

Introduction

Now that you have received an email with the GradStar data your agency entered into the system during the just completed school year (August to June 30), you will want to take steps to make the data set more useful to you in serving students and their children. However, “polishing” your data by following the instructions in this document is OPTIONAL. It is strictly up to you and your colleagues at your agency as to whether or not you “polish” your GradStar data file.

The instructions in this document are quite detailed and assume that you have a basic knowledge of Excel. If you have never used Excel or consider yourself a beginner with very little Excel experience, you might want to skip now to page 22 and choose one of the print manuals or online tutorials to help you learn the basics before beginning your data “polishing” steps.

Also the following instructions are written using the *Office 2003* version of Excel. The instructions and screen shots will vary slightly between Windows and Apple Macintosh versions. Furthermore, if you are using a later version of Excel (beyond 2003 for Windows and 2004 for Mac), you will find more variations, but the basics are the same.

You will notice that the GradStar file you received recently has the file extension .xls. This file extension makes the file readable by all current versions of Excel, whether you are working in Windows or on a Mac. However, please note that Excel in Office 2007 now uses the file extension of .xlsx and files with this extension cannot be read by earlier versions of Excel. For this reason, if you have the most recent version of Excel in Office 2007, you should continue saving your files in the .xls format.

Finally, as you work with the data file to make it more useful for you at your site, please share with Brenda LeTendre (bletendr@pittstate.edu) any tips or examples that you think other Cal-SAFE agency staff across the State might find helpful. She will compile the tips and examples and share them via email or on the www.gradstar.com website so that everyone can profit from your experiences and discoveries.