

User Note Regarding Variable: TABFLAG

PSS Data Collections Impacted: 1995-96; 1997-98; 1999-2000; 2001-02; 2003-04; 2005-06; 2007-08; 2009-10; 2011-12; 2013-14; 2015-16; 2017-18; 2019-20

Impacted PSS documentation, tables, and publications:

- Survey documentation tables 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, and 17
- Survey documentation chapter 4 (response rates, which references tables 8 and 9)
- First Look Tables 20, 21, 22, and 23 (these tables were not produced for 2019-20 PSS)
- PSS Pubic-Use Data File and Codebook
- PSS Restricted-Use Data File and Codebook

Background

The definition of a private school according to the PSS is “a school that is not supported primarily by public funds. It must provide classroom instruction for one or more of grades K–12 (or comparable ungraded levels) and have one or more teachers.” Additionally, “schools with kindergarten, but no grade higher than kindergarten, are referred to as kindergarten-terminal (k-terminal) schools; these schools were first included in the 1995–96 PSS. Schools meeting the pre-1995 definition of a private school (i.e., including any of grades 1–12) are referred to as traditional schools.”

PSS has produced four First Look tables and six survey documentation tables that examine response rates specific to either the k-terminal definition or the traditional school definition. To do this, a tabulation variable called TABFLAG was created to flag k-terminal versus traditional schools and was used during the creation of these ten tables. The variable was also included on the Public- and Restricted-Use data files. The definition for TABFLAG is as follows:

TABFLAG	Num	8	Tabulation flag 1 = Schools offering ungraded or grade 1 or above 2 = Schools offering no grade higher than kindergarten
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To create TABFLAG as it is defined above, programmers referenced the individual grades offered by a school using survey question #4 (How many students were enrolled in each of the following grade levels around the first of October?). This allowed programmers to determine if a school offered any of grades 1 or above, if they offered kindergarten, transitional kindergarten, or transitional first grade – the combination of which are all considered kindergarten level, and if they offered nursery/pre-kindergarten or offered an ungraded level.

Schools that offer grade 1 or higher are considered traditional schools. Schools that offer kindergarten, transitional kindergarten, or transitional first grade and do not offer any of grades 1 or above are considered k-terminal schools. The ungraded grade level is not included in grade range unless the school is entirely ungraded. PSS provides other grade summary variables that treat ungraded in this way, such as HIGRyyy and LOGRyyy (high grade and low grade for that survey’s data year) or LEVEL (school level). The high-and low-grade variables are assigned a value based on the school’s reported highest or lowest grade offered.

A school that offers all grades between kindergarten (KG) and grade 12 has a LOGR of KG and a HIGR of 12. A school only receives a LOGR and HIGR of ungraded if they respond as ungraded only and do not offer any other grade levels. For example, if a school reports that they offer ungraded, kindergarten, and grade 1, then their LOGR is KG, and their HIGR is 1. If a school reports that they offer ungraded and kindergarten, then their LOGR is KG, and their HIGR is KG. If a school reports that they offer ungraded and no other formal grade level, then their LOGR is ungraded, and their HIGR is ungraded.

LEVEL designates the general level of instruction for a school, assigning each school as either Elementary, Secondary, or Combined. Elementary schools offer any grade from kindergarten to 6, without any higher grades. Secondary schools offer grades 7 to 12, without any lower grades. Combined schools are those that do not fit either

of these categories or only offer ungraded. Therefore, a school that offers ungraded and kindergarten would be assigned school level Elementary. A school that offers ungraded only, would be assigned school level Combined (because we cannot assume where the ungraded levels fall within the typical KG – 12 grade range).

The definitions for these variables as provided in the survey documentation data dictionary and the public/restricted use files are as follows:

LEVEL	Num	8	Level of Instruction 1= Elementary (Students reported in grades prekindergarten through 6 and no students in grades 9 through 12) 2= Secondary (Students reported in grades 7 through 12 and no students in grades prekindergarten through 6) 3= Combined elementary and secondary (All students ungraded or students reported in grades 6 or below and 9 or above)
LOGRyyyy	Num	8	20yy-yy Lowest Grade Level Recode 01 = All Ungraded 02 = Lowest grade in school is prekindergarten 03 = Lowest grade in school is kindergarten 04 = Lowest grade in school is transitional kindergarten 05 = Lowest grade in school is transitional first grade 06 = Lowest grade in school is 1st grade 07 = Lowest grade in school is 2nd grade 08 = Lowest grade in school is 3rd grade 09 = Lowest grade in school is 4th grade 10 = Lowest grade in school is 5th grade 11 = Lowest grade in school is 6th grade 12 = Lowest grade in school is 7th grade 13 = Lowest grade in school is 8th grade 14 = Lowest grade in school is 9th grade 15 = Lowest grade in school is 10th grade 16 = Lowest grade in school is 11th grade 17 = Lowest grade in school is 12th grade
HIGRyyyy	Num	8	20yy-yy Highest Grade Level Recode 01 = All Ungraded 02 = Highest grade in school is prekindergarten 03 = Highest grade in school is kindergarten 04 = Highest grade in school is transitional kindergarten 05 = Highest grade in school is transitional first grade 06 = Highest grade in school is 1st grade 07 = Highest grade in school is 2nd grade 08 = Highest grade in school is 3rd grade 09 = Highest grade in school is 4th grade 10 = Highest grade in school is 5th grade 11 = Highest grade in school is 6th grade 12 = Highest grade in school is 7th grade 13 = Highest grade in school is 8th grade 14 = Highest grade in school is 9th grade 15 = Highest grade in school is 10th grade 16 = Highest grade in school is 11th grade 17 = Highest grade in school is 12th grade

TABFLAG Inconsistency

As displayed above, TABFLAG assigns the traditional school value (TABFLAG = 1) for “schools offering ungraded or grade 1 or above” and the k-terminal school value (TABFLAG = 2) for “schools offering no grade higher than kindergarten.” Programmers interpreted this definition to mean that if a school offered any grade 1 or higher, OR offered ungraded at all, then it was included with the traditional schools. However, this results in schools that offer ungraded and kindergarten, with no grades higher than 1, to be considered a traditional school, because the

definition simply states, “schools offered ungraded.” This conflicts with the intent and usage of the variable in PSS documentation.

Schools that offered kindergarten and no grades higher than 1 were all correctly assigned the k-terminal school value if the school did not also offer ungraded. Ultimately, the error in the TABFLAG definition resulted in a small number of k-terminal schools being reported as traditional schools each PSS cycle.

PSS Data Collection Cycle	Improper TABFLAG Calculation		Corrected TABFLAG Calculation		Difference: Improper - Corrected	
	Traditional	K-Terminal	Traditional	K-Terminal	Traditional	K-Terminal
1995-96	24,101	4,521	23,873	4,749	228	-228
1997-98	24,557	5,698	24,285	5,970	272	-272
1999-2000	24,163	4,996	23,973	5,186	190	-190
2001-02	25,532	5,280	25,324	5,488	208	-208
2003-04	24,979	5,092	24,768	5,303	211	-211
2005-06	24,961	4,823	24,748	5,036	213	-213
2007-08	24,030	4,420	23,858	4,605	172	-185
2009-10	23,914	4,303	23,669	4,548	245	-245
2011-12	22,717	4,266	22,529	4,454	188	-188
2013-14	20,904	3,662	20,705	3,861	199	-199
2015-16	19,538	2,890	19,392	3,036	146	-146
2017-18	20,195	2,700	20,055	2,840	140	-140
2019-20	19,069	2,503	18,918	2,654	151	-151