This multi-part series published in IDOE's Friday update, *IN the Know* and in the Accountability Moodle Community, provides information to educate schools about managing their graduation cohorts and the calculation of graduation rates. Please forward any questions to schoolaccountability@doe.in.gov.

Installment #7: Lessons Learned - Common Issues in Graduation Rate Audits

Although the graduation rates have been audited for at least ten years now, it has only been within the last three years that all schools in the state have been subject to the audit and that students with insufficient documentation have been returned to the cohort as dropouts.The Department has taken the approach of continuous process improvement in regards to the audit process. We have not only refined our process to provide more student specific feedback but have also expanded the resources available to schools. We encourage schools to utilize these resources to avoid surprises during grad rate audits.

Common Easily Correctable Mistakes on Audit Documentation

- **Ilegible document scans** ~ take the time to review the document scan for clarity. Resubmissions are not accepted.
- **Incomplete document scans** ~ take the time to review the document scan for completeness. Resubmissions are not accepted.
- **Contradictory information** ~ provide the information requested and don't augment or attach additional information. There have been cases where the additional information contradicts or negates the information requested.
- **Missing dates** ~ use a date stamp to mark receipt of forms and documentation for cohort exits. There are key dates in the cohort process which require auditors to know dates documents were generated or received in order to determine their sufficiency.

Grad Rate Audit Resources (School Accountability & Accreditation Moodle Community[1])

- **Appendix A of the RT/EM layout** - this document describes for each exit type the acceptable documentation.
- **Common Audit Issues** - available for each of the last 3 years, these documents list the most prevalent issues found during the audit.
- **Cohort Videos** - this 4 part video series goes into depth on cohort, exit documentation, graduation, and audits.
- **Audit Checklist** - new in 2020, this document provides a checklist that any school can use to look at their documentation through the eye of an audit reviewer.

IDOE Audit Enhancements in 2019

- Student specific feedback is now emailed securely to the principal and the superintendent detailing all insufficient findings.
- Audit finding review process implemented ~ whereby the school believes an audit finding is in error and can request the IDOE to review documentation originally submitted

Next Installment

Next week's installment will discuss the Voluntary Graduation Rate Audit.

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[1] Enrollment key is "AccountabilityCommunity"