

Standards of Learning Tests and Graduation Requirements:
Retention and Promotion Practices for Grades K-12

Promotion

Promotion from one grade to another shall be determined by a student's proficiency in the knowledge and skills contained within the curriculum for the grade level in which the student is enrolled.

The evaluation of the student's proficiency in the core academic areas of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and history/social science shall be the fundamental basis of the decision to promote a student. That evaluation shall include consideration of the student's performance on Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in those grades and subjects where the tests are administered. Remediation shall be required for students who fail to achieve a passing score on any core academic area SOL test.

Health, art, music, physical education, vocational and technical education, and other electives are critical components of the curriculum as well.

Elementary School: Guidelines for Grades K-2

Students are expected to be proficient in the four core academic areas: reading/language arts (including spelling, grammar, composition, and handwriting), mathematical concepts and computation, science, and history/social science. Students in grades K-2 must demonstrate a proficient level of knowledge and skills in language arts and in a minimum of two of the three other core academic areas of the curriculum in order to be promoted to the next grade level. For students who do not meet all requirements for promotion, satisfactory completion of an approved remedial program may be the basis for promotion to the next grade level.

Elementary School: Grades 3-5

Students are expected to be proficient in the four academic areas: reading/language arts (including spelling, grammar, composition, and handwriting), mathematical concepts and computation, science, and history/social science. Students who score below 400 on any of the SOL tests will be required to attend remediation sessions during the summer and after school during the next school year. Students in grades 3-5 must demonstrate a proficient level of knowledge and skills in a minimum of English and Math and one additional content area (Science or History) in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Middle School: Grade 6, 7, and 8

Students in grades 6-7 must demonstrate a proficient level of knowledge and skills in three of the four core academic areas and also score 400 or more on the English, mathematics and history SOL tests, or be successfully remediated, in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Students in grade 8 must demonstrate a proficient level of knowledge and skills in three of the four core academic areas and also score 400 or more on the English, mathematics, science and history SOL tests, or be successfully remediated, in order to be promoted to grade 9. For students who score below 400 on the SOL tests, but who meet all other requirements for promotion, the satisfactory completion of an approved remedial program will be the basis for promotion to the next grade level.

Effect of End-of-Course SOL Test Scores at Middle School

Students in grade 8 who take End-of-Course SOL tests at the middle school are held to the same standards that apply to these courses if taken at the high school. That is, SOL test scores will be factored into a student's final course average along with other measures of student performance. Students will be encouraged to re-take failed End-of-Course SOL tests as permitted by the Board of Education. If a student passes the course but has a score of below 400 on the SOL test the student will receive credit but not a verified credit. The student will need to retake the SOL test and get a score of 400 or higher to receive a verified credit.

Procedures for Granting Credit in High School

Credit toward the requirements for graduation is awarded for classes taught on the high school level and for certain high school level classes taught at the middle school. The grade classification of a student in high school shall be based upon the accumulation of individual standard course credits and verified credits.

The determination of whether a student is proficient in the knowledge and skills required by a course's curriculum shall be the responsibility of the teacher of the course. The parents of students who are not mastering the knowledge and skills of a course's curriculum shall be notified as early as is reasonable.

At the school level, the final decision to grant credit for a course is the principal's responsibility. Parents who wish to appeal the principal's decision shall direct their appeal in writing to the Superintendent.

High School: Grades 9-12 and Middle School Courses Carrying High School Credit

A. Courses with No End-of-Course SOL Testing Requirement

Students must pass the course requirements with a minimum grade of “70” or “D” in order to receive a unit of credit.

B. Effect of End-of-Course SOL Test Scores on Final Course Grades

For courses having an End-of-Course SOL testing requirement, SOL test scores, or any substitute test scores, will be factored into a student’s final course average along with other measures of student performance. Students will be encouraged to re-take failed End-of-Course SOL tests as permitted by the Board of Education. If a student passes the course but has a score of below 400 the student will receive credit but not a verified credit. The student will need to retake the SOL test and get a score of 400 or higher to receive a verified credit.

C. Verified Credit

Six verified credits are required for graduation with a Standard Diploma and nine verified credits are required for graduation with an advanced Studies Diploma.

Four options exist for earning verified credit:

1. Students who achieve a passing score on an End-of-Course SOL test and successfully complete the course requirements shall be awarded a verified credit in that course. Students may earn verified credit in any courses for which End-of-Course SOL tests are available.
2. Students may earn verified credits by achieving a passing score on alternative tests to the SOL assessment. Such tests are those only approved by the Virginia Board of Education.
3. Students may earn one verified credit by achieving industry certification credentials while passing related career and technical education courses or programs. For the Standard Diploma, when the certification, license, or credential confers more than one verified credit, a second verified credit may be substituted for a science or history and social science verified credit.
4. Students will be encouraged to re-take failed SOL tests as permitted by the Board of Education.

Credit Requirements for Grade Classification

Grade classification is based on the number of standard units of credit accumulated. Students who do not advance to the next grade classification are required to repeat only those classes necessary to meet graduation requirements, not their entire schedule of classes.

Grade classification will take place annually prior to the opening of the school year. The high school principal may re-classify individual students during the school year if he/she deems that a re-classification is warranted.

Classification Levels:

Grade 10	5 credits
Grade 11	10 credits and two verified credits
Grade 12	15 credits and four verified credits

*Students must pass English Course at each grade level to advance to the next grade level. (Grade level could be adjusted depending upon course load and summer school).

Retention

Retention is defined as the repetition of a course, courses or a grade level. The decision to retain a student shall be based on a body of evidence in which a student demonstrates that his/her performance is below a proficient level in one or more core curricular areas. The intent of retention is to provide the student additional time and/or alternative or remedial instruction designed to increase academic growth and personal development. Research clearly demonstrates that:

- Simply repeating a course or grade without specific and ongoing monitoring and support is ineffective;
- Careful planning and support are necessary beyond a sequence of retention, intervention and promotion; and
- Rarely should a student repeat a level more than one time during the student's elementary experience.

Therefore, a clearly articulated education plan will be developed for any student who is retained.

A recommendation for retention may originate with any professional staff member, student or parent/guardian. If such recommendation originates from a professional staff member, steps should be taken to assist the student and parents in understanding the reason for such a recommendation. The final decision about retention will be made by the school administration.

Moreover, a student should not be retained unless:

1. There is an appropriate instructional alternative or intervention for the student, including but not limited to special and/or remedial help or an alternative placement, and the district is able to provide such instructional alternative or intervention should the student be retained.

2. There is space available for the student in any alternative program/setting during the time the course(s) or grade level must be repeated.
3. Instructional alternatives or interventions not requiring retention have been explored, and have been determined to be inappropriate or impracticable.

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