

**REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

The Alexandria City School Board (Board) recognizes that decisions affecting a student's grade-level assignment (especially the decision to retain a student) may have long-lasting effects on the student's future success in school and life. The promotion of a student from one grade level to the next shall be based primarily on the successful completion of work required at the specific grade level of the student. Research indicates that students who have been retained two or more times are more likely to drop out of high school than are students who have never been retained. Therefore, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) expects that any decision to retain a student be made following considerable deliberation and consultation. ACPS will not retain a student more than once. When retention is recommended, it should occur at the earliest possible time in the student's school career. All personnel involved with this decision-making process should understand and address the following processes and procedures.

**Promotion**

The primary consideration for grade assignment shall be successful achievement in academic areas. Other factors such as the student's ability to learn, social and emotional maturity, and attendance shall also be considered. Determinations regarding student acceleration shall be made in accordance with Policy IKEB - Acceleration.

**Elementary Students:**

Promotion will be made through grade five (K-5) based on an evaluation of the student's acquisition of required standards and other evidence of growth as determined by the student's teacher(s) and principal, as evidenced by the following factors:

- Academic performance
- Attendance
- Physical size
- Reading level
- Work habits
- Intellectual ability
- Parental support
- Age
- School/family history
- Prior retention
- Special needs, circumstances or disability
- SOL assessment results at the end of grades three through five (3-5); however, the use of SOL scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is prohibited.

45 **Middle School Students:**

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47 Students in grades six through eight (6-8) are promoted to the next grade on the basis of  
48 earning passing final grades in the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, science,  
49 and social studies; and a passing final grade in one of the following program areas:  
50 health/physical education or the equivalent of a full-year elective course together with  
51 consideration of the following factors:

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- 53 ● Academic performance
  - 54 ● Ability level
  - 55 ● Attendance in conjunction with poor classroom performance
  - 56 ● Chronological age in relation to the normal grade/age group
  - 57 ● Delayed/advanced physical development
  - 58 ● Work and study skills
  - 59 ● Student and parent attitude
  - 60 ● Parental support
  - 61 ● Prior retention
  - 62 ● SOL assessment results at the end of grades six through eight (6-8); however, the use  
63 of SOL scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is prohibited.

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65 **High School Students:** For high school students, promotion refers to a student advancing  
66 from one class designation to the next (i.e., from ninth to tenth grade, etc.) after having  
67 satisfied all requirements for advancement. The designation of a student as a ninth grader,  
68 tenth grader, or eleventh grader is based solely on the number of standard and/or verified  
69 units of credits earned towards graduation. However, for a student to be designated as a  
70 twelfth grader (i.e., a senior preparing for graduation), that designation involves a  
71 combination of the following factors: (a) requisite number of credits earned; (b) the types  
72 of credits earned; and (c) other graduation requirements (i.e., fulfillment of state mandates  
73 and requirements for courses and program completion to receive the type of diploma for  
74 which the student is preparing). Accordingly, a high school student shall be promoted to  
75 the next class designation only as follows:

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90**Minimum Requirements for Students Earning a Standard Diploma**

To be classified as a 9 <sup>th</sup> grader:	A student must have been promoted from middle school.
To be classified as a 10 <sup>th</sup> grader:	A student must have accrued at least 5 standard high school units of credit towards graduation by the start of an academic year.
To be classified as a 11 <sup>th</sup> grader:	A student must have accrued at least 11 standard high school units of credit towards graduation by the start of the academic year.
To be classified as a 12 <sup>th</sup> grader:	A student must have accrued at least 16 standard high school units of credit towards graduation by the start of the academic year. A student's transcript and schedule must include all units of credit and/or courses necessary to complete graduation requirements in June or August of that school year.

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92 Note: The use of SOL assessment scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is  
93 prohibited.

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95 **Intervention to Minimize Retention**

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97 ACPS is committed to maximizing student promotion and providing a system of K-12  
98 interventions to maximize student success. For those students whose educational performance is  
99 not commensurate with their peers and/or are suspected of having a disability, a written referral to  
100 the School Support Team or Child Study shall be made by the student's classroom teacher.

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102 When a student in kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) is not making progress toward  
103 mastery of content standards, school staff uses interventions associated with the ACPS  
104 Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to make a determination of which supports and  
105 interventions are necessary to address the student's lack of academic growth. In addition,  
106 an Individual Achievement Plan (IAP) or other systematic classroom and support  
107 interventions shall be developed to address the areas of deficiency and be implemented  
108 with fidelity. The prescribed interventions will be designed to monitor and document the  
109 student's progress toward mastery of content standards.

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111 At the elementary level (grades K-5), parents/guardians and (when appropriate) students  
112 should be included in the development of the IAP, or other intervention plan. The principal  
113 will monitor the implementation of this plan and guide the team in making the necessary

114 adjustments. These adjustments should be based upon a systematic progress monitoring  
115 that includes a collection of evidence and thorough analysis of student data.

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117 At the secondary level (grades 6-12), the ACP (Academic and Career Plan) is used to guide  
118 this process (incorporating a focus upon both student academic achievement as well as  
119 career development). Additionally, when a student is experiencing academic problems or  
120 challenges, appropriate options for intervention, coaching, and tutorial assistance should  
121 be used to support this process (and should be incorporated into the ACP).

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123 When a secondary student is experiencing academic difficulty, the parents/guardians shall  
124 be notified in writing as soon as reasonably possible. In addition to the Report Card,  
125 parents/guardians of students who are failing any high school course shall be notified in  
126 writing at the end of the second quarter for a year-long course, or the end of the first quarter  
127 of any semester course. In addition, teachers are encouraged to arrange conferences with  
128 parents/guardians of these students.

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130 If a student continues to fail through the end of the third quarter for a year-long course or  
131 through the interim of the second quarter of any semester course, the parents/guardians  
132 shall again be notified in writing.

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134 **Retention**

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136 Retention shall be used as a last resort. It will be considered only after ongoing, sustained, and  
137 intensive intervention efforts have been unsuccessful. The final responsibility for retention should  
138 be based upon a collaborative team decision involving:

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- 141 ● The principal
  - 142 ● Parents/legal guardians
  - 143 ● The classroom teacher(s)
  - 144 ● The school counselor
  - 145 ● A special education teacher (if appropriate)
  - 146 ● An English Learner (EL) teacher (if appropriate)

147 After a careful and systematic review of documentation of the interventions administered over  
148 time, the following factors shall be deliberated for a student being considered for retention:

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- 150 ● Standards-based performance in academic areas
  - 151 ● Performance on Division-level assessments
  - 152 ● Performance on curriculum-based assessments
  - 153 ● Quarterly Progress Reports
  - 154 ● Consideration of the factors listed above in section A. (Promotion) of this regulation.

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156 **Initial Notification:** As soon as retention is being considered, the teacher shall notify the  
157 parents/legal guardians in writing and schedules a meeting with the parents/guardians. If,

158 at the end of the third quarter, the student is still at risk of being retained, the information  
159 must be stated in the narrative portion of the progress report. The teacher shall also submit  
160 a cumulative folder of the student's work to the retention team.

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162 **Final Determination:** The decision to retain shall be made during the fourth quarter, with  
163 plans for summer school or other interventions shared with the parents/guardians. Written  
164 permission from the parents/guardians for retention is not required; however,  
165 parents/guardians must be notified of the specific reasons for retention. Final notification  
166 must be made in writing and a meeting will be scheduled with the student's  
167 parents/guardians at least 30 working days prior to the close of school. In addition, the  
168 process for appeals must be included in the retention determination letter.

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170 When a student is retained, a retention plan must be developed by the student's teacher.  
171 This retention plan will build upon the intervention plan, including areas not yet mastered.  
172 The receiving teacher may modify or add to the retention plan as the retention year  
173 proceeds based on student progress. The principal must review the retention plan and  
174 monitor the student's progress during the retention year. A copy of the retention plan shall  
175 be attached to the progress report and placed in the student's cumulative folder.

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177 The final responsibility for promotion and retention decisions resides with the principal.  
178 However, the principal is responsible for ensuring that this decision is made within the  
179 context of the interventions and processes articulated below.

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181 **Students with Disabilities:** For students with disabilities, promotion and retention shall  
182 be determined with consideration of the student's progress on annual goals in accordance  
183 with accommodations, and the impact of the disability as defined in the student's  
184 Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

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186 **EL Students:** For English Learners(EL), promotion and retention decisions will involve  
187 the same factors that must be considered for all students. However, ELs with English  
188 proficiency levels of 3 or below will not generally be considered for retention.

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190 **Retentions at Initial Placement**  
191 Sometimes, in order to place a student in the most appropriate academic setting, the  
192 equivalent of a retention is made at the English Learner Office at the time of entry. Initial  
193 retentions shall consider the same factors as all other retentions, contributing to a holistic  
194 determination of what is in the best educational interest of the student.

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196 **Notice to Parents of ELs**  
197 If neither parent/guardian of a student being considered for retention speaks English, all  
198 retention-related written and oral communications will be provided in the  
199 parents'/guardians' native language. Non-English speaking parents/guardians should have  
200 the same opportunity for input, and receive the same level of communication from the  
201 school regarding the student's progress as English speaking parents/guardians.

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**Final Authority and Appeals**

Promotion and retention decisions which require further review or are contested by parents/guardians must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director of School Leadership. The process for appeals must be included in the retention determination letter from the school.

Established: November 17, 2003  
Revised: June 23, 2016  
Updated: June 6, 2024

Cross Refs.:	IKC	Grading
	IKC-R	Regulations Governing the Grading Policy
	IKE	Academic Promotion and Retention
	IKEB	Acceleration

## Appendix I

## RETENTION INFORMATION GATHERING

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Information Gathering: Educators

1. Classroom performance
2. Ability to work independently
3. Frequency and accuracy of responses
4. Quality and accuracy of class work
5. Knowledge and skill depth and breadth
6. Time and work management skills
7. Study skills
8. Problem-solving, decision-making skills in comparison with age peers
9. Self-evaluation skills
10. Choices in independent activities
11. Relationship to age peers and adults

Information Gathering: Parents

1. Perceived academic strengths and limitations
2. Past patterns of achievement or underachievement
3. Motivation for learning
4. Study skills and habits
5. Work and management skills
6. Ability to work independently
7. Attitudes toward school and learning
8. Level of maturity and emotional stability
9. Interest areas of the child
10. Relationships with peers and adults