

## **The California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program Data Collection Instructional Manual (v3 Sept 09)**

Changes from v2 to v3: Removed references to 2008-09 and the Consolidated Application, revised text to reflect the current data collection procedures, added FAQs section

### **GETTING STARTED**

#### **Overview**

Since the inception of the Cal-SAFE Program in 2000, advocates across the state have recognized the need to collect reliable and useful data about the Program's effectiveness in meeting the 11 Legislative Goals established when the California State Legislature first funded The California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program. Additionally, educators within the agencies have seen the need for a management information system that provides them with timely information to guide their practice in serving the educational needs of California's pregnant and parenting students.

To continue to fulfill this need for reliable, valid, and timely data in August 15, 2008, the Cal-SAFE Program evaluation data collection process will undergo two major changes.

First, agencies began using *new* or *revised* forms to collect important information about the students and children they serve. Almost all of these forms represent revisions of previous GradStar forms.

Second, and by far the most dramatic change in the data collection process, involved using an online data collection system for submitting student and child information to a state-wide GradStar Database.

Three times a year (at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, and in June), each agency director receives an Excel file that contains all the data entered for its students and children. Agency staff can then use this information to guide and monitor the services they provide for students and to advocate within their communities using data. The information is also used to create state-wide evaluation reports showing the progress of The Cal-SAFE Program on meeting its goals.

To guide you in using the new forms and the online data collection system, we have created an Instructional Manual for each of the GradStar forms listed below:

- Child Care Enrollment (paper and online versions)
- Child Information Form (paper and online versions)
- Pregnancy Form (paper and online versions)
- Student Enrollment Form (paper and online versions)

- Student Exit Form (paper and online versions)
- Needs Assessment / Support Services Form (paper only)
- Support Services RECEIVED Form (online only)
- Exit Outcome Update Form (online only)

You can view and download these instructional manuals by visiting the Evaluation Forms and Materials at the <http://www.gradstar.com> website.

This Getting Started document gives a brief overview of the online data collection system, plus instructions on how to access the online forms. It also includes a Frequently Asked Questions section at the end of the document.

### **Gathering Information**

As in the past, you will need to interview students and complete various forms that gather information about the students and their children. You will also need to secure the appropriate signatures on the following consent forms required for enrollment in the Cal-SAFE Program:

- Data Collection Consent Form -- Used to obtain parent/legal guardian consent for data collection and entry into the state-wide GradStar Database
- Release of Information Consent -- Used only if agency intends to share educational, medical and/or social services information with other individuals or agencies
- Program Participation Form (Student)
- Program Participation Form (Child) -- Used to obtain the student's consent for child's program participation

These consent forms have *not* been revised. Thus, you will continue to use the *same* forms as you have used in previous years. Furthermore, the consent forms will remain in paper-only versions. None of the consent forms will be completed online. Finally, as in the past, you can download paper copies of these required consent forms and the instructions for completing these forms by visiting <http://www.gradstar.com>. The forms are available in English and Spanish.

Although the consent forms have not changes, all the other GradStar forms have been revised. A task force comprised of Cal-SAFE Program directors and service-providers worked from February to August 1, 2008, with the Branagh Information Group to revise the GradStar data collection forms. None of these forms had been revised since 2003. The task force members feel that the forms now more explicitly fit the current terminology within the State's educational

settings. Furthermore, the revised GradStar forms will better meet the needs of both the agencies and the state-wide evaluation of the Cal-SAFE Program.

### **Paper or Cyber?**

Just as you have a choice at your local grocery check-out counter, you will have a choice as to what kind of form you complete as you gather information from students. You may either use a paper form, handwriting the information and later keying the data into the state-wide GradStar Database OR you may complete a form online as you interview the student and submit the data immediately into the state-wide GradStar Database.

During the 2008-09 school year, when the online GradStar Database was implemented, most agencies preferred to continue completing a paper-version of the forms and then later “batch” entering the information into the online GradStar Database. The paper form served as the hard copy documentation required by the Cal-SAFE Program regulations and the “batch” data entry allowed the agencies to continue using the help of clerical staff who were used to using the GradStar software from previous years.

However, several agencies did elect to complete the online forms, as staff interviewed the students. This method saved time and effort as staff could quickly complete the forms using dropdown menu choices and brief text responses. Once staff completed the online form, they simply printed a hard copy for the student’s file and then hit the Submit button to enter the information into the secure, state-wide GradStar Database.

If your agency elects to do batch entry from completed paper forms, we suggest that you set up a routine process, perhaps weekly, when someone at the agency enters all the completed forms into the online GradStar Database. If your agency used the GradStar software in previous years, you might find that the same process you used for gathering up completed forms and entering them into the GradStar Information Management System will work in this case as well.

No matter what routine you establish, we offer this one key piece of advice: *Don’t let the paper forms pile up too high before you enter the information into the online forms/database.*

### **Accessing the Online Cyber Forms**

To use the online GradStar form, you can use ANY machine that has a reliable Internet connection. The online GradStar forms work with any type of computer – PC or Macintosh.

To access the online GradStar forms, you will need to follow these steps:

1. Connect to the Internet using one of the following web browsers:
  - \* Internet Explorer 5.0 or later (Windows or Mac)
  - \* Firefox 1.5.x or Firefox 2.0.x (Windows or Mac)
  - \* Netscape 4.72 or later (Windows)
  - \* Netscape 7.1 or later (Mac)
  - \* Safari 2.0 or later (Mac)

2. Key in the URL for the GradStar online forms:

<http://gradstar.com/secure/form.html>

Your browser will take you to a secure site that asks you to enter a designated user id and password. Your Cal-SAFE Program agency director has this information. [Note: An email was sent to each director giving the designated user id and password. If we need to change the designated user id or password, Brenda LeTendre will send it by email to the program coordinator for your agency.]

If you cannot locate the currently designated user id or password, please contact Brenda LeTendre by email or phone to get the information. Her email is [bletendr@pittstate.edu](mailto:bletendr@pittstate.edu) and her cell phone number is 417-437-9434. We suggest that you first contact her by email and if you don't get a response, call her cell phone.

Note: Once you visit the URL for online GradStar forms, you can quickly return to this URL by using your browser's History button. Or you can simply bookmark this webpage. Either way, you will not have to type in the URL again.

3. After typing in the user id and password, your Internet browser will take you to a list of the URLs for the REVISED GradStar forms listed below. You simply need to click on the URL for the form you need and your browser will take you to the online form. Use the dropdown choices, radio buttons, and short text boxes to complete the online form.

The REVISED forms are very similar to the previous GradStar paper forms used prior to August 2008, but some differences do exist. For this reason, we suggest that the first time you complete a particular form you review the form's Manual that explains each item on that form. You can find the Instructional Manuals by visiting the Evaluation Forms and Materials section of the <http://www.gradstar.com> website.

### **Tips on Completing the Online GradStar Forms**

We believe that you will find the online GradStar forms easy and quick to complete. The Cal-SAFE Program providers who pilot tested the online forms found that to be the case. However, we do want to alert you to some things to keep in mind as you fill out the online forms.

- (1) Some schools set up an electronic firewall that prevents access to unapproved websites. When you first try to access the GradStar online forms, if you find that after repeated tries you cannot gain access to the online GradStar forms, we suggest that you check with your school's IT person to see if the firewall is preventing access. If so, you will need to work with the IT staff member to get the GradStar forms site approved for access.

If you find that the firewall is not the problem and you still have difficulty gaining access, please call Brenda LeTendre, the Cal-SAFE Program Evaluator, and she will help you. Please try first contacting her by email ([bletendr@pittstate.edu](mailto:bletendr@pittstate.edu)) and then calling her cell phone at 417-437-9434.

- (2) When it comes to Internet connections, faster is better but slower works OK. Thus, if you want almost instantaneous response in accessing and submitting a GradStar form, you should avoid using a dial-up connection and instead go for a broadband direct cable or wireless network connection.
- (3) Sometimes, no matter how fast your Internet connection is, you may get a message that a form is not available or the page you are trying to access is not available. This delay might happen when there is unusually heavy traffic on the Internet or into the server where the online GradStar forms are housed. If this does happen, just wait a couple of minutes and try accessing the form again. Rarely will you have wait more than 5 minutes.

If you continue to have difficulty accessing a form, please contact Brenda LeTendre, the Cal-SAFE Program Evaluator, for help. You should first try sending a message via email ([bletendr@pittstate.edu](mailto:bletendr@pittstate.edu)) and then try calling her cell phone: 417-437-9434.

- (4) Unlike the original GradStar Information Management System used by Agencies from 2001 to December 2004, the current online system does not do any cross-checking between fields on a form. Thus, it is possible for you to give an answer to an item that totally contradicts information you provided on an earlier item. Unfortunately, the system will not notice that the two answers do not make sense and will not alert you to this contradiction. Therefore, we ask that BEFORE you print a hard copy of the form for the student's file and submit the information to the state-wide GradStar Database you ALWAYS double check the accuracy of the information you entered. This is especially true for the Agency Code item. This code is how we can find the data for your agency when we send you your GradStar data at the end of the first quarter, the end of the first semester, and in June.
- (5) The data fields where you type in information are NOT restricted to numbers or letters. Essentially, the system will take whatever you type into the box. Thus, you could make a mistake and enter "aaa" when you really meant to enter "111." Again, we ask that BEFORE you print and submit a form to the

state-wide GradStar Database you ALWAYS double check for accuracy the information you entered.

- (6) Some of the questions on each form require answers before you can submit the form to the GradStar Database, and these are indicated with an asterisk (\*). If you fail to answer a mandatory question and hit the Submit button, you will get a message in red that requests that you complete the mandatory questions. Simply complete the mandatory items and then hit the Submit button again. This time the system will accept the form into the database.
- (7) If have left mandatory questions blank on a form and printed the hard copy for the student's file before hitting Submit button, the print out will show blanks for the missing information. You will, of course, have to complete the mandatory items online before you can submit the information to the GradStar Database. However, it is up to you as to whether you reprint the form now that you filled in the missing information or you simply handwrite the missing information onto the first incomplete copy.
- (8) After you have completed the online form and double-checked the entered information for accuracy (particularly the Agency Code), you should print out a hard copy of the completed form to put into the student's folder. To do this, simply go under File in the Browser's menu bar and select "Print." Some browsers, however, might have the print choice labeled as "Print Current Frame."

NOTE: If you entered the information into the online GradStar form using a completed paper form as a guide, you have the option of *not* printing a copy of the online form for the student's file. The completed paper form can serve as documentation for the student's file. However, we do suggest that you handwrite on the paper form a  $\checkmark$  and the date of data entry so that you know that you have entered this form into the GradStar Database.

- (9) The GradStar online forms are housed on a server managed by Zoomerang.com, a San Francisco-based company that offers survey hosting services. Because Zoomerang's primary business deals with surveys, you will often see an on-screen message refer to "the survey" rather than using the term "form."
- (10) Refrain from pressing the "return/enter" key on your keyboard after you enter data into a field. This says "submit the completed form" to the GradStar system even though you haven't answered all the questions. If you haven't answered the mandatory questions, the system will prompt you but otherwise it will submit your incomplete form to the GradStar Database.

(11) Finally, we offer a caution about making corrections to online forms that you have already submitted to the GradStar Database. To make a correction or change to an already submitted online form requires that you reenter the information on the ENTIRE form, making the needed correction or change, and then resubmit the form to the GradStar Database. The Branagh Information Data Manager will then delete the previously completed form and substitute this one into the system.

Because making a correction or change is so time consuming, we highly suggest that you review for accuracy your answers on the computer screen and make changes then BEFORE you hit the Submit button. Furthermore, we suggest that you submit a change form only if you have IMPORTANT new information on the student. By "important," we mean information that answers a mandatory item, one marked with an \*.

### **Accessing Paper Forms**

As previously mentioned, at times you may wish to complete a paper version of the REVISED GradStar forms rather than complete the online form as you interview the student. For instance, you would most likely use a paper form when you make a home visit. Just remember that later you will need to enter the information on the paper form into the online state-wide GradStar Database by completing an online version of the form.

As you have done in the past, you will need to get the following consent forms signed. These forms have *not* been revised and agencies should **continue to use** the following Consent Forms:

- Data Collection Consent Form (6/06/01\_v4)  
Used to obtain parent/legal guardian consent for data collection
- Release of Information Consent (1/23/01\_v1\_)  
Used only if agency intends to share educational, medical and/or social services information with other individuals or agencies
- Program Participation Form (Student) (1/23/01\_v1)  
Used to obtain student's consent for program participation
- Program Participation Form (Child) (1/23/01\_v1)  
Used to obtain student's consent for child's program participation
- Data Collection Consent Form (8/2001\_v3) -- in Spanish
- Release of Information Consent (7/2001\_v2) -- in Spanish
- Program Participation Form (Student) (7/2001\_v2) -- in Spanish
- Program Participation Form (Child) (7/2001\_v1) -- in Spanish

V3 Sept 09: Getting Started

You can download paper-versions of the REVISED GradStar Forms and the above Consent Forms by visiting Branagh Information Group website for the Cal-SAFE Program at <http://www.gradstar.com>

You can also download a copy of the instructions for completing these forms at the same URL: <http://www.gradstar.com>

### **Download of the GradStar Data for Your Agency**

Three times during the academic year, Brenda LeTendre, with the Branagh Information Group, will send your agency's program coordinator (or other designated recipient) an Excel file that will contain all the data that your agency has entered into the various forms during the current academic year. These files will be sent (1) at the end of the first quarter, (at the end for the Fall semester), and in late June.

For each data file you receive, you can find posted under the Additional Helpful Resources section on [www.gradstar.com](http://www.gradstar.com) step-by-step instructions - complete with many screen shots -- on how to archive and "polish" the data in your Excel file. In particular, these instructions show how to get summary counts from the you may find very helpful as you advocate for the continued existence of your Cal-SAFE Program.

### **Who to Call for Help**

Brenda LeTendre, Ed.D.

Branagh Information Group

Program Evaluation Consultant to The Cal-SAFE Program

[bletendr@pittstate.edu](mailto:bletendr@pittstate.edu)

cell phone: 417-437-9434

Available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)

NOTE: If you are not now receiving Brenda's regular email updates about the GradStar System, please contact her and she will put you on the distribution list.

V3 Sept 09: Getting Started

Frequently Asked Questions	ANSWERS
<p>When should I enter a correction into the GradStar system?</p>	<p>Please enter a correction to a GradStar form only if the correction rectifies the information in a MANDATORY field marked with an *. Otherwise, simply log the change of information on the student's paper form and any other local student/child database that you might have. For example, you do not need to enter a corrected Child Care Enrollment form each time a child's schedule changes. You would note this change on the student's paper Child Care Enrollment form and in your local database.</p>
<p>When I try to access the online GradStar forms, I get a message that says: Authorization Required</p> <p>This server could not verify that you are authorized to access the document requested. Either you supplied the wrong credentials (e.g., bad password), or your browser doesn't understand how to supply the credentials required. What's going on?</p>	<p>Most likely you are using a browser that has "remembered" your user ID and password. Indeed, you most likely didn't have to type these codes in each time. However, this time your browser got confused. All you need to do is delete and retype the user ID and password and then you should be able to get into the secure GradStar URLs. Often this happens when you have not tried recently to access the secure section of GradStar.</p>
<p>I have a student whose guardian refuses to sign the Data Collection Consent form. What should I do about putting her data into the GradStar Database?</p>	<p>If the student's guardian refuses to sign the Data Collection Consent form, you cannot enter this student's information into the GradStar Statewide Database. Thus this student won't show up in the GradStar Excel data files that I'll send your agency during and at the end of the academic year. So that you have an accurate accounting of just how many students you serve during the school year, we highly suggest that you keep a running list of students you serve who are not in the GradStar Database along with some basic information about the students. On the <a href="http://www.gradstar.com">www.gradstar.com</a> website under the Additional Helpful Resources, you can download an Excel template that [TemplateStudentsWITHOUTdataConsent.xls] can help you keep track of these students. We hope that you won't have many who refuse to sign. It might help to let them know that only Brenda LeTendre, the external evaluator will ever see the data and it will have NO identifying individual information. Plus Brenda will NEVER share with the California Department of Education any individual data. Brenda will only give the CDE summary tables that aggregate data from across the state.</p>
<p>Do I have to enter the access codes (user ID and password) each time I fill out an online GradStar form?</p>	<p>Although you cannot simply hit the Back arrow to return to the secure URLs for the online GradStar Forms, there are three ways you can easily access them: (1) You can simply click on the blue text that says: "You have completed the EXIT OUTCOME UPDATE FORM of the Cal-SAFE Program. Please CLICK HERE to return to the GradStar Forms page." Unfortunately, this may cause you to have to reenter the user ID and password. (2) An easier way is to go into History in the menu bar of your Internet browser and scroll down until you see the name of the form you want. Once you select this, the browser will take you back to the list of all the URLs for the online GradStar forms. (3) Finally, you can bookmark the <a href="http://www.gradstar.com/secure">www.gradstar.com/secure</a> webpage and return to the list of URLs for the forms without having to reenter the access codes.</p>

V3 Sept 09: Getting Started

Frequently Asked Questions	ANSWERS
Does the GradStar Database retain prior years information?	The GradStar Database retains information entered into the online database starting August 1, 2008. However, when enter a returning student's ID number, GradStar cannot go and fetch the prior year's information and populate the fields in the form you are completing. Because of the limited amount of money allocated to GradStar, we have had to design a very basic data collection system. Like a "Ford Escort" it will get us from here to there but it won't run like a "Ferrari" !
Is there any way to pull up any lists or reports myself?	No, only Brenda LeTendre has access to the GradStar Database. Unfortunately, you cannot query the GradStar system yourself to produce lists and reports for your agency. Because of the limited amount of money allocated to GradStar, we have had to design a very basic data collection system. However, three times during the school year -- at the end of the first quarter, at the end of the Fall semester, and in June -- Brenda will send you an Excel file that contains all the data that your agency has entered into the GradStar system. You can then use the data in these files to create your own lists and reports.
If I open up a form and start it and step away from my computer for a long while, will the GradStar Database automatically log me out?	No, the system will not log you out as long as you remain connected to the Internet and simply minimize the window showing the form. However, if you close the window altogether, you will be logged out.
When I get into the secure section of GradStar, I see what look like surveys rather than forms. Why is that?	The GradStar Database is hosted by the online survey hosting company Zoomerang.com located in San Francisco. This company provides a platform for the GradStar forms and stores the information you enter into the system.
Do I need to submit all the forms at one time or can I just submit the enrollment forms now & the Pregnancy Outcome and Child Info forms at a later date.	You can submit the forms (Student Enrollment, Preg Outcome, Child Info, Child Care Enrollment) in any order you wish. It's just that once you start a form you must complete all the * items (which are mandatory) before you can submit the form.
After we complete a form and move onto a new form for the same student, we're having to log in each time. Is there a way around this?	Here are three ways to avoid logging in each time: (1) When you first encounter the user ID/name & password dialog box, you can tell your browser to "Remember this password in my keychain" usually by clicking a box. From then on, the browser will automatically fill in both the user ID/name and password when you see the dialog box and all you would have to do is click "Log In". Note: Some of the exact wording of these phrases and selections vary depending on the browser you are using, such as FireFox, Explorer, Safari etc. (2) After completing and entering the online form and you see the on-screen message: "You have completed the STUDENT ENROLLMENT FORM of the Cal-SAFE Program. Please CLICK HERE to return to the GradStar Forms page." Don't click on "CLICK HERE" but instead go into the History menu of your browser and select the URL for the online GradStar forms. It should say "Eval Forms Online." This will take you directly back to the URLs on the secure GradStar forms and you can select another form without filling in the access codes. Again, you might find the phrases/wording slightly different depending on the browser you are using. (3) Finally, you can bookmark the www.gradstar.com/secure webpage and return to the list of URLs for the forms without having to reenter the access codes.

V3 Sept 09: Getting Started

Frequently Asked Questions	ANSWERS
I mistakenly entered a student using the online 2008-09 form instead of the 2009-10 form. What should I do?	Notify Brenda of the mistake. Please send her the student's ID number and your agency number and she will rectify the situation, switching the student to the 2009-10 data set.
When I print out a copy of a completed online GradStar form, it takes SOOO much paper. How can I print it out without killing so many trees?	You can reduce the number of pieces of paper you use by telling your printer to print several pages to one piece of paper. Right before you hit the Submit button, go into the main menu of your Internet browser and select "Print." Your printer will then show its Print dialogue box that asks you to specify such things as the number of copies, layout, paper handling, color/b&w, and print quality. At this stage, you can specify that the printer reduce the size of the GradStar form so that you can get 2 or more pages on one piece of paper. Some printers even allow you to specify that the printer print the GradStar form on both sides of the piece of paper. For example, I use an Epson Office Jet 4300 series printer and under the Layout section of the printer dialogue box I can select "4" under the Pages Per Sheet option. The printer would then automatically reduce the pages of the completed GradStar Student Enrollment, printing 4 pages on each piece of paper. Generally, thus for each of the GradStar forms I could print out the completed online form on one piece of paper for documentation.
When I enter my agency code should I enter it using the hyphen or not? For example, my agency code is XX-XXXX. Should I enter it as XX-XXXX or without the hyphen as XXXXXXX?	It's up to you -- without or without the hyphen works just fine. All we ask that everyone in your district use the same method -- everyone entering the agency code with the hyphen or everyone entering the agency code without the hyphen. Being consistency makes it simpler for the Branagh folks to easily extract your agency's data from the statewide database.
How do I know what my agency code is?	At the <a href="http://www.gradstar.com">www.gradstar.com</a> website under the Evaluation Forms and Material section, you can download the file: AgencyCodes09-10.pdf. This file contains the agency code that your agency should be using.
As a program housed in the County Office of Education, I have students who attend schools in several school districts. At the end of the Fall semester, several students will transfer to another school in different district served by our program. The change in school will result in a new student ID number. What should I do about the student's ID number in GradStar?	We suggest that you not change the student's ID number within the GradStar system. Rather, you would make a note in your local database that the student is now attending another school/district within your program and now has a new ID number. The reason for NOT changing the student's ID within the GradStar system is this: For state-wide reporting purposes, we need to be able to provide an unduplicated count of students (and children) served by a particular agency for any length of time during the academic year. This means we need a consistent GradStar ID # that a student keeps during the academic year no matter where she attends within an agency's Cal-SAFE Program.

V3 Sept 09: Getting Started

Frequently Asked Questions	ANSWERS
<p>As a program housed in the County Office of Education, I have students who attend schools in several school districts. Some of these districts serve students in K-8 only. This year I have a student who was at a junior high in a K-8 districts. She is now enrolled in a 9-12 district and has a new ID number. What should I do about her ID number in GradStar?</p>	<p>We suggest that you make no change of the student's ID number within GradStar. This way her information over the years will be grouped together. However, you would make a note in her paper file and your local database that she is now in a different school, different district and has a new ID number.</p> <p>One way to avoid this with future students is to use the permanent student ID number that the State of California is assigning each student within the state's student data base.</p>
<p>I'm not sure which students I've entered into the GradStar Database and which I have not yet entered. How can I keep track of what I've done?</p>	<p>First, we suggest that you put a ✓ mark and the date entered at the top of each paper form you enter into the system. Second, we suggest that you keep an Excel spreadsheet that includes the student's name, ID number and which forms you've entered into the GradStar Database for the student. On the <a href="http://www.gradstar.com">www.gradstar.com</a> website under the Additional Helpful Resources subsection, you can download an Excel template (GradStarDataEntryLogV1LeT08Sept18.xls) that you can use to keep track of the students and children you enter into the GradStar Database. Later, when you receive the GradStar data files for your agency, you can use this Excel spreadsheet to double check that you've entered everyone into the system. Also, this same Excel spreadsheet can help you match the students' names to their ID numbers and information in the GradStar files.</p>
<p>In our agency we simply assign a very simple ID number to a student -- such as 01, 02. My colleague at another Cal-SAFE Program says that they do their student ID numbers the very same way. Won't that get the information on our students mixed with that for their students?</p>	<p>When we extract the data for your agency, we use the student ID number AND your agency number. This way it does not matter if you duplicate another student's ID number used in another agency. However, you should not ever assign the same ID number to another student, even if that student attends your program during a future school year. This means that across the life of your program (from 2008 on), you should have only one student with the ID number 01.</p>
<p>Often I get interrupted as I'm entering a form into the online GradStar Database. Can I leave a form and come back and complete later?</p>	<p>If you simply keep the form open on your computer's desk, you can come back and complete it. GradStar will not time you out. BUT if you close and leave the browser window showing the <a href="http://www.zoomerang.com">www.zoomerang.com</a> site where the GradStar forms are located, then you will not be able to finish the form and submit. However, in most browsers you can open up new windows while keeping other Internet site windows open. This way you can keep the incomplete GradStar form open (and actually hidden from view if you wish) while you take care of interruptions. Then later, you can complete and submit the form.</p>
<p>If I don't skip a field on a form, does GradStar automatically fill in with a default answer?</p>	<p>GradStar has no default answers on the forms. If you skip a MANDATORY field marked with an *, you must answer the question before you can submit the form. If you skip a non-mandatory field, GradStar will simply leave that field blank.</p>

V3 Sept 09: Getting Started

Frequently Asked Questions	ANSWERS
<p>What if the school does NOT issue an ID number?</p>	<p>We suggest that you create an ID number for students -- perhaps even something as simple as using the student's birth date plus a 1 for female and 2 for male. So if Brenda LeTendre were a student attending your program had her birth date is March 15, 1992, then her ID number would be 31519921. You just want to make sure that you don't give that same ID number to another student AND that you keep a list somewhere (perhaps in an Excel file) that includes Brenda LeTendre ID 31519921 so you know to which ID goes with which student.</p>
<p>I forgot to print a copy of the completed online GradStar form before hitting Submit. What should I do to document that I entered the student's form into GradStar?</p>	<p>If you were inputting the information from a hand completed paper copy of the form then, you really don't have to print the online form because you already have a paper copy of the information -- albeit hand completed. You should, however, write on the paper form the date when you entered the information into the online GradStar system. If you were interviewing the student as you filled out the form online and forgot to print it out before hitting the Submit key, then you can complete by hand a paper version of the form and put it in the student's folder. This will provide documentation in the student's folder.</p>
<p>When should I enter a correction into the GradStar system?</p>	<p>Please enter a correction to a GradStar form only if the correction rectifies the information in a MANDATORY field marked with an *. Otherwise, simply log the change of information on the student's paper form and any other local student/child database that you might have. For example, you do not need to enter a corrected Student Enrollment form each time a student changes where she attends school in your district. You would note this change on the student's paper Student Enrollment form and in your local database.</p>
<p>What is the difference between Consent to Collect Data and Release of Information Consent forms?</p>	<p>The Consent to Collect Data is the form that the student (if over 18 or legally declared an adult) or the student's guardian must sign so that you can enter data into the state-wide online GradStar Database. On the other hand, the Release of Information Consent form is the form that student (if over 18 or legally declared an adult) or the student's guardian must sign giving you permission to share information about the student with person or agency outside the school district, such as a physician, social worker, or case manager.</p>