

Frequently Asked Questions about Students who Drop Out and Post School Outcome Data Collection

Q: If a student decides to drop out of school, when is the Kentucky In School Transition Survey (KISTS) completed?

A: The KISTS is traditionally completed during a student's final year of high school.

However, for a student who has chosen to leave school prior to completion, the KISTS should be done at the time the student drops out.

So, if a student drops out of school at age 16 (grade 11), the KISTS should be done then.

Q: If a student drops out of school, when is the Youth One Year Out former student interview (YOYO) completed?

A: The YOYO should be conducted the spring following the date the student left school.

We use the calendar year to determine a 'cut-off point' for determining which students should or should not be given the YOYO each year. Any students who exit during 2009 (January 1 – December 31) by any means (graduation, certificate, withdraw /drop out) should be followed up with during the 2010 YOYO window (April 1 – June 30, 2010).

For example, if a student dropped out in October of 2009, her junior year in high school, her school district would follow up with her at some point between April – June 2010, along with those students who exited (after completion) in the spring of 2009. If a student dropped out in January 2010, they would be followed up with in the 2011 YOYO.

Q: How do I get in touch with students who have dropped out to conduct the YOYO?

Students who formally withdraw from school should complete the KISTS. The KISTS requires LEAs to record student contact information after high school which should aide in contacting these students one year later.

However, most students leave school informally, without completing an exit survey or informing teachers or administrators of their intentions to drop out. These students are the most difficult to contact.

According to the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) (January 2007), strategies for contacting students who drop out fall into two categories, *before* exiting and *after* exiting school. Click here to go directly to the article:

Excerpts from the article of **Before and After School Exit strategies** include:

Before School Exit

- **Keep students' files current and accurate** prior to exiting and notify students and their families of the expectation for students to provide post-school outcome data. This will assist in the collection of these data more easily.
- **Have students complete an exit survey prior to leaving school.** Administrators and teachers should emphasize the importance of the survey to both students and families. Verbally reinforce the relevance of completing the survey during all high school IEP meetings. In Kentucky, this is the Kentucky In School Transition Survey (KISTS) completed during the final student school year.
- **Discuss the importance of transition planning and inform students and families that they may be contacted after leaving school.** Explain to students and families the necessity of collecting post-school outcome data. Make youth and families your partners in this process.
- **Encourage LEAs to maintain current contact information and to update information biannually,** including mailing and physical address, home telephone number, cellular number, alternate address and phone number, email address, and next of kin address and phone number.
- **Encourage LEAs to recheck fall enrollments annually for students who may have returned.**

After School Exit

- **Keep local data systems current.** Make certain that school personnel enter the most recent student data. Make certain that the data are updated at the beginning and end of each academic period.
- **Send "heads up" letter to youth and families** so they will prompt students to respond to the post-school outcomes survey. See "Sample Former Student Letter" at: http://www.kypso.org/tools_for_data_collection.aspx
- **After students leave school, send written correspondences or correspondences through email** (e.g., birthday or holiday cards) biannually (i.e., to receive the most current and correct mailing address from the post office, if available).

- ***Send postcard with forward service or change of address request.*** Conduct formal postal checks through the post office. Current information may be obtained at the post office via the use of an automated vendor file of current postal change-of-address updates, the National Change of Address (NCOA) file.
- ***“Google” students.*** A high percentage of students can be found through social networking sites such as www.facebook.com www.myspace.com and www.classmates.com