Dear Colleagues,

The New York City Department of Education’s academic policy guides consolidate the many requirements for academic programming, assessments, promotion, grading, and student data into one reference document. Our goal in publishing the academic policy guides is to provide you with clear interpretations of academic policies and guidance about how to apply them in different scenarios. The academic policy guides are revised each year based on changes to policies and feedback from schools and field staff.

This academic policy guide is just one tool that you may use in providing every student with rigorous academic experiences that considers their individual strengths and needs. Use this guide as a resource as you program and grade students, develop instructional supports and interventions, and set your own school-level policies. As you implement these policies, we encourage you to apply an equity lens, identifying opportunities to examine how having strong policies, systems, and structures impacts the outcomes of every student.

As you plan for the upcoming school year and beyond, refer to this guide and share it with key members of your school community. This guide, as well as additional resources on policies pertaining to academic requirements and programming, can be found on the Department of Education’s academic policy and systems resource pages on the InfoHub. Please contact your Borough/Citywide Office’s academic policy and systems lead for additional guidance on any of the topics described in these resources, and refer to Principals’ Weekly for updates.

Sincerely,

Linda Chen
Chief Academic Officer
New York City Department of Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. **ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS** .......................................................................................................................... 5
   A. **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**—Updated September 2019 ...................................................................... 5
      1. Grade 6 ....................................................................................................................................................... 6
      2. Grades 7 and 8 ............................................................................................................................................. 6
      3. Career and Technical Education (CTE)—Updated September 2019 ......................................................... 7
      4. Languages Other Than English (LOTE) ...................................................................................................... 8
      5. Physical Education—Updated September 2019 ....................................................................................... 8
      6. Health Education—Updated September 2019 ......................................................................................... 9
      7. Arts Education ......................................................................................................................................... 10
      8. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) ....................................................................................................... 10
      9. Response to Intervention ....................................................................................................................... 12
   B. **ASSESSMENTS** ....................................................................................................................................... 12
      1. New York State Tests in English, Math, and Science .............................................................................. 12
      2. Second Language Proficiency Exam (SLP) ................................................................................................. 13
      3. Regents Exams—Updated September 2019 ............................................................................................. 14
   C. **NEW STUDENTS AND GRADE PLACEMENT**—Updated September 2019 ........................................... 14
      1. Translations .............................................................................................................................................. 15
   D. **PROMOTION AND GRADE LEVEL** ......................................................................................................... 15
   E. **STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN MOVING UP CEREMONIES** .............................................................. 16

II. **COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES** ............................................................................................... 17
   A. **GRADE 8 COURSE ACCELERATION** ..................................................................................................... 17
      1. Option 1: Accelerated Courses at Middle Schools—Updated September 2019 .................................... 17
      2. Option 2: High School Courses—Updated September 2019 ................................................................ 18
   B. **INTERDISCIPLINARY AND MULTI-GRADE COURSES** ..................................................................... 19
      1. Courses Addressing Two Subject Areas .................................................................................................. 19
      2. Courses with Multiple Grade Levels ...................................................................................................... 19
   C. **ONLINE AND BLENDED COURSES** .................................................................................................. 20
   D. **HONORS COURSES** ............................................................................................................................. 21

III. **POLICIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS** ............................................................................................ 21
   A. **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)** .......................................................................................... 21
      1. New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) ................................. 22
      2. New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) .............................. 22
   B. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** ......................................................................................................... 22
      1. New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)—Updated September 2019 ....................................... 23
   C. **TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** ........................................................................................................ 24
D. HOME AND HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION ........................................................................................................... 25
E. HOME SCHOOLING ..................................................................................................................................... 26
F. STUDENTS IN COURT-ORDERED SETTINGS ............................................................................................. 26
IV. PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS POLICIES ............................................................................................. 27
   A. TERM MODELS ........................................................................................................................................ 27
   B. SCHEDULING IN STARS .......................................................................................................................... 27
      1. Course Codes—Updated September 2019 ............................................................................................. 28
      2. Course titles—Updated September 2019 ............................................................................................ 28
      3. Section Properties ................................................................................................................................. 29
      4. Push-in/Pull-out Instruction .................................................................................................................. 29
V. GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ................................................................................................. 30
   A. GRADING POLICIES ................................................................................................................................. 30
   B. COURSE MARKS AND REPORT CARDS ............................................................................................... 31
      1. Course Marks ........................................................................................................................................ 32
      2. Report Cards ......................................................................................................................................... 33
   C. INCORPORATING REGENTS EXAMS INTO FINAL COURSE GRADES .................................................. 33
   D. TRANSCRIPT UPDATES ........................................................................................................................... 33
   E. CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK ....................................................... 34
VI. ATTENDANCE, DISCHARGE, AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES ............................................................ 34
   A. SCHOOL CALENDAR—Updated September 2019 ................................................................................. 34
   B. DAILY SESSION TIME AND STUDENT SCHEDULES—Updated September 2019 ............................. 34
   C. ATTENDANCE POLICIES—Updated September 2019 ....................................................................... 37
      1. Administration and Systems .................................................................................................................... 37
      2. Policy and Practice ................................................................................................................................. 37
      3. Early Intervention ................................................................................................................................ 38
      4. Elevated Interventions ........................................................................................................................... 38
   D. DISCHARGING STUDENTS ..................................................................................................................... 38
   E. STUDENT RECORDS RETENTION AND TRANSFER ........................................................................... 39
      1. Changes to Student Records—Updated September 2019 .................................................................... 39
VII. APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................................ 41
   A. UNIT OF STUDY PROGRAMMING ESTIMATES ...................................................................................... 41
   B. COURSE AND EXAM MARKS TABLES—Updated September 2019 ....................................................... 43
I. 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 middle school grades, including program requirements, assessments, grading, and promotion. Middle schools also serving elementary and high school grades should refer to the Elementary 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 and systems leads.

The STARS suite of applications is the NYCDOE’s official record of students’ programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements.\textsuperscript{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 middle schools must use STARS to enter information about the instruction and supports students are receiving 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, middle schools must follow the procedures outlined in the Middle School Course Code Directory and on the STARS wiki. STARS is managed by the NYCDOE’s Office of Academic Policy and Systems. See the section of this guide on scheduling in STARS and visit the STARS wiki for more information.

A. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS—Updated September 2019

NYSED’s Part \textsuperscript{100,4} defines the minimum program requirements for students in middle school grades, including required units of study for grades 7 and 8. Part \textsuperscript{100,1} defines a unit of study as 180 minutes per week throughout the school year, which is the equivalent of 108 hours of instruction per year.\textsuperscript{2} A unit of study is based on the amount of instructional time the student receives from a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher in a course aligned to NYSED learning standards.

The sections below outline the program requirements for grades 6–8. These represent the minimum academic program that a public middle school in New York State must provide. Schools may exceed the requirements and offer supplementary experiences, including advisory, service-learning opportunities, and other youth development courses that will enhance students’ educational experiences and prepare them for the rigor of high school coursework.

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 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.

\textsuperscript{1} The STARS Suite includes three platforms across grades K–12: STARS Classroom, Client, and Admin.

\textsuperscript{2} Most middle schools use an annual term model. These schools maintain a consistent schedule throughout the entire school year and award final grades at the end of the year, in June. See the section of this guide on term models for more information.
1. Grade 6

Schools must provide students in grade 6 instruction aligned to NYSED intermediate-level learning standards in specific departments. Principals may determine the distribution of time among these subject areas based on their academic program and student needs, with the exception of physical education and health education, and, where student need is established, bilingual education and/or English as a New Language (ENL) instruction.

Schools must provide instruction to all students in the following departments:

- English language arts (ELA), including reading, writing, listening and speaking
- Social studies, including geography and United States history
- Mathematics
- Science and technology
- Language other than English (LOTE)
- Physical education (PE), as described in Part 135.4
- Health education, as described in Part 135.3
- Arts education, including dance, music, theatre and visual arts
- Career development and occupational studies
- Where student need is established, bilingual education and/or English as a New Language (ENL) instruction, as described in Part 154

2. Grades 7 and 8

In grades 7 and 8, schools must provide students with academic programs that enable them to complete specific units of study in required departments by the end of grade 8. In most cases, instructional time delivered in these departments prior to grade 7 may not count toward the required units of study.

The table below uses units of study to define the requirements. Schools may consult the appendix in this guide for examples of how schools can reach the unit of study requirements depending on period length and term model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 7 &amp; 8 Subjects</th>
<th>Total required time (1 unit = 108 hours)</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language arts</td>
<td>2 units</td>
<td>108 hours in grade 7 and 108 hours in grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>2 units</td>
<td>108 hours in grade 7 and 108 hours in grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2 units</td>
<td>108 hours in grade 7 and 108 hours in grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2 units</td>
<td>108 hours in grade 7 and 108 hours in grade 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Middle schools often integrate the intermediate level career development and occupational studies (CDOS) learning standards into English language arts, social studies, and other departments.

4 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 English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide for middle school ENL requirements.

5 As an exception, the health, technology, and home and career skills requirements may be delivered prior to grade 7.
### Grade 7 & 8 Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total required time (1 unit = 108 hours)</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology education</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
<td>108 hours total, across grades 7 and 8&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technology instruction provided in grades 5 and/or 6 may fulfill this requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages other than English (LOTE)</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
<td>108 hours total, in any years prior to the end of grade 8&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>1 unit</td>
<td>54 hours (90 minutes per week) in grade 7 and 54 hours (90 minutes per week) in grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health education</td>
<td>0.5 units</td>
<td>54 hours total, across grades 7 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health instruction provided in grade 6 may fulfill this requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts education</td>
<td>0.5 unit in two different disciplines, for a total of 1 unit</td>
<td>108 hours total, across grades 7 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and information skills</td>
<td>One period per week in grades 7 and 8, or the equivalent&lt;sup&gt;9&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and career skills</td>
<td>0.75 unit</td>
<td>81 hours total, across grades 7 and 8&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction in home and career skills provided in grades 5 and/or 6 may fulfill this requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development and occupational studies</td>
<td>School-determined</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Career and Technical Education (CTE)—Updated September 2019

Middle schools are required to provide 1.75 units of Career and Technical Education. Schools may offer standalone courses to address CTE learning standards, or they may integrate CTE learning standards into other courses. Starting in school year 2019–2020, all middle school students may fulfill the 1.75 units requirement by taking courses in any of the six CTE disciplines (Technology Education, Home and Career Skills (FACS), Trade and Technical Subjects, Business, Agriculture, and Health Sciences), provided an appropriately certified CTE teacher instructs the course.<sup>12</sup>

See NYSED’s website for middle-level content modules in each of the six CTE subject areas.

---

<sup>6</sup> Schools unable to hire teachers certified in technology education and/or home and career skills (FACS) may meet this requirement through any Career and Technology Education (CTE) course. See the CTE section below for additional information.

<sup>7</sup> Schools may integrate the technology learning standards into other courses, provided teachers certified in technology teach the courses.

<sup>8</sup> All students are required to complete two units of study prior to the end of grade 9. One of these units must be completed prior to the end of grade 8.

<sup>9</sup> It is recommended that library and information skills be taught by library media specialists and classroom teachers to ensure coordination and integration of library instruction with classroom instruction.

<sup>10</sup> As of school year 2017–2018, schools unable to hire teachers certified in in technology education and/or home and career skills (FACS) may meet this requirement through any Career and Technology Education (CTE) course.

<sup>11</sup> Schools may integrate family and consumer sciences and/or CDOS learning standards into other courses.

<sup>12</sup> NYSED approved an extension for CTE teachers who are certified in grades 7–12 to teach grades 5 and 6 by taking additional coursework. See NYSED’s memo for more information.
4. Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Instruction in LOTE may begin as early as kindergarten and must begin no later than the beginning of grade 8, such that all students receive two full units of study by the end of grade 9. Courses in languages other than English provided as part of a home language arts (HLA) program satisfy the LOTE requirement.13

While not required, middle schools may design their LOTE programs to culminate in the NYCDOE Second Language Proficiency (SLP) exam. This locally-administered exam assesses proficiency of Checkpoint A learning standards and can be used to award accelerated high school credit when taken after completing an accelerated LOTE course in grade 8. Common middle school LOTE models are:

- **Two years of study in LOTE in any elementary or middle school grades, culminating in the SLP exam.** Students who successfully complete these courses and pass the associated SLP exam may be eligible receive two high school course credits upon transfer into high school.

- **One year of accelerated LOTE study in grade 8, culminating in the SLP exam at the end of grade 8.** Students who successfully complete the course and pass the SLP exam receive two high school course credits. Schools using this model should code these courses using the accelerated middle school LOTE course codes.

NYCDOE LOTE Comprehensive exams are aligned to Checkpoint B learning standards and designed to be completed after a full course of study (meaning, three units of study/six credits). If a school determines that students have acquired the proficiency necessary to be successful on the LOTE comprehensive exam, the school can request to administer that exam. However, successfully completing the LOTE exam in middle school could affect programming decisions for these students. Schools should contact their academic policy and systems lead to request approval to offer a NYCDOE LOTE Comprehensive exam in grade 8.

See the LOTE guidance for information on these policies, and for guidance on how to program LOTE courses in STARS.

5. Physical Education—Updated September 2019

Part 135.4 defines the minimum requirements for physical education (PE) for students in middle school grades. Schools must provide students in grades 6–8 with an instructional physical education (PE) program, aligned to NYSED learning standards and the NYC Grades 6-12 PE Scope and Sequence, for at least 90 minutes per week throughout the year, in every term in middle school.14 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 PE instructional time requirement.

**Summary of PE Time and Frequency Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Which PE policies apply?</th>
<th>Minimum required time</th>
<th>Minimum required frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Elementary school policies for grades 4–6</td>
<td>120 minutes per week</td>
<td>No less than 3 times per week, every term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a K–6, K–8, K–12 school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Middle school policies for grades 7–8</td>
<td>90 minutes per week</td>
<td>Every term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a 6–8 or 6–12 school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

13 Home language arts (HLA) is formerly known as native language arts (NLA). See the English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide for more information.

14 The traditional PE scheduling model set by Part 135.4 is known as the “3/2 model,” in which students are scheduled for three days per week in one semester and two days per week in the other semester, or for a comparable time when the school uses a different term model. See the PE guidance document for more information on scheduling and term models.
Grades 7–8
Middle school policies for grades 7–8
90 minutes per week
Every term

PE programs must be designed to meet NYSED learning standards for physical education. PE courses must be taught by a certified, licensed PE teacher. Class size should be similar to other instructional areas to support student learning and sound instructional practice, and shall not exceed 50 students to one certified PE teacher per the UFT contract.

As in all other courses, grading for PE must be based primarily on content area knowledge and skills, and not on non-mastery measures. Schools may not grade students solely on attendance, participation, or preparedness. See the section of this guide on grading policies and the Grading Policy Toolkit for more details.

NYC FITNESSGRAM is the City’s annual health-related fitness assessment. Schools must complete this assessment for all eligible students each year as part of their PE program; however, schools may not use performance on this assessment to determine students’ grades.

There are no waivers or exemptions from PE requirements in middle 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 that indicates the area of the PE program in which the pupil may 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. Students should be provided adapted physical education instruction as needed, taught in the least restrictive environment.

6. Health Education—Updated September 2019

Part 135.3 defines the minimum requirements for health education instruction, which includes required annual HIV/AIDS lessons in each grade. Schools must provide all middle school students with one half-unit (54 hours) comprehensive health education course that includes sexual health education. The course must be aligned to NYSED learning standards for health education, and must be taught by a certified health education teacher. The NYCDOE strongly recommends that this course takes place during grades 6 or 7, so that students are adequately prepared to make healthy and informed choices throughout middle school.

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: nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (including heroin and opioids); sexual health; HIV/AIDS; safety and injury prevention; violence 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 for Achieving New York State Standards in Health Education and the New York City 6-8 Health Education Scope and Sequence, or contact the Office of School Wellness Programs.

The required sexual health education lessons provide students with medically accurate information and skills to avoid risky behaviors. Parents/guardians may opt out of lessons related to methods of HIV/STI prevention and birth control. The NYCDOE provides schools with a sexual health education notification letter from the Chancellor to distribute to families prior to sexual health education instruction.

In addition to the half-unit of comprehensive health education, schools must provide HIV and AIDS education to every student, every year. The NYCDOE requires schools to provide the following lessons, using the NYCDOE HIV/AIDS Curriculum, which is available through WeTeachNYC.org:
• Five lessons per year for all students in grade 6  
• Six lessons per year for all students in grades 7 and 8

Families may opt their child out of only the specific HIV and AIDS lessons that include methods of HIV and STI prevention and birth control. Lessons regarding abstinence that do not include other methods of prevention do not qualify for this exemption. The NYCDOE designates specific opt out lessons in the NYCDOE HIV/AIDS Curriculum for each grade level and provides schools with an HIV/AIDS notification letter for distribution to families prior to HIV and AIDS instruction.

For more information on academic policies and STARS programming for physical and health education courses, schools should contact their academic policy and systems lead. For more guidance on the implementation health education instructional programs, contact the Office of School Wellness Programs. See also the section of this guide on section properties in STARS.

7. Arts Education

Schools may determine the distribution and amount of time spent in arts education (visual arts, music, dance, and theater) for students in grade 6 based on their academic program and student need. To ensure a balanced curriculum, NYSED recommends that students in grade 6 spend ten percent of their time weekly in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, with certified arts teachers or arts partners using curricula that align to NYSED learning standards in the arts.

Schools must provide students in grades 7 and/or 8 with two half-units of instruction (54 hours), taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified arts teacher, in any two of the four arts disciplines (visual arts, music, dance, and/or theater), totaling one unit of instruction (108 hours). Schools may choose to complete the requirement in either grade, or across both grades. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Programming Models</th>
<th>Meeting the Requirements of 108 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option A</td>
<td>Students may take a semester (54 hours) of music in grade 7 and a semester (54 hours) of dance in grade 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option B</td>
<td>Students may take a full year of arts in <em>either</em> grade 7 or grade 8, covering both visual arts (54 hours) and music (54 hours).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Option C                  | Students may take arts courses consistently throughout middle school:  
  • Students may take theater twice per week throughout grade 7, for a total of 54 hours; and  
  • Students may take dance twice per week throughout grade 8, for a total of 54 hours. |

Extended day arts instruction may only count towards the arts requirements in grade 7 and/or 8 if taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher and aligns to NYSED Learning Standards in the Arts.

A student may meet the required half unit of study in music by participating in a school’s band, chorus, or orchestra, provided that such participation is consistent with the goals and objectives for the school's music program for grades 7 and 8.

See the Scheduling in STARS section in this guide for information on how to program arts instruction in STARS.

8. Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

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 1001.1(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 general and special educations students who are not meeting learning standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, 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 assessments in ELA or math. Students who score below the median scale score between level 2 and level 3 are preliminarily eligible for AIS.\(^{15}\)
- 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.

For more information, see this NYSED memo.

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 tutorials 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 or 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 must also notify parents or guardians when it terminates AIS for a student. Schools do not need parent permission to start or to end AIS.

While the 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

\(^{15}\) This procedure may also include diagnostic screening for vision, hearing, and physical disabilities.
• 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

9. Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-tiered instruction and intervention model that promotes early identification of students in need of additional academic support and, for students not making expected progress, provision of increasing levels of intensity of intervention. Often referred to as a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), this protocol involves provision of increased levels of intensity in interventions where students require it. RtI is a form of MTSS, although RtI is typically associated with early-grades prevention models. For students identified for RtI services by a school-wide universal screening assessment, evidence-based instruction, intervention driven by diagnostic assessment, and progress monitoring are provided in increasing levels of intensity needed.

While both AIS and RtI have academic recovery as their goals, the RtI structure seeks to increase the accuracy of referrals to special education services by helping to determine whether learning delays are a result of inadequate instruction or learning disability. It also seeks to insure that all students have access to high quality, effective, evidence-based instruction and differentiated supports.

New York State requires that all schools provide RtI for students in grade in K–4; New York City extends the mandate to the fifth grade. Although RtI is not a formal requirement in the middle school grades, schools may choose to embed RtI/MTSS structures into their AIS programs in order to ensure that academic intervention leads to academic recovery and that students are properly identified for special education referral accurately and where warranted.

B. ASSESSMENTS

Students in middle 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. Some middle school students take language assessments, like the SLP or Regents-like LOTE exams, which demonstrate knowledge of high-school level content. In addition, students in grades 8 or 9 who wish to apply to New York City’s specialized high schools must take the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT). See the Assessment InfoHub page for more information.

1. New York State Tests in English, Math, and Science

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

Schools administer NYSED ELA and math tests to students according to their grade level. Students with disabilities (those with Individualized Education Programs 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 section on testing accommodations for more information.

The following students may be exempt from some or all of these tests:

• Students who participate alternate assessments, such as the New York State Alternative Assessment (NYSAA), rather than standard State tests.

---

16 NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.
• 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.
  
  o 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 English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide for more information.

• Students in accelerated math courses, who instead must take high school-level Regents exams as their culminating assessments:
  
  o In an effort to reduce the number of standardized tests that students take, the United States Department of Education has indicated that students in grades 7 or 8 in accelerated math courses who take a Regents exam as a culminating assessment are not required take the NYSED grade-level math test. Schools may not administer both the Regents exams and grade-level exams to these students, except in very rare cases.
  
  o In rare exceptions to the Federal policy, schools may administer the NYSED math assessment in addition to the Regents exam to students in accelerated math courses who also receive instruction in the middle school math learning standards. Schools must follow the process detailed in the double testing waiver guidance if they wish to administer the grade-level tests in addition to the required Regents exams.
  
  o In the event of an exception, where students are scheduled to take both the NYSED math assessment and the Regents exam, schools must provide parent or guardians with timely written notification of their right to opt out of the grade-level math tests. Schools may never require students to take both assessments.

• Students in accelerated science courses (per the NYSED testing manual)
  
  o School principals may either require or waive the NYSED science test for grade 8 students taking an accelerated science course and who did not take this test during the last school year, but who will be taking a Regents exam in science at the end of this school year based on the instruction provided to students.
  
  o For those grade 8 students taking an accelerated science course for whom the principal waives the grade 8 science test, the student’s achievement in science will be measured by the student’s performance on the Regents exam in science.
    • Schools may also administer the grade 8 science test to students in grade 7 who, by the end of this school year, will have completed all of the material aligned to the intermediate-level learning standards and are being considered for placement in an accelerated, high-school-level science course when they are in grade 8.
    • Principals have the discretion to include or exclude grade 7 students who meet these criteria. Schools can use the grade 8 science test scores for these grade 7 students to help determine whether students should be placed in accelerated science courses. Students who take the test in grade 7 will not be permitted to take the test again in grade 8. Therefore, caution is advised in administering the test to grade 7 students.

2. Second Language Proficiency Exam (SLP)

Second Language Proficiency exams (SLPs) are designed to assess student mastery of the Checkpoint A learning standards for languages other than English (LOTE). Middle schools may choose to administer the SLP exam to students as part of their LOTE programs. Students typically take the SLP in grade 8. The NYCDOE offers SLP exams in the following languages:

• Chinese
• French
• German
• Italian
Spanish

Students who pass the SLP exam at the end of a middle school LOTE program after completing courses aligned to Checkpoint A learning standards may be eligible for high school course credits. See the LOTE section of this guide and the LOTE guidance document for additional information on middle school LOTE program options.

3. Regents Exams—Updated September 2019

NYSED Regents exams assess a student’s mastery of NYSED commencement-level (high school) learning standards in a given subject area. All students enrolled in the course of study leading to a Regents exam have the right to take that exam. Schools may not bar students from taking a Regents exam for disciplinary reasons or because their achievement in a subject is considered unsatisfactory.¹⁷

Regents exams are designed to be culminating exams for high school courses; the NYCDOE recommends that middle schools only register students for a Regents exam after completing an accelerated unit of study in that subject area. The following additional eligibility criteria apply:

- To qualify to take a Regents exam in any of the sciences, a student must successfully complete, 1,200 minutes of hands-on laboratory experience in addition to completing the science course. Students in NYCDOE grade 8 accelerated courses should be scheduled for these lab experiences during the school year.
- Schools wishing to administer the Comprehensive LOTE exam or the OHM BOCES LOTE exams in middle school, should refer to the LOTE guidance document or contact their academic policy and systems lead for support.

Students who attempt Regents exams in middle school may use those scores towards high school exam requirements. See the section of this guide on Grade 8 Course Acceleration for information about how students in grade 8 can earn high school credit.

Starting in school year 2019–20, all Regents exams scores (passing and failing) will appear on students’ middle and high school transcripts.

C. NEW STUDENTS AND GRADE PLACEMENT—Updated September 2019

Chancellor’s Regulation A-101 outlines the admission, readmission, and transfer policies for all NYCDOE students.

Students entering a NYCDOE middle 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 there are no educational records, the student will be placed according to calendar year of birth. If the principal deems that another grade level placement would be more instructionally appropriate, they must submit a grade change request to the superintendent using the ROSA function in ATS and provide evidence to justify any recommendation. The superintendent will make the final decision concerning the appropriate grade level for the student.

The following procedures apply to student grade placement when a student transfers:

- 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.

¹⁷ See this guidance on School Administrator’s Manual for Secondary Level Examinations.
If a student is discharged from the NYCDOE and returns to the NYCDOE in a subsequent academic year, the student will be placed 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.

See the section of this guide on Promotion and Grade Level for additional information.

NYCDOE middle 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, if at all.

For example, if a student transfers to a NYCDOE school for the first time in the spring of grade 8, the school may choose to incorporate the student’s report card grades from the fall semester 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 at the NYCDOE school in the spring semester. See the Grading Policy section of this guide, the Grading Policy Toolkit, and the Transfer Student Toolkit for more information.

In rare cases, transfer students may have completed high-school-level courses at a previous middle school. In this case, the middle school should place the student into a grade level according to the policies described above, considering opportunities for advanced or accelerated courses where available. The middle school should not award transfer credit for high school courses taken in middle school; however the student’s subsequent high school may choose to award transfer credit for these courses in alignment with the policies described in the Transfer Credit section of the High School Academic Policy Guide.

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 Translation & Interpretation Unit 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 mastered enough 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 in order 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 participate in alternate assessments, such as the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), rather than standard State assessments.

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 in order 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.

In grades 3–8, grade level is determined by the promotion decision entered into ATS. Schools may use ROSA–GRC or ROSA–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

Middle school students must meet promotion benchmarks to participate in their school’s moving up ceremonies. Schools must clearly communicate these expectations to students and families.

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. 

---

18 See this guidance on Exclusion from Graduation Ceremonies. Translations are available on the Academic Policy Resources page.
II. COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. GRADE 8 COURSE ACCELERATION

Per Part 100.4(d), students in grade 8 have the opportunity to earn high school credits in various departments, including English, social studies, mathematics, science, languages other than English (LOTE), art, music, and career technical education (CTE). Students in grades 6 and 7 are not eligible to earn high school credit through accelerated courses, except in LOTE.\(^{19}\)

Most students in grade 8 must pass English, social studies, math, and science courses to be promoted to grade 9, in accordance with NYCDOE promotion policy.\(^ {20}\) Schools must carefully consider the impact that accelerated courses may have on students’ ability to be successful in grade 8, prepare for high school, and be promoted to grade 9.

Middle school principals are responsible for determining which courses to offer for high school credit and which students have demonstrated readiness to pursue such courses. For all accelerated courses, particularly those that typically require multiple years of study and/or are usually completed in grades 11 or 12, principals should consider students’ academic readiness for the course. Additionally, before scheduling students for accelerated courses, principal have the responsibility to consider students’ future high school programming options. Schools should notify students and families of programming needs and how this may inform high school application decisions.

There is no limit to the number of accelerated course credits a student may earn in grade 8, though all accelerated courses must meet instructional time requirements to bear credit (which is 108 hours of instructional time over the course, during grade 8). The following caveats also apply:

- Middle school students may not accelerate PE credits for high school. See the PE guidance document.
- To qualify to take a Regents exam in any of the sciences, a student must successfully complete 1,200 minutes of hands-on laboratory experience in addition to completing the science course.

There are two ways for grade 8 students to earn two credits for high school-level courses, detailed below. High schools may not refuse to accept accelerated course credits or schedule students to repeat credits that have been appropriately awarded in alignment with NYCDOE and NYSED policies.

1. Option 1: Accelerated Courses at Middle Schools—Updated September 2019

In traditional grade 8 acceleration, students take an accelerated course in middle school aligned to high school-level standards, culminating in a Regents, SLP, or LOTE exam in June or August immediately following the course. These students earn credit after passing both the course and the assessment.

For option 1, grade 8 accelerated courses in middle school must:

- Provide students the opportunity for 54 hours of instruction per credit (108 hours of instruction per two credits all year, since most middle schools use an annual term model);
- Address high school (commencement-level) learning standards; and
- Be taught by an NYCDOE teacher certified in the subject area.

Students in grades 6 and 7 are not eligible to earn high school credit through accelerated courses, except in LOTE.

---

\(^{19}\) See the LOTE section of this guide and the LOTE guidance document for additional information on middle school LOTE program options.

\(^{20}\) In rare circumstances, students in grade 8 may be subject to different promotion criteria. ELLs with a status as a student with interrupted formal education (SIFE), ELLs who have been enrolled in a United States School System (USSS) for at least one year but fewer than four years, and students who participate in alternate assessments are held to different promotion criteria. See the Promotion Guide for more information about promotion criteria for students in grade 8.
In order to earn high school credit for the course, grade 8 students must pass the accelerated course and earn a specific minimum score. The minimum score that a student needs to earn to receive high school credit after passing the accelerated course depends on the type of exam and if the student has an IEP.

As of school year 2018-19:

- Grade 8 students without IEPs must score 65 or higher on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course.
- Grade 8 students with IEPs must score a 55 or higher on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course.

For accelerated courses culminating in the SLP or LOTE exam, grade 8 students with and without IEPs must pass the accelerated course and score 65 or higher on the culminating SLP or LOTE exam.

Schools must program accelerated courses in STARS using the accelerated course codes and exams described on the STARS wiki; schools cannot modify these course codes in any way. This ensures that the equivalent high school courses and credits appear on the high school transcript, provided the student passes both the accelerated course and Regents exam in the appropriate timeframe.

Starting in school year 2019–20, all Regents exams scores (passing and failing) will appear on students’ middle and high school transcripts.

After passing a full year of accelerated study (meaning, 108 hours) aligned to high school learning standards and the associated Regents or LOTE exam, a student earns two high school course credits and can use the passing score toward exam requirements for graduation. Students who successfully complete the SLP as their culminating exam will earn two high school credits but cannot use this exam toward exam requirements for graduation.

High school credit may not award in the following circumstances:

- A student passes the accelerated course but does not earn the required minimum score on the culminating Regents, LOTE, or SLP exam in June or August, immediately following the end of the course. Even if the student passes the exam in the following year, the student will not receive high school credit. Schools cannot retroactively award high school credit for grade 8 accelerated courses.
- A student earns the required minimum score the Regents, LOTE, or SLP exam but does not pass the accelerated course(s). The Regents and LOTE exam scores will still appear on the student’s high school transcript, but they will not receive high school course credit.

2. **Option 2: High School Courses—Updated September 2019**

For option 2, an individual eighth grader in a school that does not offer a grade 8 accelerated course (as described in option 1) may attend a course at a high school and earn credit on the same basis as the high school students in that course. Participation in high school courses as an eighth grader should be on a student-level basis; this option is only meant for students who have demonstrated their ability to participate in high school course work and be successful in a

---

21 Schools must reach out to their academic policy and systems lead if they wish to offer an accelerated course in a subject that does not culminate in a Regents exam.

22 This change applies only to current and future grade 8 students who are enrolled in an accelerated course. High schools may not retroactively award high school credit to students with IEPs who previously passed a grade 8 accelerated course but earned 55-64 on the culminating Regents exam prior to school year 2018-19.
high school setting. These students will have high school course codes and credits on their high school transcripts. Evidence of the course will not appear on the student’s middle school transcript.

In this scenario, the high school uses the shared instruction (SHIN) function in ATS to enroll the student. The high school then schedules the student using the high school course code and awards grades in STARS.

Starting in school year 2019–20, all Regents exams scores (passing and failing) will appear on students’ middle and high school transcripts.

**B. INTERDISCIPLINARY AND MULTI-GRADE COURSES**

The section below provides policy guidance on the implementation of interdisciplinary and mixed-grade courses. Recording interdisciplinary and mixed-grade courses appropriately in STARS ensures accurate data for student promotion, teacher evaluation, and accountability.

1. **Courses Addressing Two Subject Areas**

Interdisciplinary programming combines learning standards from two different content areas in a single course. For example, a school may offer a humanities course that integrates both English and social studies standards. The following policies apply to middle school interdisciplinary courses:

- The course must be overseen by a NYCDOE teacher certified in at least one of the two subject areas addressed in the course, provided that the teacher instructs the student population defined by the license area and has demonstrated subject matter competency in both subjects.
- In grades 7 and 8, the interdisciplinary course must align with both of the grade level program requirements. For example, an eighth grade humanities course covering English and social studies learning standards must provide 360 minutes of instruction per week (216 hours per year) in order to satisfy the requirements for one unit of study in each subject area.
- Schools must reflect both subject areas in STARS and award grades accordingly. Schools have two options for scheduling students and awarding grades for interdisciplinary courses:
  - Use the interdisciplinary mechanism to schedule students for a ‘ZJ’ coded course linked to two other subject area course codes. For example, students may be scheduled for a ‘ZJ’ course titled “Humanities,” which is linked to the core English and social studies course codes. Marking period grades should be awarded in the ‘ZJ’ interdisciplinary course. Final grades should be awarded in the subject area course codes upon expansion of the interdisciplinary course at the end of the term. See the [STARS wiki](#) and this [interdisciplinary guidance document](#) for more information.
  - If the course meets for a double period, schools should schedule students for the two courses separately, using the same teacher for both courses. For example, for a humanities course, students should be scheduled for English during the first period and social studies during the second period. The teacher should award grades for both courses. The grading policy must clearly indicate whether students receive the same grade for both subject areas or are graded separately.

2. **Courses with Multiple Grade Levels**

Schools may offer mixed-grade courses in a single subject area in order to meet students’ academic needs. For example, a math course may group sixth and seventh grade students with similar math proficiency. The following policies apply to mixed-grade middle school courses:

---

23 Grade 8 students who participate in an accelerated course, comprised of grade 8 students, at a high school must meet the requirements listed in Option 1. For support in scheduling these students in STARS, schools should contact their academic policy & systems lead.
A NYCDOE subject-certified teacher whose license area includes the grade levels of all students enrolled in the course must instruct the course.

Students must take the New York State tests corresponding to their grade levels. For example, sixth-grade students in a mixed sixth- and seventh-grade math course must take the sixth grade math test. Seventh grade students in the same course must take the seventh grade math test.

In grades 7 and 8, the course must align with unit of study requirements described in the section on program requirements.

The school must use the interdisciplinary mechanism in STARS to schedule students for a ‘ZJ’ coded course linked to the course for both grade levels. For example, in a mixed sixth- and seventh-grade math course, the school must schedule students for a ‘ZJ’ course linked to the core sixth-grade and seventh-grade math course codes. The subject-certified teacher assigned to the course will assign marking periods are awarded in the ‘ZJ’ course and award final grades in the grade-level-specific core math course code corresponding to students’ individual grade levels. See the STARS wiki for more information about this mechanism.

C. ONLINE AND BLENDED COURSES

Middle schools may choose to offer blended and online learning experiences and may incorporate online learning into their academic programs. These courses are defined by the way instruction is delivered to the student:

- In an online course, students receive their instruction on course content solely through digital and/or Internet-connected media. The course may include teacher-to-student, student-to-student and/or student-to-content interactions, but the instruction itself is fully delivered through media.
- In a blended course, students receive their instruction through a combination of classroom-based learning and through digital and/or Internet-connected media. This may include teacher-to-student, student-to-student and/or student-to-content interactions.

Online or blended courses that bear credit or fulfill NYSED unit of study requirements must meet the following minimum standards:

- Align with NYSED learning standards for the subject area, as outlined in the course syllabus;
- Be instructed or overseen by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher, who monitors the course, provides the student with substantive and regular feedback, awards the final grade, and is the teacher of record in STARS; and
- Meet instructional time requirements, as appropriate for the subject and grade level.

In addition, all of the following must be true of online/blended courses:

- The course is of equal scope and rigor to other courses offered by the school.
- The course includes regular and substantive interaction between the student and the teacher, which may occur in person and/or virtually, and must be documented by the school.
- The student must complete the course within one term, comparable to a traditional course.
- The student must demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes for the subject, including passing the Regents exam in the subject area if the student has not already passed an exam that counts toward a diploma in that subject area, if the course is worth high school credit.

All courses, including online and blended courses, must be scheduled in STARS. Schools must code online and blended courses like traditional classroom courses, using the standardized Middle School Course Code Directory, and identify online and blended coursework using the section properties; see the Scheduling in STARS section of this guide for additional information. Schools may not permit students to do a ‘trial run’ of an online or blended course without it being

---

24 See the Online and Blended Courses guidance document for additional information about the role of the teacher.
scheduled in STARS. Schools cannot retroactively add an online or blended course to a student’s transcript or change the grade of an online or blended course, unless the rationale meets the explicit criteria outlined in the Transcript Update Form.

Students must still have regular and substantive interaction with the NYCDOE subject-certified teacher, even though the learning takes place outside of the school building. However, because this instruction is not supervised, online learning that occurs outside of the school building cannot contribute to any portion of the required daily instructional time schools must provide to students during the school day.

For additional guidance on designing or implementing blended and online courses, see the guidance on Online and Blended Courses.

D. HONORS COURSES

Schools may offer advanced or honors courses to provide opportunities for students to master more rigorous learning standards in a subject area, expand the scope of the learning standards addressed in core courses, and/or prepare for course acceleration in grade 8. 25

Schools have discretion in how they offer honors courses, provided the criteria and expectations for honors courses are clearly documented and communicated to students, teachers, and families. Schools may not use NYSED test scores as the sole, primary, or major factors in determining which students take honors courses. Schools may incorporate report card grades, school-based assessment scores, teacher recommendations, and other measures into their selection criteria.

Students in honors courses are still required to take the NYSED standardized assessments corresponding to their grade levels; see the section on NYSED tests for more information. Additionally, students in honors courses are held to the same promotion standards described in Chancellor’s Regulation A-501 and in the Promotion and Grade Level section of this guide.

Schools must schedule honors courses in STARS according to the standards in the Middle School Course Code Directory (use an ‘H’ in the sixth character). Schools must code honors courses to indicate the grade level of the students taking the course, even if the standards addressed in the course exceed grade-level standards. For example, a grade 7 honors English course that also addresses grade 8 standards must be coded with a ‘7’ in the fifth character to represent that the students are in seventh grade (EENM7H).

III. POLICIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

A. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)

Policies regarding English Language Learners (ELLs) are defined in Part 154. 26 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 Education (SIFE), see the English Language Learners Policy and Reference Guide.

Once a student has been identified as an ELL, parent selection of an ELL program drives program placement. Parents of ELLs view an orientation video in their preferred languages, which describes the NYCDOE’s three program options: Dual Language (DL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and freestanding English as a New Language (ENL), described

25 Gifted & Talented (G&T) programs are offered within district elementary schools, beginning in kindergarten and ending in the school’s terminal grade. Therefore, most middle schools do not have G&T programs.

26 NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.
further in the English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide. All parents are entitled to choose among these three options, regardless of whether their child’s current school has their program of choice immediately available. The NYCDOE’s website provides a variety of resources for 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 grades K–8 when there are 15 or more ELLs with the same language in one grade or in two contiguous grades, for whom parents/guardians chose a bilingual program placement. This threshold is the minimum requirement under State regulations (Part 154), as amended by the ASPIRA Consent Decree, but by no means limits schools that choose 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 and Home Language Arts units provided is based on English proficiency and all units must be standards-based. See the English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide for additional information.

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

The NYSITELL is used to initially identify English Language Learners (ELLs). New entrants whose Home Language Identification Survey indicates languages other than English 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 proficiency levels:

- Entering
- Emerging
- Transitioning
- Expanding
- Commanding

The student’s level of English proficiency determines the number of service hours they receive. More information is available on NYSED’s website. See the English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide for more information on ELL services.

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

All ELLs take the 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 English Language Learner Policy and Reference Guide.

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 prepare 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 school-based IEP 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.

Schools should review each new student’s IEP or Section 504 plan upon entry. If a child’s IEP or Section 504 plan recommends programs or services that the school does not currently have, 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 disabilities, schools should contact their Administrator of Special Education (ASEs). For questions related to Section 504 plans, see the Office of School Health’s guidance and Chancellor’s Regulation A-710. For other policies related to students with disabilities, see the sections on testing accommodations, NYSAA, and scheduling 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 should not list courses titled as “SETSS” on a transcript.

1. New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)—Updated September 2019

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 4 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.27

Students who 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

---

27 See NYSED’s Eligibility and Participation Criteria – NYSAA
Middle School Academic Policy Guide

order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment.”

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. In high school, students who participate in alternate assessments in lieu of Regents exams are not eligible to earn high school diplomas; 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 and life skills).

Schools administer the NYSAA to students according to their chronological age and against grade-level standards set by NYSED. 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 State 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 child will participate in alternate assessments and is therefore not eligible for a high school diploma.

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

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 are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Testing accommodations do not change the content or skills that tests measure.

Testing accommodations 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 and Section 504 plans
  - The accommodations specified on the student’s “Declassification from Special Education Services” document continue until the student receives a diploma or ages out at 21 years old.

---

28 See section 100.1 (2.)(iv.)
29 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.
30 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
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
  - Former ELLs who were identified as English language proficient based on their scores on one of the two most recent administrations of the NYSESLAT are eligible to receive these testing accommodations for only two additional years after testing out of 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 (such as large print, Braille, audio or digital versions of the test)
- Method of test response, including transcription or scribe

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. 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.

### D. HOME AND HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION

Home and hospital instruction programs provide educational services to students who cannot be accommodated in a regular school facility because of a medical or physical condition and/or a severe emotional, psychological, or behavioral disability that prohibits the student from attending school. Home and hospital instruction programs are interim programs, operated by District 75, that provide academic services to limit the educational effects of a long-term absence.

Students who apply to and are approved for home instruction must be affiliated with a New York City school. The affiliate school is the public, parochial, or private school that the student will return to after home or hospital instruction has ended. Students receive home or hospital instruction via “shared instruction,” in which the home or hospital program collaborates with the affiliate school to oversee the students’ instructional program. This ensures continuity of instruction and helps the student maintain a strong connection to the New York City school they will return to after home and hospital instruction has ended.

All students on home or hospital instruction must receive instruction that corresponds to courses required for promotion, as appropriate. Students should receive instruction in courses that mirror their academic program. Secondary school students who receive home or hospital instruction must receive a minimum of ten hours of instruction per week, to the extent possible given the student’s condition.

Within this collaborative relationship, the affiliate school remains primarily responsible for the student’s academic programming, while the home or hospital instruction program is primarily responsible for providing instruction. Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined for schools in the Home and Hospital Instruction guidance document. These responsibilities may change based on the student’s expected duration in home or hospital instruction. A change in
Responsibilities should be coordinated between the affiliate school and the home or hospital instruction program, specific to each student.

The affiliate school and home and hospital program should keep an open line of communication. This is particularly important as students will return to New York City schools after home or hospital instruction has ended, in order to ensure that the student receives final grades.

For information on student eligibility for home instruction, the process for referring a student to home or hospital instruction, and approval for a student to go on home instruction, see Chancellor’s Regulation A-170 and the Home Instruction Schools webpage. For information on NYCDOE home and hospital instruction policies and implementation, see the Home and Hospital Instruction guidance document.

E. HOME SCHOOLING

Families who opt for home schooling should understand that home schooling is governed by a separate set of policies. 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. For more information, see the Office of Home Schooling website and the NYSED FAQ on home schooling.

F. STUDENTS IN COURT-ORDERED SETTINGS

Students who are or have been involved with the juvenile court systems are entitled to specific rights related to their educations:

- The right to enroll in school in a timely manner.
- The right to continue to receive appropriate special education services, where an IEP is in place.
- The right to receive assistance from the NYCDOE in obtaining records and updating the student’s DOE transcript and other records to reflect credits and grades earned while in a non-DOE court-ordered setting. For assistance obtaining students’ records, email reenrollmentsupport@schools.nyc.gov.

In this case, students in court-ordered settings refers to:

- Students who attend Passages Academy:
  - When students under age 16 are detained in New York City following an arrest, they are under the supervision of the Administration for Children’s Services, Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) while in detention. These students attend a NYCDOE school at one of the sites of Passages Academy (79X695), a program operated by District 79. ATS will indicate that the student is on Passages Academy’s register.
  - Under the Close to Home Initiative, some students may also remain under the supervision of DYFJ after they are adjudicated in Family Court. These students are considered to be in “placement.” Most of these students remain in New York City and attend Passages Academy.

- Students in an Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) or Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) placement:
  - Some students are placed by the Family Court or Supreme Court in the custody of OCFS, ACS, or OCFS/ACS-contracted facilities (for example, Children’s Village, Greenburgh-Graham, etc.) and receive educational programming from a non-DOE entity.
  - These students are discharged from 79X695 with a discharge code ‘10.’ Upon the end of their court-ordered involvement, students are to appear at their Family Welcome Center to re-enroll in a DOE school.

See the Transfer Student Toolkit for information about how to support a student’s transition back to their NYCDOE home school.
IV. PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS POLICIES

The STARS suite of applications is the NYCDOE’s official record of students’ programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements. STARS Classroom, STARS Admin, and STARS Client comprise the STARS suite of course scheduling and grade management applications used by the NYCDOE. STARS Classroom is an internet-based application that automates the collection of course marks for teachers. 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.

Middle schools have a responsibility to program students towards the most rigorous coursework possible. All NYCDOE middle schools must accurately reflect students’ academic schedules and coursework in STARS. Maintaining accurate student and teacher schedules in STARS ensures schools, students, and families understand how a student is progressing towards graduation. It also reduces data requests from central offices to schools.

A. TERM MODELS

Schools must designate a term model in STARS. A term is defined as the length of a course with one teacher, one syllabus, and a final grade and credit(s) earned. Schools may adjust the number of weeks of instruction per term in STARS, as long as they have designated enough instructional days to meet State instructional day and aidable day requirements, as well as individual course instructional time requirements.

Schools may choose from one of four term models:

- **Annual:** about 36 weeks of instruction, in which students remain in a course the entire year and receive final course marks in June. Most middle schools use an annual term model.
- **Semester:** about 18 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into two terms
- **Trimester:** about 12 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into three terms
- **Cycle:** about 9 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into four terms

Term model heavily influences course sequences, student programming and progress to graduation, and the frequency of awarding credits. Schools should not modify the term model frequently and must never adjust term model during the school year.

B. SCHEDULING IN STARS

A school’s academic program is operationalized through its master schedule. The master schedule encompasses the locations and meeting times of all courses a school currently offers, including the locations and meeting. Each course has the following attributes that can be used in creating both student and teacher schedules:

- Course code
- Section number
- Period
- Cycle (meaning, number of days per week the course meets)
- Capacity (the maximum number of students that can be scheduled in one section)
- Room number
- Teacher name

Once the master schedule is set up, schools can begin to program their students. Schools typically program students using either an individual or block scheduling model, or some combination of the two methods, which are described in brief here:
• **Individual scheduling:** Students are scheduled based on individual needs and requirements. As a result, each student’s schedule is unique. Courses may be scheduled as a daily uniform program or on a rotation cycle.

• **Block scheduling:** Students are grouped according to their needs, or by special program or grade level. Each group follows the same schedule. In some cases, block scheduling may allow for longer.

In addition to individual and block scheduling, schools may choose to adopt different instructional approaches in accordance with contractual requirements.

1. **Course Codes—Updated September 2019**

Schools indicate the courses they currently offer by designating active course codes. STARS course codes capture information about the subject area, course content and its alignment to NYSED [learning standards](#), the position of a course within a sequence, the instructional level, and delivery model. They are used for student schedules, report cards, transcripts, and NYCDOE data and accountability purposes.

Schools must follow the coding practices detailed in the [Middle School Course Code Directory](#) to ensure that course sequences can be interpreted by other NYCDOE schools and NYCDOE tools. The use of the standardized codes outlined in the [Middle School Course Code Directory](#) allows users within and outside the school community to understand what the course codes signify. Many NYCDOE reports, tools, and data feeds use the rules established in the [Middle School Course Code Directory](#) to inform their business rules.

Prior to building the term's master schedule, schools should review their course offerings and active codes for the given year and term and ensure the courses will again be available. At this time, schools should also adjust course codes for the current school year and beyond, as needed. Schools must not modify historical course codes, as this can result in the loss of important academic data. As described in the [Transcript Update](#) guidance, schools must not complete transcript updates in order to “clean up” or delete and modify historical course codes to better align with the above policies and practices.

Course codes and other attributes like title and credits are set at the course level. The information designated by the code applies to all students in the course and sections receiving that content. Schools may not customize codes for individual sections or students who are sitting in the same class. For support with course coding, schools may contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#).

2. **Course titles—Updated September 2019**

Schools also select the title of their courses. These titles appears on students’ transcripts and records, and are visible to those within and outside of the NYCDOE.

The New York City Department of Education is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

To support this districtwide commitment, schools should be mindful of what a course title reveals about participating students. Specifically:

- Course titles may never indicate that a course is designed specifically for students with disabilities (for example, courses may not be titled “English Special Ed”).
- Course titles should not identify the gender of students participating in those courses (for example, Girls Health or Boys Choir).
See the Guidelines on Gender Inclusion for help implementing gender-inclusive curricula, programs, activities, and practices that are consistent with this policy and with the DOE’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.

The additional following guidance applies:

- The titles of courses should be easy for an external reader to interpret. Information about the themes and topics covered in required courses can hinder postsecondary institutions’ ability to understand a student’s academic history. This information can be communicated with students and families through course catalogs or other materials.
- Courses for which a standard code is not available are generally coded using ‘Q’ in the second character. The titles of these courses should be descriptive so that the reader of the transcript can interpret them. For example, the course “MQS11: Math Topics” does not provide any information about the content of the course and whether it is high-school level, while “MQS11: Pre-Algebra” clearly describes the course content.
- Advanced Placement courses must use specific, required course titles; see the AP Courses guidance for additional information.

3. Section Properties

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

- 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

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 section 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, and Section Properties.

4. 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 and students with disabilities.

Push-in and pull-out instruction must always be programmed in STARS to reflect the content 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 (using course codes), 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 outside the classroom from a second teacher.

Integrated co-teaching (ICT) is not considered push-in or pull-out instruction. Instead, this is indicated as a section 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, public-facing grading policies. The goal of a documented grading policy is to provide students, families, and school staff a shared understanding of what is required to earn a specific grade. Students should understand and be able to articulate how their grades are calculated. Schools may establish grading policies at the school, department, grade, or course level, provided the school applies their grading policies equitably to all students.

Schools must share a physical or electronic copy of their grading policy with students and families at the beginning of the school year. The NYCDOE Student Bill of Rights and the Parent Bill of Rights include the rights to know and be provided with written documentation of grading policies and to receive grades based on those policies. Schools must translate their grading policies, as needed.

All grading policies must explain, at a minimum, how courses are graded, the scale of marks awarded, and the timeline of when students receive grades. In addition, schools should have clearly defined procedures to ensure that students’ final grades are entered in STARS in a timely manner, no more than four weeks (or 20 days) after the end of the term.

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 master 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.

Students may not pass or fail based solely on non-mastery measures (for example, behavior, attendance, and participation), but rather based on how well they demonstrate their understanding of the course content and skills. Grading policies must clearly detail exactly how non-mastery measures of performance contribute to the overall grade.31

All students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, should be working toward grade-level standards and must receive grades based on mastery of NYSED learning standards.32

- ELLs: grading policies should consider students’ English as a New Language (ENL) proficiency level, and should include opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery 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 master the content and skills addressed in a course or subject. An Individualized Education Plan (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.

32 See the United States Department of Education’s Dear Colleague Letter.
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 mastered. To accommodate for the different expectations, a school’s grading policy should address how it grades students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments.

For information on how to develop and implement strong grading policies, 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 depending on the term model they use. Schools must give at least two grades (marks) in each course or subject per term. 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. Schools should clearly define their procedures for calculating final grades and entering final grades in STARS in a timely manner, up to four weeks after the end of the term.

---

**Important Terms to Know**

- **Grades** are a reflection of students’ understanding and command of content, their progression through a course or subject, and their mastery of skills *at a given point in time*.

- **Grading policies** outline when and how students receive feedback on their mastery 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, 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. The term model a school uses heavily influences student programming.

- **Marking periods** are intervals during a course when the teacher of record awards an interim mark, which provide status updates to students, families, and other stakeholders.

- **Report card grades** are indications of students’ progress toward mastery of the courses learning standards. 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 student completed over their courses and the level of mastery at the end of the course, *as of that point in time*. This grade may also confer credit(s) when a course

---

33 For additional information on generating final grades in STARS, see this page on the STARS wiki on [Grades and Exams](#).

34 See the STARS wiki for more information on [how to define terms](#) and enter marking period grades.
is credit bearing. 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. 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 using one of the available NYCDOE grading scales, 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. Schools may not award narratives alone. Schools can provide narratives in addition to, but not in lieu of, grades. 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.

Grading scales available to middle schools include, but are not limited to, numeric grades (1–100), alpha grades (A–F), and performance levels (1, 2, 3, or 4). Each course mark has a citywide pass/fail equivalent, and most have a numeric equivalent used in the calculation of GPA.

The following policies apply to specific course marks:

- **Incompletes**: Schools may award a grade of Incomplete (‘NX’) if a student has a documented, extreme extenuating circumstance that prevents them from completing the course in its established timeframe (for example, surgery, death in the family). A student who receives an incomplete must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the semester following the termination of the course in order to receive a final grade. ‘NX’ does not have a pass/fail or a numeric equivalent.

- **New or Recently Admitted Students**: Students who enroll in a course after it has started 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 this circumstance. ‘NL’ does not have a pass/fail or numeric equivalent. Students who receive a grade of ‘NL’ must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the semester following the termination of the course in order to receive a final grade.

- **No Shows**: A grade of ‘NS’ is given to a student who fails to attend a course and does not participate in any of the work from which a grade can be derived. ‘NS’ has a pass/fail equivalent of fail and a default numeric equivalent of 45. This mark should be used in egregious situations, when students have been given reasonable chances to make up missed work and their absences are so chronic that only a failing mark is appropriate.
  - Neither long-term absentees (LTA) nor students receiving hospital or home instruction should be assigned an ‘NS’ mark. See the Home and Hospital Instruction guidance for information on how schools should collaborate with students receiving home or hospital instruction. Schools who have students who are LTAs and have missed more than 20 consecutive school days, must follow the guidance on using ZLTA codes so that students are not awarded marks.

See the Course and Exam Marks Tables in the appendix of this document for the full list of grading scales and marks available for middle schools.
2. Report Cards

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. Schools can refer to the Student Report Cards webpage for sample STARS report cards, including 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.

C. INCORPORATING REGENTS EXAMS INTO FINAL COURSE GRADES

For students in grade 8 who complete an accelerated course of study culminating in a Regents exam, the Regents exam may not be the only reason a student passes or fails a course, per the NYSED School Administrator’s Manual. As a part of the school’s grading policy, Regents scores may be included in the calculation of a final course grade only if the score is:

- Weighted no more than 33 percent of the culminating course for the respective Regents exam
- Calculated into the course grade as a component of the weighted average

Schools may not add points to the total grade because the student passed the Regents exam. If a school is including the Regents exam in the calculation of the final course grades, schools should wait until the exams are scored before awarding a final grade in STARS. Schools may not use transcript updates to recalculate a student’s final grade based on subsequently passing the Regents exam. For examples of ways to incorporate the Regents exam into a grading policy and calculate the weighted average, see the Grading Policy Toolkit.

D. TRANSCRIPT UPDATES

Schools must have procedures to keep student transcripts up to date to ensure that students are progressing toward promotion requirements. Schools may complete a transcript update only in specific circumstances. Schools must complete all transcript updates in accordance with the policies listed in the Transcript Update guidance document by completing the Transcript Update Form and providing any necessary supporting documentation.

Middle schools may update a student’s final grade for the following reasons:

- Change an existing grade:
  - Grade calculation/entry error, in accordance with the course’s grading policy
  - Updating a grade of Incomplete (NX) or Recent Admit (NL) to a final grade
  - Principal override, in accordance with CSA and UFT contracts (a teacher must be notified in writing of any principal override of final course grades)
- In rare cases, add an exam:
  - Regents exams taken at a New York State school outside NYCDOE
  - NYSED-approved alternatives to Regents exams

33 Schools using grading systems not based on weighted averages should ensure that the Regents exam mathematically accounts for no more than 33% of the final grade. For example, in a grading system where the final grade is based on a total of 300 points, no more than 100 points should be derived from the Regents exam outcome.
E. CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK

Schools may determine which courses taken at their school to include in the calculation of student GPA and whether to establish school-based policies for class rankings and determinations of a valedictorian and salutatorian. Schools should share clear, documented policies with students and families that take into consideration which students are eligible to be ranked, which courses count in the ranking, how courses are weighted, and how the final rank will be calculated. In STARS, when calculating the rank, schools can determine which students are included in the denominator by creating a custom group and excluding or including students based on their ranking policy. Schools should complete their ranking prior to discharging students.

VI. ATTENDANCE, DISCHARGE, AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A. SCHOOL CALENDAR—Updated September 2019

Each year, the school year calendar is centrally designed to meet the NYSED requirement of a minimum number of 180 State aidable days in all schools. 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 open late, dismiss early, close, or treat any day as a non-attendance day (meaning, “release” one or more classes or grades) submitting a calendar change request and receiving formal approval in advance. To request permission to deviate from the Citywide NYCDOE school calendar, principals must use the Calendar Change Request application. See the NYCDOE InfoHub for more information about the calendar change process.

B. DAILY SESSION TIME AND STUDENT SCHEDULES—Updated September 2019

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.

---

36 Calendar changes can be submitted after a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) vote and SBO vote have been conducted. An SBO is the process whereby a Principal and their UFT chapter leaders agree to propose to the UFT represented school staff deviations from certain requirements of the UFT teachers’ contract. First, the principal and UFT chapter leader must reach agreement on the SBO proposal. Next, the UFT chapter leader must arrange for a vote and notify all UFT staff members. The proposal must be approved by 55% of the staff who vote, and the SBO must specify which provisions of the contract will be altered.

37 See the NYCDOE’s School Calendar. Note that not all aidable days are instructional days, or days where students are attending classes. See the section of this guide on daily session time for more information on instructional time requirements.
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. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade levels</th>
<th>Hours per year</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students in full day Kindergarten and grades 1–6</td>
<td>900 hours/year</td>
<td>25 hours/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in grades 7–12</td>
<td>990 hours/year</td>
<td>27.5 hours/week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Schools must take attendance on every school day, including on half days and days of special events, unless otherwise noted on the Student Attendance Calendar. Days of special events, such as PSATs, field trips, promotion ceremonies, etc. are days of attendance; impacted grades should not be released. It is crucial that schools accurately reflect attendance using marks of “absent” and present”, in order to ensure students are safe and accounted for and that records are accurate.

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.

For middle and high school grade levels, the following applies:
Regents testing and Regents rating days are considered aidable days by NYSED. Schools should carefully consider if students would benefit from attending class and receiving instruction during these days. These are indicated in the NYCDOE’s Student Attendance Calendar. In general, Regents Days should be instructional, unless it is necessary for schools to allow students to leave the building to support proper exam administration.

*In 6–12 schools:*
- Schools serving students in grades 6–12 may use the function CCLA (release code 43) to release students in affected grades if the exam administration will disrupt normal instruction. Approval is not required, provided the school is releasing on the days of Regents exams only.
- Similarly, secondary schools may request the release of grades 6–8 during the Regents exam period if middle school students take local final examinations, as described above.

*In K–12 schools:* Schools serving students in grades K–12 must request approval in advance if they would like to release students in affected grades during Regents exam administration. Schools must follow the [Calendar Change Request process](#).

To avoid the risk of a reduction in State aid, and to limit the impact on bus scheduling and other services, schools may not otherwise deviate from the published NYCDOE School Year Calendar without an approved calendar change request. See the [NYCDOE InfoHub](#) for more information about the calendar change process, eligibility requirements, and dates that are not permitted to change.

Note that days of special events, such as PSATs, field trips, promotion ceremonies, etc. are days of attendance; impacted grades may not be released.

The following additional guidance on programming non-attending students applies:

- Schools must follow the guidance on investigations, flagging non-attending students. They must resolve all non-attending student cases in the current school year, indicating the reason the student cannot be discharged or cannot return to school, where necessary. Schools should escalate cases where there is not enough information for a discharge to their attendance point at the FSC.
- Schools should use official classes (via CMOD) to organize their register, including for students with long-term absences (LTAs).
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that all students, including students who are absent for extended periods of time, are provided with an academic program that moves them toward graduation and college and career readiness. In the event that a student is absent for more than 20 consecutive school days the school may:
  - Add administrative block(s) to serve as a transition schedule, in which the student will meet with a counselor, administrator, and/or other school staff members prior to their return to classes, with a ‘ZA’ in the first two characters. This ‘ZA’ functional course serves to indicate that the student needs to see the guidance counselor or another administrator upon return.
  - Partially or fully remove the student from the academic program for which they were previously scheduled. The school should retain a copy of the academic program in the student’s cumulative record to facilitate the process of recreating the program in STARS at a later date.
- If a student returns from an extended absence, the following must occur:
  - On the same day the student returns, the school must develop a transition plan, which may include discussing the student’s progress toward graduation and postsecondary goals, diagnosing the student’s...
academic proficiency, informing the student’s teachers of the student’s current program, and providing the student with information about school systems and structures. For any remaining time in the school day, the school must provide the student with academic instruction in alignment with their needs.

- By the following morning, the school must provide the student with a full academic program. To create this program, the school should review and adjust the student’s most recent academic program to ensure that it will support the student in progressing toward graduation and college and career readiness. Where needed, the school should modify the program to provide opportunities for academic intervention and recovery.

For more information on term models and how to reflect instructional time in STARS, see the Scheduling in STARS section of this guide. Schools may contact their academic policy and systems leads for direct support with STARS.

C. ATTENDANCE POLICIES—Updated September 2019

Attendance is reporting how many students are in school each day, and the practices to increase the number of students in school each day. Per Chancellor’s Regulation A-210, principals are responsible for the school attendance program.

1. Administration and Systems

Schools must have systems to take and track attendance and to manage their registers. Good data is the start for improved school-wide attendance. Strong attendance procedures can indicate overall school organization. Schools are expected to:

- Submit complete attendance per Chancellor’s Regulation A-210, section III.
- Have routines to check for data accuracy, such as post and check daily attendance for errors each day.
- Ensure that there is no missing attendance information (unscanned rosters or retro attendance).
- Follow rules for calendar changes, early dismissals, and releases.
- Account for all students, including the 000 class, immunization exclusions, shared instruction students, and student performers.
- Follow discharge guidelines and complete pending discharges.
- Conduct a thorough clearance of register each September.
- Complete ALOA/ANDI audit each year; compile documents for audit, as required.
- Implement daily attendance monitoring and special outreach for grade PK-8 students who are child-welfare involved per the Tiered Response Protocol.

2. Policy and Practice

Every school must define its own specific policies on attendance and lateness. Schools must publish these policies for staff, students and families, including: the definitions of lateness; the process for leaving school early; the reasons and documentation required for excused lateness or absences; and how the school is notified of absences or reasons for absences. School attendance policies must be clear on what parents must do to notify the school before and/or after all absences, including extended absences for vacations or family emergencies.

Please note:

- Schools cannot mark a student who has attended at least one instructional period as absent.
- Schools cannot not exclude a student due to late arrival.
- Family trips that result in missed instructional time, including extended vacations, count as absences on the student’s record in ATS; Schools cannot discharge students on extended family travel.
Every school must update the OSYD Consolidated Plan annually to define basic administrative procedures. Within the plan, schools must designate an attendance coordinator (administrator or pedagogue) who works with the principal to monitor all procedures for attendance reporting.

Refer to Chancellor’s Regulation A-210, the public webpage on required attendance policies, and the Attendance page for full details.

3. Early Intervention

At the start of the year, schools must begin intervention for students identified as chronically absent in the previous year, or target groups likely to be chronically absent, like students in temporary housing (STH). These students are flagged for support and matched to interventions to prevent further patterns of absence.

Other intervention efforts to follow include:

- Acknowledge all absences with daily phone call and two-way outreach routines.
- Know chronic absentees and act on 5/10 Day Report each Wednesday.
- Group students by cause of absence or type of intervention.
- Plan for common reasons for absences: school refusal, struggling in class, asthma, travel, or pre-k.
- Employ intervention plans, success mentors, and incentives for targeted improvements.
- Have in place procedures to address and prevent STH absences.
- Set ILOG expectations for how the school coordinates outreach.
- Know ways community partners help promote attendance and update the list of local services.

4. Elevated Interventions

A school should keep a log of outreach for each student and there should be one school staff member who “knows the student’s story.” The school must ensure this person:

- Is prepared to address common reasons for extended absences (for example, pregnant/parenting, hospitalizations, or court-involved youth).
- Plans for revised academic programs, remediation, or transitions for affected students.
- Connects students and families to social workers, ACS Preventive Services, Family Assessment Program (FAP), and mental health programs.
- Follows policy for educational neglect.
- Conducts investigations for unexplained, repeated absences, and 407 referrals.
- Documents non-attending reason and continue outreach.
- Consults with shared attendance teacher.

For more information, schools may consult the Attendance page or email attendance@schools.nyc.gov.

D. DISCHARGING STUDENTS

The NYCDOE’s Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines describe the procedures required to discharge students. The guidelines are updated each year to reflect current standards and to increase alignment with the NYSED reporting requirements. School staff members must be properly trained to administer the transfer, discharge, and graduation processes for students. They must collect and store the appropriate documents to support the discharge.
Schools must create a system for collecting, recording, and storing documents related to discharges. Teachers must be encouraged to provide any information that they have received from the child or family about moves, new phone numbers, or addresses. In addition, a process must be established for collecting information about new residence addresses and evidence of a student’s enrollment in a new school. A standard discharge form with quick references to documentation needed for each discharge is available on the discharges InfoHub webpage and in the Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines.

E. 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 ED-1, Chancellor’s Regulation A-820, and the Student Records guidance document.

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

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 records as a cover sheet. Middle schools can use the ROSA 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.
- **For NYCDOE students transferring to non-NYCDOE schools**: schools should send copies of the contents of the cumulative folder to the admitting school; keep the original folder indefinitely.

1. Changes to Student Records—Updated September 2019

There are different types of documentation that support changes to students’ electronic records or cumulative folders. The type of documentation varies based on the request. Before updating a student’s electronic records, schools must receive the appropriate documentation from the student or student’s family.

- **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 name**:
  - A court order or birth certificate reflecting the student’s legal name OR
  - A signed Name and Gender Change Request Form
- **Request to change a student’s gender**:
  - A birth certificate or government ID reflecting the student’s legal gender OR
  - A signed Name and Gender Change Request Form
Students are able to change their gender marker and name on their education records without legal documentation by submitting a signed Name and Gender Change Request Form to their school. The new form will be available to 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).

For students currently enrolled in a New York City school, the school should update the student’s name, gender, and/or date of birth. Schools should update the student’s gender in the “Sex” field. Currently, schools may only enter binary gender terms (“M” for male and “F” for female) in ATS. For students who are discharged from the NYCDOE, the student’s last school should forward the request and documentation to their Borough/Citywide Office.

Schools should retain copies of this documentation in the student’s cumulative folder. The former name and/or gender will be maintained in archived data. Records will accurately reflect circumstances in effect at the time each record was made to enable records to be cross-referenced and will maintain confidentiality.

For more information, see the NYCDOE’s Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students.

**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, moving up ceremony programs, 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. UNIT OF STUDY PROGRAMMING ESTIMATES

Schools should design their daily schedule to allow sufficient time to meet unit of study requirements. For middle schools, these requirements are defined in Part 100.1 as 180 minutes per week of instruction throughout the school year, or 108 hours per year; more information is outlined in the section of this guide on program requirements. A unit of study is based on the amount of instructional time the student receives from a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher in a course aligned to NYSED standards.

The required number of minutes of class time each day necessary to meet the unit of study requirements in a given year depends on:

- The calendar: the number of instructional days in the year
- The term model: whether a school uses semesters, trimesters, or cycles
- The number of times a class meets per week and/or throughout the year if the schedule cycles
- The day of the week a class meets on and how many of that day occur in the calendar
- The length of each class period

The following page includes examples of minimum class times schools may use to earn one unit of study. The tables assume students are in class no fewer than 180 instructional days in the year. The total number of actual days where students receive instruction will vary, so schools should be conservative in their estimates to be sure they will reach minimum unit of study requirements in any schedules they program for students.

To use these tables, schools should first look up the minimum units of study required for a particular subject. For example, as outlined in the section of this guide on required units of study, schools are required to provide grade 7 and 8 students with two units (108 hours each, for a total of 216 hours) of math. Use the following tables to determine the combinations of period lengths and term models that will allow students to accumulate 216 hours.

**Time Accumulated over One Semester (expressed in total hours, rounded to the nearest hour; days per every 5 class meets)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes per period class meets</th>
<th>1 day</th>
<th>2 days</th>
<th>3 days</th>
<th>4 days</th>
<th>5 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Time Accumulated over **One Year** (expressed in total hours, rounded to the nearest hour; days per every 5 class meets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes per period class meets</th>
<th>1 day</th>
<th>2 days</th>
<th>3 days</th>
<th>4 days</th>
<th>5 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Accumulated over **Two Years** (expressed in total hours, rounded to the nearest hour; days per every 5 class meets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes per period class meets</th>
<th>1 day</th>
<th>2 days</th>
<th>3 days</th>
<th>4 days</th>
<th>5 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### B. COURSE AND EXAM MARKS TABLES—Updated September 2019

The table below outlines all available grade scales, and their associated marks in STARS, along with their pass/fail equivalents and numeric equivalents. Schools may only use marks listed below and cannot alter the pass/fail equivalent to course marks.

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Numeric Equivalent</th>
<th>Pass/Fail Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IB2 İB7</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate scale</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB1</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate scale</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (+/-)</td>
<td>Performance level: excels in standards (1–4 scale)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (+/-)</td>
<td>Performance level: proficient (1–4 scale)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (+/-)</td>
<td>Performance level: below standards (1–4 scale)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (+/-)</td>
<td>Performance level: well below standards (1–4 scale)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 100–65      | Numeric course grades (10–100 scale)

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.

39 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Numeric Equivalent</th>
<th>Pass/Fail Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N+</td>
<td>Needs Improvement+ (E–U scale)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Needs Improvement (E–U scale)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-</td>
<td>Needs Improvement- (E–U scale)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory (E–U scale)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Exceeds standards (Mastery scale)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Above standards (Mastery scale)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Meets standards (Mastery scale)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Approaching standards (Mastery scale)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Below standards (Mastery scale)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>No credit</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>No credit–No show (additional policies apply)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>No credit–Fulfilled distribution requirement</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>No credit–Audit</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NX</td>
<td>No credit–Incomplete (additional policies apply)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>New/Recent Admit (additional policies apply)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>No credit–Course Waived (used only for PE for early graduates)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Mark</th>
<th>Applicable Exams</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Default Numeric Equivalent</th>
<th>Pass/Fail Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100–65</td>
<td>Regents LOTE Comprehensive exam LOTE SLP</td>
<td>The numeric exam score the student received on the exam</td>
<td>100–65</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64–0</td>
<td>Regents LOTE Comprehensive exam LOTE SLP</td>
<td>The numeric exam score the student received on the exam</td>
<td>64–0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Regents LOTE Comprehensive exam LOTE SLP</td>
<td>Student was scheduled to take the exam but did not show up on test day</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INV</td>
<td>Regents LOTE Comprehensive exam LOTE SLP</td>
<td>Student cheated on the exam; or Student became ill during the exam and was therefore unable to complete it</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>Regents LOTE Comprehensive exam LOTE SLP</td>
<td>School/teacher misadministered the exam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40 Schools have the option of displaying only the highest Regents exam score on the transcripts of students who have taken Regents exams multiple times.

41 Marks of ABS, INV, and MIS will not appear on transcripts. All Regents exam marks are maintained in the students’ STARS permanent records.