NYC Department of Education

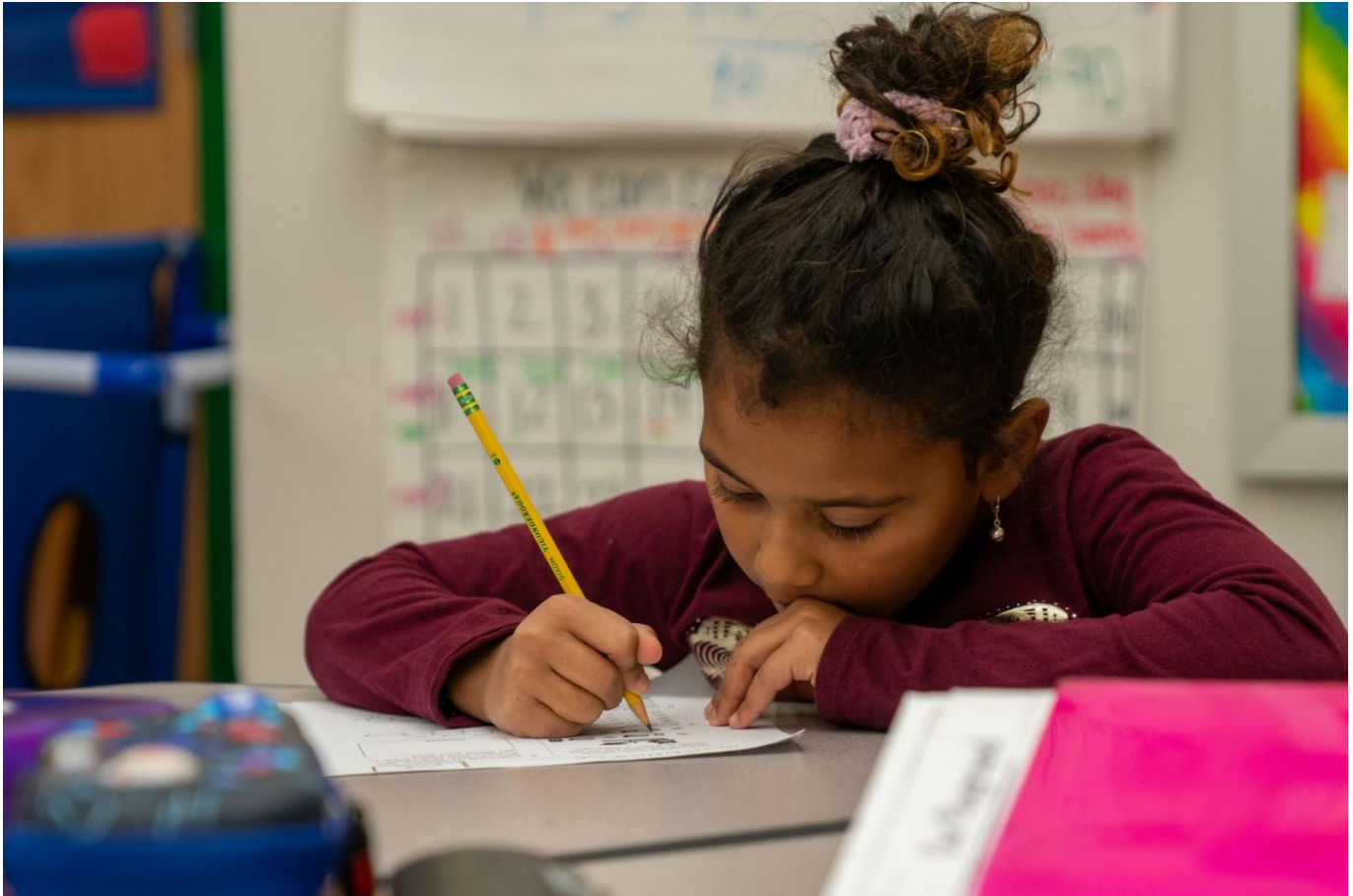**Office of Academic Policy & Systems**   **August 2023 Edition**

Elementary School Academic Policy Guide

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I. KEY SHIFTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS – <mark>NEW AUGUST 2023</mark>

The following are new policy changes and/or flexibilities for the 2023-24 school year to create more equitable and supportive learning environments for all students. These policies are also addressed in their corresponding sections of this guide.

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Identification

Since students' State assessment results will not be available prior to the start of the 2023-24 school year, NYCDOE schools must use a universal screening assessment as the first step in identifying students at risk of not meeting NYSED's learning standards in English Language Arts and mathematics.

New York State Science Test

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is no longer administering the science exam in grade 4. Beginning in Spring 2024, students in grades 5 and 8 will take the science exam.

Medically Necessary Instruction (MNI) and Hospital Programs

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) increased the minimum instructional hours for students in MNI and hospital programs from 5 to 10 hours per week for elementary students (grades K-5).

Grading Scale

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has a new four-level competency-based grading scale that has numeric equivalents. This optional grading scale will be available in STARS in September 2023.

II. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) Commissioner's Regulations, New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Chancellor's Regulations, and supplementary academic policy resources provide guidance on policies pertaining to students in elementary school grades, including program requirements, assessments, grading, and promotion. Elementary schools also serving middle and high school grades should refer to the Middle and High School Academic Policy Guides for information applicable to these grade levels.

For academic policy and systems questions, schools can refer to the academic policy and systems resource webpages, or contact their academic policy, performance, and assessment specialists.

> The STARS suite of applications is the NYCDOE's official record of students' programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements.[1] STARS reflects academic information for all NYCDOE public school students in grades K–12. STARS data also reflects schools' alignment to the New York State and New York City academic policies described in this guide. All elementary schools must use STARS Classroom to enter information about the instruction and supports students in elementary grades receive throughout the school day; to reflect student-teacher-subject relationships; and to enter student grades. To ensure that STARS data accurately captures students' academic programs and outcomes, schools must follow the guidelines described on the STARS wiki. STARS is managed by the NYCDOE's Office of Academic Policy and Systems (OAPS). See the section of this guide on programming in STARS and visit the STARS wiki for more information.

A.   Program Requirements

NYSED's Part 100.3 and Part 100.4 define program requirements for students in elementary grades. The sections below outline the program requirements for grades K–5. These represent the minimum academic program that a public elementary school in New York State must provide. Schools may exceed the requirements described here and offer supplementary experiences that will enhance students' educational experiences in the elementary years and prepare them for the rigor of middle and high school coursework.

At minimum, elementary schools must provide students with instruction in these departments every year, and must accurately reflect that instruction in STARS Classroom:

- English language arts (ELA)
- Social studies
- Mathematics
- Science and technology
- Arts education, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts
- Physical education
- Health education

There are no specific instructional time requirements in these areas with the exception of physical education and, where student need is established, bilingual education and/or English as a New Language instruction per Part 154.

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[1] The STARS Suite includes three platforms across grades K–12: STARS Classroom, STARS Client, and STARS Admin.

Schools can choose to deliver instruction in each academic area every day, rotate through subjects during the week, or implement another scheduling model. This flexibility allows schools to provide an academic program that best meets students' needs.

It is the policy of the NYCDOE to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free of discrimination because of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

See the Guidelines on Gender Inclusion and Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students for help implementing gender-inclusive curricula, programs, activities, and practices that are consistent with this policy and with the NYCDOE's commitment to equity and access. Schools must be mindful that inappropriate gender segregation may result in isolating students, hindering diversity, and/or perpetuating gender stereotypes.

1.   *Kindergarten*

Schools must provide students in kindergarten with instruction aligned to NYSED learning standards, which "ensures continuity with instruction in the early elementary grades and is integrated with the instructional program in grades one through twelve," according to Part 100.3.

Schools must provide students in kindergarten with instruction in all of the following departments every year, at minimum, and must accurately reflect this programming in STARS:

- English language arts (meaning, early literacy and emergent reading)
- Social studies
- Mathematics
- Science
- Arts education, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts
- Physical education, as described in Part 135.4
- Health education, as described in Part 135.3
- Where student need is established, bilingual education and/or English as a New Language (ENL) instruction per Part 154[2]

In addition, programming and instruction should be based on the ages, interests, skills, and needs of the students served and should include:[3]

- Differentiated instruction to support the acquisition of new concepts and skills;
- Materials and equipment which allow for active and quiet play in indoor and outdoor environments;
- Opportunities for participation in inquiry-based activities and projects; and
- Opportunities to use a wide variety of information in print and electronic mediums.

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[2] Courses previously referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL) are now referred to as English as a New Language (ENL). English as a New Language (ENL) courses that meet ELA standards may count toward students' ELA instructional requirements. See Part 154 and the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs for additional information on the elementary school ENL requirements.

[3] See NYSED's Part 100.3 on the program requirements for kindergarten for more information.

2. Grades 1–5

In grades 1–5, elementary schools must provide students with instruction aligned to NYSED learning standards. There are no specific instructional time requirements in these areas, with the exception of physical education and, where student need is established, for bilingual education and/or ENL instruction. Schools must provide students with instruction in all of the following departments every year, at minimum, and must accurately reflect this programming in STARS:

- English language arts (ELA)
- Social studies, including geography and United States history
- Mathematics
- Science and technology
- Arts education, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts
- Physical education, as described in Part 135.4
- Health education, as described in Part 135.3
- Family and consumer sciences[4]
- Career development and occupational studies[5]
- Where student need is established, bilingual education and/or ENL instruction as described in Part 154.

3. World Languages and Home Language Arts (HLA) [6]

> The Board of Regents adopted the revised New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE)/World Languages on Monday, March 15, 2021. For more information on the changes, implementation timeline, and proficiency ranges aligned to the World Language Checkpoints, see the World Languages Standards and Guidelines and the Administrator's Reference Guide.

Elementary schools have the option to offer World Languages and/or home language arts (HLA) instruction at any grade level. According to NYSED requirements, schools must provide all students with at least two units of study (108 hours) in World Languages instruction before the end of grade 9. While this requirement is typically satisfied in middle school, it may also be satisfied in elementary school. See the World Languages guidance document for more detailed information.

In STARS Classroom, World Languages and home language arts (HLA) are represented as one combined 'foreign or native language instruction' subject area. For more information on how to program language instruction, including World Languages, HLA, or World Language in Elementary School (WLES), see the section of this guide on subject-specific programming guidance in STARS Classroom.

In addition, schools providing Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) or Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs for English language learners (ELLs) must also provide instruction in a separate HLA course (180 minutes

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[4] See NYSED's instructional standards for the elementary-level family and consumer sciences (FACS). Elementary schools often choose to integrate this content into English language arts, science, physical education, health education, and other subjects.
[5] See NYSED's instructional standards for the elementary-level career development and occupational studies (CDOS). Elementary schools often choose to integrate this content into English language arts, math, science, social studies, and other subjects.
[6] Home language arts (HLA) is formerly known as native language arts (NLA). See the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs for more information.

per week) as described in NYS Commissioner's Regulations (CR) Part 154.[7] These courses may also satisfy the World Languages requirement. Schools without a bilingual program are strongly encouraged to organize and offer home language arts (HLA) courses whenever possible. See the sections of this guide on ELLs and STARS programming and the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs for information on HLA instruction in ELL programs.

4.   Physical Education – *Updated August 2023*

Part 135.4 defines the minimum requirements for physical education (PE) for students in elementary grades.[8] Schools must provide students in grades K–5 with an instructional PE program aligned to NYSED learning standards and the NYC K–5 PE Scope and Sequence for at least 120 minutes a week. In grades K–3, students must receive PE daily, and in grades 4–5, students must receive PE no fewer than three times per week. K–6, K–8, or K–12 schools serving grade 6 students should ensure that grade 6 students follow the elementary school requirements, and receive PE for 120 minutes at least three times per week, rather than the middle school requirements. This allows for continuity in scheduling across grades K–6. For more information see the PE FAQ for more details.

Only teacher-led instructional time may count toward PE minutes. Schools may not count time spent dressing or traveling to an off-site facility toward the instructional time requirement for PE. Schools cannot count recess toward the instructional requirement for PE.

a.   Summary of PE Time and Frequency Requirements

Grade Level	Which PE policies apply?	Minimum required PE time	Minimum required PE frequency
Grades K–3	Elementary school policies for grades K–3	120 minutes per week	Daily, in every term[9]
Grades 4–5	Elementary school policies for grades 4–6	120 minutes per week	No fewer than 3 times per week, in every term
Grade 6 in a K–6, K–8, K–12 school	Elementary school policies for grades 4–6	120 minutes per week	No fewer than 3 times per week, in every term

PE programs must meet NYSED learning standards at the elementary school level. The NYCDOE recommends that all elementary PE be taught by a certified PE teacher; however, per NYSED's part 135.4, a NYCDOE classroom teacher may provide instruction under the guidance of a certified PE teacher assigned to a school. Each school serving elementary grades must have at least one NYSED certified Physical Education teacher providing instruction to students, and guidance with content and pedagogy for any classroom teachers assigned to teach PE.

As in all other courses, students' grades in PE must be based primarily on their content area knowledge and skills, and not on non-competency measures. Schools may not factor attendance into students' grades or grade

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[7] NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.
[8] This regulation describes grades K–6. In the NYCDOE, grade 6 is considered a middle school grade. For more information on middle school policies, see the Middle School Academic Policy Guide.
[9] The majority of elementary schools in the NYCDOE use an annual term model; however, regardless of the school's term model, students must receive PE consistently every school year.

students predominantly on participation or preparedness. See the Grading Policy section of this guide and the Grading Policy Toolkit for more details.

NYCDOE sports and physical education programs, including physical education classes and school teams, are educational opportunities. Participation in these activities is integral to developing a student's fitness and health, self-esteem, and general well-being. Transgender and gender expansive students must be given the same opportunities to participate in physical education as all other students.

> Schools must follow the Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students when programming students for physical education and provide access to facilities such as locker rooms and restrooms consistent with the student's gender identity asserted at the school. Schools also may not separate students by gender for physical education classes or activities except for contact sports as outlined in the Guidelines on Gender Inclusion.

NYC FITNESSGRAM is the City's annual health-related fitness assessment. PE teachers complete this assessment for all eligible students each year as a part of their PE program. Schools use NYC FITNESSGRAM assessments to help students identify the importance of healthy fitness zones, set goals, and create long- and short-term fitness plans. Schools may not use performance on this assessment to determine students' grades.

The Move-to-Improve (MTI) Physical Activity Program is a classroom-based program designed to supplement existing physical education programs in elementary schools. Physical activity supports academic success by helping students to be alert and have the energy to learn. Teachers can use all of the available MTI resources to integrate physical activity into their academic lessons. Both PE and classroom teachers can access and use MTI resources in order to keep students physically active and engaged throughout the school day. Move-to-Improve is not a break from instruction, it is an instructional tool. Teachers can access the free Move-to-Improve program materials collection on WeTeachNYC.org by typing "move to improve materials collection" in the search bar. Daily physical activity through required physical education and MTI is critical for student health, and PE teachers and classroom teachers are strongly encouraged to use MTI resources to promote physical activity and learning in any environment.

MTI All-Star schools are those that have a comprehensive PE program, led by a PE-certified or designated PE teacher, and at least 85% of their teachers have up-to-date training in MTI. Only designated MTI All-Star schools may use MTI classroom-based activity as part of their PE program to help meet the required 120 minutes of PE instruction and weekly frequency, in conjunction with regularly scheduled physical education classes. MTI can be used to supplement up to 40 minutes of weekly physical education time, but it cannot replace an instructional PE program.[10] MTI may be used to meet PE requirements for students in grade 6 in K-6, K-8, and K-12 schools. MTI instructional programming must be indicated in STARS, as described on the STARS wiki. For more information on becoming an All-Star School or about the Move to Improve program, contact the Office of School Wellness Programs Borough Team.

There are no waivers or exemptions from PE requirements in elementary school. Students with chronic or temporary medical conditions or disabilities must participate in physical education. Students with temporary medical conditions must provide the school with a medical certificate of limitation provided by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner that indicates the area of the PE program in which the pupil may

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[10] The NYCDOE recommends that this "regularly-scheduled" instruction occur as a minimum of two 40-minute periods of physical education per week, in addition to 40 minutes of MTI activities throughout the week in each classroom.

participate. Students with chronic medical conditions or disabilities documented by a Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) must participate in PE in the least restrictive environment, as indicated on their 504 Plans or IEPs, which could include an Adapted Physical Education (APE) program if necessary. APE is specially designed physical education instruction suited to the interests, capabilities, and limitations of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in the activities of the general physical education program without adaptation. APE must be taught by an NYCDOE certified PE teacher. APE instruction must be captured in STARS. Refer to the STARS wiki pages for section and subject properties, as well as the Physical Education FAQ for guidance on reflecting APE in STARS. Please see the Adapted Physical Education FAQ and Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual for additional information on APE.

5.   Health Education – ==Updated August 2023==

Part 135.3 defines the minimum requirements for health education instruction, which includes required annual lessons on HIV and AIDS and lessons on mental health, in each grade. Elementary schools must provide an age-appropriate, sequential comprehensive health education program, aligned to NYSED learning standards for health education, to all students in grades K–5 every year. There is no specific number of instructional minutes required each year for elementary health education, but the NYCDOE recommends a minimum of one class period per week (typically 45 minutes) so that students have adequate time to learn essential health knowledge and skills.

Comprehensive health education emphasizes skill development around multiple dimensions of health, including social, emotional, mental, and physical health. It also includes these essential content areas: personal health and safety (including child sexual abuse prevention); nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use prevention; growth and development; disease and illness prevention (including HIV prevention); and other required health areas. The NYCDOE offers free health education training, curricula, and instructional resources for educators Citywide. For more information, see NYSED's guidance, information, and resources for health education, the New York City K–5 Health Education Scope and Sequence, or contact the Office of School Wellness Programs.

In addition, NYSED requires that schools provide every student with annual instruction on HIV and AIDS as part of the health education class. The NYCDOE requires five lessons each year in grades K–5 using Growing Up and Staying Safe: New York City K-12 HIV Education Curriculum, available through WeTeachNYC.org. Parents/guardians may opt their student out of only the specific lessons that include methods of HIV and STI prevention. Schools must send each parent/guardian a notification letter, signed by the principal, prior to their child receiving HIV lessons. For detailed guidance on providing standards-based health education, review the NYC Health Education Frequently Asked Questions.

Health education and HIV lessons in elementary school may be provided in any subject area and may be taught by certified health education teachers or classroom teachers only. Schools must indicate HIV lessons using the subject property in STARS and enter their health education minutes.

For more information on academic policies and STARS programming for physical and health education courses, see the PE guidance document. For guidance on the implementation of physical and health education instructional programs, contact the Office of School Wellness Programs. See also the section of this guide on subject-specific programming guidance in STARS Classroom.

6. Arts Education

NYSED's arts requirements are described in Part 100.3 and 100.4 and in further detail on the Arts Curriculum and Instruction webpage.

All students in grades K–5 must receive arts instruction designed to facilitate their attainment of the NYSED learning standards in the arts in visual arts, music, dance, and theater each year. It is recommended, but not required, that certified arts teachers provide elementary-level instruction. If the classroom teacher alone provides the instruction, they must still address the arts learning standards. Only teachers with a NYS certification in the arts may teach more than 40% of their time in the arts. Below are details about recommendations in the arts for each grade level.

a. Kindergarten

The instructional program for kindergarten shall be based on the ages, interests, strengths, and needs of the children. Learning experiences in such programs include instruction in the content areas of the arts, including dance, music, theater, and visual arts, designed to facilitate student attainment of NYSED learning standards.

b. Grades 1-3

NYSED guidelines advise that schools allocate 20% of the weekly instructional time equally to dance, music, theater, and visual arts. For schools following a standard five-hour instructional day (excluding lunch and after-school activities), this equals five hours of arts instruction per week.

c. Grades 4-6

NYSED guidelines advise that schools allocate 10% of the weekly instructional time equally to dance, music, theater, and visual arts. For schools following a standard five-hour instructional day (excluding lunch and after-school activities), this equals two and a half hours of arts instruction per week.

See also the section of this guide on subject-specific programming guidance in STARS Classroom.

7. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) – Updated August 2023

Part 100.2(ee) of NYSED general school requirements sets the purposes and requirements of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for New York State public schools. AIS is defined in Part 100.1(g) as "additional instruction which supplements the instruction provided in the general curriculum and assists students in meeting the State learning standards…and/or student support services which may include guidance, counseling, attendance, and study skills which are needed to support improved academic performance."

NYSED mandates AIS for students with and without disabilities who are not meeting learning standards in English Language Arts, social studies, mathematics, and science, as well as English Language Learners who are not meeting or in danger of not meeting annual Part 154 performance standards. NYSED has approved amendments to Part 100.2 that delineate a two-step process for identifying students who are eligible for AIS. In grades 3–8, principals must provide AIS to students who demonstrate need, as follows:

- First, schools must identify all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, who scored below the NYSED-designated performance level on one or more of the NYSED elementary assessments in ELA or math. Students who score below the median scale score between level 2 and level 3 are preliminarily eligible for AIS.[11]
- Then, using additional assessments, schools may make local determinations about which students will most benefit from AIS. Schools must apply the same assessments uniformly across any given grade.
- In July 2023, NYSED approved an emergency action that allows schools to identify students in grades 3-8 for AIS services based solely on district-developed procedures when students' State assessment results are not available prior to the start of the school year. As a result, NYCDOE schools must use a universal screening assessment as the first step in identifying students at risk of not meeting NYSED's learning standards in English Language Arts and mathematics. Schools may use a student's results from either the beginning-of-year (BOY) screeners or the end-of-year (EOY) screener from the previous school year to begin this identification process (see Periodic Assessment for academic screening administration dates).

    o Students who score below the universal screening assessment's benchmark may require tier 2 services, and students who score below the 20th percentile will require intensive intervention in accordance with the school's multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)/Response to Intervention (RtI) model.
    o Once students are identified based upon these cut points, teachers will utilize informal diagnostic data to validate whether a student requires AIS.

Qualified staff in the area of concern must provide services. Appropriate pedagogues include:

- Teachers licensed in the subject area where the student is not meeting performance standards
- Special education teachers
- Licensed reading teachers

NYSED also mandates student support services when attendance, social/emotional or study skill problems affect a student's ability to meet performance standards. A range of staff can provide mandated student support services, including licensed guidance counselors, at-risk counselors (meaning, SAPIS), members of the school attendance team and non-academic staff who contribute to students' academic success.

For AIS services in a student's identified area of need, schools must provide instruction supplementary to what is occurring in the classroom. This additional instruction cannot occur during classes required by NYSED academic policy. Scheduling options can include extra periods during the school day, before- and after-school programs, weekend tutorial programs, and summer school. Computer-based distance learning is also suitable.

Along with choosing specific content of additional instruction, schools may choose to differentiate the intensity of AIS by changing the length and/or frequency of sessions, as well as the group size. Regular progress monitoring must be part of the AIS program and intervention providers must keep records of interventions used and student academic growth.

Schools must provide written notification to the parents/guardians of students who have been identified to receive AIS; notification must be provided in writing, in English and in the preferred language or mode of communication of the parent, where appropriate. The notification must inform the family of the services the student will receive, the reason the student needs such services, and the consequences of not achieving expected performance levels. The school also must notify parents/guardians when it terminates AIS for a student. Schools do not need parent permission to start or to end AIS.

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[11] This procedure may also include diagnostic screening for vision, hearing, and physical disabilities.

While a student is receiving AIS, the school must maintain ongoing communication to parents or guardians regarding their child's AIS program, including:

- Quarterly reports on the student's academic progress in response to the intervention services
- At least once per semester, an opportunity to consult with the student's regular classroom teacher(s) and the school staff providing AIS for their child
- Information on ways to work with their child to improve achievement, monitor their progress, and work with educators.

Schools must track academic interventions in STARS in alignment with current STARS programming guidance.

8. Response to Intervention (RtI)

Part 100.2(ii) of NYSED general school requirements defines schools' responsibility for providing Response to Intervention services (RtI) for students in grades K–4 who are performing below NYSED standards in reading. The NYCDOE extends this mandate through the fifth grade.[12]

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-tiered instruction and intervention model that promotes early identification of students in need of additional support. For students who are identified for RtI services by a universal screening assessment, it mandates the provision of evidence-based instruction and intervention driven by diagnostic testing and progress monitoring. Where there is a lack of response to intervention, schools are required to provide increased levels of intensity, typically in three tiers of service. The first, tier one, is provided in the classroom by the classroom teacher in the form of differentiated supports. Where the student does not make adequate progress in this tier, there is a move to a more intensive tier of targeted instruction, tier two, provided in small groups of three to five students by a teacher other than the classroom teacher. Where there is insufficient response in this tier after a reasonable (but not lengthy) period of time, the student is provided with tier three instruction, which is the most intensive format of instruction, provided in groups of one to three students and delivered by a highly skilled intervention specialist. Only when tier three does not elicit sufficient response can the student be referred for an evaluation for special education services.

The RtI system is designed to increase the accuracy of referrals for special education services by discerning whether learning delays are caused by inadequate instruction rather than a learning disability. It also seeks to ensure that all students have access to high quality, effective, evidence-based instruction and differentiated supports.

NYSED regulations mandate that schools administer universal screening assessments to all students three times during each school year, beginning during the first weeks of classes. Schools must evaluate assessment data using clear cut points to determine which students are not making academic progress at expected rates for their grade level.

Students identified as needing interventions by the universal screening assessment should begin receiving services at Tier 1, which take place in the core classroom. The Tier 1 program should include:

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[12] While adherence to two sets of mandates may appear onerous, there is a great deal of overlap between the provision of intervention within the AIS mandates and the RtI mandates.

- An evidence-based academic program that includes explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension within an uninterrupted 90-minute literacy block.
- Appropriate scaffolding and differentiation of instruction.
- Progress monitoring to identify students who are not making adequate academic progress at Tier 1 level of instructional intensity.

For students who are not making adequate progress in response to Tier 1 supports, schools should provide greater intensity of service (Tier 2) in which:

- Students receive targeted evidence-based intervention in sessions of at least 20–30 minutes, three to five days a week.
- Appropriate targeted instruction is chosen using data from diagnostic and progress-monitoring assessments. The practitioner should administer a progress-monitoring assessment every one to two weeks to determine if the student is demonstrating adequate response to the intervention at the current level of intensity.
- If the student does not show sufficient response to appropriate Tier 2 interventions after a reasonable time period established by the RtI team, the practitioner should consider moving the student to Tier 3 to provide more intensive services. The school can end Tier 2 services and provide support at a Tier 1 level if the student shows sufficient progress.

Tier 3 is the most intensive level of RtI services, indicated for students who have not responded to interventions at Tiers 1 and 2. At Tier 3:

- Students receive targeted, evidence-based intervention from a reading specialist in groups of one to three students in sessions of 30–60 minutes, four to five days a week.
- Appropriate targeted instruction is chosen using data from diagnostic and progress-monitoring assessments. The practitioner should administer a progress-monitoring assessment at least once a week to determine if the student is demonstrating adequate response to the intervention at the current level of intensity.
- If the student does not show sufficient response to appropriate Tier 3 interventions after a reasonable time period established by the RtI team, a referral for a special education evaluation should be considered.[13] The school can end Tier 3 services and provide support at a Tier 2 level if the student shows sufficient progress.

Each school must convene a team that regularly oversees the school-wide RtI program. The team should include a range of members of the school community, including administrators, general and special education teachers, counselors, speech and language providers, and reading specialists. The mission of the team is to oversee identification of all aspects of the RtI program, including assessments, interventions, student response to specific targeted interventions, and movement of students between the tiers and establish reasonable time frames for time spent in each tier.

NYSED requires that parents be notified in their home language when Tier 1 services are mandated and when their child moves to a different tier. The notification must include:

- The performance data that was used to make the determination to mandate RtI services;
- The specific services that will be provided;

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[13] When making any referral for special education services, schools must provide evidence for each case that intervention within an RtI framework was provided.

- The strategies that will be used to improve services; and
- The right of the parent to request an evaluation for special education services at any time.

Although notification is required, parent permission is not necessary for the school to begin or terminate RtI services for the child.

B.   Assessments

Students in elementary school grades take standardized assessments administered by NYSED in accordance with Federal and State regulations, as outlined below. In addition, schools administer classroom-level assessments throughout the year, which may include periodic assessments. See the Assessment InfoHub page for more information.

1.   *New York State Tests in English, Math, and Science – Updated August 2023*

In accordance with Federal and State regulations, students in grades 3–8 in New York participate in NYSED ELA and math tests each year. Students in grades 5 and 8 also participate in NYSED science tests.

> NYSED is no longer administering the science exam in grade 4. In Spring 2023, only students in grade 8 participated in science exams. Beginning in Spring 2024, students in grades 5 and 8 will take the science exam.

Schools administer NYSED ELA and math tests to students according to their grade level. Students with disabilities (those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans) and English Language Learners (ELLs) may be eligible to receive testing accommodations on these assessments. Schools must base the decision to provide testing accommodations on a student's individual needs, and the accommodations must directly address the student's documented diagnosis, disability, or language need. See the testing accommodations section for more information.

The following students in grades 3–5 are exempt from some or all of these tests:

- Students who participate in alternate assessments, such as the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), rather than standard State tests.
- Recently-arrived ELLs, including students from Puerto Rico, who have attended school in the United States for less than one year as of April 1 of the year in which the NYSED ELA exam is administered, may be eligible for one, and only one, exemption from the administration of NYSED ELA Exam in grades 3–8.
- In lieu of the NYSED ELA exam, schools may administer the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to exempted students for participation purposes only. All other ELLs must participate in both the NYSED ELA exam and the NYSESLAT. See the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs.

Elementary schools also serving middle school grades should refer to the Middle School Academic Policy Guide for information on exemptions from taking the NYSED math and science exams for students participating in accelerated courses.

C.   New Students and Grade Placement – Updated August 2023

Chancellor's Regulation A-101 outlines the admission, readmission, and transfer policies for all NYCDOE students. In elementary school, students are initially enrolled and assigned to grade levels based on their age, beginning with the following:

- Children attend kindergarten the calendar year they turn five.
- Children attend first grade the calendar year they turn six.[14]

Beginning with second grade, students entering an NYCDOE school for the first time after having attended school outside New York City public schools are placed in a grade level based on the available education records from the student's previous school at the time of enrollment. If the principal deems that another grade level placement would be more instructionally appropriate, they must consult the superintendent and provide evidence to justify any recommendation. The superintendent will make the final decision concerning the appropriate grade level for the student. For more information about how families entering the NYCDOE register and enroll in elementary school, see the NYCDOE page on Enrollment.

The following procedures apply to student grade placement:

- If a student enrolls in a NYCDOE school with insufficient or no prior educational records, like students newly arrived in the United States, they will be registered provisionally based on age. The school must provide the student with a provisional academic program from the first day of enrollment. Within the first two weeks of enrollment, the principal must evaluate the instructional appropriateness of the grade placement based on available records, diagnostic assessments, and conversations with both the student and their family.
- If a student is discharged from a NYCDOE school and returns within the same academic year, the student will be placed based on consideration of the student's grade placement at their previous NYC school and the available educational records from the student's last school that are presented at the time of enrollment. If no records are available, the student will be placed in the same grade level as when they were discharged in that academic year. If grade records indicate completion of that grade level, the student will receive a placement for the new academic year.
- If a student is discharged from the NYCDOE and returns to the NYCDOE in a subsequent academic year, the student will be placed in a grade level the same way as a student enrolling at a NYCDOE school for the first time.
- If a student transfers between NYCDOE schools within an academic year, the student's grade placement does not change.

Please note that schools must communicate with families in their preferred language about the rationale for any adjustments to the students' programs. In addition, schools must remain mindful of the social and emotional impact of grade level adjustments and ensure that students have access to the necessary supports throughout the transition, which can include determining students' eligibility for language and/or special education services.

NYCDOE elementary schools receiving students from other districts should not record grades or assessment outcomes from the student's previous school in STARS. However, schools should maintain clear policies regarding the extent to which previous academic outcomes factor into final course grades.

For example, if a student transfers to a NYCDOE school for the first time in the spring of grade 3, the school may choose to incorporate the student's report card grades from the fall into the student's final course grades. Alternatively, the school may choose to base the student's final grade only on the work completed by the student

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[14] In cases where a student is required to attend first grade based upon their age, but the principal deems that another grade placement would be more instructionally appropriate, the principal will consult with the superintendent concerning placement and will provide medical or other evaluative documentation, which has been submitted by the parent or guardian, justifying a different placement. The superintendent will make the final decision concerning the appropriate grade level for the student.

at the NYCDOE school in the spring. See the Grading Policy section of this guide, the Grading Policy Toolkit, and the Transfer Student Toolkit for more information on awarding grades to new students.

1.   Translations

Schools are responsible for ensuring that transcripts or other key records written in a language other than English are translated effectively so that students can be programmed and served appropriately. Schools may use school- or community-based translators or the student's home country Embassy or Consulate for assistance. When working with a translation vendor, schools should use the portion of the budget earmarked for translation services.

Schools should never use the student or the student's family to complete the translation and may not charge them for the cost of translation. Additionally, the NYCDOE's Office of Language Access does not translate student-specific documents.

D.   Promotion and Grade Level

Promotion is the process by which teachers determine if students are ready for and have demonstrated proficiency in the content and skills to be successful in the next grade level. The NYCDOE's student promotion policy, defined in Chancellor's Regulation A-501, ensures that students have the supports they need to build a strong foundation in math and literacy before entering the next grade level.

In accordance with A-501, schools establish promotion benchmarks, or academic standards, which students must meet to advance to the next grade level at the end of the school year. Throughout the year, teachers and principals regularly review students' academic performance and identify students who, even with additional support and interventions, may be at risk of not meeting the promotion benchmarks for their grade level. Each student's academic progress is assessed holistically, using multiple measures, such as NYSED test scores, course grades, writing samples, projects, assignments, and other performance-based student work. While NYSED test scores may be considered, they may not be the determining factor in assessing a student's readiness for the next grade.

Students are held to different promotion benchmarks based on their grade levels and, if applicable, their English language learner (ELL) status and/or the criteria specified on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The following groups of students are not held to the promotion standards outlined in A-501:

- Students in pre-kindergarten;
- ELLs in grades 3–7 who have been enrolled in a United States school system (USSS) for less than two years;
- ELLs in grade 8 who have been enrolled in a USSS for less than one year; and
- Students with IEPs who do not participate in the standard NYSED ELA and math tests (meaning, students with IEPs who participate in alternate assessments, such as the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)).

The promotion process includes multiple steps throughout the year, described in greater detail in the Promotion Guide:

- At the beginning of the school year, schools define the promotion benchmarks students must meet to be ready for the next grade level and establish the multiple measures they will use to assess students' progress toward the promotion benchmarks at each grade level.

- In the fall, schools hold parent-teacher conferences and send report cards home to provide early notice to families of how students are progressing.
- In January and February, schools designate students who may be at risk of not meeting promotion benchmarks for their grade level and send written notice (via promotion in doubt letters) to their families.
- In the spring, schools hold parent-teacher conferences and send home report cards to keep families and students aware of their progress and anticipated promotion decision.
- In June, schools make promotion decisions, which they communicate in writing to families.
- In July, students who were not promoted attend summer school.
- In August, schools make final promotional decisions for students in grades 3–8 who were not promoted in June. Families receive written notice of the final promotion decision. Families may appeal these decisions, in writing, and the superintendent makes the final determination.

See the Promotion Guide and the Promotion Policy & Process webpage for information on how to implement the promotion process throughout the school year. For information on how promotion criteria should be determined, applied and evaluated for students with disabilities, refer to the Special Education Office's promotion page.

Schools may use SIGT in ATS to change official class and grade levels in grades K–2. In grades 3–8, grade level is determined by the promotion decision entered into ATS. Schools may use RQSA–GRC or RQSA-PAT to appeal promotion decisions and request grade level changes. Schools must submit grade change requests to the superintendent for review; the superintendent makes a final determination. The NYCDOE does not recognize skipping grades as a promotion option.

E.   Student Participation in Moving Up Ceremonies

If an elementary school student does not meet promotion benchmarks in June, the principal and family should decide together if the student should participate in a moving up ceremony. Schools should obtain written consent from families explicitly stating they understand participation in June moving up ceremonies does not mean their student will be promoted to the next grade level.

A school may prohibit a student who is already on suspension at the time of the moving up activities from attending when they pose a real threat of violence or disruption to the event, but the exclusion must be proportionate to the infraction committed. Schools may also bar a student with particularly egregious conduct from a moving up ceremony, as long as the school has previously advised the student and family in writing.[15]

III.   POLICIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

A.   English Language Learners (ELLs)

Policies regarding English Language Learners (ELLs) are defined in NYS Commissioner's Regulation (CR) Part 154.[16] Students are identified as ELLs based on the results of the New York State Identification Test for ELLs (NYSITELL). For additional information on ELL identification and placement, including Students with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education (SIFE), see the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs.

Once a student has been identified as an ELL, parent selection of an ELL program drives program placement. Parents/guardians of ELLs are invited to a parent orientation, where they view an orientation video in their

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[15] See this guidance on Exclusion from Graduation Ceremonies..
[16] NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.

preferred languages, which describes the NYCDOE's three program options: Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and English as a New Language (ENL) only, described further in the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs. All parents are entitled to choose among these three options, regardless of whether their student's current school has their program of choice. The NYCDOE's website offers parents a variety of resources to better serve ELL students and families.

Schools may not refuse admission to zoned students or students assigned by the NYCDOE's Office of Student Enrollment based on their ELL status or program needs.

Schools are required to form bilingual programs in kindergarten to grade 8 when there are 15 or more ELLs with the same language in one grade or in two contiguous grades, for whom parents or guardians chose a bilingual program placement. This threshold is the minimum requirement under State regulations (CR Part 154), as amended by the ASPIRA Consent Decree, but does not limit schools from choosing to open programs with fewer students. For example, when parents request bilingual programs in a small school, the school can pool resources and staffing with other schools (for example, campus schools and neighboring schools) in order to provide wider access to programs.

For all ELL programs, the number of ENL, bilingual content area, and Home Language Arts units provided is based on English proficiency and all units must be standards-based. See the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs for more information.

1.   New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)

The New York State Identification Test for ELLs (NYSITELL) is used to initially identify English Language Learners (ELLs). New entrants with Home Language Identification Surveys indicating a language other than English is spoken in the home, and who may have English language acquisition needs, take the NYSITELL to determine if they are eligible for bilingual and English as a New Language (ENL) services. Based on NYSITELL results, students are categorized into one of five English language proficiency levels:

- Entering
- Emerging
- Transitioning
- Expanding
- Commanding

A student's level of English language proficiency determines the number of ELL service hours received. More information on the NYSITELL is available on NYSED's website. For additional information on ELL services, see the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs.

2.   New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

All ELLs take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) every year to determine how well they are learning English and to determine continued eligibility for ELL services as part of the required annual assessment. The NYSESLAT assesses students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. For more information regarding NYSESLAT administration, see the Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs.

B. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should, regardless of their disability:

- Have access to a rigorous academic curriculum that sets high academic standards, enabling them to fully realize their potential and graduate prepared for independent living, college, and careers.
- To the greatest extent appropriate, be taught and participate in activities with other students with and without disabilities.
- Receive special education services that are targeted to their needs and provide the appropriate level of support throughout the school day.
- Be able to attend their zoned schools or the school of their choice, while still receiving the special education services and supports required.

It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that students with disabilities and their families feel welcome. The School Implementation Team (SIT) facilitates the strategic planning to ensure that every school appropriately and adequately serves all students. The SIT works with other school teams but does not usurp the function of the IEP team or any other team.

Students with disabilities who do not require special education services but need health services and/or education accommodations in order to attend school or participate in regular school activities, may be eligible for a Section 504 Plan. To determine student eligibility for a Section 504 Plan, a student's parent or guardian and physician must complete and submit school health forms to the school. The school's Section 504 team reviews the student's records and the physician's statement to determine accommodations the student is eligible to receive. There are two types of accommodations:

- Health accommodations, which includes administration of medication (for example, asthma and diabetes medication) and medically prescribed non-medication treatment (for example, G-Tube feeding).
- Educational accommodations, which includes testing accommodations (for example, extended time and separate testing location), classroom accommodations (for example, assistive technology), and other academic supports and services.

If approved by the Section 504 team, these accommodations must be provided to the student. For questions related to Section 504 Plans, see the Office of School Health's guidance and Chancellor's Regulation A-710.

Schools should review each new student's IEP or Section 504 Plan upon entry. If a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan recommends programs or services that the school has not previously provided, the school should first make it clear to the parents and student that they are committed to providing the programs and services that are recommended on the IEP or Section 504 Plan, beginning on the student's first day at that school. For questions related to programming for students with IEPs, schools should contact their Administrator of Special Education (ASE). For questions related to Section 504 Plans, see the Office of School Health's webpage and Chancellor's Regulation A-710. For other policies related to students with disabilities, see the sections on testing accommodations, NYSAA, and programming in STARS.

> A student's status as a student with a disability, and any information related to their disability, is private information. Schools should ensure that any student records and report cards that may be shared with a third party do not reveal a student as having a disability. For example, schools may not list courses titled "SETSS" on a report card.

1. New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

In accordance with Federal and State regulations, students in grades 3–8 in New York participate in NYSED ELA and math tests each year. Students in grade 5 and 8 also participate in NYSED science tests. NYSAA is an alternate assessment to measure progress and performance in ELA, math, and science for students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in standard assessments, even with testing accommodations.

Annually, IEP teams determine the eligibility of students with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to participate in standard or alternate assessments. The IEP team determines this eligibility on a case-by-case basis.[17]

Students who are eligible for alternate assessments "have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment."[18] Eligibility for participation in alternative assessments is not determined by disability classification.

IEP teams should carefully consider this decision, as participating in alternate assessments rather than standard State assessments has long-term implications for students and their families. For example, in the high school grades, students who participate in alternate assessments in lieu of Regents exams for one or more subjects are not eligible to earn an NYS high school diploma; they instead earn the Skills and Achievement commencement credential.

Students who participate in NYSAA are expected to achieve alternate learning standards. These alternate standards are reduced in scope and complexity. They are intended to enable students to access NYSED learning standards but focus more closely on supporting students for post-secondary life (for example, vocational or life skills).

Schools administer the NYSAA to students according to their chronological age and against grade-level standards set by NYSED.[19] The ELA, math, and science NYSAA exams are computer-delivered adaptive assessments. These measures of achievement:

- Provide eligible students with an alternative way to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Measure students' progress towards achieving academic goals.
- Support teachers and specialists in adapting instructional strategies and supports.
- Are used by schools as part of their usual classroom assessment practices.

The IEP team documents a student's participation in alternate assessments in the IEP. The student's IEP must clearly state why the student cannot participate in standard assessments and the rationale for participating in alternate assessments. IEP teams must inform families at every IEP meeting, using the parent notification of participation in NYSAA letter, that their student will participate in alternate assessments, and if they participate in NYSAA for one or more subjects in high school, they will not be able to meet the requirements for an NYS high school diploma.

See the Alternate Assessment guidance document for more information on NYSAA policies and procedures.

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[17] See NYSED's Eligibility and Participation Criteria - NYSAA
[18] See section 100.1(2)(iv)
[19] Students eligible for NYSAA must be assessed on the grade-appropriate content that is consistent with the student's chronological age. See the birthdate ranges for students participating in NYSAA to determine chronological ages and corresponding grade levels.

C. Testing Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities

Testing accommodations remove barriers to the test-taking process so that students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) can demonstrate their knowledge and skills.[20] Testing accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning and are neither intended nor permitted to:

- Change the skills or content being measured or invalidate the results.
- Provide an unfair advantage.
- Substitute for knowledge or abilities that the student has not attained.

The following students may be eligible for testing accommodations:

- Students with disabilities who have IEPs or Section 504 Plans, including:
  - Students who have been declassified and have accommodations specified on their "Declassification from Special Education Services" document continue to receive those accommodations until receiving a diploma or aging out at the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 years old.[21]
  - Students who demonstrate disabilities 30 days or fewer before the administration of a State or district-wide assessment may receive certain testing accommodations if authorized by the principal. For example, a student who breaks their arm days before an exam may be approved for a scribe. Such decisions are made by the principal and must be carefully documented with the Borough Assessment Implementation Director (BAID) and the NYSED Office of State Assessment.
- ELLs and former ELLs for two years after exiting ELL status

Decisions to provide accommodations, as well as the specific accommodations themselves, are made on an individual basis and are reflective of individual student needs. Examples of testing accommodations include:

- Flexible test schedules or timing, including extended time and breaks
- Flexible test settings and locations, including smaller group size
- Method of presentation, including test format: large print, braille, audio or digital versions of the test
- Method of test response, including transcription, scribe, or alternative language edition
- Bilingual dictionaries and/or glossaries that provide direct one-to-one translations of word

At the beginning of the school year, schools should determine which testing accommodations benefit individual ELLs and former ELLs so that students become familiar with their specific testing accommodations. ELLs are entitled to those accommodations for most assessments, including those that are teacher-created assessments and State-mandated assessments. For a comprehensive list of ELL accommodations, please refer to NYSED's website. For students with disabilities, the IEP or Section 504 team should determine the testing accommodations required for each student at each annual IEP or 504 meeting.

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[20] See NYSED's Testing Accommodations for further guidance on the following: Recommending Appropriate Testing Accommodations, Aligning Testing Accommodations with Instructional Accommodations, Documenting Testing Accommodations, Students Who Incur Disabilities Shortly Before Test Administration, and Allowable Testing Accommodations Across New York State's Testing Programs.

[21] Accommodations for students who have been declassified are considered at the time of declassification and entered on the declassification plan. Unlike declassification services, testing accommodations can be provided for more than one year or until the testing accommodations are revised or eliminated. Schools should revisit declassified students' testing accommodations to ensure that the accommodations listed on the declassification plan still meet the student's changing needs, especially considering the different types of assessments conducted as students progress through the grades. If a change in student need or type of assessment has occurred, a 504 team should convene to create a 504 with the appropriate accommodations for the student.

D. Medically Necessary and Hospital Instruction – <mark>Updated August 2023</mark>

Medically necessary instruction (MNI) and hospital instruction programs provide educational services for students who are unable to attend school due to orthopedic, non-orthopedic/medical, or psychiatric reasons. MNI and hospital instruction programs are interim programs that provide academic services to limit the educational effects of a long-term absence.

Students maintain their affiliation with their NYCDOE school, or "affiliate school," while on MNI or hospital instruction. Students receive MNI or hospital instruction via shared instruction, in which the MNI or hospital program collaborates with the affiliate school to oversee the students' instructional program. This relationship ensures continuity of instruction and helps the student maintain a strong connection to the New York City school they will return to after MNI or hospital instruction has ended.

> NYSED increased the minimum instructional hours for students participating in MNI and hospital instruction programs. Effective July 1, 2023, elementary school students in MNI and hospital programs must receive a minimum of 10 instructional hours per week, to the extent possible given the student's condition.

Refer to Medically Necessary Instruction and Hospital Instruction: Academic Policy Guidance for Schools and Programs for additional information the collaboration between the affiliate school and the MNI or hospital program.

For information on student eligibility and how to submit a request for MNI, see Medically Necessary Instruction.

E. Home Schooling

When families choose to home school their children, a separate set of policies apply. Students who are instructed at home may not participate in the instructional programs of the NYCDOE; students either receive home school instruction or receive instruction from an NYCDOE school. Home schooled students are not issued report cards or academic transcripts. For more information, see the Office of Home Schooling website and the NYSED FAQ on home schooling.

IV. PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS POLICIES

A. Programming in STARS

The STARS suite of applications is the NYCDOE's official record of students' programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements. STARS Classroom, together with STARS Admin, comprise the STARS course programming, grading, and report card management system for elementary schools. STARS Classroom is a web-based application, compatible on most internet browsers, that automates the collection of course marks for teachers. Specifically, teachers can use this system to view class rosters, access student data, and enter course marks, which will appear on STARS-generated student report cards.

STARS Classroom serves as the primary scheduling tool for NYCDOE elementary schools, allowing them to fully utilize Official Class (OC), Individual Student Programming (ISP), and Push-in/Pull-out (PIPO). Moreover, STARS Classroom allows administrators to set properties for subjects to reflect mandated services.

All NYCDOE elementary schools are required to enter information into STARS Classroom about the instruction and supports students in elementary grade levels receive throughout the school day and year. Elementary school

programming information reflects student-teacher-subject relationships in STARS Classroom; it also allows teachers to enter student report card grades into STARS Classroom and school administrators to generate report cards from STARS Classroom. All students must be awarded at least one interim grade and one final grade for each subject they are enrolled in STARS.

Elementary school programming can only be completed by a staff member with administrative access in STARS Classroom. Commonly this includes the principal and their designee(s). For more information see the STARS Wiki and assigning roles for STARS Classroom .

B.   Subject Properties

Schools capture additional information about the delivery method and content of the course using subject properties. These fields further identify the unique properties of a subject, including:

- The total number of minutes per week (including both synchronous and asynchronous minutes)
- If the course integrates English as a New Language (ENL) within a subject
- The target language of instruction and percent of time in target language
- The special education model
- If the course integrates computer science subjects and is part of the Computer Science for All initiative
- For arts education, the amount of the total time that is delivered by a community-based organization (CBO)
- For health education, the number of HIV/AIDS lessons given to the students, during the year and term
- For courses using a learning management system (LMS) such as iLearn or Google Classroom, checking the iLearn or Other Online section property for the course to properly connect to the LMS.

In order to ensure students are receiving the instruction to which they are entitled, and to support accurate reporting for compliance, schools must carefully complete the subject properties in each year and term and ensure they accurately reflect students' experiences. For additional support, refer to the following STARS Wiki pages: English Language Learners, Special Education Programming, Computer Science, and Subject Properties.

C.   Subject-Specific Programming Guidance

The following also applies to programming specific subject areas:

- **English language arts (ELA):** The overall ELA subject must be turned on, but the other ELA areas of 'reading', 'writing', and 'listening, speaking, and language' are optional. Schools should turn these on if they want to award students separate grades and comments in these areas and/or if they wish to indicate instructional time in these subjects individually. This is a school-level decision.
  - o The ELA overall subject should be inclusive of the time spent in the component areas both synchronously and asynchronously. For example, if a school indicates that students receive 300 minutes per cycle in ELA overall, they might indicate that they spend 100 minutes each in the three sub-areas.

- **Response to Intervention (RtI):** Schools should use the push-in/pull-out functionality if a student receives RtI (Tier II or III) during another class or subject area. In this case, schools must fill in the total minutes per week students receive in these areas and indicate the teacher providing RtI and the RtI subject.
- **Physical education:** As described in the section on physical education, schools must indicate the days per cycle in addition to the number of minutes of instruction per cycle.

o   Move to Improve (MTI) All-Star Schools that have a certified PE teacher may incorporate MTI implemented during regular classroom instruction as a supplement to PE instruction. To reflect this in STARS Classroom, schools should follow the steps on the STARS classroom wiki page. More information about MTI is available under Physical Education.

o   Adapted physical education (APE) can be programmed in the following ways:

- If an individual student participates in PE with the official class and teacher, but also receives APE through additional push-in or pull-out instruction, program the student for push-in/pull-out instruction. This is the most common way to reflect APE, as it maintains the existing student-teacher-subject linkage.
- If an individual student receives PE separately from the rest of the class, program the student individually for PE and indicate APE using the subject properties. This overrides any existing student-teacher-subject linkage for PE, indicating that instead of receiving PE with the full class, this student receives APE entirely with another teacher.
- If an individual student or group of students within a class receives APE from their primary PE teacher, set the properties of the PE subject to APE.

- **Health education:** As described in the section of this guide on health education, schools must indicate the actual number of HIV/AIDS lessons taught throughout the year in the subject properties under health.
- **Arts education:** As described in the section of this guide on arts education, schools must provide instruction in the subjects of music, theater, dance, and visual arts. These are unique subjects in STARS Classroom. Schools should turn on each of these subjects for each official class and indicate the teacher(s) providing instruction along with the instructional time per cycle. Subject properties also ask the school to identify whether or not a community-based organization (CBO) or cultural organization is providing the arts instruction in collaboration with the teacher. Schools must indicate, in the subject properties, the number of minutes delivered by the organization. This number is a subset of the total minutes of instruction.
- **Language instruction, including World Languages, home language arts (HLA), or World Language in Elementary School (WLES):** In STARS Classroom, world languages and home language arts (HLA) are represented as one combined 'foreign or native language instruction' subject area. Schools should turn on this subject area when students receive any instruction in a different language, regardless of whether the language is a home language or new language to each student. Schools should use the target language field in the subject properties to select the correct language and set the 'percentage of time in target language' to 100%. In doing so, they will indicate the specific language (for example, Spanish or French).

D.   Push-in/Pull-Out Instruction

Push-in and pull-out instruction occur when a teacher other than the primary teacher(s) delivers targeted instruction to a subgroup of students on a regular basis. Push-in and pull-out instruction can be used to meet a variety of instructional needs including, but not limited to, intervention, enrichment, and services for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Push-in and pull-out instruction must always be programmed in STARS to reflect the content and subjects delivered to students. It must be scheduled to reflect the frequency with which the push-in or pull-out instruction occurs. Push-in/pull-out instruction records identify the teacher, the minutes and meet times, the subject of the instruction, and any other important properties.

- In **push-in instruction**, an additional teacher instructs a student or subgroup of students within the primary class. The STARS push-in record should match the subject being delivered in the primary class.
- In **pull-out instruction**, a student or subgroup of students leaves the primary class to receive instruction from a second teacher.

Integrated co-teaching (ICT) is not considered push-in or pull-out instruction. Instead, this is indicated as a subject property. Schools should use official class programming or individual student programming when ICT is provided.

See the STARS wiki for additional details and instructions for programming push-in and pull-out instruction, programming English Language Learners and special education programming.

V. GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Grading Policies

All elementary, middle, and high schools must have written grading policies that they review and update annually. Well-documented grading policies facilitate discussion with students and families about academic growth and support students and families in sharing ownership of their learning. School-based grading policies should be developed in consultation with the school community and grounded in the needs of their students. Grading policy documents may be organized in a variety of ways, depending on the extent to which schools' grading policies are standardized at the school, department, or course level.

> Schools must share a physical or electronic copy of their grading policies with students and families at the beginning of the school year. Schools should also share grading policies at open houses, parent-teacher conferences, on the school website, and through other touchpoints with families. Students and families have the right to request the grading policy at any point in time, per the Student Bill of Rights and the Parent Bill of Rights. Schools must translate their grading policies for families when needed.

All grading policies must explain, at a minimum, how grades are determined, the grading scales used, and the timeline of when students receive grades. In addition, schools should have clearly defined procedures to ensure that students' final course grades are entered in STARS by the end of the term, and in some cases may be entered up to 20 business days (or 4 weeks) after the end of the term for individual students who need additional time.

Schools have discretion in deciding which specific measures are factored into students' grades. Schools must make determinations of passing or failing based primarily on how well students demonstrate understanding of the subject matter, concepts, content, and skills addressed in a course or subject. Even in courses like physical education (PE), science labs, or electives, students must be graded based on how well they have learned the concepts and subjects being taught.

When students miss class time, teachers should give students reasonable chances to make up missed work before final grades are entered in STARS.[22]

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[22] Sometimes, students miss the majority of the course, and it is not reasonable for them to complete course requirements through make-up work, before teachers award final grades. In these cases, it may be appropriate to award special marks such as an 'NX' (Course in Progress) or 'NL' (New/Recent Admit or Other), consistent with the NYCDOE policies for these marks. See the Grading Policy Toolkit for more information.

> **Important:** Attendance may not be factored into a student's grade. Attending school, participating in class, and demonstrating understanding are all essential components of student learning, and school communities must make every effort to ensure that students attend school, with a goal of every student, every day. When students attend school consistently, they have the greatest opportunity to make progress, receive support from their teachers, and demonstrate their learning. Students' grades must reflect the extent to which they have met the learning outcomes for their courses.

All students, including students with disabilities and ELLs/MLs, should be working toward grade-level standards and must receive grades based on achievement of NYSED learning standards.[23]

- **ELLs/MLs:** Grading policies should consider students' English as a New Language (ENL) proficiency level and should include opportunities for students to demonstrate competency of NYSED learning standards in their native language.
- **Students with disabilities:** All students, including students with disabilities, should be working toward grade-level standards and should receive grades based on how well they comprehend the content and skills addressed in a course or subject. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) describes specially designed instruction and accommodations for an individual student that creates access to grade-level standards and enables progress toward annual goals. Students' receipt of accommodations may not impact the grade that can be earned. Students with disabilities have the same opportunity to earn grades as all other students.
  - o Schools issue report cards to provide feedback on students' progress in the general education curriculum and distribute progress reports to reflect the likelihood a student will meet or has already met their annual goals. While progress reports are usually distributed at the same time as report cards, they may not replace report cards for students with disabilities.
- **Students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments**: Due to the severity of the students' disabilities, schools modify the general education curriculum to provide students access and allow for participation and progress. Modification changes the expectation of what skills students need to demonstrate they have met the learning outcomes. To accommodate the different expectations, a school's grading policy should address how they grade students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments.

For information on how to develop and implement strong grading policies that promote accurate, equitable, and social-emotionally responsive grading, refer to the Grading Policy Toolkit.

B.   Course Marks and Report Cards

Schools determine the total number of marking periods to include within a year, semester, trimester, or cycle, depending on the term model they use; see the overview of term models guidance for more. Schools must give at least two grades (marks) in each subject per term and enter them in STARS to ensure every student has at least one interim and one final mark in every subject. The last marking period in the term (for example, year, semester, trimester, or quarter, depending on the school's model) is where final course grades for that term are recorded.[24] Schools should clearly define procedures for calculating and entering final grades in STARS by the end of the term,

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[23] See the United States Department of Education's Dear Colleague letter.
[24] For additional information on generating final grades in STARS, see Grades and Exams.

and in some cases may be entered up to 20 business days (or 4 weeks) after the end of the term for individual students who need additional time.[25]

> **Important Terms to Know**
>
> **Grades** are a reflection of students' understanding and command of content, their progression through a course or subject, and their proficiency of skills *at a given point in time.*
>
> **Grading policies** outline when and how students receive feedback on their proficiency of content and skills. Schools can address these elements in one or more document(s). Schools are not required to use a specific format when drafting their grading policies. The purpose of a grading policy is to allow students, families, and teachers to have a mutual understanding of what specific grades mean. Schools may establish grading policies at the school, department, grade, or course level, provided the school applies their grading policies equitably to all students.
>
> **Term** is the length of a course with one teacher or set of teachers, one syllabus, and a final grade and credit(s) earned. Schools must designate a school-wide term model in STARS before the start of the school year. A school's designated term model defines the maximum length of any course experience that it may offer. Schools cannot offer courses that span across multiple terms; courses must begin and end within one term.
>
> **Marking periods** are intervals during a course when the teacher of record awards interim marks, which provide status updates to students, families, and other stakeholders.
>
> **Report card grades** are indications of students' progress toward proficiency of the course's learning standards at a given point in time. These are grades that do not appear on the transcript. Report card grades may be standalone or cumulative. They are also often called marking period grades.
>
> **Final grades (marks)** are given at the end of the term, representing the work students completed over their courses and should reflect the ultimate level of proficiency at the end of the course, *as of that point in time*. The teacher of record determines the final mark in accordance with the school's grading policies and the City and State's academic policies.

1. *Course Marks*

All schools are required to enter both interim and final report card grades (course marks) into STARS for grade levels K–12, regardless of the type of report card they choose to use. Schools should enter grades in accordance with their school-level grading policies and in accordance with the Grading Policy Toolkit. Schools are not required to enter indicator marks or narratives if the school is not already using the STARS report card. The marks entered in STARS must accurately match the marks awarded and communicated to students and families.

Schools must award grades in STARS using one of the available NYCDOE grading scales in the Course Marks Table, to ensure that measures of student progress are transparent and translatable across schools. Schools may choose to award grades using one or multiple grading scales, provided the use of each scale is clearly explained in the school's grading policies. The principal, in consultation with the School Leadership Team (SLT), may determine whether grading scales are set at the school, department, grade, or course level.

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[25] See the STARS wiki for more information on how to define terms and enter marking period grades.

The following policies apply to specific course marks that elementary schools may use:

- **Course in Progress ('NX'):** Schools must award a grade of 'NX' (Course in Progress) if a student has a documented, extreme extenuating circumstance that prevents them from completing the course in its established timeframe (for example, surgery or a death in the family). 'NX' does not have a pass/fail or a numeric equivalent.
- **New or Recently Admitted Students ('NL'):** Schools must award this mark when a student enrolls in a course after it has started, and they may have missed assignments or assessments needed to generate a complete course grade for a given marking period. These students may be given a grade of 'NL' in STARS to indicate the student did not have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the course content. 'NL' does not have a pass/fail or numeric equivalent.
- **No Show ('NS'):** Schools have discretion in using this mark, but it is recommended that schools use this mark sparingly if at all. An 'NS' has a pass/fail equivalent of fail and a numeric equivalent of 45. If schools choose to use this mark, it should be reserved for the most egregious situations, where a student has been given multiple chances to make up missed work and the school has made every effort to determine whether a student has extenuating circumstances that are interfering with their education.
  - o Neither long-term absentees (LTA) nor students receiving medically-necessary or home instruction should be assigned an 'NS' mark. See Medically Necessary and Hospital Instruction guidance for information on how schools should collaborate with students receiving medically-necessary or hospital instruction.

> Schools must use one of the available scale of marks when awarding grades. Schools may not award narratives alone. Schools can provide narratives in addition to--but not in lieu of--grades.

2. Report Cards – Updated August 2023

Report cards can be generated in STARS for each marking period and must be distributed to students and families at least twice per term: one report indicating the student's progress and one report indicating the student's final grades for the term. Schools may use the standard NYCDOE report card and/or school-developed materials to provide students and families with more information about their progress and performance.

In elementary school grades, schools have the following options to produce and distribute report cards:

- **STARS Classroom** (recommended): Schools can enter report card grades and print report cards directly through STARS Classroom. STARS Classroom contains indicators aligned to learning standards for each subject area and a library of narrative comments. Teachers can enter additional narratives where desired. STARS Classroom enables schools to indicate which subjects from students' programs should appear on the STARS report card. Parents can view marks entered into STARS in their NYC Schools Account (NYCSA); school staff members can view these marks via Student Profile.
- **Handwritten report cards**: Schools can print their own versions of the NYCDOE's handwritten report cards from the InfoHub and complete these by hand. *Schools choosing this option are still required to enter report card grades into STARS Classroom.* The grades entered into STARS Classroom should correspond to the grades that appear on the handwritten report cards.
- **School-based report cards**: Schools may develop their own materials to provide students and families with more information about their progress and performance, such as school-designed report cards or portfolios. *Schools choosing this option are still required to enter report card grades into STARS Classroom.* The grades entered into STARS Classroom should correspond to the grades that appear on the school-based report cards.

Refer to the Student Report Cards webpage for sample STARS report cards, the NYCDOE's handwritten report cards, and translations.

> All schools are required to enter both interim and final report card grades into STARS for grade levels K–12, regardless of the type of report card they choose to use. Schools should enter grades in accordance with their school-level grading policies. The marks entered in STARS must accurately reflect the marks awarded and communicated to students and families.

As a way to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students, schools should use gender-neutral language in report cards and other student records that will remain with the student throughout their academic career.

Examples of gender-neutral language include:

- Using the student's name or the singular "they" instead of gendered pronouns like "he" or "she."
- Avoiding gender stereotypes and focusing on the individual student's strengths and weaknesses.
- Using inclusive language that includes all genders, such as "children," "learner," or "student."

By using gender-neutral language, schools can help create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their gender identity.

All school staff members and students must refer to students by their chosen names and pronouns, consistent with the Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students.

C.   Competency-Based Learning – Updated August 2023

Competency-based learning is a pedagogical approach where instruction, feedback, and assessment are organized around the most important skills and knowledge in a course, called learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are pre-determined competencies and skills in reference to standards. In a competency-based learning system, students are given timely, differentiated supports based on evidence of their learning, as well as multiple opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency. Implementing competency-based learning requires long-term planning and strong support from the school community, including teachers, administrators, students, and families.

> Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, schools have the option to use a new, four-level competency-based grading scale that includes numeric marks. This new scale is designed to meet the needs of competency-based schools and other schools that seek to grade students using proficiency levels rather than the numeric (10-100) or alpha (A-F) scales.

For additional guidance on programming students in schools that employ competency-based learning models, see this guidance on Competency-Based Learning. Schools should contact their academic policy, performance, and assessment specialists for direct support with academic policy and programming.

VI. ATTENDANCE, DISCHARGE, AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A. School Calendar

Each year, the school year calendar is centrally designed to meet the NYSED requirement of a minimum number of 180 school days, and a minimum of 900 instructional hours for students in grades K-6. Please see New York State Education Commissioner's Regulation 175.5 regarding State Aid. The NYCDOE School Year Calendar, which includes Chancellor's conference days for professional development and parent teacher conference times, is pre-determined to ensure that schools do not fall below the minimum number of aidable days while adhering to contractual requirements and observing key holidays. According to NYSED:

- Aidable days must be between September and June
- Classes or activities scheduled on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays do not count towards the 180 aidable days

To avoid the risk of a reduction in State Aid, and to limit the impact on bus scheduling and other services, schools may not deviate from the calendar except in limited circumstances. See the NYCDOE Calendar Change Requests page for additional information and the link to the Calendar Change Request Application.

B. Daily Session Time and Student Schedules

Each year, the principal determines a school's schedule in alignment with contractual obligations and NYSED minimum instructional time requirements. Changes to the schedule that deviate from the traditional contractual requirements require a vote via the School-Based Option (SBO) process.

The principal determines a school's schedule in alignment with contractual rules and the above instructional time requirements, described in the Session Time Memo. Once a school's overarching session times and contractual work day schedules are established in the Session Time Application, students must be programmed for all instructional time in the STARS suite of applications. For middle and high schools, this includes updating the bell schedule in the STARS client with accurate information to inform student programming.

In accordance with State policies around school funding and State Aid, schools must provide all students with a minimum amount of instructional time per school year:

- In grades K–6 a minimum of 900 hours of instructional time, over at least 180 aidable days
- In grades 7–12 a minimum of 990 hours of instructional time, over at least 180 aidable days

These are experiences where students are:

- Receiving instruction from a teacher in an academic subject area
- Engaged in instructional experiences which are supervised by a qualified pedagogue

Instructional time does not include minutes where instruction and/or supervised study time is not provided to students, such as lunch or recess. Schools must work to maximize student instructional time and prioritize time in the classroom. This may include reducing minutes of passing time between periods and eliminating homeroom if it is not operationally necessary.

In order to meet these requirements, NYCDOE schools must provide a total of 25 hours per week to students in grades K–6 and 27.5 hours per week to students in grades 7–12 of supervised instructional time, exclusive of lunch.[27] This time may include supervised, instructional experiences overseen by teachers at the school that occur off-site.

Schools must provide students the following minimum instructional time, summarized in the table below, over at least 180 aidable days, as set forth in the NYCDOE's School Calendar:

Grade levels	Hours per year	Hours per week
Students in full day Kindergarten and grades 1–6	900 hours/year	25 hours/week
Students in grades 7–12	990 hours/year	27.5 hours/week

Schools may choose to extend their school day beyond the required hours with the help of community-based organizations/non-profits and special grant opportunities; however schools must deliver their mandated instruction and services, including for English language learners and the IEP-recommended program and related services for students with disabilities, during the regular, mandated school day.

For elementary school grade levels, all testing administration days are regular days of attendance. Schools should not "release" students or rosters without prior approval, because this can jeopardize state aid. Principals must submit and receive approval to release students via a Calendar Change Request.

C. Attendance, Discharge, and Strategies for the Reduction of Chronic Absenteeism – Updated August 2023

Attending school, participating in class, and demonstrating understanding are all essential components of student learning and achieving success in school and in life. It is the collective responsibility of the New York City school system to make every effort to remove barriers to attendance and to help every student attend and learn in school every day.

To see the full 2023-24 attendance policy and related policies, refer to the Attendance InfoHub.

D. Student Records Retention and Transfer

Maintaining up-to-date, accurate student records is an important part of ensuring that students are programmed for the correct courses and exams and receive the services they need. All schools are responsible for obtaining and maintaining relevant records electronically and in students' cumulative files. See the guidance provided in Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records LGS-01, the Student Records document and Chancellor's Regulation A-820.

NYCDOE's data systems automatically transfer the following information to the next NYCDOE school:

- ATS: biographical information, attendance data, health/immunization records, promotion data, disciplinary history, exam scores, and transportation eligibility
- STARS Classroom: students' previous grades
- SESIS (Special Education Student Information System): IEP[26]

Students' cumulative files should be transferred as follows:

- **For students transitioning from NYCDOE elementary schools to NYCDOE middle schools:** elementary schools are responsible for transferring students' cumulative files to students' receiving schools each spring once school placement decisions have been finalized. Elementary schools use the PLNT (general education) and PSPE (special education) reports in ATS to access students' middle school DBNs, and distribute students' cumulative files accordingly. The PLNT and PSPE reports should be included with the

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[26] It is not necessary to transfer a paper copy of the IEP.

records as a cover sheet. Middle schools can use the RQSA screen in ATS to request missing records as needed.

- **For students enrolling from non-NYCDOE schools:** schools are responsible for confirming students' prior schools and contacting the schools to request copies of students' cumulative files in a timely manner in order to provide students with appropriate academic programs. See the Transfer Student Toolkit for more information on supporting transfer students.
- **For NYCDOE students transferring to non-NYCDOE schools:** only copies of the contents of the cumulative folder should be sent to the admitting school. The original folder should be kept at the school indefinitely.

The Student Records guidance details what kinds of student records schools are responsible for providing to parents and students. Former students who wish to obtain copies of their academic records should submit a written request to the school they last attended, accompanied by valid proof of ID. If the student's school is no longer open, the student should request records from the designated transcript maintenance school. Students are advised to contact their high school superintendent's office for assistance locating their transcript maintenance school or obtaining their records. See the Student Records page for additional information.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), confidential student information is not available to everyone. This law protects the privacy of student information. See the Student Records guidance and the Data Privacy and Security Policies home page for more information.

Reasonable methods must be used to identify and authenticate the identity of parents, students, school officials, and any other parties to whom personally identifiable information from education records is disclosed. When a request comes from a former student who resides out of the New York area, schools must still attempt to confirm the identity of the requestor.

1.   *Changes to Student Records*

The types of documentation required for records change requests differs depending on the type of record that a parent/guardian or student is seeking to update. Parents and eligible students must submit their request in writing and include the following information:

- the information that is claimed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights;
- the education records in which the parent/eligible student believes the information is contained;
- the basis for the claim (i.e., why they believe the information is inaccurate, misleading, etc.); and
- the parent/eligible student's proposed change.

Schools must respond to the request, in writing, within 15 days of receiving it. See pages 11-13 of Chancellor's Regulation A-820 for additional information about the amendment of records and appeals process.

Before updating a student's electronic records, schools must receive the appropriate documentation from the student or parent/guardian as described below.

- **Request to correct a student's date of birth:** Any document accepted as a proof of age for enrollment (for example, birth certificate or passport)
- **Request to correct or change a student's legal name on their permanent record:** A court order, birth certificate, or government ID reflecting the student's legal name
- **Request to correct or change a student's chosen name:** A signed Name and Gender Change Request Form. Students' chosen names are recorded separately from their legal names in ATS and appear on attendance rosters, report cards, and other important documents. See Preferred Student Name (Chosen Name) for additional guidance.

- **Request to change a student's gender marker:** A signed Name and Gender Change Request Form. The DOE does not include gender on student- and school-facing permanent records.

> Starting in 2022-23, ATS, SESIS, and MySchools include option "X" as a gender marker for students who do not identify as female or male; this may include students who are non-binary, gender expansive, or gender fluid. Gender markers are self-identified. Schools must not request birth certificates or other documentation.

Students are able to change their gender marker and chosen name on their permanent education records without legal documentation by submitting a signed Name and Gender Change Request Form to their school, which must be signed by their parent/guardian if the student is under 18 years of age. The form can be used by all students (for example, transgender and gender expansive students, those who go by a shortened version of their name, or those who have changed their name for social reasons).

> A student's chosen name can be entered or changed in ATS if the parent/guardian—or the student if they are 18 years of age or older—submits a signed Name and Gender Change Request Form to the school. When the student's chosen first name ('CFN') and/or chosen last name ('CLN') is entered in ATS, the chosen name(s) will display on most student-, family-, and community-facing materials produced by the DOE in addition to most DOE school-facing applications, such as STARS. If a chosen name is not entered for a student, their legal name will continue to display. See the Preferred Student Name (Chosen Name) wiki page for more information.

Schools must retain copies of this documentation in the student's cumulative folder. The former name and/or gender marker will be maintained in archived data to ensure that records will accurately reflect circumstances in effect at the time each record was created, enable records to be cross-referenced, and maintain confidentiality.

For more information, see the NYCDOE's Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students and the guidance on changing a student's name and/or gender in ATS.

a. Records Other Than Permanent Records

No documentation is required to update a name or gender marker in records that are not part of a student's permanent file, such as guidance logs, graduation programs, sporting rosters, and yearbooks. Schools must use the student's chosen name and gender in all other records that are not permanent records. For students participating in Public School Athletic League activities, they can update their roster by speaking to their athletic director who will email lgbtq@schools.nyc.gov for support in making this change.

b. School ID Cards

A student's school ID card is not a permanent record and a school must issue the ID in the name that reflects the student's chosen name. Student IDs must not have gender markers on them. See this STARS wiki page for step-by-step assistance on updating a student ID without a change in ATS.

VII. APPENDICES

A.   Course Marks Table – <mark>Updated August 2023</mark>

The table below outlines available grading scales along with their pass/fail equivalents and numeric equivalents. A new four-level, competency-based grading scale will be available in STARS in September 2023 for use in the 2023-24 school year.

> **Note:** The 1–4 (+/-) scale does not have numeric equivalents. Schools may not establish nor communicate numeric equivalents for marks 1, 2, 3, or 4. Also, note that performance level 2 has a fail equivalent. Schools that wish to award grades with numeric equivalents or have more gradation between marks should use a different scale of marks.

Course Mark[27]	Description	Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
4 (+/-)	Performance level: excels in standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	P
3 (+/-)	Performance level: proficient (1–4 scale)	N/A	P
2 (+/-)	Performance level: below standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	F
1 (+/-)	Performance level: well below standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	F
100–65	Numeric course grades (10–100 scale)[28]	65–100	P
64–10	Numeric course grades (10–100 scale)	10–64	F
A+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	98	P
A	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	95	P
A-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	93	P
B+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	88	P
B	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	85	P
B-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	83	P
C+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	78	P
C	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	75	P
C-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	73	P
D+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	68	P
D	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	65	P
D-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	60	F
F	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)/Fail (Pass or fail scale)	55	F
P	Pass (Pass or fail scale)	N/A	P

[27] A scale of IB1–IB7 is also available for International Baccalaureate schools. See the Middle School or High School Academic Policy Guides.
[28] In order to avoid conflicting pass/fail equivalencies for marks of 1–4, schools using the numeric scale should round marks of less than 10 to either an 'NC' or a 10, or utilize the 'NS' mark where appropriate.

Course Mark[27]	Description	Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
E+	Excellent+ (E–U scale)	98	P
E	Excellent (E–U scale)	95	P
E-	Excellent- (E–U scale)	93	P
G+	Good+ (E–U scale)	88	P
G	Good (E–U scale)	85	P
G-	Good- (E–U scale)	83	P
S+	Satisfactory (E–U scale)	78	P
S	Satisfactory (E–U scale)	75	P
S-	Satisfactory- (E–U scale)	73	P
N+	Needs Improvement+ (E–U scale)	68	P
N	Needs Improvement (E–U scale)	65	P
N-	Needs Improvement- (E–U scale)	60	F
U	Unsatisfactory (E–U scale)	55	F
CE	Exceeds standards (4-level competency scale)	100	P
CM	Meets standards (4-level competency scale)	85	P
CA	Approaching standards (4-level competency scale)	70	P
CN	Not yet meeting standards (4-level competency scale)	55	F
ME	Exceeds standards (5-point competency scale)	95	P
MA	Above standards (5-point competency scale)	85	P
MT	Meets standards (5-point competency scale)	75	P
MP	Approaching standards (5-point competency scale)	65	P
MB	Below standards (5-point competency scale)	55	F
NS	No credit–No show (additional policies apply)	45	F
NX	No credit–Course in Progress[29] (additional policies apply)	N/A	NULL
NL	New/Recent Admit or Other[30] (additional policies apply)	N/A	NULL

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[29] During the transition to remote learning in March 2020, the description of 'NX' changed from 'Incomplete' to 'Course in Progress'.
[30] With the release of the 2020-21 Grading Policy, the description of 'NL' changed from 'New/Recent Admit' to 'New/Recent Admit or Other'.

B.   Impact of COVID-19 – <mark>New August 2023</mark>

Since March 2020, schools have been impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. NYCDOE schools and students first transitioned to a remote learning model for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year (including summer). In the 2020-21 school year schools utilized remote and blended learning models, and in the 2021-22 school year students returned to in-person learning. During that time both NYSED and NYCDOE implemented policies to address the necessary adjustments to our education system. The following are academic policies that were impacted by COVID-19. Some of these policies and flexibilities have been expanded upon and continue to exist while others are no longer in effect.

1.   *Program Requirements*

a.   Instructional Time Requirements

For the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued guidance providing flexibility for courses that previously required specific instructional time requirements (physical education and, where student need was established, bilingual education and/or English as a New Language instruction per Part 154).

During 2020-21, schools used 180 minutes per week as a benchmark for comparison when designing and delivering instruction aligned to the learning standards.

Since the 2021-22 school year, schools are expected to provide students with instructional experiences of 180 minutes per week (or 108 hours per unit) for courses that previously required specific instructional time requirements (physical education and, where student need is established, *bilingual education and/or English as a New Language instruction* per *Part 154*).

b.   Physical Education (PE)

In the 2020-21 school year, schools were not expected to meet the traditional frequency requirements (times per week) for PE. Instead, schools were to use the traditional models as a benchmark for comparison in designing schedules for the delivery of PE through blended and remote instruction.

In the 2021-22 school year, students returned for fully in-person learning experiences. As such, schools provided physical education instruction based on specific time and frequency requirements.

c.   Academic Intervention Services Identification

Due to limited State testing administration in the 2020-21 school year, NYSED amended section 100.2(ee) of the Commissioner's regulations to provide that schools may, but are not required to, conduct the two-step identification process for grade 3-8 students during the 2021-2022 school year. Those schools that did not utilize the two-step identification process were able to make an identification based solely on district-developed procedures applicable to all grade 3-8 students during the 2021-2022 school year.

2. Assessments

a. New York State Test in English, Math, and Science

In March 2020, NYSED suspended all elementary & intermediate level State testing for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

In March 2021, NYSED provided schools additional flexibility in the local in-school scheduling of the Spring 2021 operational tests. For all state assessments, schools were not expected to bring students into the building to participate in the tests if the students were receiving entirely remote instruction during the testing windows. Schools could also administer the tests to students over the full duration of the testing window to accommodate instructional schedules.

3. English Language Learners (ELLs)

a. New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)

For the school year 2020-21 only, NYSED announced expanded eligibility for NYSITELL and a Special Administration of the NYSITELL for ELLs unable to take the NYSESLAT due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This exception is no longer allowed.

4. Grading Policies

a. Course Marks

During the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, the NYCDOE issued grading policies in response to the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, families, and educators. While these policies are no longer in effect, schools must be aware of the policies that were in effect during those times, because they may have some carry-over effects. See the Grading Policy for Remote Learning (2019-20) and the Grading Policy for Remote and Blended Learning Models (2020-21) for details.

b. New/Recent Admitted Student or Other ('NL')

During the 2020-21 school year, schools had to award a grade of New/Recently Admitted Student or Other ('NL') to elementary school students in place of failing marks or when there was insufficient evidence to award a grade. 'NL' does not have a pass/fail or numeric equivalent.

5. Student Records

a. Sharing Student Records

When school buildings closed intermittently to reduce the spread of COVID-19, schools were encouraged to share student records electronically as needed. The NYCDOE developed Guidance for Sharing Student Records with Families During Remote Learning for schools to continue sharing educational records in a secure and confidential manner. This resource provides details on responding to student data requests from families, former students, third parties, etc.