

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the promotion criteria for students with disabilities?

Most students with IEPs who participate in standard assessments should be held to standard promotion criteria. This is to ensure that students with disabilities are held to the same rigorous expectations as their peers and enter the next grade level having demonstrated an understanding of the same academic standards.

Students must be provided with the appropriate interventions and special education supports and services, accommodations and specially designed instruction required in order to make sufficient progress toward promotion benchmarks and be held to standard promotion criteria. This is particularly important when planning for the transition to high school, as all high school students are held to standard promotion criteria.

When the impact of the student's disability is so severe that the student is not able to meet the school's promotion benchmarks, even with the use of multiple measures to assess progress toward the benchmark and the provision of required specially designed instruction, accommodations, supports and services, the student may be held to modified promotion criteria.

2. Do all students with disabilities have modified promotion criteria?

No. In fact, it is appropriate for most students with disabilities to be held to standard promotion criteria. Because [Chancellor's Regulation A-501](#) requires promotion to be based a holistic assessment of sufficient progress toward promotion benchmarks and not based solely on a test score, most students with disabilities can be held to standard promotion criteria. A student with an IEP receiving special education services may have modified promotion criteria if the effect of the student's disability severely impacts his/her rate of learning, such that the student is not able to meet the school's promotion benchmarks, even with the use of multiple measures to assess progress toward the benchmark and the provision of required special education supports and services, as well as accommodations and interventions.

3. What does the IEP Team do if a student is currently held to modified promotion criteria but with the use of multiple measures to assess progress, and with the appropriate supports and services, the student can be held to standard promotion criteria?

If a student's IEP has identified the student as being held to modified promotion criteria, but this is no longer appropriate for the student, the IEP team will ensure that the student's promotion criteria is changed to standard promotion criteria at the next IEP meeting. When changing the student's promotion criteria to standard, it is always important to consider the accommodations, supports and services the student receives. It will also be important to consider the multiple measures that will be used to assess the progress of the student toward the promotion benchmarks for the grade. After changing a student's IEP, schools may check the [RPCR](#) function in ATS to ensure that the correct promotion standard is reflected. Check the [Promotion Implementation Guide](#) for specific dates of when the RPCR function is open. It is always important to determine if a student can be held to standard promotion criteria in order to ensure planning and preparation for high school. High school students are all held to standard promotion criteria.

Promotion Criteria Guidelines for Students with IEPs Grades 3–8

4. When can changes to promotion criteria be made?

Changes to promotion criteria can be made at an IEP meeting. A psychologist does not need to be present if the student is changing from modified promotion criteria to standard promotion criteria. Parents must be involved in the decision-making process and be informed of the different outcomes that may occur from promotion criteria decisions (i.e. preparation for high school, etc.). They must be informed when any changes to the IEP are made, including changes to promotion criteria. When considering promotion criteria it is always important to consider the instructional supports and services a student requires in order to access, participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

5. What does a high quality IEP include for a student who has been determined to need modified promotion criteria?

To improve outcomes for students with IEPs, schools must have high expectations for students with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Identifying student strengths and needs as well as the effect of the student’s disability on his/her ability to access and progress within NYSED standards-aligned curriculum with the provision of special education services and supports;
- Annual goals aligned to the skill areas of greatest need identified in the present levels of performance;
- Determining the specially designed instruction and supplementary aids and services that will create access to NYSED standards;
- Providing appropriate special education services and supports in the student’s Least Restrictive Environment; and,
- A statement of rationale for modified promotion criteria in the multiple criteria section of modified promotion criteria in the IEP.

6. Can a student have modified promotion criteria in only one subject area?

Yes. Modified promotion criteria can be set for ELA, for Math, or for both subjects. Depending on the individual student need, a student may be held to modified promotion criteria in one subject and standard promotion criteria in another. The student must meet his/her promotion standards in each subject area to be considered for promotion. The IEP must indicate the subject(s) for which the student is held to modified promotion criteria. Note: If a student is held to modified promotion criteria in one or more subject areas, the [RPCR](#) function in ATS will display that the student is held to modified promotion criteria (MOD). In this case, the school is responsible for reviewing whether the student met his/her individual promotion criteria in each subject area. Contact your Academic Policy & Systems lead with any questions about promotion functions in ATS or refer to the [ATS wiki](#)

7. How is promotion determined for students held to modified promotion criteria?

Students who are held to modified promotion criteria must meet their appropriately rigorous literacy and/or math annual goals. We no longer use a checklist of standards that leads to a percentage, but rather now measure a student’s progress toward meeting their literacy and/or math annual goals. Please see the [guidance on how to enter modified promotion in SESIS](#) for further information.

8. How are promotion criteria set for a student in second grade?

For students in kindergarten – grade 2, schools review each student’s performance over the course of the school year to determine if the student is making progress towards meeting the learning standards for their grade level in literacy and math. Schools must notify a student’s family in the spring if promotion is considered not to be in the child’s best interest. The school should actively involve the family in reaching a decision of whether to promote or retain the student. For students with an IEP, the decision shall include consideration of the student’s grade-level progress, mastery of IEP goals, and current supports and services. For ELLs, the decision to promote or retain shall include consideration of the student’s language development; however, limited English proficiency alone may not be the sole basis for retaining a student.

While modified promotion criteria is only an option for students in grades 3–8, IEP teams for students in grade 2 may start to consider what promotion criteria students will be held to for promotion from third to fourth grade the next school year. See [Chancellor’s Regulation A-501 and the Promotion Implementation Guide](#) for second grade promotion guidelines.

9. If a student has modified promotion criteria, is the student automatically promoted?

No. The school must determine if the student has met or made sufficient progress toward meeting his/her Annual Goals. Schools must complete the [Portfolio Cover Sheet](#) in June and provide the student work to support the promotion decision reflective of the student meeting or not meeting his/her annual goals. Students who are not promoted, are recommended for summer school. Decisions about summer school must follow the timeline in the [Promotion Implementation Guide](#).

10. Should promotion criteria be revised if a student is retained?

In the event that a student with an IEP is retained, the IEP team reviews the specially designed instruction, accommodations, supports and services provided to the student to determine if the student’s current instructional program is meeting his/her needs. If it is determined that the effect of the student’s disability impacts his/her potential for learning, or rate of learning such that the student is not likely to meet the school’s promotion benchmark, modified promotion criteria, as well as the need for additional supplementary aids and services, for the student to achieve at high levels and access grade level standards are considered. Updates to the IEP with respect to modified promotion criteria and decisions about summer school must follow the timeline in the [Promotion Implementation Guide](#). Other changes to the IEP must follow the protocols outlined in the [SOPM](#).

11. Should students with modified promotion criteria receive modified report card grades?

No. Modified promotion criteria do not influence a student’s grades. Report card grades for all students are based on progress toward and/or attainment of grade-level NYSED learning standards, regardless of a student’s disability or promotion criteria. Promotion decisions — including the identification of students to receive promotion-in-doubt letters — are based on multiple measures of student progress, such as grades, classroom assessments, State tests, projects, and other work chosen by the school. Grades, like test scores, are not the sole factor in making promotion decisions for any student. [Grading policies](#) must apply to all students in the school, including students with disabilities. Please refer grading policy questions to the Academic Policy and Systems Lead.

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Annual goals, plans for progress monitoring, and promotion criteria are documented in the IEP, while the report card is intended to document progress made in the general education curriculum. The IEP describes the specially designed instruction and accommodations for individual students that will be used to create access to grade level standards and enable progress toward annual goals.

12. What are the implications of this policy on the creation of annual goals?

Annual goals must always be developed based on the individual needs of a student and aligned to NYSED Learning Standards. Assessments are used to determine a student’s areas of need; these skills then become the basis for annual goals. Annual goals must always be appropriately rigorous for the student, requiring one year to achieve based on the individual rate of learning. Appropriately rigorous means that the goals are ambitious but achievable when provided with special education supports and services, specially designed instruction, accommodations and assistive technology (as applicable).

13. What does sufficient progress mean?

Schools are expected to answer the core question of whether each student is ultimately prepared for success in the next grade level. Consider if the student has acquired the skills and content knowledge to access the curriculum in the next grade, given their special education supports and services.

14. Where can I go for additional information or if I have questions?

Please see [Promotion Implementation Guide](#), [Promotion Policy for Students with Disabilities](#), and the Promotion [Portfolio Cover Sheet](#) for specific information and guidance.