

# Step-by-Step Instructions and Guidance Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes

**Survey Process Overview**

1. Contact students **with IEPs** who during the 2023-2024 school year:

* dropped out of high school, OR
* aged out of special education (with or without a [certificate of attainment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cert-attainment.html)), OR
* graduated from high school, OR
* didn’t return for the 2023-2024 school year, even though they had been expected to return.

**We refer to these former students as “exiters.”**

1. Survey ALL exiters using the online [*Massachusetts After High School Survey*](https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2025), even those who will also complete the *CVTE Graduate One-Year Follow-Up Survey*.[[1]](#endnote-2) Consider coordinating administration of these two surveys.
2. Make at least three attempts to contact each student. You will choose the method of contact: phone, email, U.S. mail, social media, etc.
3. *Massachusetts After High School Surveys* will be completed online at <https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2025>. If a survey is completed using a paper form, district staff should enter the data online as soon as is practical.
4. Plan to complete Indicator 14 surveying and data entry **no later than September 22, 2025**.

**Exception:**

Grade Tuition Agreements/Academic Regional Schools

* Districts that are members of an academic regional school housed in another district and districts that have a grade tuition agreement with another district are not responsible for surveying *exiters who attend high school in the other district(s).* The receiving district(s) will report the post-secondary outcomes data for these exiters.

**Pre-Survey Preparation**

**Identify *all* 2023-2024 exiters**

1. Obtain your exiter list by arranging for your District Directory Administrator, from the list at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/diradmin/list.aspx>, to grant you access to the Indicator 14 dropbox on the DESE Security Portal. *This dropbox is not inside the State Performance Plan dropbox.*

Next, go to the DESE Security Portal, <https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us>, then navigate to **DropBox Central**. Select “Indicator 14” in the **Dropbox** drop-down menu, then select your district in the **Organization** drop-down menu. You may need to select either “Public School District (5)” or “Charter District (12)” in the **Organization Type** drop-down menu, as appropriate to your district, in order for your district to appear in the **Organization** drop-down menu. Once you have selected your district, an Excel workbook (xlsx file type) will be available to download from the ESE OutBox with your district’s SIMS exiter file. The file name will begin with “FFY24” to make it easier to identify. The names and SASIDs of former students in this file were reported to DESE by your district in spring 2024 and comprise the complete list of your district’s exiters for Indicator 14 data collection: those who in 2023-2024 graduated, dropped out, or aged out (with or without a certificate of attainment). Download the workbook and save it to your computer.

1. **If there are discrepancies** between the list of exiters you obtain from SIMS and any internal district lists, this may indicate a data reporting error when your district originally submitted data to DESE in spring 2024,

* Please take these steps:
  1. Ascertain whether the SIMS list or the internal list is correct. Your goal is to survey every individual who meets the Indicator 14 data collection criteria, and *not* to survey anyone who does not. For example, you should not survey anyone who enrolled in another district after leaving yours, who did not have an IEP, or who exited in some other year.
  2. Create an Excel spreadsheet on which you list your district name and org code, as well as the SASID, name, and birthdate for each discrepant record. Indicate whether you are **adding** the individual to the official list of exiters or **removing** them. Finally, enter the reason for adding or removing the individual. Your spreadsheet headers will look like this:

ORG CODE, LEA NAME, SASID, STUDENT NAME, STUDENT BIRTHDAY, ADD TO SIMS LIST (Y/N), DELETE FROM SIMS LIST (Y/N), REASON

* 1. Upload this spreadsheet to the Indicator 14 dropbox on the DESE Security Portal.
  2. IMPORTANT: Email [ariellelevin@westat.com](mailto:ariellelevin@westat.com) to let us know of the discrepancy and your uploaded corrections.
* To avoid future reporting errors, we urge you also to investigate and correct any relevant district processes.

1. Gather contact information for all 2023-2024 exiters.

* **For student contact information,** utilize *Student Contact Information Forms* that were completed by students in Spring 2024.
* **If you don’t have the completed *Student Contact Information Forms*:** Districts should make a good faith effort to complete the survey with *all* exiters. Exiters who dropped out, who didn’t return, or who for any other reason (e.g., the pandemic) did not fill out *Student Contact Information Forms* last spring may be difficult to contact. In these cases, DESE suggests that contact information be collected through a review of these exiters’ emergency contact forms and other information in their cumulative records. If your district has a student re-engagement center, you may wish to consult with them to find students who dropped out during the 2023-2024 school year but did not re-enroll in high school.
* **Out-of-District Placements**: A district is responsible for surveying exiters who were in out-of-district placements for which the district was *programmatically responsible*.

**Planning for Maximum Participation**

When planning the survey process, consider the following:

1. Telephone surveys achieve higher response rates than other methods, especially when:
   1. exiters are contacted by someone they know.
   2. an exiter’s disability affects their reading and comprehension skills.
2. Some districts have had success making initial contact with exiters through web-based social media sites. Announce that you are conducting the survey and ask exiters to call or visit you so that you can complete the online survey with them.
3. To respond to the survey accurately and completely, some exiters will need:
   1. parental assistance,
   2. translation services, and/or
   3. other accommodations.
4. Try to vary the time of day or day of the week when contacting hard-to-reach exiters.
5. You may find it helpful to consult with:
6. CVTE survey personnel, to coordinate administration of the Indicator 14 and CVTE surveys, and to get helpful tips from them.
7. district personnel who were involved in previous SPP/APR reporting.

**Steps for Phone Contact**:

See [*Sample Script for Telephone Contact*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/specialeducation/reporting/spp-apr/indicators/indicator14/)

**Steps for Mail Contact:**

This year the sample letter and survey are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Cape Verdean Creole, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. If you send a translated letter and survey, we suggest that you include the English versions as well.

1. Send the exiter a letter explaining why you are reaching out, and giving them the option to:
   1. contact you so that you can complete the online survey with them, or
   2. use the online survey, <https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2025>, to complete the  
       survey themselves, or
   3. complete the [printed survey](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/) and mail it back to you.
2. In the letter, let the exiter know that the survey has about 10 questions and should take them about 5 minutes to complete. Include instructions for completing the survey online.
3. Include a copy of the paper [survey](https://www.doe.mass.edu/specialeducation/reporting/spp-apr/indicators/indicator14/) (English plus an appropriate translation and a stamped return envelope), in case the exiter prefers this method. (Before printing the survey, add your contact information and return address at the bottom.)
4. Let the exiter know the due date for completing the survey online, over the phone with you, or via mail. **We recommend choosing a date before September 12, 2025** to allow sufficient time for the surveys to be returned by mail or completed online by the **September 22** deadline.
5. Provide the phone number and email address of a survey team member the exiter can contact with questions or to respond to the survey on the phone.
6. Thank the exiter for their time.

**Steps for Email Contact:**

1. Send the exiter an email explaining why you are reaching out and giving them the option to (a) contact you so that you can complete the online survey with them or (b) use the online link, <https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2025>, to complete the survey themselves.
2. Let the exiter know that the survey consists of about 10 questions and should take about 5 minutes to complete. Include instructions for completing the survey online. As appropriate, tell them the survey is available online in English, Spanish, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole.
3. Tell the exiter the due date for completing the survey. **We recommend choosing a date before September 12, 2025** to allow sufficient time for surveys to be completed online by the **September 22** deadline.
4. Provide the telephone number and email address of a survey team member the exiter can contact with questions or to respond to the survey on the phone.
5. Thank the exiter for their time.

For questions about the online survey, e.g. how to access it or whether your district’s exiters have completed the survey yet, contact Arielle Levin at [ariellelevin@westat.com](mailto:ariellelevin@westat.com) or (301) 315-5947. Arielle has clearance to discuss individual exiter information with school staff. For all other Indicator 14 questions, please contact DESE’s Indicator 14 Data Collection team at [IDEAdata@mass.gov](mailto:IDEAdata@mass.gov).

Thank you for your assistance with this data collection and for all of the work you do on behalf of youth with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

1. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recommends that district guidance and special education offices coordinate their efforts. All questions on the CVTE survey and the Indicator 14 survey must be completed, and each survey must be submitted to DESE according to the protocols and timelines of the Office of Special Education Planning & Policy Development (Indicator 14 survey), or the Office of College, Career, and Technical Education (CVTE survey). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)