

# 2025-2026

# PRAG

Promotion, Retention, Acceleration, & Grading

# HANDBOOK K-6



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*Unified School District*

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# Foreword

At Deer Valley Unified School District (DVUSD), we are dedicated to the continuous academic and personal growth of every student. This **Promotion, Retention, Acceleration, and Grading Handbook for Grades K–6** is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide for elementary-level educators, administrators, and families. It outlines essential policies and practices related to student promotion, retention, and acceleration, and provides clear grading and reporting guidelines aligned with district expectations.

The content of this handbook reflects the requirements of the Arizona Revised Statutes as well as DVUSD policies and regulations. Grading is the process through which educators assess student learning and monitor progress toward mastery of the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards and the Arizona K–12 State Standards. Reporting plays a vital role in communicating students’ academic achievement and skill development to parents and guardians.

To maintain relevance and accuracy, this handbook is reviewed annually by the DVUSD Handbook Review Work Team. Should changes occur during the legislative session, timely updates will be made and published in the electronic version, available on our district website: [www.dvusd.org/handbooks](http://www.dvusd.org/handbooks).

We trust that this handbook will be a valuable and reliable resource for educators, families, and stakeholders as we work together to ensure student success and uphold excellence in education across grades K–6.

# Arizona State Statutes

The statutory authority to retain or promote a student in an elementary grade or to pass or fail a student in high school is set forth in A.R.S. § 15-701.

## **A.R.S. § 15-342(11) Discretionary powers states:**

The governing board of a district may:

*Review the decision of a teacher to promote a pupil to a grade or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school.*

While the teacher has the primary responsibility to make these decisions, it is the Governing Board that has the authority to prescribe standards or criteria for promotion that may be in addition to those prescribed by the State Board of Education. (A.R.S. § 15-701.C and 701.01.C). However, once these criteria are set, a school district cannot delay graduation for a student who has achieved the necessary credits. (Ariz. Atty. Gen. Op. 189-095).

## **A.R.S. § 15-516 Teacher immunity states:**

A full-time teacher who is employed by a school district or a charter school is immune from personal liability for all acts done and actions taken in good faith in evaluating or grading any student.

## **A.R.S. § 15-521 Duties of teachers' states:**

Every teacher shall:

1. Make student learning the primary focus of the teacher's professional time.
2. Hold pupils to strict account for disorderly conduct.
3. Take and maintain daily classroom attendance.
4. Make the decision to promote or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school. Such decisions may be overturned only as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11.
5. Comply with all rules and policies of the governing board that relate to the duties prescribed in this section.

## **A.R.S. § 15-701 Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit (2a) states:**

*A requirement that a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, or a successor test, that demonstrates that the pupil's reading falls far below the third grade level.*

A school district or governing board MAY choose to promote a pupil who earns an AASA score that falls far below the third grade level for the following reasons:

1. A good cause exemption if the pupil is an English learner or a limited English proficient student as defined in section 15-751 and has had fewer than three years of English language instruction.
2. A child with a disability as defined in section 15-761 if the pupil's individualized education program team and the pupil's parent/guardian agrees that promotion is appropriate based on the pupil's individualized education program.

**A.R.S §15-701** requires that an Arizona student not be promoted from the third grade if the student scores far below the third grade level on the AASA statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

1. Is an English learner or a limited English proficient student as defined in section 15-751 and has had fewer than three years of English language instruction.
2. Is in the process of a special education referral or evaluation for placement in special education, or
  - i. Has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment, including dyslexia, or is a child with a disability\* and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate.
3. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of reading assessments.
4. Receives intervention and remedial services during the summer or subsequent year and demonstrates sufficient reading progress.

**A.R.S. § 15-701 Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit states:**

E. A teacher shall determine whether to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school as provided in section 15-521, paragraph 4 on the basis of the prescribed criteria. The governing board, if it reviews the decision of a teacher to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11, shall base its decision on the prescribed criteria.

**A.R.S. § 15-821 Admission of children; required age states:**

A. Unless otherwise provided by article 1.1 of this chapter or by any other law, all schools shall admit children who are between the ages of six and twenty-one years, who reside in the school district and who meet the requirements for enrollment in one of the grades or programs offered in the school. A school may refuse to admit a child who has graduated from a high school with a recognized diploma.

B. If a preschool program for children with disabilities is maintained, a child is eligible for admission as prescribed in section 15-771.

C. If a kindergarten program is maintained, a child is eligible for admission to kindergarten if the child is five years of age. A child is deemed five years of age if the child reaches the age of five before September 1 of the current school year. A child is eligible for admission to first grade if the child is six years of age. A child is deemed six years of age if the child reaches the age of six before September 1 of the current school year. The governing board may admit children who have not reached the required age as prescribed by this subsection if it is determined to be in the best interest of the children. For children entering the first grade, such determination shall be based upon one or more consultations with the parent, parents, guardian or guardians, the children, the teacher and the school principal. Such children must reach the required age of five for kindergarten and six for first grade by January 1 of the current school year.

# DVUSD Governing Board Policy

The following are Deer Valley Unified School District Governing Board policies and regulations that are important for all stakeholders to know with the use of this handbook.

<b>IHBHD</b>	ONLINE/CONCURRENT/CORRESPONDENCE COURSES (7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math)
<b>IKA</b>	GRADING / ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS
<b>IKAB</b>	REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS
<b>IKACA</b>	PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCES
<b>IKB</b>	HOMEWORK
<b>IKD</b>	HONOR ROLLS
<b>IKE</b>	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
<b>IKE-RA</b>	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
<b>IKE-RB</b>	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS: Competency Requirements for Promotion of Students from Third Grade
<b>IKEA</b>	MAKE UP OPPORTUNITIES
<b>IKEA-R</b>	MAKE UP OPPORTUNITIES
<b>IKEB</b>	ACCELERATION

## Guidelines

Promotion, retention, acceleration, and grading guidelines are designed to establish a procedure for providing an appropriate academic intervention and/or enhancement program for each student in Deer Valley Unified School District. It is every teacher's professional responsibility to recognize and assist struggling students or challenge academically capable students at each grade level. This handbook provides an overview of professional responsibilities for classroom teachers, local school administrators and district level administrators. In each case, an in-depth examination of student needs should be conducted by all appropriate professionals.

**For a student who is in the process of being evaluated for special education and/or Section 504, there should be a high level of caution for any retention consideration.**

## Intervention in Education

Developing an instructional intervention involves a series of coordinated steps undertaken by collaborative teams to assist a student in improving a specific area of need. These interventions are tailored to address a targeted skill identified through data gathered from a common formative assessment. Interventions provide dedicated time for the student to re-engage with the targeted skill and offer opportunities for reassessment.

To ensure equitable access to the curriculum for all students, Tier II and Tier III academic interventions are established across all grade levels. Parents/guardians and students can expect timely communication in the spring semester of 6th grade regarding a student's enrollment in Tier III academic interventions as they transition from elementary grades into middle school.

## Standards

Students must demonstrate accomplishment and proficiency of the academic standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies adopted by the State Board of Education. In addition to these standards, test scores, grades, teacher recommendations, and other pertinent data will be used to determine promotion or retention.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with a teacher’s decision regarding promotion or retention, as outlined in A.R.S. §15-521.10, they may formally request that the Governing Board review the decision made by the site intervention team. Upon receiving notification from the school regarding the intention to retain or promote their child, parents/guardians have five days to submit a retention appeal form or promotion appeal form to the school principal or school secretary in writing. **Promotion Appeal Process - page 17 / Retention appeal process - page 24**

**For a student who is in the process of being evaluated for special education and/or Section 504, there should be a high level of caution for any retention consideration.**

## Definitions for Grades K-6

<b>504 Plan</b>	The <b>504 Plan</b> is a plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives <b>accommodations</b> that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.
<b>Acceleration:</b>	The early promotion of individual students to the next grade or higher (based on their academic achievements or readiness for higher level work or advancing them in one or more content areas).
<b>Accommodations:</b>	Accommodations are supports provided to help a student access the general education curriculum and validly demonstrate learning. They assist students in learning the same material and content, allowing them to meet the same expectations as their peers.
<b>DIBELS:</b>	The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade.
<b>EL</b>	Students whose first language is not English, and encompasses both students who are just beginning to learn English (often referred to in federal legislation as “limited English proficient” or “LEP”) and those who have already developed considerable proficiency is considered an English Learner “EL”.
<b>ELD</b>	English Language Development is the teaching of English language skills to students who are in the process of learning English. It is distinguished from other types of instruction, e.g., math, science, social studies, in that the content of ELD emphasizes the English language itself.
<b>Exclusions and Exemptions From School Attendance Agreement</b>	This is an instructional agreement for students with chronic health conditions. The agreement provides an exemption from school attendance only, not from required school assignments and assessments that may occur.

<b>Exclusions and Exemptions From School Attendance – Medical Certification</b>	This is a companion document that provides a licensed Physician's medical certification of students with chronic health conditions.
<b>Gifted Cluster</b>	Gifted students are grouped together in a general education classroom with teachers who are trained to adapt the curriculum and environment for gifted students. Available at all schools in grades K-6. Gifted students at our Title 1 schools are automatically placed into a Gifted Cluster Classroom when they score at or above the 88th percentile on a state approved, cognitive abilities test. Gifted students at non-Title schools are automatically placed into a Gifted Cluster Classroom when they score at or above the 97th percentile on a state approved, cognitive abilities test.

<b>Gifted Cohort</b>	The Gifted Cohort is a full day gifted service model. Gifted identified students are placed into one, self contained gifted classroom at their grade level. The classes are taught by a teacher (or teachers) who have or are working on earning their Gifted Endorsement and are supported by the school Gifted Specialist. The Gifted Cohort model is available for grades 1-12.
<b>Iowa Acceleration Scale:</b>	The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) is a tool for use by a team of school professionals when whole-grade acceleration (grade skipping) is being considered. The IAS was designed for use with students in grades K-8. The IAS provides a systematic and defensible way to generate recommendations and guidelines that will help make educated and appropriate placement decisions for students who demonstrate high ability and who have the capacity to process greater amounts of information and knowledge than they are able to acquire in their present learning environments.
<b>Light's Retention Scale:</b>	<b>The Light's Retention Scale (LRS)</b> is a valuable tool designed to support school professionals in making informed, sensitive, and often challenging decisions regarding student promotion or retention. It fosters meaningful dialogue between educators and parents or guardians, ensuring that every decision is grounded in thoughtful, evidence-based professional judgment. <i>(Academic Therapy Publications)</i> Each school office should maintain a copy of the Light's Retention Scale to guide these important discussions.
<b>Modifications:</b>	A modification is an instructional adaptation that fundamentally alters or lowers the standard. Modifications should only be used to adapt the instruction for students that take the alternative state assessment.
<b>MOWR (Move on When Reading)</b>	Arizona's Move on When Reading policy is designed to provide students with evidence-based, effective reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade in order to position them for success as they progress through school, college, and career. The legislation in A.R.S §15-701, A.R.S §15-704, and A.R.S §15-211 explains the requirements for pupil promotion, early literacy instruction, and accountability for student achievement in reading.

<b>MTSS:</b>	A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a structured and thorough approach to student learning. It involves collaborative communities using a tiered framework to address various needs and ensure high-quality, personalized instruction, enrichment, and intervention for all students, both academically and behaviorally. In DVUSD, the aim of MTSS is to empower every student to achieve at high levels, with the ultimate goal being 100% success.
<b>MyHours Online Attendance</b>	<p>In compliance with ASRS-15-901 and ASRS-15-808, all students enrolled in Aspire, Deer Valley’s Online Academy (AOI) are required to submit weekly attendance time logs for each course. The Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) Program, established in A.R.S. §15-808, enables approved school districts and charter schools to develop online instructional systems, expanding educational opportunities statewide. District AOI programs are approved by the State Board of Education.</p> <p>To meet state attendance requirements and maintain enrollment in the program, AOI students must adhere to the following minimum weekly hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grade-6: 25 hours</li> <li>● Grades 7-8: 5 hours per course, per week</li> <li>● Grades 9-12: 7 hours per course, per week</li> </ul> <p>Attendance hours includes time on the computer, research, reading, writing, reviewing and completing assignments</p> <p>Failure to log attendance for more than 10 consecutive days in the MyHours system or to participate in coursework on Canvas for 10 consecutive days will result in the student being dropped or withdrawn from the Aspire, Deer Valley’s Online Academy.</p>
<b>Promotion:</b>	Meeting the criteria for moving to the next grade level.
<b>Renaissance:</b>	Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies are designed to provide highly gifted, elementary and middle school students unique educational opportunities. Renaissance Academies provide rigorous learning experiences that address the individual needs of gifted students in grades 1-8. Renaissance students acquire a solid foundation in the content areas of mathematics, language and communication arts, social studies, science, and technology literacy. Students work 1-2 years above grade level within core content areas. Student application is required.
<b>Retention:</b>	Not meeting the criteria for promotion and remaining at the same grade level.
<b>SAGE:</b>	Students Achieving through Gifted Education. SAGE Content Replacement is an intentional placement for gifted and talented students. Learners meet daily in the SAGE classroom, in lieu of general education classrooms to receive their instruction in reading and/or math from an endorsed gifted teacher. Curriculum, materials, and content are accelerated and enriched at the appropriate challenge level for students. SAGE Reading/ ELA is available for students in grades 4-6. SAGE Math serves students in grades 3-6. Qualification is based upon state approved gifted identification scores. At Title 1 schools, students may be eligible for placement when they score at or above the 88th percentile on a state approved, cognitive abilities test. Students attending non-Title schools may be eligible for placement when they score at or above the 94th percentile on a state approved, cognitive abilities test.
<b>SPARK:</b>	Supporting Potential and Achievement in Remarkable Kids (Enrichment Program). SPARK is an ongoing enrichment learning program that addresses the unique needs of gifted, high achieving, and high potential students at our participating schools. Students attend certain days during the week, depending on the schedule of the school, during RTI periods and Tier 3 blocks in grades K-6. Qualification based on gifted identification scores. At Title 1 schools,

	students may be eligible for placement when they score at or above the 80th percentile on a state approved, cognitive abilities test. Students attending non-Title schools may be eligible for placement when they score at or above the 94th percentile on a state approved, cognitive abilities test.
<b>Targeted Language Instruction</b>	Targeted Language Instruction is a specific approach within the Structured English Immersion (SEI) model, where English Language Learners (ELLs) receive focused, dedicated time to develop English language skills through explicit instruction to address their specific needs in areas like vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension, all aligned with Arizona's English Language Proficiency Standards. It is distinguished from other types of instruction, e.g. ELA, math, science and social studies, in that Targeted Language Instruction emphasizes the language proficiency standards (ELPs). This instruction addresses ELs specific needs in areas like vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension, as well as productive, receptive and interactive communication.
<b>Walk-Up to Math:</b>	Qualifying students walk up (usually as a group or cluster) to the next grade level's gifted cluster math class. The school's Gifted Specialist works with the Gifted Cluster Teacher to help instruct students in the classroom and pull out small groups of students as needed. Students are pre-assessed using skills-based assessments and gifted test results to support students with "walking-up" to the grade level that is appropriate for their individual needs in grades 3-8. Qualification based on rubric.

## **Placement of Transfer Students New to the District or Entry of Home Schooled Students**

Home schooled students or students entering without a current grade report should be placed in the age appropriate grade level for the district’s academic school year. Observation and evaluation over a period of three weeks will determine appropriate placement. Evaluation will include reading, writing, math and social consideration. After three weeks, the school will determine if the data supports maintaining age appropriate placement or if the data supports a change in grade level.

The principal will determine whether there should be any change in the grade-level placement of the student. In making such determination, the principal will refer to the teacher recommendations and consultation with the parents/guardians. (DVUSD Policy JG-R)

A student's class assignments are the principal's responsibility. The principal will consider the student's grade level assignment, the prerequisite completion, the student's achievement, and classroom limitations or class size guidelines. (DVUSD Policy JG-R)

Children may be admitted to first grade who are six years of age, or shall be deemed six years of age if they reach such age prior to September 1 of the current school year. Children entering first grade who are not six years old on or before August 31, but will be six years old by December 31 of the current school year will be tested through the Early Entry testing process. (A.R.S. § 15-821 Admission of children; required age)

# Home Schooled Student Participation in DVUSD Extra Curricular Activities

Students who are home schooled at the K-6 level may participate in special area and/or exploratory classes and/or after-school sports at their home DVUSD school. All registration paperwork is required, including immunization records, proof of residence, etc. If sports participation applies, athletic paperwork is required. If a home schooled student wants to participate in special area and/or exploratory classes at a DVUSD school that is not their home school, open enrollment must be completed and all open enrollment rules and procedures will be followed for placement in the school and class. **A copy of the Affidavit of Intent for Homeschooling filed with Maricopa County is required.**

Students who are recipients of the Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) must notify DVUSD of their ESA status and are required to pay tuition for DVUSD elective-only courses. The tuition fees for ESA are \$1200 per elective course, per year for grades K-6 and \$600 per elective course, per semester for grades 7-8.

Students attending a charter school may not participate in DVUSD exploratory classes or athletics. (A.R.S. § 15-802.01: Homeschool students' eligibility to participate)

## Online Options

### 6th Grade Students

Students are permitted to enroll at [dvusd.org/online](http://dvusd.org/online) for **Aspire**, Deer Valley's Online Academy, as a full-time student. For unique situations, select online courses are available to be taken in conjunction with campus-based courses. This option requires campus administration approval on a case-by-case basis and course availability in the Aspire school. Students who require health accommodations or have extenuating circumstances are typically approved, such as:

- Walk-Up to Math students at a K-6 campus moving into 7th grade or higher math class. As part of the student's gifted mandated services, the school's Gifted Specialist is to help coordinate with campus-based and online teachers as well as to provide support to these students during the school day as needed.
- Advanced student athlete or student artist in need of early dismissal
- Student with a medical or mental health need
- Student in need of a full-time online schedule
- Students are allowed to participate in their boundary school's extra-curricular activities with administrator approval

An open enrollment application must be submitted for consideration.

For more information go to [DVUSD.org/aspire](http://DVUSD.org/aspire), email [aspire@dvusd.org](mailto:aspire@dvusd.org), or call [623-445-4992](tel:623-445-4992)

## Online Students: Starting High School Transcripts

Students are permitted to start taking high school courses with Aspire campus administrator approval. Families request this flexible learning option for a variety of reasons:

- Student is ready for the next level of math (most common)

- Student transferred into DVUSD with advanced core subjects and is ready for the next level.

Once there is campus administrator approval, and the campus team is certain online is a successful option, then the administrator will email the Aspire, Deer Valley's Online Academy at [aspire@dvusd.org](mailto:aspire@dvusd.org) to provide the student's information and online course request. If the online course is in addition to a full school day schedule, there is a \$200 fee per semester course. If the online course is replacing a course within the school day then there is no fee.

For more information go to [dvusd.org/online](http://dvusd.org/online), email [aspire@dvusd.org](mailto:aspire@dvusd.org), or call 623-445- 4992 .

## Process for Requesting Online Courses

The process for requesting online courses is as follows:

1. The parent/guardian requests a meeting with the campus administrator.
2. The parent/guardian and campus administrator discuss scheduling options.
3. If moving forward, the campus administrator emails the **Aspire**, Deer Valley's Online Academy Specialist at [aspire@dvusd.org](mailto:aspire@dvusd.org) and copies the Director of Online and Virtual Programs with the updated student schedule.

## Promotion and Retention Parent/Guardian Information

(From the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook)

### The Statutes

The statutory authority to retain or promote a student in an elementary grade or to pass or fail a student in high school is set forth in **A.R.S. 15-701, Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit.**

#### **A.R. S. 15-701 states:**

E. A teacher shall determine whether to promote or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school on the basis of the prescribed criteria. The governing board, if it reviews the decision of a teacher to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11, shall base its decision on the prescribed criteria.

#### **Parental/Guardian Rights A.R.S. 15-102 states:**

Procedures by which parents/guardians may learn about parental/guardian rights and responsibilities under the laws of this state, including the following:

(e) The promotion requirements prescribed in section 15-701.

#### **A.R.S. 15-342 states:**

11. Notwithstanding Title 38, chapter 3, article 3.1, the governing board shall review the decision of a teacher to promote a pupil to a grade or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school in executive session unless a parent/guardian of the pupil or the pupil, if emancipated, disagrees that the review should be conducted in executive session and then the review shall be conducted in an open meeting.

## K-6 Special Education Promotion and Retention

Guidelines for students receiving special education services should be the same as those for general education students. The IEP team should not be used to retain a student who, by general education standards, would not otherwise be retained.

However, an exception to this guideline could be made if a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student with a disability has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP team and the pupil's parent/guardian could agree that promotion is appropriate based on the pupil's individualized education program (IEP). This decision would need to be made in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, prior to the end of the school year.

## K-6 English Learner Promotion and Retention

Under U.S. law, particularly the 1974 Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*, it is illegal to retain an English Language Learner (ELL) solely due to limited English proficiency. Schools must provide appropriate accommodations and consider other academic factors before making retention decisions to ensure ELL students receive a meaningful education.

## K-6 English Learner Promotion and Retention Appeal Process

### Process for Parents/Guardians

**If a parent/guardian choose to contest the teacher's decision to retain or promote a student:**

1. Within five school days from the notification of intent to retain or promote, parent/guardian will complete a Retention Appeal Form (pg. 67) or Promotion Appeal Form (pg. 68), submit it to the school secretary and schedule a meeting with the principal.
2. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/guardian's completion and submission of an appeal form.
3. The teacher must fill out a Teacher Promotion or Teacher Retention Justification Form and attach the required documentation.
4. The principal collects all forms, with the required documentation, and forwards the packet to the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for review.
5. If warranted, the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will then schedule a hearing conference with the Governing Board.

The ***Light's Retention Scale*** is a powerful tool that assists school professionals when making sensitive and often difficult decisions about promoting or retaining a child. LRS provides opportunities for dialogue between parents/guardians and educators and assures all involved that the decision is based on thoughtful, professional findings. (Academic Therapy Publications)

# PROMOTION

According to A.R.S. § 15-521.10, each teacher shall make the decision for promotion or retention of students. All recommendations for promotion must be documented by the teacher. Recommendations that do not comply with the stated criteria must be substantiated by the teacher.

## K-6 Promotion Procedures

Student progression in grades K-6 is determined by a variety of indicators, as defined by state standards and district expectations, which are aligned with the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards (AZCCRS) and the Arizona K-12 State Standards. These expectations include specific levels of student performance on locally determined assessments, including universal screenings and ongoing progress monitoring, and results of statewide assessments.

Promotion from one level to the next is based upon each student's progress toward the accomplishment of high standards that are both challenging and achievable. The evaluation of each student's progress will be based upon the student's classroom work, observations, tests, district and state assessments, and other relevant information.

The Arizona Statute *Move on When Reading* (MOWR Law) requires that *a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, or a successor test, that demonstrates that the pupil's reading falls far below the third grade level.* A school district or governing board MAY choose to promote a pupil who earns a score on the state assessment that falls far below the third grade level for the following reasons:

1. A good cause exemption if the pupil is an English learner or a limited English proficient student as defined in section 15-751 and has had fewer than three years of English language instruction.
2. A child with a disability as defined in section 15-761 if the pupil's individualized education program team and the pupil's parent/guardian agrees that promotion is appropriate based on the pupil's individualized education program.

[A.R.S §15-701](#) requires that a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the statewide assessment that does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills as established by the state board on the statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

1. Is an English Learner (EL) who has received less than three years of English language instruction.
2. Is in the process of a special education referral or evaluation for placement in special education, or
  - a. Has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment, including dyslexia, or is a child with a disability and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate.
3. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of reading assessments.
4. Receives intervention and remedial services during the summer or subsequent year and demonstrates sufficient reading progress.

### **Promotion Criteria for Grades K-6 include:**

At the K-6 level, it is the responsibility of the teacher to notify parents/guardians, via the fourth quarter report card, of the intent to promote to the next grade.

- A. Achievement: Students must demonstrate accomplishment of the standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies as adopted by the State Board of Education. In grades K-6, the student will be promoted when the student receives a teacher's recommendation for promotion.
- B. Attendance: The minimum attendance standard for the Deer Valley Unified School District is

90% of the days of the school year per A.R.S. §15-802 and A.R.S. § 15-803. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. Students who are absent 10% of the school year, or 18 days, may need to be retained.

- If a teacher notices a pattern of absences and/or tardies that is affecting student performance, the teacher may contact the parents/guardians. Student absences for each grading period are to be recorded on the report card. If the absences are a reason for low grades, the teacher may wish to write a comment on the report card. Attendance issues may not be the sole criterion for Retention.
- According to Arizona State Law, A.R.S. §15-802, students who are identified as having chronic health problems must have the opportunity to keep up with class work through homework assignments

### **Comprehensive Considerations in Promotion or Retention Decision-Making:**

The decision-making process for promotion or retention considers not only a student's academic achievement and cognitive abilities but also takes into account their physical and social characteristics. Schools will utilize the *Light's Retention Scale* to gather and assess student data comprehensively.

## **K-6 Promotion Appeal Process**

### **Parent/ guardian**

#### **Within five days from the notification of intent to promote:**

1. Complete a Promotion Appeal Form (page 74) and submit it to the school principal or secretary.
2. Notify the school principal to schedule a meeting.

NOTE: The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/guardian's completion and submission of a Promotion Appeal Form.

### **Teacher –**

Fill out a **Teacher Promotion Justification Form** and attach the following required documentation (in this order):

1. Promotion Appeal Form from parent(s)/guardian(s)
2. Copies of report cards
3. Copy of the student's attendance record
4. Test results from district assessments (DIBELS 8th, reading or math assessments, NWEA [Northwest Evaluation Association] MAP [Measure of Academic Progress], Common Formative Assessments, etc.) and state mandated assessments
5. Examples of the student's work and examples of an average student's work (be sure to remove the average student's name from the papers)
6. Copy of the student's Intervention Plan or documentation collected by the campus MultiTiered System of Support (MTSS) team
7. Records of communication with the student's parents/guardians (telephone logs and copies of written/electronic communication)
8. Verification of conferences with parents/guardians (signed forms with a list of items

discussed)

9. *Light's Retention Scale* Rating

**Principal –**

1. Meet with parents/guardians.
2. Sign the Teacher Justification Form.
3. Collect all forms, with the required documentation, and forward the packet to the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for review and decision.

NOTE: If warranted, the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will then schedule a hearing conference with the Governing Board.

# RETENTION

According to A.R.S. § 15-521.10, each teacher shall make the decision for promotion or retention of students. All recommendations for promotion must be documented by the teacher. Recommendations that do not comply with the stated criteria must be substantiated by the teacher.

# Retention Procedures

When considering student retention, Deer Valley Unified School District believes that school staff must take a proactive and collaborative approach to ensure that each student has access to meaningful learning opportunities and the support necessary for success. A key component of this process is convening a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team meeting to review and determine appropriate academic and behavioral interventions for students who may be at risk of retention. It is essential that teachers consistently document the instructional strategies and interventions implemented to support underperforming students. This documentation plays a critical role in making informed, student-centered decisions regarding retention.

Research consistently shows that students who are retained or experience delayed entry into kindergarten are at a significantly higher risk of dropping out of school compared to their peers who are continuously promoted—even when academic performance is taken into account. The risk of dropping out increases with each additional retention, and even a single instance of retention has been strongly correlated with long-term academic disengagement. A recent systematic review identified grade retention as one of the most powerful predictors of high school dropout.

While annual promotion of students is the preferred goal, DVUSD recognizes that, in certain cases, retention may need to be considered as part of a broader academic intervention strategy. In such cases, the following guidelines apply for middle school students:

- **Early Identification:** Schools must make every effort to identify students at risk of retention as early as possible in the school year.
- **Parent/Guardian Involvement:** Collaboration with parents/guardians is essential to support student improvement and explore all available academic interventions.
- **Attendance Requirements:** Arizona Department of Education attendance regulations, as outlined in A.R.S. § 15-803, must be strictly followed and considered in the decision-making process.

The goal is always to support students through proactive measures and targeted support, with retention viewed as a last resort after all other avenues have been explored.

**Promotion of students in grade 3 shall follow requirements set forth in A. R. S. 15-701, Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit:**

*Effective the 2013-2014 school year, no third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student obtains a score on the third grade state reading test that indicates he or she is reading far below third grade.*

[A.R.S §15-701](#) requires that a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the statewide assessment that does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills as established by the state board on the statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

1. Is an English Learner (EL) who has received less than three years of English language instruction.
2. Is in the process of a special education referral or evaluation for placement in special education, or has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment, including dyslexia, or is a child with a disability and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate.
3. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a

collection of reading assessments.

4. Receives intervention and remedial services during the summer or subsequent year and demonstrates sufficient reading progress.

At the K–6 level, it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to notify parents/guardians if retention is being considered for their child. A copy of this notification must also be provided to the school principal. While the final recommendation for retention is made by the teacher using the *Light's Retention Scale*, it is essential that this decision be made in collaboration with the principal and other relevant staff members.

Prior to any retention decision, the school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team must convene to review the student's academic progress, evaluate intervention efforts, and consider alternative support strategies. Ongoing communication and meaningful involvement of parents/guardians throughout the process is critical. No retention decision should be made without active parent/guardian involvement.

If parents/guardians believe that retention is not in the best interest of their child, they are encouraged to follow the steps below to initiate an appeal:

1. Meet with the child's teacher to discuss concerns and review the rationale for retention.
2. Complete a Retention Appeal Form (see page 68) and submit it to the child's teacher.
3. Schedule a meeting with the school principal to review documentation from both school and home, as well as to discuss the retention process.
4. Upon submission of the completed Retention Appeal Form, the appeal process will begin immediately.

This process ensures a thoughtful, student-centered approach to all retention decisions, with collaboration and communication at its core.

### **K-6 English Learner Retention**

A team consisting of the principal, EL Teacher Specialist, EL CIAS/Coordinator, and the classroom/core teacher will determine retention of an English Learner. The decision to retain a student in DVUSD who qualifies for English Language services can be made if the student has received English Language Targeted and Integrated instruction if the reason to retain is not related to the student's acquisition of the English language.

#### **In order to retain an English Learner, teachers must:**

- Demonstrate a student's inability to meet grade level curriculum with scaffolded classwork and documentation of these EL scaffolds and academic progress.
- Implement an EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan
- Show that the student has not made appropriate gains on district or state assessments with appropriate accommodations.

The classroom/core teacher does not have the sole right or responsibility to promote or retain EL students. Teachers must follow the process of retention as determined by DVUSD.

#### **\*EL Retention and Individualized Enhanced Language Support Plan**

Before an English Learner can be considered for retention, an EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan (page 69) must be developed and implemented for a minimum of one grading period (9 weeks). The classroom teacher, EL Specialist, EL CIAS/Coordinator, campus administrator, and parent/guardian will collaborate to design targeted individualized language instruction that supports student mastery of state-standardized core

content. If the parent/guardian is unable to attend the planning meeting, they will be notified in writing and provided with a copy of the plan. Interpreters will be utilized as needed.

Teachers providing individualized language instruction must incorporate research-based strategies to help English Learners acquire English and achieve adequate academic progress.

### **Retention Criteria for Grades K-6 include:**

- A. Achievement: Students must demonstrate accomplishment of the standards in reading, writing mathematics, science and social studies as adopted by the State Board of Education.
- Students grades K-3 who are identified intensive on DIBELS 8th and have **reading diagnostic screener** results indicating discrepancy of one grade level or more should receive notification at the end of the first quarter that they may be good candidates for retention. Possible retention letters should be sent at the end of the second quarter if updated winter benchmark DIBELS and screener scores show the same gaps. For grades 4-6, test results from district assessments (Reading or math assessments, NWEA MAP Assessment, **(Common Formative Assessments)** and state mandated assessments may be used for possible retention. For full academic year students, a targeted intervention plan must have been created through the MTSS Team using identified research based strategies. The plan must have been in place for a minimum of 9 weeks in order to consider retention. Students who enroll during the second semester will be evaluated by the MTSS team on a case by case basis.

### **B. Attendance and Retention**

In accordance with **A.R.S. § 15-802** and **A.R.S. § 15-803**, the **Deer Valley Unified School District (DVUSD)** requires a minimum attendance rate of **90%** for all students across the school year. This equates to no more than **18 absences** in a full school year. Students who exceed this threshold may be considered for retention, though **extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis**.

If a teacher observes a pattern of frequent absences and/or tardies that appears to impact a student's academic performance, the teacher may contact the parents/guardians to discuss concerns and possible interventions. Student absences are to be documented each grading period and reflected on the report card. If attendance is contributing to low academic performance, the teacher may include a supporting comment on the report card. However, **attendance alone may not be used as the sole basis for retention**.

In cases where a student is identified as having a **chronic health condition**, Arizona law (**A.R.S. § 15-802**) requires that these students be given the opportunity to stay current with classwork through homework or other alternative assignments. Families must submit an **Exceptions and Exclusions form**, completed and signed by a medical provider. This form is available through the **school nurse**.

### **Comprehensive Considerations in Promotion or Retention Decision-Making:**

The decision-making process for promotion or retention considers not only a student's academic achievement and cognitive abilities but also takes into account their physical and social characteristics. Schools will utilize the *Light's Retention Scale* to gather and assess student data comprehensively.

## **K-6 Retention Notification Timeline:**

### **Following the end of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter:**

- Parents/guardians are notified that their child is experiencing academic difficulty during their first conference time
- Teacher will notify and conference with administration regarding concerns
- **An MTSS Team meeting is scheduled to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention** using research based **strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress.**
- Targeted intervention plan should in place For an EL student, the EL Specialist must be invited to the MTSS meeting
- Meet with parent to discuss EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan
- If a student has a 504 Plan or IEP (Individualized Education Program), the school will first consult with the school psychologist, service coordinator, and/or 504 coordinator to ensure the plan is being implemented as intended.
- Information in PowerSchool log entries entered by principal/secretary

### **Following the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter:**

- Parents/guardians are notified of possible retention
- Use K-6 Notification of Possible Retention letter (Principal must sign letter)
- Update information in PowerSchool
- **An MTSS Team meeting is scheduled to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention** using research based **strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress.**
- Targeted intervention plan should in place
- For an EL student, the EL Specialist must be invited to the MTSS meeting
- Meet with parent to discuss EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan
- If a student with a 504 Plan or IEP is not making meaningful progress, a 504 meeting or IEP meeting should be held to review concerns and adjust supports as needed. This may include new interventions, accommodations, or services to ensure access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Parents/guardians and the school team will participate in the meeting.
- Information in PowerSchool log entries entered by principal/secretary

### **Within the 3rd quarter:**

- Parents/Guardians are notified of potential retention during parent/guardian teacher conferences · Use K-6 Notification of Possible Retention letter (Principal must sign letter) · Update information in PowerSchool
- **An MTSS Team meeting is scheduled to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention** using research based **strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress.**
- Targeted intervention plan should in place
- For an EL student, the team consisting of the principal, EL Teacher Specialist, EL CIAS/Coordinator, and the classroom/core teacher must review the data and determine if retention is warranted based on academic progress and not language acquisition.
- Meet with parent to discuss EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan
- Schools should consistently monitor the implementation of 504 Plans and IEPs to ensure the student is receiving access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Special education service providers must also send home quarterly progress reports that clearly reflect the student's progress—or lack of progress—toward their goals.
- Information in PowerSchool log entries entered by principal/secretary

**Six weeks into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, upon documentation of teachers' final grades:**

- Parents/guardians are notified of intent to retain
- Use K-6 Notification of Retention letter/Appeal letter (Principal must sign letter) - Update information in PowerSchool
- **An MTSS Team meeting is scheduled to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress**
- For an EL student, the team consisting of the principal, EL Teacher Specialist, EL CIAS/Coordinator, and the classroom/core teacher must review the data and determine if retention is warranted based on academic progress and not language acquisition.
- If significant concerns remain about a student's 504 Plan or IEP progress despite supports in place, a school team member or administrator should consult with the Student Support Services (SSS) Office to review the situation and potential retention with district leadership.
- Information in PowerSchool log entries entered by principal/secretary

**Within five days of the date of notification of retention**, parents/guardians may appeal the decision to retain by completing the *Grade K-6 Retention Appeal Form (pg. 68)*. A meeting is held with parent/guardian, teachers, and Principal.

## K-6 Retention Appeal Process

### Parent/guardian

**Within five days from the notification of intent to retain:**

1. Complete a Retention Appeal Form (page 75) and submit it to the school principal or secretary.
2. Notify the school principal to schedule a meeting.

NOTE: The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/guardian's completion and submission of a Retention Appeal Form.

### Teacher –

Fill out a **Teacher Retention Justification Form** and attach the following required documentation (in this order):

1. Retention Appeal Form from parent(s)/guardian(s)
2. Copies of report cards
3. Copy of the student's attendance record
4. Test results from district reading and math assessments, NWEA [Northwest Evaluation Association] MAP [Measure of Academic Progress] assessment, and state mandated assessments
5. Examples of the retained student's work and examples of an average student's work (remove the average student's name from the papers)
6. Conduct a MTSS Team meeting to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress
7. Records of communication with the student's parents/guardians (telephone logs and copies of written/electronic communication)
8. Verification of conferences with parents/guardians (signed forms with a list of items discussed)
9. *Light's Retention Scale* Rating

### Principal –

1. Meet with parents/guardians.
2. Sign the Teacher Justification Form.

3. Collect all forms, with the required documentation, and forward the packet to the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for review and decision.

NOTE: If warranted, the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will then schedule a hearing conference with the Governing Board.

# ACCELERATION

In accordance with DVUSD Governing Board policy IKEB the final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Superintendent.

# Acceleration Information

## **DVUSD Board Policy I 7300 IKEB states:**

When circumstances indicate that acceleration in grade placement is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents/guardians and all school personnel involved is imperative. Each student's placement will be considered individually and decisions will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to the student's growth and development. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

The final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Superintendent. Parental/guardian involvement in all steps of the process is vital. Parental/guardian consent to the acceleration of a student should be in writing.

If parents/guardians do not approve of a decision regarding the acceleration of the student, they may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. Further appeal, if necessary, may be made to the Board.

## **What is Acceleration?**

Acceleration is one of the most effective ways to meet high achieving and/or gifted students' educational needs. While DVUSD wants acceleration opportunities to be accessible to students whom it will benefit, we also acknowledge that decisions to accelerate must be well-reasoned and evidence-based. The decision to accelerate changes the path of a child's education and should be made carefully.

**Grade Based Acceleration** (see Whole Grade Acceleration – Grade skipping below) shortens the number of years a student spends in K-12 schooling. Students are placed by factors other than age and are given opportunities to master content faster.

Forms of grade-based acceleration include:

- Early admission to Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- Whole-grade skipping
- Early entrance into middle or high school

**Content Based Acceleration** (see Single-subject Acceleration on next page) provides students with content, skills, or understanding that is beyond their grade level or age. Students can work on the advanced content either within their current grade level, in a content replacement pull-out class for gifted identified and talented students (i.e. - SAGE), or in a classroom above their age grade level. Opportunities for content-based acceleration include:

- Single-subject acceleration
- Curriculum compacting \*
- Traditional School at Bellair
- **Aspire** - Deer Valley's Online Academy courses

\***Curriculum compacting** -- Standard curriculum is compressed into a shorter period of time, allowing the gifted and/or talented student to study related material while classmates master standard content.

# Acceleration Procedures

## **Whole Grade Acceleration (Grade Skipping)**

When a student displays significant academic, emotional, and social maturity, the child's age-grade might not be the optimal placement. Parents/guardians, school staff, and the child can initiate consideration for grade skipping in grades K-8.

The *Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)* will be used by all schools when considering grade skipping in grades K 8. It is a tool commonly used to guide decisions about whole-grade acceleration. The IAS provides a systematic, objective process by using data to inform the decision. It uses factors such as ability, motivation, attitude, and peer relationships in addition to ability, aptitude, and achievement. The result is a prediction of success with grade skipping, and a recommendation for or against whole-grade acceleration. *Early Entry testing for Kindergarten and First Grade utilizes alternate testing tools to determine eligibility.*

If parents/guardians feel whole-grade acceleration is in the best interest of the child they should complete a Request for Whole Grade Acceleration form and submit it to the principal. The principal will contact the Manager of Gifted & Advanced Academics to start the acceleration review process. Once the Manager of Gifted & Advanced Academics receives the signed copy of the parent request form, he or she will provide the IAS materials to the principal. The Manager of Gifted & Advanced Academics will provide guidance to the principal and school team with completing the Whole Grade Acceleration Process.

### **Timeline for Requesting Whole Grade Acceleration:**

Parents and schools requesting whole grade acceleration for the current school year must complete the Whole Grade Acceleration Process before the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Parents/guardians and schools requesting whole grade acceleration must do so before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter to be considered for skipping a whole grade level in the next school year. Once a parent/guardian completes the Request for Whole Grade Acceleration form and it has been received by the school principal, the principal will set up a meeting with the parents/guardians and the student's teacher(s) to discuss the request. If the decision is to proceed with the acceleration process, the school will have 30 school days (unless an extension is required) to go through the review process and submit the team's decision (to accelerate or not accelerate the student) to the Gifted Services Coordinator. Principals may not be able to consider summer requests until the necessary school staff returns from summer break.

### **Whole Grade Acceleration Process:**

If it is determined that the acceleration process is necessary, the principal will:

1. Request the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) and the Summary and Planning Record from the Gifted Services Manager, and ensure both are completed.
2. Form an Acceleration Team that includes the following people:
  - a. Principal
  - b. Current teacher
  - c. Receiving teacher
  - d. Parents/guardians
  - e. Counselor and/or school psychologist
  - f. Any specialists who work with the child (gifted, EL, special education, etc.), if applicable

3. Gather available assessment data including: Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement (required for the IAS completion). Options for each area include but are not limited to:
  - **Ability**- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities (WJ-Cog); these assessments may be administered by a gifted teacher or school psychologist. Parents/guardian may provide a report completed by a private psychologist if it meets the State of Arizona's criteria for gifted identification
  - **Aptitude**- DVUSD benchmark exams given above grade level (at the level being considered for placement)
  - **Achievement**- State standardized assessments, Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ-ACH); these tests may be administered by a school psychologist or qualified teacher
  
4. Schedule testing for any areas (ability, aptitude, and achievement) where scores are not already available. School psychologists, gifted specialists/teachers, and other qualified staff may administer the assessments.
  
5. Meet with the Acceleration Team to complete and discuss the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS).
  - The team will review the required data to complete the IAS including ability, aptitude, and achievement scores. Using the IAS, the team will make a recommendation for or against whole grade acceleration and the principal will contact the Manager of Gifted & Advanced Academics.
  - The team will use the IAS Summary and Planning Record to outline subsequent steps to ensure success. This process is detailed below.
  - Should the team not find 30 school days enough time to acquire the data to make an informed decision (i.e. the student is showing potential, but it is too early in the school year or a student is new to the school), the team will meet with the parents/guardians and recommend pausing the process and restarting after the grading period has ended and more data can be collected.
  - If the team recommends whole grade acceleration, the principal will forward the IAS Planning Record to the Manager of Gifted & Advanced Academics for review.
  - The Manager will then meet with the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment to review the documentation collected by the school's assessment team. The Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will forward the recommendation to the Superintendent, who will make the final recommendation for or against acceleration. Further appeal, if necessary, may be made to the DVUSD school Board.
  - If the recommendation is to accelerate, the goal is to make placement changes at the end of the current grading period, and allow the student to begin the next level in the new grading period.
  - If the decision is made not to skip a whole grade, the team should consider single subject acceleration. See the Single Subject Acceleration (Content Replacement) section below.

**Planning and Monitoring for Success:**

After a decision for whole grade acceleration, the team will complete the IAS Summary and Planning Report. This document summarizes all of the important information from the IAS and outlines:

- a step-by-step plan of the program change

- a transition plan to support student success
- a monitoring plan to ensure acceleration is beneficial

Each member of the Acceleration Team should receive a copy of the IAS Summary and Planning Report. One must also be placed in the student's cumulative file, and one must be sent to the Gifted Services Manager.

A follow-up meeting with the acceleration team should take place within eight weeks of the grade change. At this time, the team may establish a need for continued monitoring or other interventions to ensure success. A whole grade accelerated student may need a semester or longer to fully adjust to the new placement. During this time, staff should closely monitor the student for gaps in academic understanding or social difficulties. Should problems arise, factors other than the placement change may be contributing to the problem. Be sure to examine all issues and possible related factors before making further decisions.

### ***Whole Grade Acceleration When Moving to Another Building (K-6 to MS)***

For students at a K-6 school accelerating into middle school, parents/guardians and school will follow the identified acceleration process found on the preceding pages. However, the team should include all current core content teachers and a counselor (if appropriate) and administrator from both schools. The team should identify a contact person at the receiving school who will monitor the student's transition for the first semester and will coordinate interventions, if necessary.

### **Early Entry to Kindergarten**

Children who are 5 years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> are eligible to enroll in kindergarten. However, children who turn 5 between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> may be assessed to determine readiness for early entrance into kindergarten.

The intent of early entrance is to identify highly capable children who miss the regular August 31 cutoff for kindergarten entrance. Early entry is specifically geared for children whose curriculum achievement level far exceeds the norm. In order to be considered for the early entrance exception, the child must exhibit advanced skills in language arts, mathematics, written expressions and social emotional development as measured by tests administered by Deer Valley Unified School District.

No age exceptions will be granted after the start of the first day of the school year unless unique circumstances exist with children transferring from another school, state or country. In these unique circumstances, all rules and procedures described above will be followed. No screenings from other schools will be accepted. Early entry students to kindergarten must attend full day kindergarten.

### ***Thirty Day Classroom Observation Period***

The kindergarten teacher will observe the early enrolled kindergarten student's work habits and maturity in the classroom setting during the first thirty (30) calendar days enrolled. The classroom teacher will complete the Early Entry Readiness Checklist after the 30 day observation period and the appropriateness of placement will be discussed with site administration. The administrator and the teacher will meet with the parent/guardian to discuss the appropriateness of the placement at the end of the 30 days if it is determined that the child is struggling academically, socially, or behaviorally. The principal will make a determination about the continuation of placement in early entry kindergarten after reviewing all data. The administrator's decision is final.

For additional information about testing, please go to: <http://www.dvusd.org/Page/30453>

### **Early Entry to First Grade**

Children who are 6 years old on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> are eligible to enroll in first grade. However, children who turn 6 between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> may be assessed to determine readiness for early entrance into first grade.

The intent of early entrance is to identify highly capable children who miss the regular September 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff for first grade entrance. Early entry is specifically geared for children whose curriculum achievement level far exceeds the norm. In order to be considered for the early entrance exception, the child must exhibit advanced skills in language arts, mathematics, and in social, emotional and motor development as measured by tests administered by Deer Valley Unified School District.

No age exceptions will be granted after the start of the first day of the school year unless unique circumstances exist with children transferring from another school, state or country. In these unique circumstances, all rules and procedures described above will be followed. No screenings from other schools will be accepted.

### ***Thirty Day Classroom Observation Period***

If a student passes the first grade readiness test, the first grade teacher will observe the early enrolled student's work habits and maturity in the classroom setting during the first thirty (30) days enrolled. Appropriateness of placement will be communicated with parents/guardians and site administration. The principal and the teacher will meet with the parent/guardian at the end of the 30 days if it is determined that the child is struggling academically, socially, or behaviourally. The principal will make a determination about the continuation of placement in early entry first grade after reviewing all data. The administrator's decision is final.

For additional information about testing please go to: <http://www.dvUSD.org/Page/30454>.

### **Special Circumstances:**

#### **Late Entry to Dual Language Immersion Program**

Students are encouraged to enroll in the Mandarin or Spanish immersion programs in kindergarten and first grade. However, if space is available, parents/guardians may request that their student be granted late entry into the program on a trial basis. The principal will then form a team that includes the following people:

- Principal
- Current teacher
- Receiving DLI teacher
- DLI coordinator or DLI mentor teacher
- Any specialists who work with the child (gifted, EL, special education, etc.)
- Parents/guardians

The team will look at pertinent data, including but not limited to the state achievement test, grade level content, DVUSD benchmark exams, and grades from the current class. The team will also consider any gaps that may exist or develop because of skipped language content and create a plan to fill them. Finally, the team will develop a transition plan to support the student socially and emotionally and to monitor success throughout the remainder of the school year. It is recommended that the student demonstrate a strong desire to be in the program and have a willingness to study at home.

After nine weeks, the team will reconvene to discuss the student's progress, achievements, and

challenges. In collaboration, the team will make a recommendation regarding the student's continued participation in the program. The final decision rests with the school principal.

If the decision is made for the student to continue in the program, the DLI teacher will continue to monitor the student's progress and inform the parents/guardians if any remediation is needed to ensure the student's success.

### **Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies**

The Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies is a program with a combination of enrichment and acceleration provided to meet the unique needs of highly gifted students in grades 1-8. Students are typically learning at levels one to two grades above their current grade level. Because of this, **whole grade level acceleration is not available either into or within the Renaissance program.**

For students in a Renaissance program transitioning to a new school, DVUSD generally offers the full range of gifted services. While this is typically the standard practice, there may be exceptions. It's important to note that students typically remain in Renaissance programs; however, in cases where a student leaves a Renaissance placement due to severe anxiety or similar concerns, it may not be in their best interest to be placed in an accelerated class or grade level.

### **Single Subject Acceleration (Content Replacement)**

In the Deer Valley Unified School District, we recognize the importance of catering to the diverse learning needs of our students, including those who demonstrate advanced proficiency in specific subjects. To address this, our district offers a comprehensive approach to single-subject acceleration across various grade levels and subjects.

For mathematics, we provide opportunities for acceleration at all grade levels, allowing students to progress at a pace that matches their abilities.

Additionally, our district offers acceleration in English Language Arts (ELA) specifically tailored for Renaissance students, ensuring that their advanced language skills are nurtured and challenged.

In subjects where single-subject acceleration may not be feasible or appropriate, such as social studies or science, we employ various methods to support advanced learners. This includes enrichment activities designed to deepen their understanding and stimulate their curiosity, as well as access to our gifted program services, which provide specialized instruction and support.

Through this multifaceted approach, the Deer Valley Unified School District is committed to fostering the academic growth and success of all our students, including those with exceptional abilities and talents.

The final decision to accelerate a student in a single subject grade level rests with the school principal.

### **Online Learning Opportunities through Aspire, Deer Valley's Online Academy:**

**Online Classes-** [dvusd.org/online](https://dvusd.org/online)

The school administrator/counselor/designee contacts the Aspire, Deer Valley's Online Academy to begin the registration process for online classes. **Access to technology and internet is a requirement to be in an online class.** Although online learning provides flexibility, there are weekly due dates that must be

met. The Aspire, Deer Valley's Online Academy provides on-going support as needed to ensure success for the online teacher and the online students and families.

### **Online Middle School Courses**

When a student in a K-6 school takes online 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math, the Aspire, Deer Valley's Online Academy works with a school team to set up the PowerSchool sections and enroll the student. Students complete an orientation and the course within the regular 18-week semester timeline (there is a three-day delay at the beginning of each semester for set up). There is no charge for accelerated online Math at the middle school.

# GRADING & REPORTING

**A.R.S. § 15-516 states:**

A full-time teacher who is employed by a school district or a charter school is immune from personal liability for all acts done and actions taken in good faith in evaluating or grading any student.

**A.R.S. § 15-521 states:**

Every teacher shall:

1. Make student learning the primary focus of the teacher's professional time.
2. Hold pupils to strict account for disorderly conduct.
3. Take and maintain daily classroom attendance.
4. Make the decision to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school.  
Such decisions may be overturned only as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11.
5. Comply with all rules and policies of the governing board that relate to the duties prescribed in this section.

# Grading & Reporting

## **DVUSD Beliefs about Grading and Reporting**

All students must graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary success in college, careers and citizenship. Learning standards define what students must know and do to be college and career ready. The purpose of grading and reporting is to communicate students' academic progress toward meeting learning standards.

Effective communication between school and home is a contributing factor to academic success. A positive, productive teacher-parent/guardian relationship contributes to cooperative efforts toward a student's academic achievement. The following means of communication are used to keep parents/guardians informed of their children's progress.

## **Academic Integrity**

To be college, career, and community ready, students in the Deer Valley Unified School District are expected to demonstrate academic integrity. Academic integrity is all about being honest and fair in your schoolwork. It means doing work that is entirely your own and giving credit to others (including generative Artificial Intelligence tools) through proper citation when you use their ideas or words.

Academic dishonesty refers to any action that compromises the integrity of academic work or evaluation processes. This includes but is not limited to:

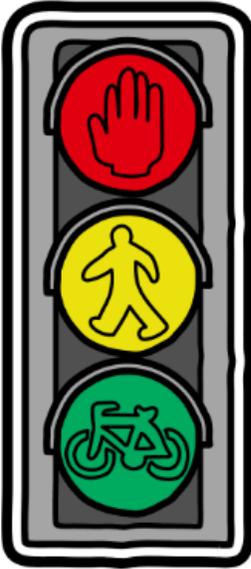
- Copying or stealing another person's work or data (plagiarism);
- Allowing another person to copy one's work;
- Doing another person's classwork;
- Creating more than one copy of one's work for distribution;
- Providing another person with the answers on tests or quizzes;
- Noncompliance with teachers' test-taking procedures;
- Unauthorized copying or development of software; and
- Unauthorized use of generative Artificial Intelligence.

If academic dishonesty (cheating) occurs, the behavioral infraction will be addressed separately from the student's academic progress. Initially, a zero will be entered into the grade book; however, the student will be given an opportunity to redo the original assignment or complete a comparable one to demonstrate mastery and potentially earn full credit. Disciplinary consequences will also be applied in alignment with the *Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook*. These may range from a conference and documented loss of credit to a suspension of up to five days, depending on the severity and frequency of the offense.

In the Deer Valley Unified School District, we are committed to providing our students with the best possible education while ensuring their safety, privacy, and well-being. As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance learning experiences, teachers may incorporate generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom for students.

Students must adhere to the specific guidelines provided in the assignment details. If teachers provide no guidance around the use of generative AI, students should follow the "restrictive" level (see chart below). Teachers should direct students to contact their teacher before submitting classwork if the student is unsure if the tool or website they are using is permitted on a specific assignment.

# Levels of Student AI Use



Level	Description	Example Instruction
<b>Restrictive</b> <b>No!</b>	AI tools are prohibited for the assignment, and all work must be the student's original creation.	"Do not use AI tools for this assignment. All content must be original, and any use of AI will be treated as plagiarism."
<b>Moderate</b> <b>Whoa!</b>	Students can use district-approved AI tools for specific parts of their assignments, such as brainstorming or initial research, but the core content and conclusions should be original. Proper citation is required for any AI-generated content.	"You can employ AI tools to assist brainstorming or initial research, however, the main content, arguments, and conclusions should be your own."
<b>Permissive</b> <b>Go!</b>	Students can utilize district-approved AI tools to assist in their assignments, such as generating ideas, proofreading, or organizing content. Proper citation is required for any AI-generated content.	"You may use AI tools as you see fit to enhance your assignment and demonstrate your understanding of the topic."

## Canvas

DVUSD uses Canvas to support student learning by digitally providing access to content resources along with facilitating the student submission and teacher review of student work. Designed with consideration for the needs of K-12 teachers and students, Canvas is an easy-to-use, cloud-based learning management system (LMS) that connects digital tools and resources teachers use into one simple place. It integrates seamlessly with learning apps, empowering teachers and students with streamlined access to tools that make teaching and learning easier and more engaging. Canvas provides a secure way for teachers to support ongoing learning, provide students access to course materials, monitor student learning progress, provide performance feedback, and transmit scores for select assignments to the PowerSchool gradebook.

Additional information about the Canvas LMS is available on the DVUSD website at [dvusd.org/canvas](https://dvusd.org/canvas) - including how parents & guardians can create a Canvas account to track student progress, view assignment scores, and receive teacher announcements.

Details on course grade display settings are available in [this Canvas tip sheet](#).

## Conferences

Conferences between parents/guardians and teachers are encouraged. These interactions promote involvement of both the home and the school, fosters mutual understanding of the student's progress, clarifies the student's strengths and needs, and allows for the exchange of information and ideas needed to strengthen and reinforce student performance. Conferences may be in person or on Zoom.

An alternative that many schools and/or teachers use is student-led conferences that engage students in their own learning and allow them to be an active part of the conference between a teacher and parent/guardian. While both formats take some time and effort, research is clear on the importance of parental/guardian involvement to student success. **Four early release days have been built into the K-8 DVUSD calendar to provide teachers with an opportunity to meet with parents/guardians.**

### **Gradebook Guidelines**

- Kindergarten teachers keep records of on-going formative assessments to document student progress.
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are to maintain final grades for the school year and are to be maintained in the student's cumulative permanent record.
- Teacher gradebooks are auditable documents and are maintained digitally by network services.
- Teachers should take no more than five (5) school days (with exceptions only for major projects and essays) from the assignment due date to enter its grade.
- At the end of the school year, Principals may still require their teachers to print grade books to turn in, however this is a campus decision.

### **Multi School/Grade Level Teams Teams are responsible for collaborating to establish general consistency among the following:**

- Creating Learning Progressions, Learning Intentions, Success Criteria, and Assessment Opportunities in relation to grade-level essential standards.
- Developing proficiency level rubrics based on Success Criteria.
- Designing Common Formative Assessments tied to Learning Progressions.
- Coordinating the skills, method, and schedule for re-engagement opportunities. (Tier 2)
- Determining the date and procedure for reassessment.

### **Parent Communication**

Deer Valley Unified School District strongly values a parent/guardian's role in a child's education. It is through communication that teachers can help parents/guardians stay involved. In addition, ongoing communication helps parents/guardians stay informed about their child's academic progress. Parent/guardian contact or attempt to contact parents/guardians by phone, conference, or e-mail should be kept on file by the teacher. Records should include the date, student name, parent name, phone number, and notes concerning the contents and results of the conversation. For more information, contact your campus administrator.

### **Progress Reports**

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. It is part of the district standard that parents/guardians are provided a report of student progress each quarter. Student grades can be accessed at any time during the school year on Powerschools. In an effort to "go green", all progress reports will be available digitally unless specifically requested in hard copy from the teacher.

It is important to note that it is the responsibility of both parents/guardians and students to check PowerSchool regularly to stay informed about academic progress throughout the quarter. While some schools may provide hard copies of progress reports mid-quarter, families may also request a printed copy from the school office if needed.

### **Review of Student Grades in PowerSchool**

Deer Valley Unified School District provides parents/guardians with a means of staying up-to-date with their child's progress. PowerSchool is a secure website used by classroom teachers to input and maintain student grades electronically. All parents/guardians and students have the opportunity to use PowerSchool to access attendance, activities, assignments, and grades (both current and historical) throughout the school year.

### **Role of Professional Learning Community (PLC)**

A professional learning community is a group of educators that meet regularly and work collaboratively to improve teaching practices and the achievement of students.

The questions that drive the work of PLC's are:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- How will we respond if some students do not learn?
- How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

The PLC process is vital for the ongoing development and refinement of fair and accurate grading practices. Through collaborative analysis of student work, discussions about the impact of accommodations, and the sharing of effective strategies for scaffolding and differentiation, teachers continuously strengthen their assessment methods. PLCs provide a structured space to review grading practices, ensuring they are aligned with the principles of meaningful access to essential standards and learning progressions that accurately reflect student learning.

### **Special Program Grade Reporting**

Grade reporting for students enrolled in Special Programs—including those with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Plan, or designated as English Learners (ELs)—shall occur at the same regular intervals as for students in the general education population. Furthermore, documentation of progress toward IEP goals must be communicated to families on a quarterly basis, consistent with the district's grading schedule.

### **Timely Reporting of Grades**

Part of a teacher's professional responsibility is the timely reporting of grades and feedback. Teachers must grade student assignments as soon as possible. Timely reporting of grades and feedback to students is crucial for their academic growth and development. When students receive prompt feedback on their assignments and assessments, they can identify their strengths and weaknesses, understand the areas that require improvement, and address any misconceptions before they become deeply ingrained. Additionally, prompt grading and feedback fosters a sense of accountability and motivation in students, encouraging them to stay on track and actively engage with the course material.

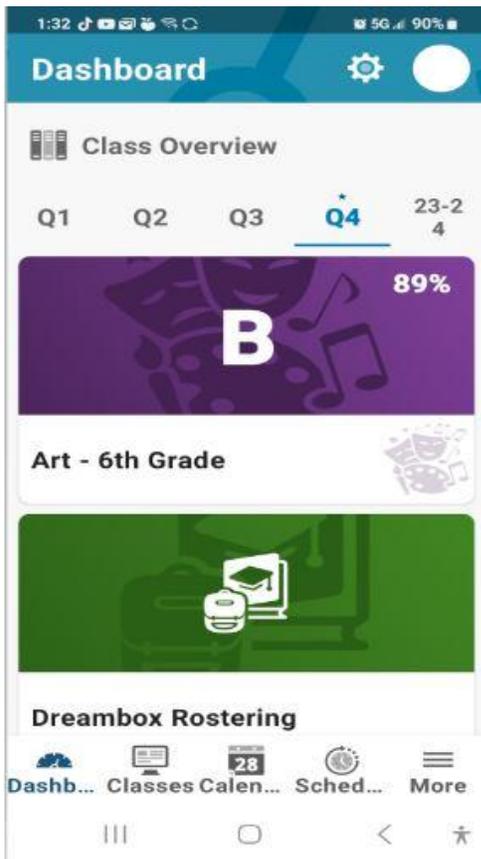
# PowerTeacher Pro

## How PowerTeacher Pro Gradebook Calculates Grades

The internal working of PowerTeacher Pro Gradebook calculates grades based on total points, taking into consideration any category weight. PowerTeacher Pro Gradebook displays the percentage for informational purposes only. The bottom of the report shows a breakdown of each Category Summary.

## **Viewing student PowerSchool (PS) information on the App.**

1. Download the Gradebook app: **PowerSchool Mobile App**. Parents need to use the district code of JZFD to access Deer Valley's PowerSchool account.
2. Parents use their PS parent username and password to access the App. If they do not have their login information, they should contact their students' school to access the login information.
3. Students can follow the same process using their student-specific login information to see their own grades.
4. Once a parent is logged into the PowerSchool Mobile App, they have the ability to navigate to icons that will allow them to see attendance, assignment scores, standards, and course grades. From the dashboard icon parents can view the most current course grades for the student. To view individual assignment information, parents would click on the grade for a specific course, and assignment information will populate. The Class icon offers a comprehensive view of class, absences, and grades by period. Parents can view by grid, S1 or S2. The Schedule icon offers a view of the student's daily schedule. Clicking on the More icon, parents can manage notifications, and manage student profiles. If parents encounter problems with the app, it is best to remove it from their device, and reinstall.



Per.	Course	Abs	Q1	Q2
CSB...	Art - 6th Grade		A 94%	9
CSB...	Dreambox Ro...		...	
CSB...	ELA Lab180		...	
CSB...	English Langu...		C 71%	6
CSB...	Math - 6th Gr...		C 77%	9
CSB...	Math Lab180		...	
CSB...	Music - 6th G...		A 93%	7

The screenshot shows the 'Classes' screen of the PowerSchool Mobile App. It displays a table with columns for Period (Per.), Course, Absences (Abs), and Quarter 1 (Q1) grades. The table lists several courses including Art - 6th Grade, Dreambox Rostering, ELA Lab180, English Language, Math - 6th Grade, Math Lab180, and Music - 6th Grade. The bottom navigation bar includes icons for Dashboard, Classes, Calendar, Schedule, and More.

## Viewing student PowerSchool (PS) information on the PowerSchool website

1. The website has additional features that the parent/guardian can access that are different from the PS App. **Go to the following link:** <https://ps.dvusd.org/public/home.html>.
2. Using their username and password credentials parents can access students schedule, grades, attendance, their DVUSD grade history, and teacher and school communications.
3. They can also email the students' teachers from the PS website.
4. To look at assignment scores or additional grading points parents will click on the grade in the grade column.
5. To access the standards measured during the grading term, once logged into PowerSchool, click on the Standards Grades tab and click on the course name to expand to the standards and their scores for each term.

PowerSchool SIS Welcome | Help | Site Map | Sign Out

Navigation: Grades and Attendance, Grade History, Attendance History, Teacher Comments, School Bulletin, Class Registration, My Schedule, School Information

Desktop Code: JZFD  
Download on the App Store  
GET IT ON Google play

### Grades and Attendance:

Grades and Attendance | **Standards Grades**

Exp	Last Week					This Week					Course	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Absences	Tardies
	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F							
CSB(M-F)											Art - 6th Grade Email [redacted] - Rm: B117	A 94	A 90	A 100	B 89 S	0	0
CSB(M-F)											P.E. - 6th Grade Email [redacted] - Rm: L107	A 100	A 100	A 100	A 100	0	0
CSB(M-F)											Music - 6th Grade Email [redacted] - Rm: B104	A 93	C 79	B 84	C 75	0	0
CSB(M-F)											Social Studies - 6th Grade Email [redacted] - Rm: C106	C 79 E	F 46	C 74	[1]	0	0
CSB(M-F)											Science - 6th Grade Email [redacted] - Rm: C106	B 81 E	F 51	B 84	[1]	0	0
CSB(M-F)											English Language Arts 6 Email [redacted] - Rm: C106	C 79 S	D 80	B 83 S	C 78	0	0
CSB(M-F)											Math - 6th Grade Email [redacted] - Rm: C106	C 77 S	A 96 S	C 75	B 83	0	0
CSB(M-F)											Math Lab100 Email [redacted] - Rm: C107				[1]	0	0
CSB(M-F)											Dreambox Rostering Email [redacted] - Rm: C107				[1]	0	0
CSB(M-F)											ELL Lab100 Email [redacted] - Rm: C108				[1]	0	0
AM-PM(M-F)											Home Room Email [redacted] - Rm: C106	0	0	0	[1]	0	0
Attendance Totals															0	0	

Show dropped classes also

PowerSchool SIS Welcome | Help | Site Map | Sign Out

Navigation: Grades and Attendance, Grade History, Attendance History, Teacher Comments, School Bulletin, Class Registration, My Schedule, School Information

Desktop Code: JZFD  
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### Standards Grades:

Grades and Attendance | **Standards Grades** Year: 23-24

Expand All Collapse All

Current Classes

- CSB(M-F)Art - 6th Grade- 23-24
- CSB(M-F)Dreambox Rostering- 23-24
- CSB(M-F)ELA Lab180- 23-24
- CSB(M-F)English Language Arts 6- 23-24
- CSB(M-F)Math - 6th Grade- 23-24

Standards	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Y1
Math.S.EE.A.1 Write and evaluate numerical expressions involving whole-number exponents. 6.EE.A.1	2	--	3	--	3
Math.S.EE.A.2 Write, read, and evaluate algebraic expressions. 6.EE.A.2	--	--	3	--	3
Math.S.EE.A.2c Evaluate expressions given specific values of their variables. Include expressions that arise from formulas used to solve mathematical problems & problems in real-world context. 6.EE.A.2c	2	--	3	3	3
Math.S.G.A.1 Find the area of right triangles, other triangles, special quadrilaterals, and polygons by composing into rectangles or decomposing into triangles and other shapes; apply these techniques to solve mathematical problems and problems in real-world context. 6.G.A.1	3	--	--	--	3
Math.S.G.A.2 Find the volume of a right rectangular prism with fractional edge lengths by packing it with unit cubes of the appropriate unit fraction edge lengths, and show that the volume is the same as would be found by multiplying the edge lengths of the prism. Understand and use the formula $V = B \cdot h$ . 6.G.A.2	3	--	--	--	3
Math.S.NS.B.3 Fluently add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using a standard algorithm for each operation. 6.NS.B.3	--	3	--	4	4
Math.S.RP.A.1 Understand the concept of a ratio as comparing two quantities multiplicatively or joining/composing the two quantities in a way that preserves a multiplicative relationship. Use ratio language to describe a ratio relationship between two quantities. 6.RP.A.1	2	3	--	--	3
Math.S.RP.A.3 Use ratio & rate reasoning to solve problems. 6.RP.A.3	--	3	--	--	3
Math.S.RP.A.3b Solve unit rate problems. 6.RP.A.3b	--	1	--	--	1
Math.S.RP.A.3d Use ratio reasoning to convert measurement units. 6.RP.A.3d	--	1	--	--	1

CSB(M-F)Math Lab180- 23-24 Kraemer, Jennifer L

# DVUSD Grading Practices: Philosophy and Goals

Ensuring fair and credible evaluation of student learning from classroom to classroom and school to school will directly impact and improve student learning. Students should be held accountable for their learning. We also recognize that grading practices can contribute to long-term student success. An emphasis on the evaluation of content standards and timely, constructive feedback are cornerstones to grading that reflect student growth and development.

## DVUSD Grading Goals

Grading practices in DVUSD will encompass the following goals:

- Grades are equitable, accurate, specific, and consistent.
- Grades reflect academic learning and are not used as a punitive tool.
- Grades report the status of academic learning, not behavioral conduct.
- Assessment and grading provide actionable feedback to inform student learning.
- Grading takes into account that learning is a process that takes place over time and at different speeds for different students.
- The grading system is coordinated and consistent among common courses.

## GRADING PRACTICES: PROCEDURES

### Grading Expectations for Staff (K–12)

To support ongoing communication and ensure all students are progressing toward learning goals, teachers are expected to regularly enter grades into the electronic gradebook for each student and subject/course. These grades allow students, families, and support staff to monitor academic progress in a timely and meaningful way.

### What is a “Meaningful Grade”?

Meaningful grades contribute to the overall course grade and provide insight into student learning. These grades allow students, families, and support staff to monitor academic progress in a timely and meaningful way. **The following two categories represent the only types of meaningful grades that impact the overall course grade:**

- **Assessments** (e.g., tests, performance assessments, reports, unit or module assessments, quizzes, long-term projects, short-term projects, presentations, capstone projects, research papers, and lab reports, exit tickets)
- **Coursework** (e.g., assignments, classwork, discussions)

## Grade Entry Frequency Based on Class Schedule

Class Meeting Frequency	Minimum Grade Entry Requirement
Meets 4–5 times per week	At least one meaningful grade each week
Meets 2–3 times per week	At least one meaningful grade every other week
Meets once per week	At least one meaningful grade every third week

### Assessment Category Entries

#### Minimum Graded Assessments

- Grades 1–8 (Quarterly Courses): **Minimum of 4 graded assessments per quarter**
- Semester-Long Courses (All Grades): **Minimum of 8 graded assessments per semester**

These minimums help ensure a consistent and accurate reflection of student performance over time.

### Cross-Content Grades

Teachers may apply grades across multiple content areas when appropriate. For example, an interdisciplinary project that integrates writing and science skills may be reflected in both subject gradebooks.

## GRADING PRACTICES: GRADE SCALES

### K-2 Grade Scale

Students in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards in core content and special area classes using the following scale.

- 4 = Applies grade level skills with greater depth or complexity
- 3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency
- 2 = Approaches grade level proficiency
- 1 = Displays a significant lack of grade level proficiency

Students in 1st and 2nd grades will receive marks for their overall performance in core content and special area classes using the following letter grade scale.

- E = Excellent (80%-100%)
- S = Satisfactory (60%-79%)
- N = Needs Improvement (42%-59%)
- U = Under Performing (0%-41%)

### 3-6 Grade Scale

Students in 3rd through 6th grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards in core content and special area classes using the following scale.

- 4 = Highly Proficient
- 3 = Proficient

- 2 = Partially Proficient
- 1 = Minimally Proficient

Students in 3rd through 12th grades will receive marks for their overall performance in core content and special area classes using the following letter grade scale.

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 0-59%

Grades of “D” and above are passing marks. A final course grade of “F” indicates that the student has failed the course.

## **GRADING PRACTICES: GRADE CALCULATIONS**

### **Overall Standards Grades**

Overall standards grades will be determined by the average of the most recent three proficiency level marks a student receives for each standard.

All teachers are required to tag and enter proficiency levels for standards for gradebook entries in the assessment category.

### **Kindergarten**

Students in kindergarten will not receive an overall course grade for each subject area. They will instead receive scores for each standard that was measured during the marking period.

### **1-2 Overall Course Grades**

Overall course grades for students in 1st and 2nd grades will be determined by the average of all overall standards scores for the grading period. The average will be converted to a letter grade of E, S, N, or U.

### **3-6 Overall Course Grades**

Overall course grades for students in grades 3-12 will be calculated from the average of the student’s assignment scores (assessments, coursework).

Teachers will enter scores for assignment entries in the gradebook based upon student performance of the standards.

Highly Proficient A 100%–90%			Proficient B 89%–80%		Proficient C 79%–70%	
100–97	96–94	93–90	89–85	84–80	79–75	74–70
<b>All 4's on standards</b>	All 4's except for one 3	Mostly 4's with some 3's and/or 2's	Mostly 3's with some 4's <b>All 3's on standards</b>	Mostly 3's and 4's with a 2	Mostly 3's with some 2's	Mostly 2's with 3's and/or 4's
Partially Proficient D 69%–60%			Minimally Proficient F 59%–50%			
69–65		64–60	59–56		55–50	
Mostly 2's and 3's with a 1		<b>All 2's on standards</b>	Mostly 2's and some 1's		<b>All 1's on standards</b>	
No Evidence						
49% - 0%						

### Grade Categories

All 1st-6th grade teacher gradebooks will utilize the following categories in the gradebook.

**ASSESSMENT:** This category includes all items used to measure a student’s proficiency toward the learning standards once the student has had sufficient practice and at a specified point in time. This category can include tests, performance assessments, reports, unit or module assessments, quizzes, long-term projects, short-term projects, presentations, capstone projects, research papers, and lab reports. Some district assessments may be appropriate to include in the Assessment category. Refer to the District Assessment Calendar (<https://url.dvusd.org/K8AssessmentCalendar>) for guidance on which assessments may be included as a grade in the grade book. This is a school decision and must be applied to all students in the grade level or course at the school.

**COURSEWORK:** This category includes formative work that provides students with the opportunity to learn content and skills and to receive feedback on their learning. Coursework is assigned to provide meaningful, independent practice, reinforce learning targets, and extend learning. This category can include in-class assignments, exit tickets, checks-for-understanding, and daily activities.

**PRACTICE:** This category includes student work that a student completes while in the process of learning specific skills. Student work that is done inside and outside of the classroom, such as classwork and homework, falls into this category.

## Category Weights

All 1st-12th grade teacher gradebooks will utilize the following weights for each category in the gradebook.

<b>ASSESSMENT</b> CATEGORY	80%
<b>COURSEWORK</b> CATEGORY	20%
<b>PRACTICE</b> CATEGORY	0%

## Procedures for Incomplete Grades – Grades 1-6

If incomplete grades are to be issued in academic or special area classrooms, there must be:

- Prior approval from the principal
- Documentation from the teacher with a completion plan
- A reasonable timeline set, generally not to exceed 10 school days, for the student to complete all required coursework as outlined in the completion plan

**It is the responsibility of the teacher to notify the Registrar and parents/guardians of the changed grade and a new report card will be printed and sent home.** Teachers should include the reason for the grade change, new percentage, and letter grade. Communication to parents about the changed grade is the responsibility of the teacher, not the Registrar.

NOTE: Every effort should be made so a DVUSD student does not have the option to choose to fail by not completing work or turning in assignments. It is the expectation that all possible interventions will be implemented to assist students struggling with these expectations. Campus procedures should reflect a specific process for identifying and supporting these students per the determined intervention process. Parents/guardians should be a part of this process.

## DVUSD Report Cards

The purpose of the student report card is to communicate formally to parents/guardians their student's performance on the grade-level instructional objectives taught during each of the four nine-week grading periods. The DVUSD report cards (grades K-6) are to reflect each student's individual growth and acquisition of the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards.

- Progress in Kindergarten is indicated through Performance Levels (1-4). Kindergarten teachers may opt to use the PowerTeacher Pro Gradebook or PowerSchool.
- Progress in Grades 1-2 is indicated through Academic Letter Grades (E-U) and Performance Levels (1-4).
- Progress in Grades 3-6 is indicated through Academic Letter Grades (A-F) and Performance Levels (1-4).

In addition to the overall percentage and letter grades reported on the elementary K-6 report card, parents/guardians will also find performance levels. Performance levels on the DVUSD K-6 report card

indicate a student's level of proficiency in relation to grade level standards and content. Performance levels are not correlated with traditional letter grades such as A, B, C, D.

**The following descriptors can be used to interpret performance levels on the report card.**

Students in Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards using the following scale.

- 4 = Applies grade level skills with greater depth or complexity
- 3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency
- 2 = Approaches grade level proficiency
- 1 = Displays a significant lack of grade level proficiency

Students in 3rd through 6th grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards using the following scale.

- 4 = Highly Proficient
- 3 = Proficient
- 2 = Partially Proficient
- 1 = Minimally Proficient

**Grade Changes After Grades Are Stored**

Once grades are stored and archived in PowerSchool, teachers have 10 days to make changes to the grades by contacting the school registrar. Teachers must ensure that the gradebook is updated as well. After 10 days, grades may be changed for the following reasons only.

- 1) Calculation Error
- 2) Course Extension
- 3) Grade Enhancement

## **GRADING PRACTICES: ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS AND SOCIAL SKILLS**

### **Citizenship**

Citizenship marks in grades K-8 will continue to use the E/S/N/U scale in the 2024-25 school year.

- E = Excellent
- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

### **Grade Penalties For Behaviors**

DVUSD uses grades to indicate academic performance. Behavioral skills and attitudes are an important part of a student's development. Behavioral issues will be handled through other means, such as assigning consequences, conferences, loss of privileges, or disciplinary measures. In order to accurately reflect a student's academic performance level, **deductions of scores or grades will not be applied for student misbehaviors.**

## **Extra Credit**

Just as imposing grade penalties for poor behavior distorts academic grades, so does awarding higher grades or extra credit for good behavior. Extra credit renders an academic grade less accurate since it is not based upon performance of the standards, but rather on compliant behaviors. **No extra credit will be awarded.**

## **Terms Defined**

**Missing Work:** An assignment is considered as missing work when it is not submitted by the due date.

**Late Work:** An assignment is considered late work when the assignment is not submitted by the due date that was established, but is submitted within the late work timeframe listed below.

**Classwork:** An assignment expected to be submitted within the class period. Teachers may adjust assignments from being considered classwork to the designation as homework for all students or specific students.

**Homework:** An assignment expected to be completed fully or partially at home independently. Homework can also be a learning activity assigned as practice to be completed outside of class.

**Long Term Project Assignment:** A project/assignment due more than 1 week after the date assigned is considered a long-term project assignment. Long term project assignments cannot be submitted late, unless an arrangement has been approved by the teacher.

Learning is a journey that is often not linear. Some students learn content and skills quickly, while others may require more time or feedback to learn. In order to accurately reflect a student's academic performance level, teachers will accept late work for full credit if the specified parameters are met.

**Missing work** will be treated as such:

- The assignment will be marked with the "Missing" special code in the gradebook
- A zero ("0") will be entered as the score for the assignment in the gradebook (grades 3-12)
- No Evidence (NE) will be entered for the standards attached to the assignment
- If the work is submitted as Late Work (see terms below), the zero ("0") assignment score will be changed to reflect the student's actual score with no deductions or penalties
- If an assignment is not submitted as Late Work or does not meet the criteria for Late Work, schools may choose to assign a score between 0% and 49%, in accordance with their individual site-level grading practices. This is a school-based decision and not a district requirement or expectation.

In order for **Late Work** to be accepted, students must meet the following parameters:

- Assignment is not due within the class period
- Assignment is not a timed activity (such as a Quick-Write Essay)
- Assignment is not a Long-Term assignment (over multiple weeks)
- Assignment is turned in within the following time frame
  - K-2 Grades: By the end of the quarter
  - 3-8 Grades: Within 5 school days after the end of the unit of learning/project, assignment

If a student meets the above criteria, he/she will be issued full credit for the work submitted (no added penalties or caps on the grade that can be earned). The teacher will mark the student's assignment with the "Late" special code. If the assignment is an assessment, the proficiency level of the standards attached will be entered.

*Please note: Accommodations included in a student's IEP, 504, or EL plan may supersede the above Late Work procedures. Consult with the student's Service Coordinator, counselor, or the student's support team.*

## Reassessment

### Terms Defined

**Retake:** The student completes another assessment of the same learning targets. The assessment to be retaken may be in the same format or a different format. The higher of the two scores will be entered in the gradebook.\*

**Reperformance:** The student will be reassessed on the same learning target later in the marking period as part of the instruction cycle, thus providing an additional measurement of the learning. All reperformance scores related to the learning target will be entered in the gradebook.

Retakes or reperformance of essential skills is important to support learning of critical skills and filling gaps in learning. Retakes are allowed for assessments in which scores are entered into the gradebook, for full credit, if reperformance opportunities will not be available during the marking period or in addition to reperformance opportunities during the marking period.

In order to earn a retake opportunity, a student must complete all of the following:

- Complete all formative coursework related to the content/skill assessed
- Consult with the teacher
- Submit a reassessment plan or application, if required by the teacher

A reassessment plan must be scheduled within the following time frames:

- K-2nd Grades: Until the week before the end of the marking period
- 3rd-6th Grades: Within 10 school days after receiving the assessment score
- 7th and 8th Grades: Within 10 school days after receiving the assessment score
- 9-12th Grades: With 5 school days of receiving the assessment score, the student must communicate with the teacher to create a reassessment plan

## Grading in Special Programs

### English Learners

A student's progress in the content area will be measured according to the students' English proficiency level. Using the content area/ELP crosswalk, the classroom teacher can determine the appropriate measure of mastery for the content area standard using the ELP performance indicators outlined within the ELP standards. ELP Standards and their Performance Indicators (PI) will be embedded into the content curriculum. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure EL students learn the content through the use of English Language strategies.

## **Pre-Emergent/Emergent**

### **Identification and Placement:**

All Pre-Emergent/Emergent students, identified through the AZELLA Placement test, who are new to the country and/or in their first full academic year in an English Learner (EL) program, will be graded on core course content (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) using a Pass/Fail grading system once the results of their AZELLA scores are received.

### **Notification Requirement:**

Parents of Pre-Emergent/Emergent students must be notified of the intention to place the student on the Pass/Fail grade book. This notification should clearly outline the reasons for the Pass/Fail grading approach and provide an understanding of the process.

### **Scaffolding Support:**

All Pre-Emergent/Emergent students, regardless of their grading status, will receive documented scaffolds to support their learning. These scaffolds are designed to provide additional assistance and guidance tailored to the individual needs of the student.

Pre-Emergent/Emergent students as identified by AZELLA placement or reassessment should only be held accountable to core content standards. Core content standards are those that have been identified by PLCs as essential in order to be prepared for the next grade or content level.

### **Duration of Pass/Fail Grade Book:**

Students placed on the Pass/Fail grade book may remain on this system for up to one full academic year, not to exceed five quarters. The EL Specialist and the General Education Teacher must meet at the end of each quarter to determine if the student should continue on the Pass/Fail Grade Book. Collaboratively, the teachers will decide if the student will continue on the Pass/Fail Grade Book for another quarter or transition to a traditional grade book based on the preponderance of evidence of completed assignments and assessments with scaffolds using the Pass/Fail Rubric.

### **Pass/Fail Rubric:**

General Education Teachers will use the EL Pass/Fail Grading Rubric (pages 72 and 73) along with scaffolds for assignments and assessments in core content areas.

### **Grading by EL Specialists/SEI Teachers:**

Any grades assigned by EL Specialists/SEI Teachers during targeted language instruction will be based on a traditional gradebook format. This ensures that students receive comprehensive and accurate assessments of their academic progress in alignment with EL proficiency standards.

## **Basic (B)**

Students as identified by AZELLA placement or reassessment can be held accountable to core content standards with documented scaffolds. Core content standards are those that have been identified by PLCs as essential in order to be prepared for the next grade or content level. Basic EL Students will receive documented scaffolds to support their learning. These scaffolds are designed to provide additional assistance and guidance tailored to the individual needs of the EL student.



## K-2nd Grade EL PreEmergent/Emergent Grading Rubric for Pass/Fail Grade Book

Each student assignment/assessment will be graded on Essential Standards using the rubric below. Assignments/assessments must be scaffolded for pre-emergent/ emergent new-to-country students. This rubric ensures that the student is assessed on **completion of scaffolded assignment/assessment and engagement**, rather than penalized for limited language skills/language proficiency.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Scaffolded Assignment/ Assessment</b>  (Coursework/ Assessment)	Student completes the entire task using provided supports (e.g., visuals, word banks, sentence frames). Shows strong effort and engagement, even if responses contain language errors.	Student completes most of the task with the use of supports. Demonstrates effort but may leave some sections incomplete or require minimal prompting. Language errors do not affect scoring.	Student attempts part of the task but may rely heavily on prompting or scaffolds. Some effort is visible, but task completion is inconsistent.	Student provides little to no attempt, even with scaffolding and frequent prompting and support. Engagement is low, and effort is not evident.
<b>Name:</b>			<b>Date:</b>	

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## 3rd/8th Grade EL PreEmergent/Emergent Student Grading Rubric for Pass/Fail Grade Book

Each student assignment/assessment will be graded using the rubric below. Assignments/assessments must be scaffolded for pre-emergent/emergent new-to-country students. This rubric ensures that the student is assessed on **completion of scaffolded assignment/assessment and engagement**, rather than penalized for limited language skills/language proficiency.

Criteria	10 pts	8 pts	6pts	5pts
<b>Activity Engagement</b> (Based on Language Usage, not Participation)	Actively engaged, contributed ideas (with or without language support), and demonstrated understanding through actions or simple language.	Engaged consistently, shared relevant thoughts, and showed a good understanding.	Engaged occasionally, offered basic responses, and demonstrated a limited understanding.	Did not engage in the activity.
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>10 pts</b>	<b>8 pts</b>	<b>6pts</b>	<b>5pts</b>
<b>Scaffolded Assignment/ Assessment</b> (Coursework/ Assessment)	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment to a high standard, and demonstrated exceptional understanding (considering language limitations).	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment meeting all requirements, and demonstrated a solid understanding (considering language limitations).	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment but it was of poor quality and demonstrated a basic understanding (considering language limitations).	Did not complete any of the scaffolded assignment/assessment.
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>Total Score:</b> _____ /20 <b>pts</b>	

### **Intermediate (I)**

Students as identified by AZELLA placement or reassessment can be held accountable to core content standards with documented scaffolds, as needed. Core content standards are those that have been identified by PLCs as essential in order to be prepared for the next grade or content level.

Students should be assessed based on their proficiency level as indicated by the AZELLA. Depending on the purpose of the assessment, assessments for EL students may be scaffolded to allow the student to demonstrate content knowledge regardless of English language skills. Expectations must remain high for EL students.

### **For All Levels of Proficiency for EL Students:**

When a student is not demonstrating grade level understanding, general education teachers will meet with the EL Specialist on their campus to develop a plan of EL scaffolds and strategies to be implemented in the classroom to help the student access the content. EL scaffolds and strategies are utilized to facilitate student participation and comprehension of course work. If the student is still not progressing academically, then the EL scaffolds or strategies need to be revisited with the support of the Teacher EL Specialist or EL CIAS. As is true with any student, ELs can fail to demonstrate mastery of grade level standards and content. However, general education teachers must provide evidence of student progress monitoring and documentation of the scaffolds that have been *consistently* implemented to make content accessible for the EL student. This ensures that the student's language proficiency level is not the reason for the grade assignment.

### **Monitor Students**

Students who have scored proficient on the AZELLA and exited the EL program within the last four academic years can still receive EL scaffolds, and grades can be a reflection of scaffolded assignments when needed.

### **Gifted Students**

- Ensure grade level material is learned.
- If students are doing enrichment material only, the grade still represents mastery of on-grade level material. A teacher may choose to use an addendum to the report card, such as a rubric, to provide feedback on advanced material. Feedback may also be given in the comment section of the report card. This typically applies to gifted cluster classrooms.
- If the course name indicates advanced material (Algebra I Honors, IB MYP, Advanced Science, English 1-2), then teachers grade against those advanced standards.
- If the student has been accelerated (in a content area) by one grade level or more, he or she will be graded against the same standards as his/her older classmates. (e.g. SAGE, Walk-Up Math, or Walk-Up ELA/Reading)

Adapted from Wormeli, R (2007-2008). *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*.

### **Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

All students with an IEP receive grades based upon grade level standards. If a student is taking the alternate assessment and receives modified instruction, the teacher of record enters a letter grade and checks the appropriate performance level from 1-4. The teacher of record will then check the "Modification" box. For all other students with disabilities, the teacher of record will enter the grade, check the appropriate performance level from 1-4, and check the "Accommodation" box.

The teacher of record for a student with an IEP is the one who delivers core instruction aligned with grade-level academic standards. Only properly certified teachers are authorized to assign grades for students with an IEP.

### **Homebound Students**

For homebound students, the teacher of record is always the campus teacher. Homebound or hospitalized means a student who is capable of profiting from academic instruction but is unable to attend school due to illness, disease, accident, or other health conditions. This is a student who has been examined by a medical doctor and who is certified by that doctor as being unable to attend on-campus classes for a period of not less than three school months during the school year. This also includes a student who is able of profiting from academic instruction but is unable to attend school regularly due to chronic or acute health problems, who has been examined by a medical doctor and who is certified by that doctor as being unable to attend campus classes for an intermittent period of time totaling three school months during a school year.

A.R.S.15-761 and Arizona school code 1995 15-901.

### **Homebound Teacher Responsibilities**

- Homebound Instructor will contact the counselor/Special Education Strategist at the student's school to assist in coordinating the student's initial services meeting within one school day of contact from the school.
- The Homebound Instructor is responsible for providing quality instruction, utilizing appropriate materials and techniques to keep the student working at his/her assigned grade level. This will be done in unison with the classroom teacher. Completed assignments will be returned to the classroom teacher on a weekly basis.
- The Homebound Instructor will work with the classroom teacher to submit grades for the student at the end of each quarter so the student's transcripts/records will accurately reflect his/her grades and performance. The Homebound Instructor will provide assignments, assessments, and documentation to the classroom teacher to support the final grade.
- The Homebound Instructor is responsible for the coordination of administering classroom, state, and district assessments.
- The Homebound Teacher will ask for a meeting with appropriate school staff and the parent/guardian if the process is not working or the student is not progressing with passing grades.

### **Classroom Teacher of Record Responsibilities**

- The classroom teacher determines the plan of action for assignments missed prior to the initiation of homebound services, in conjunction with the parent/guardian, as homebound does not go backwards and cover work prior to the initiation of services start date.
- Teachers must adhere to the 504 plan or IEP accommodations/modifications.
- The classroom teacher(s) must attend initial services meeting and additional meetings related to homebound instruction.
- The classroom teacher will ensure that the student has the appropriate textbooks, materials and assignments. Classroom teachers will provide hard copies of assignments, power points, assessments etc., in lieu of electronic copies except when the student is enrolled in Deer Valley Online courses.
- The school is responsible for providing technology to enable the student to access the curriculum.
- The classroom teacher is the teacher of record and will provide the homebound instructor a basic outline of concepts covered, materials, notes, answer keys and tests on a weekly basis.

- The classroom teacher works closely with the homebound instructor to provide a final grade to the student.

## Accommodations/Modifications/Acceleration

Accommodations are changes to the learning environment that allow students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum/standards and participate in all tiers of instruction. Accommodations do not change what a student is expected to learn; they change the approach to learning. This includes students with 504s and IEPs.

Ensuring fair and accurate grading for all students, including those with IEPs and accommodations, requires a collaborative effort between general and special education teachers using the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process. This partnership is critical for developing a shared understanding of individual student needs and aligning grading practices with essential standards, learning progressions, and necessary accommodations. By working together, educators will implement strategies that allow every student to demonstrate their learning effectively.

Accommodations:

- Are changes in instruction that enable children to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom or assessment/testing setting
- Are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's academic or behavioral deficits
- Do not reduce learning expectations

Accommodations can be provided for:

- Instructional method and materials
- Assignments and assessments
- Learning environment
- Time demands and scheduling
- Special communication systems

Examples of Accommodations:

- Reading a test to a student (with no additional help). This does not apply to reading or state testing such as AzSci or Math state assessment (unless noted on IEP).
- Allowing extra time to take the same test or complete the same assignment
- Signing an assignment book
- Breaking down work into smaller segments, but still expecting all elements to be completed
- Preferential seating
- Providing an extra set of books at home
- Home-School communication journal
- Provide audio recordings of lectures or books on tape
- Provide copies of teacher's lecture notes
- Use large-print books, braille, or books online or text-to-speech
- Provide answers to essay-type questions by speaking, rather than writing them down; allowing answers to be given orally or through dictation
- Use of a calculator for math assessments when calculation skills are not being assessed.

## GRADING STUDENTS WITH MODIFICATIONS

Modifications are changes to what a child is expected to learn. Modifications are changes that actually lower the standards of performance. In order to provide modifications, modifications must first be identified on a student’s Individual Education Program (IEP).

Modifications may alter the curriculum content and/or reduce the complexity of tasks prescribed by the standards. Students who are on modified curriculum also qualify for the state alternate assessments.

The DVUSD Universal Rubric for students on modified curriculum, Unique Learning Systems (ULS) is below. ULS also has clear measurements of progress over time on modified state standards.



### Modified Curriculum Grading Rubric

Universal Rubric for Learning Center			
4	3	2	1
<p><b>PROFICIENT</b> (Independent):</p> <p>The student performs the skill independently and consistently. The student demonstrates clear understanding, engages appropriately, and may even assist others or extend the task.</p>	<p><b>APPROACHING</b> (Supporting):</p> <p>The student performs the skill with minimal support or prompting. The student demonstrates general understanding and can complete most of the task independently with occasional cues.</p>	<p><b>EMERGING</b> (Partial Support):</p> <p>The student performs the skill with partial or moderate support. The student demonstrates some understanding but requires frequent prompting, guidance, or redirection to stay on task.</p>	<p><b>BEGINNING</b> (Full Support Needed):</p> <p>This is new material, new information, or a new skill to the student. They will be exposed to the new material consistently using different modalities</p>

\*Each student has a unique response mode. Grades should reflect the appropriate response mode for individual students.

Modifications should be marked only for students with a significant cognitive disability who qualify to take the alternative state assessment in accordance with their IEP. The essential learnings for students who receive modifications are known as Core Content Connectors and can be found at [https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core\\_Content\\_Connectors](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core_Content_Connectors).

Modifications:

- Are substantial changes in what the student is expected to demonstrate
- May be changes in instructional level, content, and performance criteria, and may include changes in test form or format or alternative assignments
- Can increase the gap between the achievement of students with academic/behavioral deficits and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level

Examples of Modifications:

- Reading a reading test to a student
- Reading a test and rewording/re-explaining questions on the test
- Tests created at the student's reading level
- Tests created including pictures or other visual aids
- Construction of test items at the student's cognitive level of development
- Shortening a spelling test or other assignment

On the report card, teachers can denote that a student has received accommodations or modifications if the accommodation or modification is part of the student's IEP or 504 plan. Please note that Tier III instruction is considered a support and not an accommodation. Acceleration may be noted on the report card if the student is enrolled in a course that is above their grade level.

### **Acceleration**

Content Acceleration provides students with content, skills, or understanding that is beyond their grade level or age. Students can work on the advanced content within their current age grade level, in a content replacement pull-out class, or in a classroom above their age grade level.

Students can be accelerated either by skipping to a higher grade or by receiving accelerated instruction in a single subject. On the K-6 report cards, acceleration should be checked when the student is receiving content replacement in one or more areas. For example:

- The student leaves his/her classroom to go to a classroom at a higher grade level each day for math, reading, or another content
- The student receives math or reading services in the SAGE program or enrichment in the SPARK program.
- The student attends Renaissance Academy, grades 1-6

For students receiving gifted services but not acceleration, the teacher should not choose acceleration. He/she should designate the type of services in the comments section (examples: differentiation through enrichment in the gifted cluster classroom; flexible grouping for high ability).

## **Grading & Reporting Procedures — Kindergarten**

### **General Information**

Kindergarten grades are indicated through Performance Levels (1-4). Kindergarten teachers will use the PowerTeacher Pro Gradebook to record final quarter grades.

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. Kindergarten teachers will share student assessment data through quarterly progress reports.

Before marking a citizenship (conduct) concern on a report card, parent/guardian contact must be made.

Report cards are required for new students who have attended a DVUSD school for at least 10 days during the quarter and may reflect grades from the previous school.

### **Special Populations**

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodations, or modifications as they relate to student instruction, it is appropriate to write *“The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, modified to meet student needs”*. **Do not refer to a student as an English Learner (EL), having an Individualized Education Program (IEP), etc. as this information could lead to discrimination when report card information is disseminated to entities outside of the parents/guardians and school district.**

### **Grading in Academic Subjects**

Mastery of grade level standards may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to be comprised of written paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher should monitor and provide feedback to students for activities and assignments, the feedback does not have to be in the form of a single grade.

The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, tests, performance assessments, etc.). The grade a student receives on any assignment will reflect an accurate assessment of the student’s performance on the assessment.

Students in Kindergarten will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards in Mathematics, English Language Arts Reading, English Language Arts and Writing, Science, Social Studies and Special Areas using the following scale.

- 4 = Applies grade level skills with greater depth or complexity
- 3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency
- 2 = Approaches grade level proficiency
- 1 = Displays a significant lack of grade level proficiency

### **Student Citizenship (Conduct) - Kindergarten Core Content Classes**

The citizenship (conduct) grade is to be based on a combination of effort and behavior. Consult your school’s discipline plan for guidelines in evaluating student behavior. Parent/guardian contact must be made and documented in an effort to resolve any citizenship (conduct) issues. If behaviors persist, the teacher will mark areas of needed improvement on the report card with an **“X”** to indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship (conduct) needing improvement. **If improvement is not needed, do not mark with “X.”**

<b>Citizenship (Conduct) Area</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Listens attentively	Actively listens and is involved in instructional presentation
Follows directions	Follows teacher’s instruction promptly without excessive reminders
Stays on task	Is appropriately engaged in classroom activities
Works well independently	Works independently without undue assistance from teacher or others

Is prepared for class	Has necessary items, including assignments and supplies
Completes work in a timely manner	Turns in completed assignments at the time the teacher has specified
Respects rights and property of all	Respects and accepts difference among other including the property of others
Exhibits self-control	Is able to stay in seat, respond appropriately to requests and conversation, and respects others' learning
Functions as a group member	Work cooperatively with others
Follows school and classrooms rules	Obeys all campus and classroom rules
Displays appropriate playground behavior	Interacts appropriately with peers and uses the equipment in a responsible manner

### **Citizenship (Conduct) - Kindergarten Special Area Classes**

Special Area teachers will assign one conduct grade E, S, N, U for each subject which will reflect the student's attitude, level of learning, enthusiasm, responsibility, and participation in learning. Before marking a citizenship (conduct) grade of N or U, parent/guardian contact must be made in an effort to resolve the issue(s). If behaviors persist and a student earns a citizenship grade of N or U, the teacher will indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship needing improvement in the comment box of the report card.

E = Excellent

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs Improvement

U = Unsatisfactory

## **Grading & Reporting Procedures – Grades 1 & 2**

### **General Information**

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. It is part of the district standard that parents/guardians are provided a progress report each quarter. In an effort to "go green", all progress reports will be available digitally unless specifically requested in hard copy from the teacher. Parents/guardians will receive a reminder via email, newsletter, or School Messenger to check grades on PowerSchool no later than halfway through the grading period.

Before marking a citizenship (conduct) concern on a report card, parent/guardian contact must be made.

Report cards are required for new students who have attended a DVUSD school for at least 10 days during the quarter and may reflect grades from the previous school.

### **Special Populations**

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodations, or modifications as they relate to student instruction, it is appropriate to write *"The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, modified to meet student needs"*. **Do not refer to a student as an English Learner (EL), having an Individualized Education Program (IEP), etc. as this information could lead to discrimination when**

**report card information is disseminated to entities outside of the parents/guardians and school district.**

### **Grading in Academic Subjects**

Mastery of grade level standards may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to be comprised of written paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher should monitor and provide feedback to students for activities and assignments, the feedback does not have to be in the form of a single grade.

The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, tests, performance assessments, etc.). The grade a student receives on any assignment will reflect an accurate assessment of the student's performance on the assessment.

Students in 1st, and 2nd grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards using the following scale.

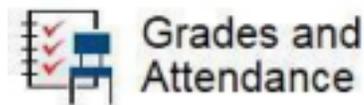
- 4 = Applies grade level skills with greater depth or complexity
- 3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency
- 2 = Approaches grade level proficiency
- 1 = Displays a significant lack of grade level proficiency

Students in 1st and 2nd grades will receive marks for their overall performance in each course of study using the following letter grade scale.

- E = Excellent (87%-100%)
- S = Satisfactory (58%-86%)
- N = Needs Improvement (42%-57%)
- U = Under Performing (0%-41%)

### **Parents/Guardian View of Current and Historical grades**

Parents may view their student(s) current grades and current year stored grades in their parent/guardian portal by logging into power schools at <https://ps.dvusd.org/public/> Your student(s) information will be located under Grades and Attendance on the left side of the screen.



Parents/guardians may view historical grades for all years under Grade History.



### **Student Citizenship (Conduct) – Grades 1 and 2 Core Content Classes**

The citizenship (conduct) grade is to be based on a combination of effort and behavior. Consult your school's discipline plan for guidelines in evaluating student behavior. Parent/guardian contact must be made and documented in an effort to resolve any citizenship (conduct) issues. If behaviors persist, the teacher will mark areas of needed improvement on the report card with an "X" to indicate the specific

area(s) of citizenship (conduct) needing improvement. **If improvement is not needed, do not mark with "X."**

Citizenship (Conduct) Area	Explanation
Listens attentively	Actively listens and is involved in instructional presentation
Follows directions	Follows teacher's instruction promptly without excessive reminders
Stays on task	Is appropriately engaged in classroom activities
Works well independently	Works independently without undue assistance from teacher or others
Is prepared for class	Has necessary items, including assignments and supplies
Completes work in a timely manner	Turns in completed assignments at the time the teacher has specified
Respects rights and property of all	Respects and accepts difference among other including the property of others
Exhibits self-control	Is able to stay in seat, respond appropriately to requests and conversation, and respects others' learning
Functions as a group member	Work cooperatively with others
Follows school and classrooms rules	Obeys all campus and classroom rules
Displays appropriate playground behavior	Interacts appropriately with peers and uses the equipment in a responsible manner

**Citizenship (Conduct) - Grades 1 and 2 Special Area Classes**

Special Area teachers will assign one conduct grade E, S, N, U for each subject which will reflect the student's attitude, level of learning, enthusiasm, responsibility, and participation in learning. Before marking a citizenship (conduct) grade of N or U, parent/guardian contact must be made in an effort to resolve the issue(s). If behaviors persist and a student earns a citizenship grade of N or U, the teacher will indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship needing improvement in the comment box of the report card.

- E = Excellent
- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

# Grading Procedures – Grades 3-6

## General Information

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. It is part of the district standard that parents/guardians are provided a progress report each quarter. In an effort to "go green", all progress reports will be available digitally unless specifically requested in hard copy from the teacher. Parents/guardians will receive a reminder via email, newsletter, or School Messenger to check grades on PowerSchool no later than halfway through the grading period.

Before writing a citizenship (conduct) concern in the comment section of the report card, parent/guardian contact must be made.

Report cards are required for new students who have attended a DVUSD school for at least 10 days during the quarter and may reflect grades from the previous school.

## Special Populations

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodations, or modifications as they relate to student instruction, it is appropriate to write *"The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, modified to meet student needs"*. **Do not refer to a student as an English Learner (EL), having an Individualized Education Program (IEP), etc. as this information could lead to discrimination when report card information is disseminated to entities outside of the parents/guardians and school district.**

## Grading in Academic Subjects and Special Area Courses

Mastery of grade level standards may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to be comprised of written paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every learning activity completed. Although the teacher should monitor and provide feedback to students for activities and assignments, the feedback does not have to be in the form of a single grade.

The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, tests, performance assessments, etc.). The grade a student receives on any assignment will reflect an accurate assessment of the student's performance on the assessment.

Students in 3rd through 12th grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards using the following scale.

- 4 = Highly Proficient
- 3 = Proficient
- 2 = Partially Proficient
- 1 = Minimally Proficient

Students in 3rd through 12th grades will receive marks for their overall performance in each course of study using the following letter grade scale.

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%

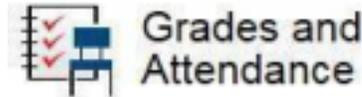
D = 60-69%

F = 0-59%

Grades of “D” and above are passing marks. A course grade of “F” indicates that the student has failed the course. For 9th-12th grade levels, no course credit will be awarded for a failing course grade.

### **Parents/guardians View of Current and Historical grades**

Parents/guardians may view their student(s) current grades and current year stored grades in their parent/guardian portal by logging into power schools at <https://ps.dvusd.org/public/>. Your student(s) information will be located under Grades and Attendance on the left side of the screen.



Parents/guardians may view historical grades for all years under Grade History.



### **Student Citizenship (Conduct) – Grades 3-6**

The citizenship (conduct) grade is to be based on a combination of effort and behavior. Consult your school’s discipline plan for guidelines in evaluating student behavior. Before marking a citizenship (conduct) grade of N or U, parent/guardian contact must be made in an effort to resolve the issue(s). If behaviors persist and a student earns a citizenship grade of N or U, the teacher will indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship needing improvement in the comment box of the report card.

A student’s citizenship (conduct) will be based on the following criteria:

<b>Citizenship (Conduct) Area</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Listens attentively	Actively listens and is involved in instructional presentation
Follows directions	Follows teacher’s instruction promptly without excessive reminders
Stays on task	Is appropriately engaged in classroom activities
Works well independently	Works independently without undue assistance from teacher or others
Is prepared for class	Has necessary items, including assignments and supplies
Completes work in a timely manner	Turns in completed assignments at the time the teacher has specified
Respects rights and property of all	Respects and accepts difference among other including the property of others
Exhibits self-control	Is able to stay in seat, respond appropriately to requests and conversation, and respects others’ learning

Functions as a group member	Work cooperatively with others
Follows school and classrooms rules	Obeys all campus and classroom rules
Displays appropriate playground behavior	Interacts appropriately with peers and uses the equipment in a responsible manner

**Citizenship (Conduct) - Grades 3-6 Core Content and Special Area Courses**

Teachers will assign one conduct grade E, S, N, U for each subject which will reflect the student’s attitude, level of learning, enthusiasm, responsibility, and participation in learning. **Citizenship (conduct) grades do not affect inclusion on Honor Roll or Principal’s List but could impact the ability to participate in extracurricular sports and activities.**

## Home Practice

**DVUSD Board Policy IKB, Homework, states:**

The Board recognizes that development of study skills and self-discipline are integral and indispensable elements of a quality educational process.

Homework should be assigned on a routine and systematic basis consistent with the maturity, special needs, potential, and achievement level of the individual student. The student should learn that he/she has a responsibility for actively pursuing knowledge without immediate supervision outside of as well as within the classroom.

It is critical that all students, regardless of their intellectual capacity, understand that mastery of skills is not always possible within the time constraints of the classroom. All students should exit the system with a firm foundation for pursuing knowledge and developing skills on an independent\* basis.

Homework assignments should be specifically addressed to the objectives outlined herein. Homework should not carry the stigma of punishment

The Superintendent is responsible for procedures that will achieve the following objectives through homework:

- Elevation of deficient performance to acceptable standards
- Reinforcement and mastery of critical skills and concepts. Special emphasis will be placed on mastery of basic skills.
- Challenge through exploration of concepts and skills that complement and elaborate those introduced in the classroom.
- Feedback from the teacher through correction and clarification of all outside assignments.

## Home Practice Philosophy

Home practice, sometimes referred to as homework, is essential for increasing and reinforcing student learning and achievement for course standards. Through home practice, teachers provide students opportunities to increase their understanding of essential knowledge relating to course standards. Home practice means a student is engaged in applying new learning in order to get to as close to mastery of a standard as possible. Teachers should assign home practice work that extends course learning in a manner that is appropriate to a student’s age, grade level, and achievement level. Home

practice work may also be differentiated to meet an individual student's learning needs to help increase student mastery of skills. Student participation is critical in order to receive specific feedback on how to improve and become successful in meeting course standards. In addition to increasing student achievement, home practice also provides the student opportunities to develop critical, independent\* study skills and self-discipline for their own educational journey.

Homework is independent practice which reinforces the lesson and is directly related to the lesson. When the student can perform the skill or process without major errors, then s/he is ready to develop fluency by practicing without the availability of the teacher. The parent/guardian should not need to monitor the practice as the student is doing it, but should check the finished product.

The three main types of homework are:

1. **Practice exercises** – providing students with opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:
  - Finishing class work, physical activities, projects and assignment tasks (classwork sent home should not need the direct supervision of the teacher and can be completed independently\* by the student)
  - Consolidation exercise e.g. math problems
  - Practicing for mastery e.g. spelling words
  - Reading for pleasure
  - Completing writing tasks
2. **Preparatory homework** – providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:
  - Background reading
  - Discussion of topics with parents/guardians
  - Researching topics for a class unit or work
  - Collecting items e.g. geometric shapes
  - Preparing and practicing public speaking notes
3. **Extension assignment** – encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually, including:
  - Writing e.g. a book review
  - Making or designing something e.g. an artwork
  - Investigations e.g. science, social science
  - Researching e.g. history, local news
  - Information and retrieval skills e.g. using a home computer to find material on the Internet

Children whose parents/guardians are engaged with their education are more likely to be successful, occasionally students may have to take home projects that may require parental/guardian engagement and thus, help increase student achievement. In the upper grades, less dependence on parents/guardians in the project taken home is expected.

## Home Practice Guidelines and Procedures

### Homework Guidelines

Research strongly supports that, when thoughtfully assigned, home practice can positively impact student

achievement. To ensure home practice is effective and developmentally appropriate, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Assign homework that aligns with each student’s age, achievement level, and instructional needs.
- Avoid overloading students with tasks that significantly interfere with family time or extracurricular activities (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).
- Homework should be directly connected to standards-based instructional objectives and meaningful to current learning.

Maximum daily homework timeframes across all content areas:

- **Grades K–1:** Up to 20 minutes
- **Grades 2–3:** Up to 30 minutes
- **Grades 4–6:** Up to 60 minutes

To support balance and consistency:

- Content area teachers should collaborate to manage the overall workload assigned to students each evening.
- Larger projects or long-term assignments should be broken into manageable parts and spread over multiple days.
- Homework duration and difficulty should be differentiated as needed to support individual student learning needs.

These guidelines aim to promote purposeful practice, reinforce classroom learning, and maintain a healthy balance between school and home life.

### **Assigning Home Practice**

Home practice should be purposeful and meaningful, reinforcing learning and fostering independence. Effective assignments support student achievement by focusing on the following key areas:

- **Skill reinforcement:** Provide students with opportunities to practice and apply skills or concepts previously taught in class, deepening their understanding.
- **Extension and exploration:** Offer chances for students to extend their learning through independent\* inquiry, creative application, or topic exploration aligned with their interests.
- **Differentiation:** Design home practice that accommodates students’ diverse learning needs, allowing for varying levels of complexity and choice (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).

To increase the likelihood of successful completion:

- Ensure tasks are appropriately challenging—not too difficult to discourage effort, and not so simple that they fail to promote growth.
- Design assignments that students can complete independently\* to promote confidence, ownership, and self-direction in learning.
- Incorporate engaging elements that make home practice interesting, relevant, and worthwhile (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).

### **Feedback and Grading**

Teachers should provide timely and constructive feedback on home practice to support student learning and growth. Feedback is a critical component of the learning process and helps students understand their progress

and areas for improvement.

All schools use weighted categories. Home practice can be included in the "Practice" category or the "Coursework" category.

\*Note: "Independent" does not mean unaided for all students; scaffolding may be necessary for students with unique learning needs.

### **Parental/Guardian Involvement**

- Parental/guardian involvement in home practice should be supportive of student learning without the expectation that parents/guardians are teachers at home or are there to police the students' homework completion, possibly have parents/guardians assist by listening to their students summarize their learning. It is important to recognize that each student has a different support system at home and that successful home practice should be possible for each student in each different home environment (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).
- Parent/guardian access to the PowerSchool portal, [ps.dvUSD.org](http://ps.dvUSD.org), can assist in reviewing assignment due dates, emailing teachers and viewing current grades. Please see the front office staff for login information.

Reference: Marzano, R. & Pickering, D. (2007). The Case for and Against Homework. *Responding to Changing Demographics*, 64(6), 74-79.  
Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar07/vol64/num06/The-Case-For-and-Against-Homework.aspx>

## **Make Up Opportunities**

### **DVUSD Board Regulation IKEA-R (I-7261):**

When a student is absent from school, teachers shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up work for any absence in order to close learning gaps from time away from school. A student who is absent from school misses a valuable part of the benefit of in-school education and may experience challenges in understanding content and curriculum that was missed which may put the student at risk from meeting content standards. Adjustments may be made when it is in the best interest of the student(s).

- Each teacher will provide the student's assignment(s) and any handout or materials necessary for accomplishment of such assignment(s), allowing a minimum make up period of one (1) day for each day absent. Teachers may adjust time based on the individual needs of the student or assignment.
  - Aspire online students have 7 days to complete 5 days of course work, extra time due to absences is not needed as it is already built into a student's schedule.
- School sanctioned and/or approved events should not negatively impact a student's grade.
- Students who miss school work because of unexcused absences or suspensions will be given the opportunity to make up missed work for credit. Teachers shall assign such make up work as necessary to ensure academic progress, not as a punitive measure.
- When age appropriate, the student is responsible to go to his/her teacher(s) the first day back from an absence to find out what work was missed and to develop a plan to make up those assignments. This would include, but is not limited to, such things as notes, homework, tests, laboratory assignments, performances, and projects.
- If the teacher is unable to supply the student with a make-up assignment, the student will not

be held responsible for that make up assignment.

- Daily Assignments vs. Long-Term Projects: There is an important distinction between daily/formative assignments and long-term/summative projects. Make-up policies regarding long-term/summative projects are at the discretion of the individual teacher based on the timeframe of the student's absence and the requirements of the long-term project.
- In situations where the student will be absent for more than (3) three days, due to illness, or when the parent/guardian notifies the office that the student will be absent more than one (1) week for other reasons, teachers may provide required assignments in advance or send assignments with the student.
- In the case of school absences for up to three months due to chronic health conditions certified by a doctor, procedures in DVUSD board regulation, Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance (JHD, J-1961) will be followed for student make-up work.

## Academic Recognition Grades 3-6

In order to be eligible for academic recognition, students must have full-time status.

### **Principal's List**

All A's (including special area and other elective courses)

No Incompletes

### **Honor Roll**

A's or B's (including special area and other elective courses)

No C's, D's, or F's (including special area and other elective courses)

No Incompletes

### **Citizenship (Conduct)**

Teachers will assign one conduct grade E, S, N, U for each subject which will reflect the student's attitude, level of learning, enthusiasm, responsibility, and participation in learning. **Citizenship (conduct) grades do not affect inclusion on Honor Roll or Principal's List.**

## Committee Members

The Promotion, Retention, Acceleration & Grading Handbook was revised in order to align the state regulatory statutes and district guidelines for the schools and the district stakeholders. Thank you to the following committee members:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>School Location</b>
Gayle Galligan	Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	District Office
Kathryn White	Director of Academics and Assessment	District Office
Christine Miller	SSS Representative	District Office
Bernadette Richardson	CIAS / EL	District Office
Jennifer Louis	CIAS / ELA Literacy K-5	District Office
Denise Darre	Lead Counselor	DVHS
Anat Schure	Middle School Counselor	Paseo Hills
Sharon Weiser	Principal	Terramar
Paul Strauss	Assistant Principal	Mountain Ridge HS
JoAnn Schwarting	Principal	Inspiration Mountain
Melissa Sepuka	Principal	Esperanza
Tina Marone	Principal	New River
Theresa Milks	Principal	Norterra Canyon
Tyler Bachler	Assistant Principal	Desert Sky Middle
Liz Keith	Teacher	Norterra Canyon
Saher Afzal	Teacher	Stetson Hills
Jessica Carr	Teacher	Union Park
Heather Walsh	Teacher	Union Park
Selina Gonzalez	Teacher	Anthem
Sonja Buist	Software Systems	IS&T
Lari Roque	Lead Registrar	IS&T
Hilaria Roush	Administrative Assistant	District Office
Samantha Bonamico	Acknowledgment for Student Artwork, Front Cover	MRHS

# Notification Letters/Forms

Parent/guardian letters and forms referred to in this document begin on page 55. District letters and forms are sent electronically to administrators, school secretaries, and counselors. These forms include K-8 acceleration, promotion, and retention forms, K-6 retention forms, and a checklist for early entry.

## Promotion, Retention, Acceleration & Grading K-6 Handbook Appendix – School Letters & Forms

### **Retention and Reassignment**

*EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan\** Page 69

### **Acceleration**

*K-8 Parent/Guardian Request for Whole Grade Acceleration Form* Page 70

*K-8 Parent/Guardian Request for Single-Subject Acceleration Form* Page 71

### **Grading in Special Programs**

*K-2 EL Pass/Fail Grading Rubric\** Page 72

*3/8 EL Pass/Fail Grading Rubric\** Page 73

### **Appeal**

*K-8 Parent/Guardian Promotion Appeal Form* Page 74

*K-8 Parent/Guardian Retention Appeal Form* Page 75

*Early Entry Checklist* Page 76

*Grades 3-8 Walk-Up Math Commitment Letter* Page 77

*DVUSD Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies Parent/Student Contract* Page 78



# EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan

**K-6/7-8 PRAG:** Before an English Learner can be considered for retention, an EL Retention and Individualized Language Support Plan must be developed and implemented for a minimum of one grading period (9 weeks). The classroom teacher, EL Specialist, EL CIAS/Coordinator, campus administrator, and parent/guardian will collaborate to design targeted individualized language instruction that supports student mastery of state-standardized core content. If the parent/guardian is unable to attend the planning meeting, they will be notified in writing and provided with a copy of the plan. Interpreters will be utilized as needed.

Teachers providing individualized language instruction must incorporate research-based strategies to help English Learners acquire English and achieve adequate academic progress.

A team consisting of the principal, EL Teacher Specialist, EL CIAS/Coordinator, and the classroom/core teacher must review the data and determine if retention is warranted based on academic progress and not language acquisition.

Student Name (Last, First): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ SSID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Home Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's overall AZELLA proficiency level upon entry into language support plan: (circle one)

Pre-Emergent/Emergent

Basic

Intermediate

Teacher(s) providing Tier 1 language instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher(s) providing Tier 2 language instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher(s) providing Tier 3 language instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Types of Language Instruction to be provided to this EL or recent FEP student and related dates:

Before/After School Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date started: _____	Date ended: _____
Individual instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date started: _____	Date ended: _____
Small group instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date started: _____	Date ended: _____
Other programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date started: _____	Date ended: _____

Instructional objectives targeted to improve English proficiency:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Scaffolds to support instructional objectives targeted to improve English proficiency:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Assessments used in language instruction to measure progress (minimum one quarter/nine weeks):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
General Education Teacher                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
EL Specialist    Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent    Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal    Date



## Parent/Guardian Request for Whole Grade Acceleration K-8

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Phone \_\_\_\_\_

When circumstances indicate that acceleration in grade placement is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents/guardians and all school personnel involved is imperative. Each student's placement will be considered individually, and decisions will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to the student's growth and development. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time, and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

If parents/guardians feel grade acceleration is in the best interest of the child they will:

1. Complete this form and submit it to the school's principal
2. Provide academic data that indicates the student has exceeded achievement as measured by Arizona state standards and district expectations for the current grade level.

The principal will meet with parent/guardian and acceleration team as defined in the "Acceleration" section of the "Promotion, Retention, Acceleration and Grading Handbook," and will forward the Iowa Acceleration Scale Summary and Planning Record to the Superintendent for review. The final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Superintendent. Parental/guardian involvement in all steps of the process is vital.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Superintendent's Decision:

- Acceleration request approved  
 Acceleration request not approved Comments:

Comments:

Superintendent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Parent/Guardian Request for Single-Subject Acceleration K-8

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Requesting acceleration in (content area)

When circumstances indicate that acceleration in a single subject is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents/guardians and all school personnel involved is imperative. Each student's placement will be considered individually and decisions will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to the student's growth and development. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time, and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

If parents-/guardians feel single-subject acceleration is in the best interest of the child they will:

1. Complete this form and submit it to the child's teacher
2. Provide the team with academic data that indicates the student has exceeded achievement as measured by Arizona state standards and district expectations for the current grade level.

The principal will meet with parent/guardian and acceleration team as described in the "Acceleration" section of the "Promotion, Retention, Acceleration and Grading Handbook" to determine the best placement for the student. The final decision to accelerate a student in a single subject rests with the principal. Parental/guardian involvement in all steps of the process is vital.

Parent Signature/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Principal's Decision:

- Single-subject acceleration request approved for school year
- Single-subject acceleration request not approved

Comments:

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 2/2020 AL



### K-2nd Grade EL PreEmergent/Emergent Grading Rubric for Pass/Fail Grade Book

Each student assignment/assessment will be graded on Essential Standards using the rubric below. Assignments/assessments must be scaffolded for pre-emergent/ emergent new-to-country students. This rubric ensures that the student is assessed on **completion of scaffolded assignment/assessment and engagement**, rather than penalized for limited language skills/language proficiency.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Scaffolded Assignment/ Assessment</b>  (Coursework/ Assessment)	Student completes the entire task using provided supports (e.g., visuals, word banks, sentence frames). Shows strong effort and engagement, even if responses contain language errors.	Student completes most of the task with the use of supports. Demonstrates effort but may leave some sections incomplete or require minimal prompting. Language errors do not affect scoring.	Student attempts part of the task but may rely heavily on prompting or scaffolds. Some effort is visible, but task completion is inconsistent.	Student provides little to no attempt, even with scaffolding and frequent prompting and support. Engagement is low, and effort is not evident.
Name:			Date:	

BR/BK 2025



### K-2nd Grade EL PreEmergent/Emergent Grading Rubric for Pass/Fail Grade Book

Each student assignment/assessment will be graded on Essential Standards using the rubric below. Assignments/assessments must be scaffolded for pre-emergent/ emergent new-to-country students. This rubric ensures that the student is assessed on **completion of scaffolded assignment/assessment and engagement**, rather than penalized for limited language skills/language proficiency.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Scaffolded Assignment/ Assessment</b>  (Coursework/ Assessment)	Student completes the entire task using provided supports (e.g., visuals, word banks, sentence frames). Shows strong effort and engagement, even if responses contain language errors.	Student completes most of the task with the use of supports. Demonstrates effort but may leave some sections incomplete or require minimal prompting. Language errors do not affect scoring.	Student attempts part of the task but may rely heavily on prompting or scaffolds. Some effort is visible, but task completion is inconsistent.	Student provides little to no attempt, even with scaffolding and frequent prompting and support. Engagement is low, and effort is not evident.
Name:			Date:	

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### 3rd/8th Grade EL PreEmergent/Emergent Student Grading Rubric for Pass/Fail Grade Book

Each student assignment/assessment will be graded using the rubric below. Assignments/assessments must be scaffolded for pre-emergent/emergent new-to-country students. This rubric ensures that the student is assessed on **completion of scaffolded assignment/assessment and engagement**, rather than penalized for limited language skills/language proficiency.

Criteria	10 pts	8 pts	6pts	5pts
<b>Activity Engagement</b> (Based on Language Usage, not Participation)	Actively engaged, contributed ideas (with or without language support), and demonstrated understanding through actions or simple language.	Engaged consistently, shared relevant thoughts, and showed a good understanding.	Engaged occasionally, offered basic responses, and demonstrated a limited understanding.	Did not engage in the activity.
Criteria	10 pts	8 pts	6pts	5pts
<b>Scaffolded Assignment/ Assessment</b> (Coursework/ Assessment)	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment to a high standard, and demonstrated exceptional understanding (considering language limitations).	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment meeting all requirements, and demonstrated a solid understanding (considering language limitations).	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment but it was of poor quality and demonstrated a basic understanding (considering language limitations).	Did not complete any of the scaffolded assignment/ assessment.
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>		<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>/20 pts</b>

BR/BK 2025



### 3rd/8th Grade EL PreEmergent/Emergent Student Grading Rubric for Pass/Fail Grade Book

Each student assignment/assessment will be graded using the rubric below. Assignments/assessments must be scaffolded for pre-emergent/emergent new-to-country students. This rubric ensures that the student is assessed on **completion of scaffolded assignment/assessment and engagement**, rather than penalized for limited language skills/language proficiency.

Criteria	10 pts	8 pts	6pts	5pts
<b>Activity Engagement</b> (Based on Language Usage, not Participation)	Actively engaged, contributed ideas (with or without language support), and demonstrated understanding through actions or simple language.	Engaged consistently, shared relevant thoughts, and showed a good understanding.	Engaged occasionally, offered basic responses, and demonstrated a limited understanding.	Did not engage in the activity.
Criteria	10 pts	8 pts	6pts	5pts
<b>Scaffolded Assignment/ Assessment</b> (Coursework/ Assessment)	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment to a high standard, and demonstrated exceptional understanding (considering language limitations).	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment meeting all requirements, and demonstrated a solid understanding (considering language limitations).	Completed the scaffolded assignment/assessment but it was of poor quality and demonstrated a basic understanding (considering language limitations).	Did not complete any of the scaffolded assignment/ assessment.
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>		<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>/20 pts</b>

BR/BK 2025



## K-8 Parent/Guardian Promotion Appeal Form

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

1. Within five days from the notification of intent to promote, parent/guardian will complete a Promotion Appeal form, submit it to the school secretary and schedule a meeting with the principal.
2. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/guardian's completion and submission of an Appeal form and all documentation.
3. Parent/guardian appeals to the Governing Board will be reviewed in June.

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s):** Please state your position as factually as possible using the space below. If additional sheets are required, please attach them to this form. Gather all pertinent data and documentation to support your appeal and attach to this form.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## K-8 Parent/Guardian Retention Appeal Form

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/guardian

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

1. Within five days from the notification of intent to retain, parent/guardian will complete a Retention Appeal form, submit it to the school secretary, and schedule a meeting with the principal.
2. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/guardian's completion and submission of an Appeal form and all documentation.
3. Parent/guardian appeals to the Governing Board will be reviewed in June.

**Parent(s)/Guardian(s):** Please state your position as factually as possible using the space below. If additional sheets are required, please attach them to this form. Gather all pertinent data and documentation to support your appeal and attach to this form.

Parent/guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Early Entry Readiness Checklist

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ I.D. \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

*This list describes social and emotional skills demonstrated by children at this grade level. Items should be checked when observed 75-85% of the time. The majority of boxes checked indicate a strong readiness factor. Less than a majority of boxes checked may indicate a need to reconsider continuation in placement at this time.*

- Follows a simple direction without multiple prompts or wandering
- Follows safety rules
- Stays with an activity to completion and/or does not leave group instruction
- Attempts new tasks knowing it is okay to make mistakes
- Does not become easily frustrated when tasks are challenging
- Asks for help instead of waiting for adult intervention
- Has stamina to maintain learning throughout a **full day of instruction** and does not fatigue
- Interacts with peers cooperatively (listens to others, shares, and takes turns)
- Uses words to solve problems or conflicts
- Participates in clean-up activities
- Self regulates emotions
- Demonstrates increasing self-control
- Manages own belongings: coat, backpack, folder, lunch
- Independently uses appropriate bathroom skills
- Separates easily from parents/guardians
- Adjusts to new situations and adults
- Develops motor skills to participate in tasks



**DEER VALLEY**  
*Unified School District*

## (Grades 3-8) Walk-Up Math Commitment Form

(\*Return a signed copy of this Commitment Form to your child's homeroom teacher.)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

DVUSD encourages all students to appropriately challenge themselves and participate in rigorous courses of study. We are pleased to offer Walk-Up Math for third through eighth grades to your child. Students will progress quickly through and "skip" grade level content, learn above grade level standards, and apply these standards through hands-on, project-based formats. Your child was selected for the Walk-Up Math Program due to their high achievement on mathematics related assessments and teacher input.

### Benefits of participation in Walk-Up To Math classes include:

- Accelerated mathematics curriculum
- Building a firm foundation for higher mathematics throughout middle and high school
- Enjoyment of mathematics learning
- Challenging curriculum focused on mastery and application
- Development of strong study skills and scholarly habits

While your child demonstrates the academic skills necessary to succeed in this program, other factors are directly correlated to a student's success. Therefore, you and your child should review the list of expectations and sign the agreement form (below).

### Required Student Expectations:

- Actively participate in class
- Finish homework on time
- Show respectful and positive behaviors with classmates and teacher
- Attend class regularly
- Participate in higher level thinking and application in the area of mathematics
- Maintain overall proficiency and performance in class

These commitments will be reviewed along with grades and classroom behavior to determine if continued placement in the Walk-Up To Math class is appropriate at the end of each quarter.

### Select ONE of the Following Responses to Accept -OR- Decline Walk-Up Math Placement:

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES. I ACCEPT.** My signature below indicates I have read this Commitment Form, wish to participate and will make every effort to take full advantage of the Walk-Up Math program at my school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_ **NO. I DECLINE.** I do not wish to participate in Walk-Up Math.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature) (Date)

*Revised 3.2.2023 Gifted Taskforce*



## DVUSD Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies (2025-2026 Parent/ Student Contract)

Deer Valley Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies are designed for high-achieving, highly gifted students. As a specialized program that attempts to meet the learning needs of a small and specific group of gifted students, the DVUSD strives to ensure that the most appropriate placements are made based on student need. A contract specifying the participation criteria of this program has been developed with the goal of establishing a learning environment that leads to success in this highly advanced and accelerated program.

As a parent of a child in the Renaissance program, I understand that students are expected to act in accordance with all policies of the Deer Valley Unified School District, in accordance with the school's expectations. The five components described here establish the guidelines that determine my child's eligibility to participate in Renaissance Highly Gifted Academies. As a parent of a student in this program, I realize the importance of my child continuing to meet the expectations of the program and understand that his/her continuation in the program will be determined based on the following criteria:

- I. Academic Achievement** – Renaissance provides a highly specialized, learning environment that is tailored to meet the academic needs of students 1-2 years above grade level. Students participating in the program should demonstrate appropriate academic progress that is commensurate with student potential and is reflective of teachers' expectations.
- II. Personal Conduct** – Renaissance teachers are trained to meet the affective needs of highly gifted learners. Teachers will employ a variety of strategies to nurture students' fullest potential. At the same time, students participating in a Renaissance Program are expected to demonstrate ethical use of technology and maintain respectful behavior with classmates and teachers.
- III. Interpersonal Communication** – Communication between home and school is a key component of student success. Parents and students are encouraged to approach the teacher with concerns and/or questions as they arise. Each Renaissance teacher will utilize their preferred communication tool to promote a positive learning environment.
- IV. Attendance** – Attendance is a crucial component of student academic success. Significant absences often lead to gaps in learning and a decrease in student academic success. Students participating in a Renaissance Program will maintain a reasonable attendance record.
- V. Work Ethic** – Classroom assignments within a Renaissance environment are designed to promote higher levels of critical thinking and academic discourse. Renaissance students complete a multitude of projects each year they participate in the program. Assignments are expected to be completed in a timely manner. Submitted assignments should reflect evidence of student effort in producing quality work. Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all classes. All assignments should reflect students' personal level of knowledge and academic ability.

I agree that if my child's conduct is not in accordance with the above criteria, then the following interventions will occur:

1. **First Meeting** – Teacher, student, and parent(s) will meet to set student goals. Documented goals will include specific timelines and steps my child is expected to make and interventions the teacher will make.
2. **Second Meeting** – Teacher, student, parent(s), and principal will meet to evaluate progress and re-evaluate student goals. Students who meet success resume Renaissance Programming.
3. **Probationary Period** – If adequate progress has not been achieved, written notification of Probationary Status will document specific criteria that need to occur for continuation in the program.
4. **Removal from Program** – If adequate progress has not been achieved, an alternative placement in another DVUSD Gifted Program will be recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature/ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature/ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Please Print)

*\*Revised 6/13/2025 DVUSD Gifted Services*