

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The extension of school closures by state and local officials will prevent not only the return of students to school buildings, but also impact traditional end of the year activities and close out procedures for schools and families. The district intends to close out the 2019-2020 school year according to predetermined calendar timelines. However, the district is developing additional summer remediation options and extended distance education opportunities. Student grade progression and promotion are top of mind priorities during these unprecedented circumstances. This document outlines how the East Baton Rouge Parish School System will guide promotion and placement decisions without penalty or delay, while still maximizing learning opportunities.

A [Louisiana Department of Education K-11 Course Credit & Promotion Guidance Document](#) (released April 16, 2020) provides answers to frequently asked questions pertaining to students currently enrolled in K-11 classes at all Louisiana public schools. The document explains regulatory flexibility areas waived by state and national officials. Please review this state level document to answer frequently asked questions. Local policy cannot replace state policy; these waivers on the state document address all students in Louisiana. These guidelines will be followed by district and school staff to direct promotion and retention decisions as well as end of the year close out procedures.

Within the state guidance document, there are identified areas whereby **local decisions** are specified and referenced. The purpose of this district level document is to address these areas of local concern for students actively enrolled in grades K-11 within the East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

Guiding Principle: *In accordance with state law and the general requirements of Chapter 5 of BESE Bulletin 1566 (Pupil Progression Policies and Procedures), “Each teacher shall, on an individualized basis, determine promotion or placement of each student.” Furthermore, no other individual shall “otherwise affect the grade received by a student from his/her teacher.”*

GRADES 6-8: MIDDLE SCHOOL PROMOTION, RETENTION & OTHER ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS



LDOE Guidance: *Louisiana will not require standardized testing for the 2019-2020. Mandatory attendance requirements have also been waived by state officials. In 2019-2020, promotion and retention for grades K-8 are local decisions based on a preponderance of evidence from student learning throughout the school year. Performance on classroom assignments, course grades, and any benchmark assessments are examples of items school systems can use when making a local decision. Struggling students should continue to be identified early and receive intensive support to ensure growth and the ability to stay on track academically.*

District Response: Teachers shall, on an individual basis, determine the promotion of each student. Particular emphasis shall be placed upon the student's proficiency in grade-appropriate skills. The primary indicator of proficiency is earning a passing grade in the course in which the student is currently enrolled. Since March 13th, grades in EBR's student information system have been "frozen." **Students who have earned and maintain a passing grade in coursework are considered proficient.** Teachers will determine if a student has demonstrated proficiency and mastery of standards according to the work previously completed in the course.

The East Baton Rouge Parish School Board has approved a waiver from the local requirements of K-8 promotion and retention outlined in the [district's pupil progression plan](#). With these flexibilities, there will be no 4th 9-weeks formal grading period. Continued learning opportunities afforded through the school's distance education plan may allow for grade improvement opportunities impacting the 3rd 9-weeks grade. Through a hold harmless approach, continued learning is designed to enhance student achievement and improve the mastery of core content state standards. It is not intended to negatively impact grades or academic records.

Students should be given every opportunity to demonstrate mastery and improve their grades before the end of the academic year. If no other work is completed by the end of the academic school year (since March 13th), this grade will remain in place to serve as the final grade for the 3rd 9-weeks. If additional work and continued learning is needed to ensure content mastery, teachers shall provide standards based coursework to allow students opportunities to improve their grades. The teacher of record awards the final grade for all students in all courses.

The following options may be utilized to assist **students currently failing coursework** or whose grades need improvement prior to promotion/ retention decisions and final grade postings:

- Direct instruction via printed packets or on online platforms according to the school and district distance education plan protocols;
- **make up work submitted by the student to the teacher for work not completed before March 13, 2020;**
- and/ or the school assigned use of the district's course recovery platform.

Teachers will utilize the following information to guide system level promotion and retention decisions for students enrolled in grades 6-8:

- With the elimination of the 4th 9-weeks, the final average for the 3rd 9-weeks grade will become the second semester average for all students
- Using the first semester average and the second semester average, teachers shall then use the
- promotion criteria found on page 12 of the local pupil progression plan to determine promotion status
- For students who do not achieve promotion status via the above criteria, the SBLC process is required. The School Building Level Committee (SBLC) process is used to determine placement for following year. Please refer to the local pupil progression plan for information on the composition, functions and procedures of the SBLC.

Middle school students completing courses for high school credit follow the local and state course credit and promotion guidance for high school courses will receive credits according to procedures in the local pupil progression plan. As with all other grades and subjects, the LEAP 2025 testing requirement for students currently enrolled in traditional end of course subjects has been waived due to COVID 19 impact.



LDOE Guidance: *Student placement for the 2020-2021 school year in grade 8, T9, or grade 9 remains at the discretion of the local school or school system, in consultation with the student's parents, where the student was enrolled in 8th grade. **Placement in transitional ninth grade can be based on data from the following sources:***

1. *Benchmark assessment results*
2. *Classroom assessment results*
3. *Course grades*
4. *Student growth*
5. *IEP goals*
6. *Attendance records*

*The decision should be made by the sending school no later than **July 31, 2020.***

District Response: Promotion decisions from grade 8 to grade 9 should be made according to the same considerations as other middle school students. 8th Grade retentions and transitional 9th grade decisions should be made by July 31st in consultation with the student's parents through the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) and/or SBLC process and reference the data sources listed above as well as the data sources listed in the 8th grade promotion sections of the local pupil progression plan. When conducting meetings, schools should follow proper social distancing procedures and the guidance included in the IGP and parent meeting sections of the state level promotion guidance document. Continued learning, summer remediation and course recovery programs will be offered for identified students.



LDOE Guidance: *School systems may elect to create **Individual Academic Improvement Plans (IAIP)** for struggling students based on evidence from student learning throughout the school year, though no mandate will be enforced. Students placed on an Individual Academic Improvement Plan (IAIP) at the end of 2018-2019 should continue to receive supports and interventions. The LEAP 360 diagnostic assessments will be available to assist with plans for individualized support and intervention in 2020-2021 for English language arts and mathematics.*

District Response: While mandates for IAIPs are currently paused, school and district staff shall resume the initiation, completion and review of new and existing IAIPs by September 30, 2020. This applies to students entering or matriculating through middle school grades with active IAIPs. LEAP 360 diagnostic data, placement test data and other beginning of the year assessments should be used to guide this process. Any parent

meetings conducted during the period of school closure should follow the guidance included in the state level promotion document linked in earlier sections of this document. To the extent possible, students placed on IAIPs at the end of 2018-2019 should continue to receive supports and interventions during periods of school closure and distance education. Identified students will be offered summer remediation opportunities.



LDOE Guidance: *To the extent possible, school systems should complete the **Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) process** for student planning and scheduling for the 2020-2021 school year prior to the end of the regularly scheduled school year. Graduation planning starts in the 8th grade.*

District Response: To the extent possible, schools will initiate the **Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) process** for 8th grade students following the guidance included in the IGP and parent meeting sections of the state level promotion guidance document. Each 8th grade student's IGP shall list the courses the student will take in subsequent years and begin to identify the diploma path they will eventually chose in 10th grade. IGPs not completed during periods of school closure and social distancing should be initiated or reviewed by September 30th.

END OF THE YEAR TIMELINE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-8:

Dates	Milestones
On or before May 4 - May 21	Distance Education Contingency Plan (Continued learning to address grade level state standards via school level distance education plans.) Parent Meetings for Academic Plans (To the extent possible, Schools will conduct parent meetings for SBLCs, IAIPs, IEPs. 504 and to meet end of the year academic plan requirements)
Ongoing April 21- May 22	School counselors complete missing grade audit and other end of the year closeout tasks
May 21 @ noon	Last Day for Students; Last Day to update final grades; JCampus Grade Books locked

Dates	Milestones
May 22	Last Day for Teachers and other 9 month employees Final Grades Due; Promotion Decision Deadline (Phase 1 of IGP Completions due for 8 th graders)
Late May/ Early June TBD*	Printing of District Report Cards (Report Cards to be sent via mail)
Summer 2020 TBD	Summer Remediation & Secondary Course Credit Recovery Programs
July 31, 2020	Last Day for Transitional 9 th Grade Decisions (For Students Completing Summer Remediation and Summer School Credit Recovery Programs.) Deadline for Completion of Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs) (Phase 2 deadline for students promoted to high school)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

School Activities: All end of the year promotion and academic award ceremonies have been cancelled.

Magnet & Gifted Academic Placements: Following the district’s “hold-harmless” philosophy, grades earned during periods of school closure as well as Spring 2020 promotion decisions will not negatively impact the magnet status of currently enrolled magnet students in grades K-11. In addition, families of new and pending applicants will continue to receive detailed guidance and notification from the district’s magnet department as applications are processed and students are assigned to available seats. Individual screening sessions will resume once social distancing measures allow for such activities. Schools will contact families to schedule these sessions as soon as possible. A “Frequently Asked Questions” document for the district’s Magnet Programs, which will include updates regarding the 2021-2022 Application Period, will be posted to the district’s COVID 19 Family Resource Page by mid-May.

The district’s gifted office and school level staff will work collaboratively with families to determine the best academic placement decisions for each child. Additional information including a “Frequently Asked Questions” document for the district’s Gifted Programs” will be posted to the district’s COVID 19 Family Resource Page by Mid-May.

Parent Conferences & Communication: These unprecedented times bring unusual circumstances and unique questions. Should parents or guardians have questions regarding student grades or promotion decisions, they are asked to contact their child's teacher of record and/or the student's assigned school counselor. After starting with the student's teacher or counselor, unresolved issues or concerns should be brought to the attention of the school level school principal. If a student or parent is unsure whom to contact, please email hotline@ebrschools.org. The student name, grade level, school name and parent contact information should be included in the email so that timely assistance and response may be provided by the appropriate school and/or district staff. As an alternative means of contact, parents may also call the distance education hotline number at 225.400.7451. This number will be monitored and support will be provided as quickly as possible.

Summer School Programs: The district intends to offer summer remediation and secondary credit course recovery programs for identified students. Information will be posted to the district's COVID 19 Family Resource Page as it becomes available. Additionally, individual schools will disseminate registration and summer school program information to students and families.