



National Student
Clearinghouse[®]

StudentTracker for High Schools Special September 2020 Effective Date FAQs

Why was the September 2020 effective date added?

The Clearinghouse established an additional fall effective date this year to enable us to provide our StudentTracker for High Schools participants with an additional set of reports providing an early look at fall 2020 postsecondary enrollment. Generally, the Clearinghouse waits until mid-November to set an effective date and generate StudentTracker reports. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has stirred great interest in understanding its impact on college-going rates.

What can we do with the additional reports?

What data will be included in the reports?

You will receive the same reports and outcomes that are part of every StudentTracker effective date report suite. The difference is that the additional reports generated against a September effective date will provide a preliminary look at how the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted your high school students' postsecondary enrollment rates.

Within the *basic packet*, you can look at the:

- First fall enrollment longitudinal comparisons to see if the class of 2020 has a lower or stable enrollment rate compared to previous classes: Are students attending two-year schools at a higher rate than previous years? Are more students going to in-state or public colleges vs. out-of-state or private schools?
- First-to-second-year persistence longitudinal comparisons so you can see how the persistence rate for the class of 2019 compares to previous classes.
- ***Top 25 colleges first attended report*** to see if the top colleges for the class of 2020 have changed. You'll get intel on whether the colleges first attended are closer to the high school/district or located several hours away or out of state. You can also look at the report for previous classes to understand their year two retention and persistence rates.

Within the *demographic and academic packets*, you can see several of the outcomes referenced above, stratified by various demographic and academic data elements. You can

submit these demographic and academic data elements (see the table below) in your graduates file. Although optional, submitting these data elements will enable your StudentTracker reports to provide insightful information. You do not have to submit all of the demographic and academic data elements, you can submit one, a few, or all within each category.

Demographic and Academic Data Elements

| Demographic Data elements | Academic Data elements |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Gender | 8 th grade math assessment |
| Race/ethnicity | 8 th grade ELA/reading assessment |
| Economic disadvantaged flag | High school math assessment |
| Disability flag | High school ELA/reading assessment |
| English as a second language flag | Dual enrollment flag |
| | Number of math semesters completed |

The student-level detail report allows you to see your individual students' postsecondary progress.

- Filter the high school graduation date column for the dates between 2019-2020, then filter the “*sequence*” column.
- Look at the sequence number to see which students have a value of more than “1,” which indicates that the student has attended more than one postsecondary institution.

Lastly, you can compare your outcomes against the benchmark report that the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center releases annually. The Research Center will aggregate all the high school graduates received nationwide from our StudentTracker secondary subscribers to study national enrollment patterns and the impact of COVID-19. Stay tuned to the Research Center’s [site](#).

File Submission Questions

- **When is the best time to submit our graduates file each year?**
- **Can the class of 2020 graduates be submitted after September?**
- **Are files required to be submitted in September? What happens if we cannot meet the deadline?**
- **Will StudentTracker reports be generated if class of 2020 is not submitted?**

StudentTracker subscribers should submit their high school graduates file as soon as possible after their students graduate, which saves time in the fall after the new school year starts. The most recent class is not included in the StudentTracker run for the summer effective date. The first time that the most recent class is included in the StudentTracker reports is the fall run (mid-November).

This year, however, we are adding a mid-September effective date (which is earlier than usual) and want to include the most recent high school class in the outcomes.

Therefore, we're asking you to submit your high school graduates for the class of 2019-2020 as soon as possible, preferably **before September 4. Submitting your file before September 4 allows our StudentTracker operations team to process files and resolve errors before mid-September when the effective date will be set.**

- **If last-minute changes were made to replace a file that had errors, which file is used?**
The Clearinghouse wants correct student data to be included in the mid-September run, so please resolve the errors and submit the updated data file as soon as possible. Any files received by September 4 will be processed and the updated student data included in the mid-September run.
- **Will the additional set of reports include our 2020 grads if they were not all submitted at the same time (e.g., some students graduate in June and some in summer, but are still considered 2020 grads)?**
Yes, this is high school graduation date range we use when determining a class: 9/1/YYYY-8/31/YYYY.
- **Do any additional files need to be submitted in order to obtain these reports?**
No additional file submissions are necessary, just your high school graduates file. If you have already submitted your graduates file, but want to send an updated file that includes the demographic and academic data elements, you can do that. Just be sure to get the file in before September 4.

Reports and Outcomes

- **How can we access the reports that we recently received an email notification about?**
The StudentTracker reports will be sent to your secure FTP account. You will receive an email when the reports have been delivered.
- **When will we receive automated reports again? Will the Clearinghouse send additional reports in October?**
At this time, no reports will be sent in October. We plan to set the next effective date in mid-November. You will receive updated StudentTracker reports in later November/early December.
- **Will we still receive these reports if our StudentTracker account expired on or before August 31?**
You can submit your high school graduates file even though your StudentTracker subscription has expired or will expire on or before August 31. Our Research Center will

use your student data for their analysis. Unfortunately, however, the Clearinghouse cannot release StudentTracker reports until your subscription has been paid.

- **How are these reports compiled?**

The StudentTracker service follows specific rules to determine the high school classes pulled into its reports and the report calculations used. StudentTracker returns the most current enrollment and degree records in our database as of the effective date.

When an effective date is set, StudentTracker pulls in the most recent eight years of high school graduates you have submitted. The corresponding postsecondary data is compiled for each of the report outcomes. High-level definitions are included in the last two pages of the basic packet. Here's an example:

- First fall enrollment is determined by an enrollment period that spans 8/31/YYYY-10/15/YYYY.
- A college academic year is defined as 8/15/YYYY-8/14/YYYY.
- The aggregate report count includes students who have a FERPA block on their records. The student detail report does not return any blocked postsecondary records. Students have a right to place a FERPA block on their records. For more on FERPA, see <https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/high-schools/studenttracker/ferpa-compliance>.

- **Why do some students who we know moved on to college not show up on our detail reports?**

Students have the right to place a FERPA (Federal Education Right to Privacy Act) block on their records. The aggregate report include counts of students who have a FERPA block on their records. The student detail report does not return any blocked postsecondary records. For more on FERPA, see <https://www.studentclearinghouse.org/high-schools/studenttracker/ferpa-compliance>.

- **Why are certain graduating classes missing from our reports?**

When an effective date is set, StudentTracker pulls in the most recent eight years of high school graduates you have submitted. If an older class is missing, it means that Clearinghouse does not have the data.

The most recent year's high school class is not included in the StudentTracker reports until the fall (mid-November) run, even if you have already submitted the data. In other words, 2020 graduates will not be included in the summer (August 15) or September runs, even if you have submitted the data. The first time the class of 2019-2020 is included is in the fall run.



- **What should we do if there are differences in the data we receive in the September versus November reports?**

It depends on what the differences are. The postsecondary enrollment and degree data may definitely be different because colleges report data to the Clearinghouse several times per term. Because StudentTracker returns the most current data in our database as of the effective date, it is possible that a student's enrollment status, term dates, or college attendance changed between September and November.

If you are confused about the data returned, please email the Clearinghouse at studenttracker@studentclearinghouse.org and include clear and specific examples of the differences.