

81. FTEID	435. S_SC_STU_E
82. FullTimeEquiv_obsolete	436. S_SC_STU_E
83. Gender	437. S_SC_STU_E
84. Geocode	438. S_SC_STU_E
85. GPEntryYear	439. S_SC_STU_E
86. Grade_Level	440. S_SC_STU_E
87. GradReqSet	441. S_SC_STU_E
88. GradReqSetID	442. S_SC_STU_E
89. Graduated_Rank	443. S_SC_STU_E

**Field Value**

1 students are selected

Field To Change	Grade_Level	
New Field Value	99	
Options	Clear Field Value is Off	
	Do not overwrite existing data is Off	
WARNING: This change is irreversible.		
Last, First	Old Grade_Level	New Grade_Level
1. Test, Student Twelve	12	99

Submit

## Graduates: Issues and Resolutions

There have been requests from district technology administrators for SCDE to provide standard timelines and procedures for data entry of graduates to ensure all records provide accurate data values. Customarily, students are eligible to graduate with their class by completing required coursework by the end of their senior year in high school; as such, these students are spring graduates. School counselors are well aware of the necessary information to provide and the deadlines to follow when graduates are submitting college applications, scholarship applications, etc. during the spring term. For those students who meet graduation requirements at the end of the fall, winter, or summer terms (i.e. early graduates), deadlines and requirements differ. This document section provides standard procedural guidance for both spring and early graduates.

### SCDE Standards Currently in Place

- **Date of graduation:** The graduation date is the last day of the term during in which the student completed high school requirements and received a diploma. This is the specific graduation date to display on diplomas and transcripts for both spring and early graduates.

**Note change for 2018-19:** The date of graduation and last date of enrollment may be as early as the date on which the district determined the student had met the requirements, but no later than the last day of the semester in which the student is actively enrolled in a course.

- **Receipt of high school diplomas:** There are specific dates or timelines (fall, winter, spring, or summer) during which students' data are required by SCDE to ensure those students receive diplomas. The Diploma Ordering and Tracking System (DOTS) has set timeframes for schools to place diploma orders and for principals to verify graduation lists. Reference the latest version of [\*Diploma Order and Tracking System \(DOTS\), User Manual for South Carolina Public Schools\*](#) for full instructions.
- **Class Rank:** The College Board defines class rank as “a mathematical summary of a student's academic record compared to those of other students in the class.” Class rank is calculated by comparing the GPAs for students in a specific grade level at a specific point in time.
  1. For example, in a high school class that has 500 juniors, each will receive a number, 1-500, with the student who has the highest GPA ranked #1. Of those 500 students in the class, the student with a class rank of 235 will have 234 students with a higher GPA and 265 classmates with a lower GPA.
  2. This class size (500 in the example above) cannot include any students who fall into the following groups for class rank purposes:
    - a. Do not complete their high school diploma requirements on or before the deadline “graduation date” for any SC high school.
    - b. Do not complete coursework that is based on credit-bearing courses; that is, are not taking courses that will result in receiving a high school diploma
    - c. Graduate during the fall, early/winter, or summer timeframes (i.e. early graduates).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** For SC State Scholarship purposes, the class rank must not be printed on transcripts for students who choose to graduate at the end of the fall, early/winter, or summer terms (i.e. early graduates). For each high school, the true class rank for the graduating class is based upon the count of students whose names appear on the spring list of graduates after all coursework

has been completed by all students counted in the graduating class during the traditional May/June timeframe.

- **Grade Level for Seniors:** Graduating students must have a grade level of 12. The actual grade level must be based on the number or projected number of credit-bearing course credits accumulated towards meeting high school diploma requirements on or before the final term during which the student will accrue the minimum credits. Use the following steps to change a student's grade level to 12 in PowerSchool if needed (and not graduating early):
  1. On the "Start" Page, search for and select the appropriate student.
  2. Click the "Entry Date" of the student's current enrollment on the student's "**Transfer Info**" page.
  3. Select "12" from the "**Grade Level**" drop down menu.
  4. Click **Submit**.
- **Membership by Instructional Time:** A pupil shall maintain membership in a minimum of 200 minutes of daily instruction or its equivalency for an annual accumulation of 36,000 minutes--R43-172.
- **Entry Code of EEI:** If a student only needs a quarter unit to complete high school graduation requirements, he/she may be enrolled for the fall term. However, schools must enroll these students using the entry code in PowerSchool of "EEI" since the student will not meet the minimum instructional time for funding purposes. Keep in mind a student can always opt to take more courses.

### **Data Entry ISSUES for School Personnel**

PowerSchool data entry personnel are responsible for entering accurate, appropriate, and consistent data so graduated students' transcripts for state or federal reporting include complete and finalized information. Areas of major concern are:

- Receiving funds for services provided (or not provided)
- Providing correct data for school grad rate calculations
- Providing requested transcripts with required data values
- Populating fields to meet DOTS requirements when ordering diplomas/finalizing graduate lists

Content experts at the school- and district-levels, along with SCDE staff in various offices, are responsible for ensuring all students have consistent information for SC State Scholarship determinations, to meet admission requirements for colleges or universities, to meet NCAA eligibility requirements, and/or to meet certification requirements for employment. Provision of consistent information requires, but is not limited to, the following standard policies and procedures for districts:

- Establishing specific dates for each graduation cohort (e.g., fall, winter, spring, or summer)
- Establishing deadlines by which students should complete graduation requirements for inclusion in each cohort
- Verifying display of accurate data on all transcripts
- Providing full disclosure and guidance for students on the merits of early graduation, specifically those related to State Scholarship implications for taking dual credit courses and not graduating early versus beginning college coursework after early graduation

As there appears to be a move toward more flexibility in scheduling students for coursework through virtual and other instructional settings that will allow students to complete requirements for high school graduation throughout the school year, consider the following as suggested standards for personnel providing guidance for students considering early graduation:

- Standardize the naming conventions defining the various timeframes students may graduate throughout the school year: fall, early/winter, spring, or summer:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Fall	First day of school – 45 <sup>th</sup> day of school	After the new school year begins and on or before the end of the first quarterly term, usually day 1 – day 45
Early/Winter	46 <sup>th</sup> day of school – 90 <sup>th</sup> day of school	After the end of the first quarter term but before the spring dates – day 46 and on or before day 90
Spring	91 <sup>st</sup> day of school – 180 <sup>th</sup> day of school	After day 90 but on or before day 180
Summer	Day after the final day of previous school year – first day of next school year	After day 180 but on or before the beginning day of the next school year

- Determine a standard grade level classification for high school students based on number of credits/completed coursework per year. When a student moves from freshman to sophomore status, what number of credits earned in core and elective courses determine the change in grade level/class status? For example, are students classified according to the number of credits earned rather than their duration in high school? Some schools provide information similar to the following:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b># Units</b>	<b>Specifics Areas of Study</b>
Freshman	9	NA	Varies depending on unit-based courses taken during middle school
Sophomore	10	5	Must include English I and one (1) unit of math
Junior	11	11	Must include English I and II, two (2) units of math, and one (1) unit of science
Senior	12	17	must include English I, II and III, three (3) units of math, and two (2) science units

Verify all required data fields are populated accurately. For state and federal reporting of graduate data, verify PS data values are accurate for: graduation date, graduation year, diploma type, exit date, exit code, diploma ordered/earned, enrollment status, etc. Doing so will also allow school- and district-

level reports (transcripts, high school diplomas, IGP plans, etc.) to provide accurate information both during and at the end of each school year.

## School Procedures for Early Graduates

To provide a standard set of procedures for schools, district and school administrators can compare existing early graduates policy and/or guidelines with the list below. Administrators should consider how federal and state reporting for funding, accreditation, and accountability impact each school's graduate data.

- Define a standard definition of High School Graduate. For example, a High School Graduate is “a student who has met the high school requirements for receiving a SC High School Diploma by completing all required course work according to *SBE Regulation 43-234 Defined Program for grades 9-12.*”
- Students could choose **not to continue** taking courses for additional credits in a high school environment or **to continue** taking courses for additional credits through a dual-credit agreement between the high school and a post-secondary institution. Each school/district calendar determines the specific graduation date and the necessary individual agreements in place for the student to continue or not continue his/her high school career.
- Define Graduation Dates per State Accountability. These are generally the last dates of the term for which completed requirements have been verified and documented (fall, winter, spring or summer terms). **HOWEVER**, the date of graduation and last date of enrollment may be as early as the date on which the district determined the student met his/her high school graduation requirements, but this date can be no later than the last day of the semester in which the student is actively enrolled in a course.
- Provide a standard checklist for data personnel to verify all data elements required for completing high school diploma orders and printing final transcripts are populated with accurate values for each student.
- Provide a career path flow chart for students to ensure each has attained credits towards completing high school required coursework for their grade level cohort before the end of the current school year (180 days).
- Contact the SC Commission on Higher Education about students graduating a year (or two) early during the summer. These students may be able to earn scholarship eligibility based on the SC UGP. However, CHE policy will not allow class rank to be used as an eligibility factor.

### NOTES from CHE:

- Districts shall develop an early graduate application which outlines for parents and students the implications for State scholarships and establish a district-wide deadline to apply for early graduation.
- A summer graduate would not be eligible to receive a SC scholarship for colleges/universities until after his or her first year attending a higher educational facility.
- Determine the status for each student who has completed graduation requirements through an evaluation of these and other questions:
  - a. Should the student be actively enrolled in a high school after completing graduation requirements? This depends on whether the student continues taking courses until the end of the school year.

- b. Will the student plan to continue taking courses at the home high school?
- c. Will the student be allowed to take courses at only the career center?
- d. Will the student take courses through the local community college for dual enrollment purposes?
- e. Will the student be allowed to continue taking course through virtual entities?
- f. Are appropriate contracts/agreements in place between the high school and a post-secondary institution?

## Who are Early Graduates?

### • Fall Graduates

- These are students graduating early (meeting graduation requirements within three or fewer years).
- These could also be students who need to complete any coursework in the semester of their fifth year (as a fifth-year graduate) but who were unable to complete graduation requirements during the summer. If a student needs only one-quarter or one-half credit unit to fulfill high school graduation requirements, that student could take the needed class during the fall term and have a graduation date of the last day of the fall term.
- A fall graduate is not ranked with his/her class since all final grades for “diploma-seeking” students enrolled in this class would not be available for ranking purposes. A fifth-year graduate would not be eligible to receive a SC State Scholarship for colleges/universities until after his or her first year attending a higher educational facility. Check with CHE for specific requirements to meet scholarship eligibility.
- Schools/districts should consider these potential issues when developing policy around Fall Graduates:
  - Actively enrolled student must receive a minimum amount of instruction to receive funding through SCDE. The student can be enrolled with the EEI codes if the minimum is not met.
  - The student can take a virtual class to complete requirements.
  - The student may take dual enrollment courses.

### • Summer Graduates

- These are the seniors who missed the spring graduation date deadline (last day of the school year) by not completing all graduation requirements.
- These students complete remaining requirements during a summer school session, either virtually or at a high school.
- The graduation date for summer graduates is either August 1st or the last day of the term for which summer school is offered.
- Summer graduates are not ranked with his/her class since all final grades for “diploma-seeking” students enrolled in this class would not be available for ranking purposes.

### • Winter Graduates

- The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) considers an Early Graduate for CHE/state scholarship purposes as one who has officially graduated during the winter (Dec/Jan) timeframe. This student has demonstrated that all graduation requirements are completed at the end of the fall term. These students are no longer part of the class size and are no longer active students at the high school. These students are not provided a rank. These students

have an official early/winter graduation dates printed on their transcripts and a “date calculated” date close to that graduation date.

- The CHE and the participating colleges/universities scrutinize a transcript to determine scholarship eligibility for students who have transitioned to early/winter graduate status.  
Note: The term “early” to identify a student who graduates during the Dec/Jan is synonymous to the term “winter.”
- School counselors and registrars working with their SCDE liaison through the Office of Student Intervention will use the CHE definition for early/winter graduates for students who apply for SC Scholarships and college/university admission.

## **Diploma Ordering and Tracking System (DOTS) – Office of Federal and State Accountability**

For a student to be included in the DOTS Diploma Order, the following information must be entered in PowerSchool:

- Diploma Ordered Code must be an F.
- Exit date must be in the range currently being processed; the exact dates for each range will be posted in DOTS.
  1. Winter Graduation: August through January
  2. Spring Graduation: January through May
  3. Summer Graduation: June through August
- Grade Level must be 10, 11, 12, or 99. When ordering a diploma, the system looks for grade levels other than grade 12; however, a graduating student should have senior status or grade level 12.
- If a student name is incorrect in PowerSchool, it should be corrected in PowerSchool to DOTS import. If not, the name will need to be corrected in DOTS.
- District Informational/Instructional Technology (IT) Offices will extract school data through the Diploma Order query in the Enrich Data Collection Tool.
- Districts are encouraged to run this query regularly during the spring graduation season.
- The SCDE will extract data from all districts three times a day:
  - **Monday – Friday-9:00 AM, 1:00 PM and 7:00 PM**
  - With PowerSchool coded correctly, the school data will be visible in DOTS 40 – 50 minutes after each SCDE data extraction.

**The spring graduate list must be verified and then certified by the DOTS School Admin (school principal) in DOTS prior to June 15. Be sure to reference the latest version of the [Diploma Order and Tracking System \(DOTS\), User Manual for South Carolina Public Schools manual](#).**

### **SCDE Office of Finance: Active vs Inactive Seniors**

Any student who completes high school graduation requirements and who is no longer actively receiving services from a school after the fall or winter term is an early graduate. PowerSchool data must indicate that the early graduate transferred out of the current school at the end of the fall (Q1) or winter (December/January) term (S1) and transferred to the PS Graduated Students School.

This student is not an active student receiving services from the school in any capacity; and therefore, must not be enrolled with a entry code of E or EEI.

Conversely, a student can remain an active senior who has completed graduation requirements through the end of the senior year by enrolling in courses provided through the high school, a CATE center, or a college/university for dual credit (following appropriate agreements between the student and the school administration). This student will receive a diploma at the end of the senior year (spring term) and will be ranked with the senior class for scholarship eligibility determination purposes.

### **SCDE Office of Finance: Active vs Inactive Seniors**

Any student who completes high school graduation requirements and who is no longer actively receiving services from a school after the fall or winter term is an early graduate. PowerSchool data must indicate that the early graduate transferred out of the current school at the end of the fall (Q1) or winter (December/January) term (S1) and transferred to the PS Graduated Students School.

This student is not an active student receiving services from the school in any capacity; and therefore, must not be enrolled with a entry code of E or EEI.

Conversely, a student can remain an active senior who has completed graduation requirements through the end of the senior year by enrolling in courses provided through the high school, a CATE center, or a college/university for dual credit (following appropriate agreements between the student and the school administration). This student will receive a diploma at the end of the senior year (spring term) and will be ranked with the senior class for scholarship eligibility determination purposes.

**Important Note: Students classified as 12th graders who do not meet graduation requirements at the end of the spring term (May/June) should be coded as non-graduates BEFORE you calculate and print the final class ranks report and BEFORE you archive final transcripts.**

### **SCDE Office of Research and Data Analysis (Grad Rate)**

A high school graduate is an individual who has received formal recognition from school authorities, by the granting of a diploma, for completing a prescribed course of study. This definition does not include other high school completers or high school equivalency recipients. See below for the [Graduation Rate information](#) provided for spring graduates by the SCDE Office of Research and Data Analysis.

### **School and District Current Practices**

- Some SC schools/districts have policies or guidelines in place allowing early graduates to participate in graduation ceremonies at the end of the school year (spring) even though those students officially meet graduation requirements at the end of the first semester (early/winter). This is not a problem as long as the student is not enrolled as an active student at any time after officially graduating.
- Some SC schools/districts have early/winter graduates included in the spring (end of year) class rank counts. This creates inflated class size and increases the number of students who may qualify for SC State Scholarships. This method is completely inappropriate and in violation of CHE guidelines. Students cannot be ranked when they are not included in the entire group of students who complete coursework during the same term.
- Some SC schools/districts keep early graduates as actively enrolled students and counted in membership. These students are not enrolled in classes and are not receiving services. However, these schools/districts continue to be funded for the students. This practice is unlawful since schools/districts are receiving funds through false membership counts.
- Some SC schools/districts have errors in their accountability reports based on inaccurate reporting of actively enrolled students: students who were reported as not tested for inappropriate reasons, students whose graduation date values are not the final day of school at the end of the year,

graduating students whose grade levels are other than the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, incorrect ninth grade placement (9GR), etc., and as such, may have School and District Report Cards publically displayed with negative and/or inaccurate information.

### Spring Graduates As Defined by Various Offices

**CHE/State Scholarship** – All students who complete graduation requirements at the traditional end of the school year with a GPA/rank calculated no later than June 15th and in accordance with the established statues and regulations in place for the state scholarship programs may be determined eligible for scholarship funds. These students are included in their class rank/class size at the end of the year, and their final senior transcripts must meet CHE requirements for determining SC scholarship recipients.

**SCDE Office of Finance** – Spring graduates are students who complete graduation requirements at the end of the school year of 180 days. PowerSchool coordinators should follow the application procedures to move these students to the PS Graduated Students School during the End of Year Process. For SCDE funding purposes, students actively enrolled in their high schools as full-time equivalents should be scheduled for classes, receiving instruction, and working towards the unit of credit for such courses. Their schools/districts receive funding based on services provided (e.g. high school EFA codes, high achievers, low student achievement). These students are expected to complete requirements for their high school diplomas by their senior graduation date in the spring timeframe.

**DOTS/Federal and State Accountability** -- Spring graduates are students expected to graduate between January 24 and June 14, on the last day of the school year so that they will have met attendance requirements of 180 days for the current year. The graduation date will be set as the last day of the school year.

**SCDE Office of Student Intervention** (Guidance/School Counselors) – Spring graduates include students who complete graduation requirements at the traditional end of the school year with a GPA/class rank calculated no later than June 15th and in accordance with the established statues and regulations in place for the state scholarship programs. It is important that students are kept abreast of all guidelines provided through CHE so they can follow the scholarship funding available for qualifying students.

**SCDE Office of Research and Data Analysis** (Grad Rate) – Definition from the Federal Department of Education: “The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (hereafter referred to as “the four-year graduation rate”) is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. From the beginning of 9th grade, students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently “adjusted” by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the 9th grade and the next three years and subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die during that same period.” ESSA High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance states use their own definition of “regular high school diploma.”

### Issues to Avoid

The following are procedures that have been used by different schools across the state during various years and may have presented significant negative issues for equality. Students across the state should all have equal opportunity to complete graduation requirements in a similar manner as offered by any SC district/school.

- Schedule all students for at least one (1) year-long course so they will not have the opportunity to complete coursework at the end of scheduled class terms within the school year.
- Schedule students using the four-by-four scheduling process but include at least one year-long course for each student so there can be no early graduate situations.
- Name the students early/winter graduates, but re-enroll them with an entry code of EEI (no funding) so their schools will not receive funding for serving them in an instructional program.
- Name the students early/winter graduates and keep them actively enrolled but not served – thereby receiving state funding as if the students are being served through an instructional program. Note: as previously indicated, this practice is unlawful since schools/districts are receiving funds through false membership percentages. Data analysts will review dates/times/testing results/etc. and discover “errors” that throw red flags for student information.

## Procedures to Implement

The following procedures are accepted standards to implement in your schools and districts:

- Develop an early graduate application which outlines for parents and students the implications for State scholarships and establish a district-wide deadline to apply for early graduation.
- Change the student’s grade level to 12 at the beginning of the term the student is expected to complete high school requirements for graduation.
- Set the date of graduation according to the date the district determined the students met all high school requirements for graduating.
- Graduate the early completer: provide diplomas and final transcripts according to student/parent requests, wish the students well and send them on their way to jobs, technical institutes or colleges/universities.
- If early or late graduating students do not qualify for SC scholarships, they do not need to be concerned about not being ranked with their peers at the end of the school year.
- However, if these students qualify for SC scholarships, they can work with CHE to receive information for scholarship eligibility without having the class rank on their transcripts.
- Designate the students as early/winter graduates and finalize their diploma orders and process/archive their final transcripts; but keep them on a list for graduation ceremonies during the spring so they can “walk” and receive their diplomas with their previous classmates. Students should be allowed to participate in the spring graduation ceremonies: to “walk” across the stage and receive their diplomas with their class. In these situations, PS Coordinators will follow the PS application procedures for Early Graduation (Combined PowerSource/SCDE Document) to transfer out and transfer to the Graduated School using an exit code of EG and status of 3 in the current PowerSchool SIS.
- Assist students with determining scholarship eligibility through CHE guidelines beginning as early as ninth grade.
- Work with the students to continue their high school careers by enrolling them in classes (dual credit or regular credit courses) and allowing them to continue as a high school student until the spring term.

## FAQs for Student Transcripts

Several questions concerning transcripts for SC Scholarships are briefly covered below. For complete information, review the documentation provided on the [SCDE web page](#), *South Carolina Standard Student Transcripts*.

- **What are the specific elements of the SC Standard Transcript sent to colleges/universities for SC scholarship determination?**

1. **FINAL EOY TRANSCRIPT:** The official, end-of-year SC transcript is entitled “State of South Carolina Standard High School Transcript – Final.” This transcript must be archived by grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 for each student.
2. **GRADUATION DATE:** It displays an accurate graduation date—the 180<sup>th</sup> day for the school year based on the school calendar for graduating seniors.
3. **CREDITS EARNED:** It provides all completed coursework by term—verify for correct coursework.
4. **PRINCIPALS SIGNATURE:**The principal (or superintendent if the principal is not available) is solely responsible for signing, dating, and sealing any printed transcripts for official purposes. His or her designee is responsible for verifying any data included on an electronic transcript.
5. **ACCURATE GPA:** It will have both the most current weighted grade point average based on the SC Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP) and the unweighted 4.0 GPA:
  - a. Weighted: SC\_GPA\_UGP\_Round
  - b. Unweighted: SC\_GPA\_4.0\_Round
 (Refer to the technical note “SC UGP GPA Calculation Method, UPDATE: Changing the PS Function from Truncating to Rounding, October, 2017 or the most current documentation provided by the SCDE).

**CLASS RANK:** Class rank will be calculated between the last day of school and June 15<sup>th</sup> and based on the total class count of students who completed coursework on or before the deadline for the end of the school year.

6. Final, official SC transcripts must have the “Date Calculated” value as the date of graduation (final date or the school year) or before June 15. Students may request their schools send Work in Progress transcripts to colleges, universities, or scholarship providers throughout the year. However, the Final or End of Year transcript must be processed after the graduation date, but before June 15. After the June 15 date, any transcript provided to any entity must be retrieved from the archive of the graduate’s high school. These reports cannot be processed again through PowerSchool.
7. Run the entire set of transcripts (reports) for each class every year and archive them. This should be done between the high school graduation date and June 15<sup>th</sup> for seniors and between the last day of school and June 15<sup>th</sup> for freshmen, sophomores or juniors. The “drop-dead” deadline for transcripts to have been processed for state scholarship eligibility determination is June 15<sup>th</sup> each year. There are no exceptions to this date.
8. After archiving these transcripts, **DO NOT RERUN** transcripts using PowerSchool. Any grade data changes by restoring grades or manually entering data after this “final” run can present GPA and class rank errors that will potentially disqualify any students from scholarship eligibility. Designated school administrators provide copies using only these archived reports to colleges, universities, the SC Commission on Higher Education and other scholarship or business entities on behalf of and at the request of the student and/or his parents. “Date Calculated” is the date on which the administrator processed these reports. As such, it is required on all transcripts used for state scholarship determination. This is the system date on which the administrator processes reports using PowerSchool; it is NOT the date archived transcripts were printed.

## FAQ: How Do I Change a Student's Grade Level?

Note: Backup your PowerSchool database before making changes to a group of students using the Student Field Value function. There is no undo function to reverse changes made using the Student Field Value function.

Note: Other fields to change may include Next Year Grade and Year of Graduation

You may follow the steps below to change the current grade level for a student or group of students:

### **To change the grade level for a single student, follow these steps:**

1. On the Start Page, search for and select the appropriate student.
2. Select the student's **Transfer Info** page.
3. Select the student's current enrollment.
4. Select a new grade level from the **Grade Level** pop-up menu.
5. Click **Submit**.

### **To change the grade level for a group of students, follow these steps:**

1. Search for and select the appropriate group of students.
2. Navigate to Start Page > Special Functions > Group Functions > Student Field Value.
3. In the **Field to Change** text box enter **grade\_level** .
4. In the **New Field Value** text box, enter the new grade level for the selected students.
5. Click **Submit**. PowerSchool provides a preview of all of students affected by the change, with the old value in the grade\_level field as well as the new value.
6. Click **Submit** to commit the changes.