

REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND RETENTION

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

Promotion

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

Elementary Students:

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

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

45 **Middle School Students:**

46
47 Students in grades six through eight (6-8) are promoted to the next grade on the basis of
48 earning passing final grades in the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, science,
49 and social studies; and a passing final grade in one of the following program areas:
50 health/physical education or the equivalent of a full-year elective course together with
51 consideration of the following factors:

- 52
- 53 ● Academic performance
 - 54 ● Ability level
 - 55 ● Attendance in conjunction with poor classroom performance
 - 56 ● Chronological age in relation to the normal grade/age group
 - 57 ● Delayed/advanced physical development
 - 58 ● Work and study skills
 - 59 ● Student and parent attitude
 - 60 ● Parental support
 - 61 ● Prior retention
 - 62 ● SOL assessment results at the end of grades six through eight (6-8); however, the use
63 of SOL scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is prohibited.

64

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

76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88

89
90**Minimum Requirements for Students Earning a Standard Diploma**

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

91
92 Note: The use of SOL assessment scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is
93 prohibited.
94

Intervention to Minimize Retention

95
96
97 ACPS is committed to maximizing student promotion and providing a system of K-12
98 interventions to maximize student success. For those students whose educational performance is
99 not commensurate with their peers and/or are suspected of having a disability, a written referral to
100 the School Support Team or Child Study shall be made by the student's classroom teacher.
101

102 When a student in kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) is not making progress toward
103 mastery of content standards, school staff uses interventions associated with the ACPS
104 Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to make a determination of which supports and
105 interventions are necessary to address the student's lack of academic growth. In addition,
106 an Individual Achievement Plan (IAP) or other systematic classroom and support
107 interventions shall be developed to address the areas of deficiency and be implemented
108 with fidelity. The prescribed interventions will be designed to monitor and document the
109 student's progress toward mastery of content standards.
110

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

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

116
117 At the secondary level (grades 6-12), the ACP (Academic and Career Plan) is used to guide
118 this process (incorporating a focus upon both student academic achievement as well as
119 career development). Additionally, when a student is experiencing academic problems or
120 challenges, appropriate options for intervention, coaching, and tutorial assistance should
121 be used to support this process (and should be incorporated into the ACP).

122
123 When a secondary student is experiencing academic difficulty, the parents/guardians shall
124 be notified in writing as soon as reasonably possible. In addition to the Report Card,
125 parents/guardians of students who are failing any high school course shall be notified in
126 writing at the end of the second quarter for a year-long course, or the end of the first quarter
127 of any semester course. In addition, teachers are encouraged to arrange conferences with
128 parents/guardians of these students.

129
130 If a student continues to fail through the end of the third quarter for a year-long course or
131 through the interim of the second quarter of any semester course, the parents/guardians
132 shall again be notified in writing.

134 Retention

135
136 Retention shall be used as a last resort. It will be considered only after ongoing, sustained, and
137 intensive intervention efforts have been unsuccessful. The final responsibility for retention should
138 be based upon a collaborative team decision involving:

- 139
- 140 ● The principal
- 141 ● Parents/legal guardians
- 142 ● The classroom teacher(s)
- 143 ● The school counselor
- 144 ● A special education teacher (if appropriate)
- 145 ● An English Learner (EL) teacher (if appropriate)
- 146

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

- 149
- 150 ● Standards-based performance in academic areas
- 151 ● Performance on Division-level assessments
- 152 ● Performance on curriculum-based assessments
- 153 ● Quarterly Progress Reports
- 154 ● Consideration of the factors listed above in section A. (Promotion) of this regulation.
- 155

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

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

161
162 **Final Determination:** The decision to retain shall be made during the fourth quarter, with
163 plans for summer school or other interventions shared with the parents/guardians. Written
164 permission from the parents/guardians for retention is not required; however,
165 parents/guardians must be notified of the specific reasons for retention. Final notification
166 must be made in writing and a meeting will be scheduled with the student's
167 parents/guardians at least 30 working days prior to the close of school. In addition, the
168 process for appeals must be included in the retention determination letter.

169
170 When a student is retained, a retention plan must be developed by the student's teacher.
171 This retention plan will build upon the intervention plan, including areas not yet mastered.
172 The receiving teacher may modify or add to the retention plan as the retention year
173 proceeds based on student progress. The principal must review the retention plan and
174 monitor the student's progress during the retention year. A copy of the retention plan shall
175 be attached to the progress report and placed in the student's cumulative folder.

176
177 The final responsibility for promotion and retention decisions resides with the principal.
178 However, the principal is responsible for ensuring that this decision is made within the
179 context of the interventions and processes articulated below.

180
181 **Students with Disabilities:** For students with disabilities, promotion and retention shall
182 be determined with consideration of the student's progress on annual goals in accordance
183 with accommodations, and the impact of the disability as defined in the student's
184 Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

185
186 **EL Students:** For English Learners(EL), promotion and retention decisions will involve
187 the same factors that must be considered for all students. However, ELs with English
188 proficiency levels of 3 or below will not generally be considered for retention.

189 Retentions at Initial Placement

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

194 Notice to Parents of ELs

195
196 If neither parent/guardian of a student being considered for retention speaks English, all
197 retention-related written and oral communications will be provided in the
198 parents'/guardians' native language. Non-English speaking parents/guardians should have
199 the same opportunity for input, and receive the same level of communication from the
200 school regarding the student's progress as English speaking parents/guardians.
201

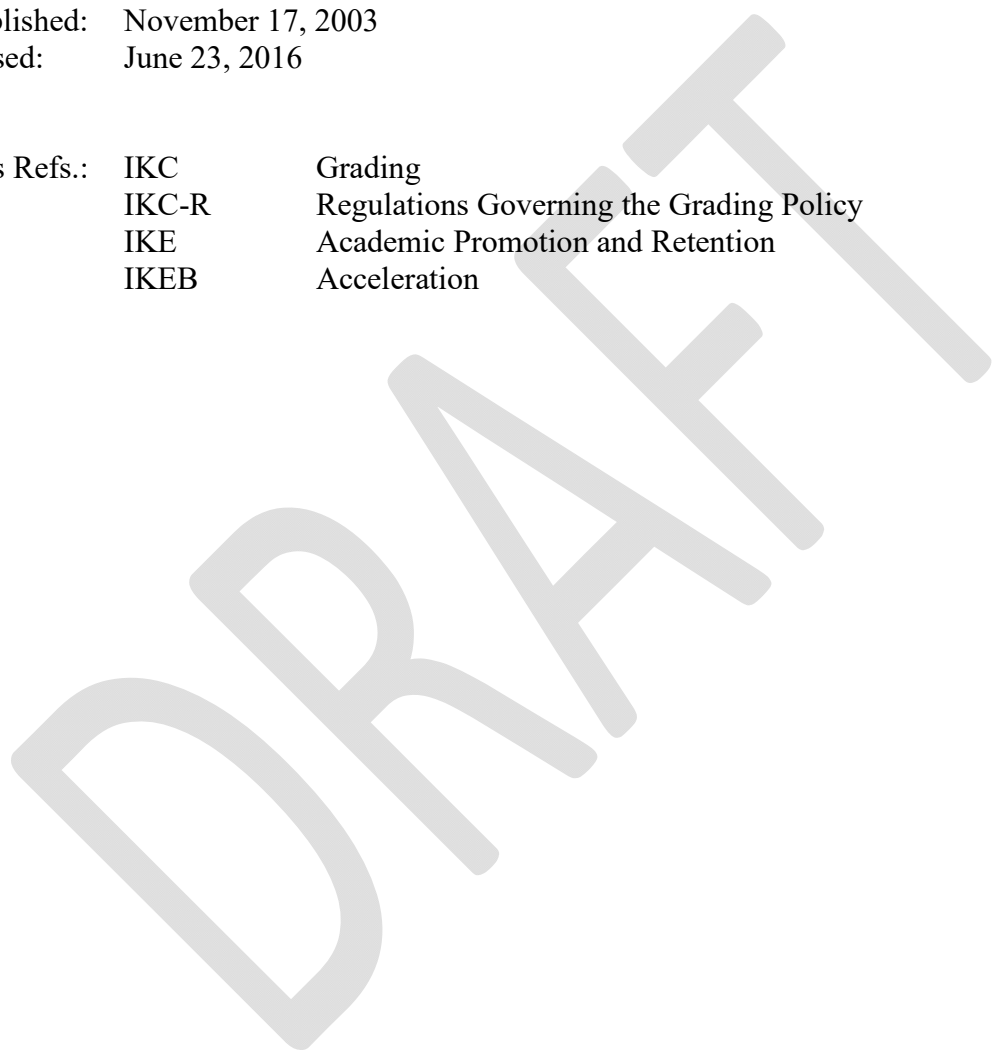
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217

Final Authority and Appeals

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

Established: November 17, 2003
Revised: June 23, 2016

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



Appendix I

RETENTION INFORMATION GATHERING

218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247

Information Gathering: Educators

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

Information Gathering: Parents

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

REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND RETENTION

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

Promotion

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

Elementary Students:

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

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

Commented [1]: Removing the and clarifies that the criteria used by the teacher and principal is listed below.

Middle School Students:

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

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

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

Commented [2]: Added to reflect revisions to the table.

89
90

Minimum Requirements for Students Earning a Standard Diploma

To be classified as a 9 th grader:	A student must have been promoted from middle school.
To be classified as a 10 th grader:	A student must have accrued at least 5 standard high school units of credit <u>towards graduation</u> by the start of an academic year. <u>One of the units of credit must be for 9th grade English.</u>
To be classified as a 11 th grader:	A student must have accrued at least <u>11+0</u> standard high school units of credit <u>towards graduation</u> by the start of the academic year. <u>One of the units of credit must be for 10th grade English.</u>
To be classified as a 12 th grader:	A student must have accrued at least <u>16-15</u> standard high school units of credit <u>towards graduation</u> by the start of the academic year. <u>One of the units of credit must be for 11th grade English.</u> A student's transcript and schedule must include all units of credit and/or courses necessary to complete graduation requirements in June <u>or August</u> of that school year.

Commented [3]: The credits must count towards graduation

Commented [4]: English not required by VDOE

Commented [5]: VDOE requirement is 11 credits

Commented [6]: VDOE requirement is 16 credits

91
92 Note: The use of SOL assessment scores as the sole criterion in awarding credit is
93 prohibited.
94

Intervention to Minimize Retention

95
96
97 ~~Alexandria City Public Schools-ACPS~~ is committed to maximizing student promotion and
98 providing a system of K-12 interventions to maximize student success. For those students whose
99 educational performance is not commensurate with their peers and/or are suspected of having a
100 disability, a written referral to the School Support Team or Child Study shall be made by the
101 student's classroom teacher.
102

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

Commented [7]: Update to MTSS language.

At the elementary level (grades K-5), parents/guardians and (when appropriate) students should be included in the development of the IAP, or other intervention plan. The principal will monitor the implementation of this plan and guide the team in making the necessary adjustments. These adjustments should be based upon a systematic progress monitoring that includes a collection of evidence and thorough analysis of student data.

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

Commented [8]: The name of the plan has changed.

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

Commented [9]: Adjusted for accuracy.

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

Retention

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

- The principal
- Parents/~~legal~~ or-guardians
- The classroom teacher(s)
- The school counselor
- A special education teacher (if appropriate)
- An English Learner (EL) teacher (if appropriate)

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

- Standards-based performance in academic areas
- Performance on Division-level assessments
- Performance on curriculum-based assessments

IKE-R

- Quarterly Progress Reports
- Consideration of the factors listed above in section A. (Promotion) of this regulation.

Initial Notification: As soon as retention is being considered, the teacher shall notify the parents/legal guardians in writing and schedule a meeting with the parents/guardians. If, at the end of the third quarter, the student is still at risk of being retained, the information must be stated in the narrative portion of the progress report. The teacher shall also submit a cumulative folder of the student's work to the retention team.

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

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

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

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

ELLEP Students: For ~~Limited-English Learners~~ ~~Proficient (ELLEP) students~~, promotion and retention decisions will involve the same factors that must be considered for all students. However, ~~ELs/LEP students~~ with English proficiency levels of 3 or below will not generally be considered for retention.

Commented [10]: Current designation is ELs

Retentions at Initial Placement

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

200 Notice to Parents of ~~ELs/LEP~~ Students

201 If neither parent/guardian of a student being considered for retention speaks English, all
202 retention-related written and oral communications will be provided in the
203 parents'/guardians' native language. Non-English speaking parents/guardians should have
204 the same opportunity for input, and receive the same level of communication from the
205 school regarding the student's progress as English speaking parents/guardians.
206

207 **Final Authority and Appeals**

208 Promotion and retention decisions which require further review or are contested by
209 parents/guardians must be submitted in writing to the Elementary or Secondary Executive Director
210 of School Leadership Instruction. The process for appeals must be included in the retention
211 determination letter from the school.
212

Commented [11]: Title correction

213
214
215 Established: November 17, 2003
216 Revised: June 23, 2016

217
218
219 Cross Refs.: IKC Grading
220 IKC-R Regulations Governing the Grading Policy
221 IKE Academic Promotion and Retention
222 IKEB Acceleration

Appendix I

RETENTION INFORMATION GATHERING

Information Gathering: Educators

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

Information Gathering: Parents

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