2019-20 *Ready Graduate* Indicator
User Guide and FAQ

Section 1: Document Intent

This document guides districts through the criteria used for the *Ready Graduate* indicator for school and district accountability. Prior to 2018-19, the *Ready Graduate* indicator was limited to only ACT data (composite score of 21 and higher and SAT equivalent of 1060) to measure postsecondary readiness. For 2019-20 accountability, this indicator will include additional criteria that are used to predict seamless transition into postsecondary and the opportunity to secure high-quality employment. These additional criteria are included and explained in this document.

Section 2: Background

The department created this accountability framework in response to the requirements for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The *Ready Graduate* indicator serves as one of six indicators used in the high school accountability model and counts for 20 percent of a school's overall score.[1] The indicator is designed to measure the percentage of students who earn a regular high school diploma and who have met at least one of the measures outlined in detail below. By meeting the measures, students are more likely to experience seamless transitions to postsecondary and the workforce.

Section 3: Design Overview

3.1 Data Criteria

The *Ready Graduate* indicator includes a variety of criteria that measure postsecondary and career readiness. The percent of ready graduates is calculated by dividing the number of on-time graduates from the cohort who meet the outlined criteria by the number of students in that cohort.

$$\frac{\textit{\# of graduates meeting Ready Graduate criteria}}{\textit{\# in the graduation cohort}}$$

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[1] All indicators and subgroups must meet minimum required counts. Schools must have 30 students in the current and prior accountability graduation cohort to be eligible. Please see the Accountability Protocol for more information about minimum counts for the Ready Graduate indicator.

The *Ready Graduate* criteria include the following four measures for graduates from the class of 2018. To be considered ready graduates, students must meet at least one of the following:

- Score of **21 or higher on ACT** (or 1060 or higher on the SAT); **or**
- Complete **4 early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs); or**
- Complete **2 EPSOs and** earn an **industry certification; or**
- Complete **2 EPSOs and** earn a score of military readiness on **ASVAB AFQT.**

Please note these data for 2018-19 accountability reflect individuals in the graduating class of 2017-18. These data types include the following:

Ready Graduate Criteria	Evidence of Completion
American College Testing (ACT)	Earn a composite score of 21 or higher
Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT)	Earn a score of 31 or higher**
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	Earn a composite score of 1060 or higher
Early Postsecondary Opportunities	
Advanced Placement (AP)	Complete course and attempt exam
Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)	Complete course and attempt exam
College Level Examination Program (CLEP)	Earn a passing score of 50 or higher on exam
Dual Enrollment	Complete course
Industry Certification (IC)*	Earn passing score on exam and/or complete licensure requirements
International Baccalaureate (IB)	Complete course and attempt exam
Local Dual Credit	Complete course and attempt exam
Statewide Dual Credit (SDC)	Complete course and attempt exam

*An IC could count for additional EPSO credit. Please refer to the ESSA Industry Certification Conversion Chart for full details.
**Students must earn a minimum ASVAB AFQT score required to qualify for admission into at least one branch of the military as of June 1 following a student's graduation in order to demonstrate military readiness for the indicator. Future years' scores may change based on needs of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). Scores will be determined on June 1 annually for the following year's accountability.

3.2 Data Sources, Requirements, and Visibility

3.2.1 Data Sources for each Criterion

The table below provides an overview of each criterion used to measure the likelihood of a seamless transition to postsecondary and high-quality employment. Additionally, outlined below is the location for districts to view these data prior to the review and appeals process. For more information regarding the number of EPSOs earned, please reference the *Ready Graduate* Indicator Overview. The department encourages districts to view these data using the suggested visibility locations prior to the opening of the Cohort application in January.

Criteria	Source	Requirements for Inclusion	District Visibility
ACT/SAT	• ACT, Inc. will provide a score file to the department that includes all students who attempted the exam and their highest score, including scores from national administrations. • The College Board will provide a score file to the department that includes all students who attempted the exam on an in-school or national test administration.	• Earn an ACT composite score of 21 or higher • Earn an SAT score of 1060 or higher	• Accountability application • Score files sent directly to district from ACT, Inc. and The College Board • Individual student score reports

Criteria	Source	Requirements for Inclusion	District Visibility
AP	• Student information system (SIS) data on course enrollment in AP course codes will be obtained from Education Information System (EIS). • The College Board will provide a score file to the department that includes all students who attempted an AP exam.	• Complete course and attempt exam (no minimum score required)	• Course enrollment located in EIS • Score files sent directly to district from The College Board
CIE	• SIS data on course enrollment in Cambridge course codes will be obtained from EIS. • Cambridge International Education will provide a score file to the department that includes all students who attempted a Cambridge exam.	• Complete course and attempt exam (no minimum score required)	• Course enrollment located in EIS • Exam data visible through the *Ready Graduate* viewing platform via the testing file • Score files may be available through CIE for districts serving as testing sites
CLEP	• The College Board will provide a score file to the department that includes all students who attempted a CLEP exam.	• Earn a passing score of 50 or higher	• Exam data visible through the *Ready Graduate* viewing platform via the testing file
IB	• Student information system data on course enrollment in IB course codes will be obtained from EIS. • International Baccalaureate will provide a score file to the department that includes all students who attempted an IB exam.	• Complete course and attempt exam (no minimum score required)	• Course enrollment located in EIS • Exam data visible through the *Ready Graduate* viewing platform via the testing file • Score files may be available through IB for districts serving as testing sites

Criteria	Source	Requirements for Inclusion	District Visibility
DE	• Student information system data on course enrollment in dual enrollment course codes will be obtained from EIS. • The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) will submit postsecondary student enrollment information to the state's longitudinal data system (P20Connect), which will provide a matched data file to the department.	• Complete course	• Course enrollment located in EIS
LDC	• SIS data on course enrollment in high school course codes that have been appropriately flagged as "local dual credit" will be obtained from EIS.	• Complete course and attempt exam (no minimum score required)	• Course enrollment located in EIS
SDC	• SIS data on course enrollment in SDC course codes with appropriate flags will be obtained from EIS. • Results of the challenge exam will be provided through the Early Postsecondary Data System.	• Complete course and attempt exam (no minimum score required)	• Course enrollment located in EIS • Exam scores located in the Early Postsecondary (EPS) Data System

Criteria	Source	Requirements for Inclusion	District Visibility
IC	• Examination/certifying agencies will provide a file to the department that includes all students who successfully earned a certification. The department will use the state's longitudinal data system (P20Conenct) to match student records.	• Complete all requirements of a specific certification included on department's promoted list, including earning a passing score on any assessment(s) and/or completing licensure application if required	• Individual student certifications and/or score reports
ASVAB	• The U.S. Department of Defense will provide results to districts who will provide data to the department with documentation.	• Earn an AFQT score[2] of 31	• Score file provided by the Department of Defense

3.2.2 Using Course Codes in Student Information Systems for Extract to EIS

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, specific course codes for AP, IB, Cambridge, and Dual Enrollment are specified in the Correlation of Course Codes document and in local SIS packages. In 2018-19, specific codes for Statewide Dual Credit courses were also added. SIS packages also provide a "flag" option for all high school course codes available to be taught as a local dual credit course, assuming an articulation agreement with a local postsecondary institution to provide a culminating challenge exam is in place. For all *Ready Graduate* criteria where course enrollment information is obtained through EIS, a student must be appropriately placed in the correct course code, and/or the appropriate flags must be checked to reflect that the course was offered as an early postsecondary course eligible for postsecondary credit. If a student was enrolled in a course that was eligible for postsecondary credit, but that student is not placed in the correct course code or flagged course section as reflected in EIS, appropriate documentation must be provided through the Accountability application to ensure the student's progress toward *Ready Graduate* is captured. For statewide dual credit, the department provides specific enrollment and flagging instructions to SDC coordinators. For any other questions on early postsecondary course enrollment, please email Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov.

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[2] The "passing" score for military aptitude may change in the future. Annual determination of military readiness will be the minimum ASVAB AFQT score required to qualify for admission into at least one branch of the military as of June 1 following a student's graduation. Future years' scores may change based on needs of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). Scores will be determined on June 1 annually for the following year's accountability.

In addition to secondary student information systems, dual enrollment course information is also collected from the state's longitudinal data system, P20Connect, where it is provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission at the conclusion of each semester. To ensure students who successfully earn college credit enrolled at a Tennessee public postsecondary institution prior to high school graduation are captured in this indicator, a student who is identified as completing a course in these data will be given credit for the EPSO, regardless of if they have matching dual enrollment course codes in their high school student information system.

Section 4: Reviewing Data

Through the Cohort application under the "Ready Graduate" page, districts will have the opportunity to review the data provided to the department, as outlined above. Districts will also have the opportunity to appeal data and provide documentation to prove the student meets *Ready Graduate* criteria on this page. As mentioned in Section 3.1, the data used for the *Ready Graduate* indicator in 2019-20 accountability will be lagged one year and represent those students who graduated in spring 2019. The *Ready Graduate* Appeals Guidance may be located on the Cohort application.

Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions

The intent of this indicator is to recognize and reward schools and districts whose high school graduates demonstrate they are ready to be successful in postsecondary training programs and enter the workforce with high-quality employment, earning above minimum-wage. To provide input and feedback on the responses in this document, or to ask clarifying questions, please email TNED.Accountablity@tn.gov.

Continuing in 2019-20, per the accountability protocol, the department is looking for students who demonstrated completion of EPSOs. In future years, there will be a shift to focus on credits earned through these opportunities.

1. ***Are the measures outlined in the* Ready Graduate *indicator new graduation requirements?***

   No. The state plan aims to use EPSOs as an indicator for student readiness for postsecondary. The *Ready Graduate* indicator is a part of the accountability model that points to Tennessee's vision for postsecondary and career readiness while addressing one of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements. There are four ways in which students can demonstrate readiness (see above) – only one of which (ACT/SAT) is required for high school graduation. For additional information, visit the graduation requirements website and the state's ESSA plan.

2. *If a student followed a career and technical education (CTE) program of study and is planning on earning a department-promoted industry certification, do the two EPSOs for the indicator have to be within the CTE program of study?*

No. If a student is progressing through a program of study and earning an industry certification, the two EPSOs can come from within the CTE program of study or from general education courses. For example, a student could take courses within the *Office Management* program of study, earn the *Microsoft Office Specialist* certification, take *Statewide Dual Credit Statistics* to meet his/her fourth year math requirement, and take a *Dual Enrollment Spanish* course in order to meet this indicator.

3. *Does a student have to complete a CTE program of study for an industry certification to count?*

No. The department believes students who possess documentation of their knowledge and skills are demonstrating their readiness for postsecondary and career. If a student feels confident to sit for an industry certification because of their experience outside the classroom, we encourage him/her to test. All students who earn a certification will be included, regardless of the courses they have completed or their elective focus of study. Please note that students who have completed a CTE program of study, are more likely to successfully earn the certification than students who have not had the experience of aligned coursework and training.

4. *Do students have to pass the EPSO exam and earn credit to meet the* **Ready Graduate** *indicator?*

No, not necessarily, for the 2019-20 Accountability Protocol. Based on our 2015 graduating cohort, the department determined that students who completed at least four EPSOs had a 50 percent chance of scoring at least a 21 on the ACT. However, less than 17 percent of students in that cohort completed four or more EPSOs. In fact, less than 40 percent completed even *one* EPSO. Therefore, this requirement will **initially** be focused on increasing access to EPSOs. The criteria for 2019-20 accountability is based on a student participating in and completing both the course and any accompanying exam. In future years, the indicator will shift to account for students who have **earned** college credit through these opportunities.

The exception to this for the 2019-20 model is for CLEP and industry certifications, in which the student would need to earn the credit in order to be recognized, as these opportunities are not aligned to a specific course, but rather a sequence of courses. Industry certifications and CLEP will only be recognized if a student earns the scores necessary to pass the exam.

5. *Is the third pathway in the* **Ready Graduate** *indicator (two EPSOs and an industry certification) the only path for students in CTE courses?*

No. Though students who are participating in CTE courses aligned to an industry certification will be more likely to earn those certifications, many CTE programs of study do not have an aligned industry certification. Students progressing through these programs would need to either meet the indicator of a 21 on the ACT (or 1060 on SAT), earn four EPSOs, or earn two EPSOs and a score of military readiness to count toward the *Ready Graduate* indicator. EPSOs may be obtained through a combination of both general education and CTE subjects.

6. *Are students with IEPs included in the* **Ready Graduate** *indicator?*

Yes, if they graduated on time with a regular education diploma. Students who are not on track to graduate within four years, or who have received or are planning to receive an occupational or special education diploma, are not included.

The department encourages districts to challenge all of their students to complete early postsecondary opportunities, even if they have a disability. Tennessee data shows that disadvantaged students who participate in EPSOs enroll in postsecondary programs at a higher rate than those who do not, even those who may not reach the college-readiness scores on academic achievement tests, such as the ACT and SAT. All students who graduate with a regular high school diploma in Tennessee have a right to be ready for postsecondary and career after graduation. The pathways of the *Ready Graduate* indicator are an appropriate way to gauge this readiness and should be the goal for all students.

7. *What if a student is not allowed to test for an industry certification until after graduation?*

We understand that there may be some criteria (such as age or work experience) that may prevent a student from completing the certification exam or licensing process prior to high school graduation. In order to ensure students who obtain certifications the summer after their high school graduation are included in a school's *Ready Graduate* count, the data for certifications will be pulled no earlier than Aug. 1 each year. After a student graduates, he or she has the summer to complete the requirements of the certification, prior to the department running the accountability data. This timeframe is similar to time allotted for students to complete graduation requirements to receive their high school diploma.

8. **What if a student who has taken and passed an EPSO/industry certification exam is not listed in the department's data?**

Data from third party certification agencies and early postsecondary opportunity vendors will be matched with our student information system data. However, we understand there may be changes in student information that may impact the matching process. In order to ensure all students who have earned certification and college credit will be included, the department will offer an appeals process through which a district representative may upload documentation to verify the student has received the certification/credit to the Cohort application.

Please note, data for dual enrollment, statewide dual credit, and local dual credit opportunities will be pulled directly from a district's student information system (SIS). Please ensure you are using the [correct](#) [course codes](#) and are appropriately "flagging" courses that have local articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions. Courses that do not use the correct course code and/or are not appropriately marked as a dual credit course in the SIS will not pull data for EPSO enrollment. If you have any questions on this, please contact Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov.

9. **Do industry certifications count as early postsecondary opportunities? If a student earns more than one industry certification, does that count as one of their two EPSOs?**

Yes. The department has worked with the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) to vet certifications included in our statewide promoted list as appropriate to serve as prior learning assessments in order to award clock hours toward a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) program. While it is the intent that all department-promoted industry certifications demonstrate documented knowledge and skills possessed by a student and confer clock hours toward a TCAT program, some certifications represent a larger portion of program completion than others. The department has aligned each certification to specific courses in a TCAT program and converted those clock hours to credit hours through the same formula used by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) to calculate financial aid. These calculations show that some certifications may count for more than one EPSO in the *Ready Graduate* indicator calculations. For a full list of certifications and their EPSO conversation download the ESSA Industry Certification Conversion Table. Please note, **new industry certifications for the 2018-19 academic year have not yet been converted to clock hours.** This conversion is expected prior to the release of final data for the 2018-19 accountability model.

10. **What criteria do students have to meet in order to obtain an industry certification?**

Each industry certification is different, so the department has developed a chart to assist in planning for implementation of each certification. This chart can be found in the Industry Certification FAQ document.

11. **If my district has a local dual credit articulation agreement with a postsecondary institution that awards credit through the passing of an industry certification exam, does that count as both industry certification and an EPSO?**

Potentially. A student would receive credit for the local dual credit opportunity if he/she was enrolled in a course that was marked as a local dual credit course in your student information system. If the student also passed the industry certification exam, that would also be captured in the indicator. A student would need to complete both the course and the exam in order for both opportunities to be recognized.

12. **Will the WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) count in the 2019-20 accountability model?**

Not at this time. The department is working with the Tennessee Board of Regents to develop a statewide articulation policy for the WorkKeys NCRC. The score level for the NCRC that is appropriate to award credit has not yet been determined and is not anticipated to be confirmed prior to release of official business rules. As soon as this value is determined, the department will work to update the accountability model to recognize it.

13. *Is work-based learning (WBL) included in the* **Ready Graduate** *indicator as an EPSO?*

No. EPSOs included in the indicator are opportunities that award students documented credit transferable to a postsecondary institution. Most WBL placements do not award such credit and are therefore not included in this indicator. The only way a WBL placement may be included is if an articulation agreement with a postsecondary institution existed in order to award postsecondary credit through a WBL placement opportunity that is aligned to a local postsecondary institution's course and exam. For this to be included in the *Ready Graduate* calculations, students must be enrolled in a high school course code and course section that is "flagged" as a local dual credit course in their student information system.

14. *Is JROTC included in the* **Ready Graduate** *indicator as an EPSO?*

No. During regional meetings in spring 2018, there were a few districts that requested the department work with the Department of Defense (DOD) to recognize students in Jr. Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs. While the DOD does recognize completion of these programs during recruitment into military programs, no postsecondary credit is awarded. Because of this lack of postsecondary articulation, JROTC programs will not be counted in the indicator at this time. The department is still working to explore articulation options of these courses with Tennessee postsecondary institutions and will recognize any local dual credit courses that are appropriately "flagged" in the student information systems because of local articulation agreements with specific postsecondary courses and exams.