



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Promotion Policy in New York City Public Schools for English Language Learners (ELLs) in Grades K—8

Students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) have their own promotion criteria depending on their grade and the number of years they have been enrolled in a U.S. school. In addition to the requirements listed below, ELLs must take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) every spring to determine their English proficiency level.

Kindergarten to 2nd Grade

In kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade, the principal will decide if an ELL should be promoted to the next grade. The principal should notify you and discuss your child's progress with both you and your child's teacher before making a decision. ***Your child should NOT be held back because of his/her limited English proficiency.***

3rd Grade to 7th Grade

If your child has attended a U.S. school for ***more than 2 years*** but ***less than 6 years*** **OR** if your child is a ***student with an interrupted formal education (SIFE)***, he/she must:

- Demonstrate sufficient English as a New Language (ENL) progress towards Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) standards based on student work, course grades, and tests.
- Demonstrate sufficient progress towards Common Core Math standards in native language or English using ENL methods.

If your child has attended a U.S. school for ***more than 6 years***, he/she will be evaluated using same standards as other students. Promotion will be determined through a review of the student's work over the course of the year, including:

- State test scores
- Course grades
- Report cards
- Samples of student writing
- Projects
- Assignments

If your child has attended a U.S. school for ***less than 2 years***, he/she will not be held to the above promotion criteria.

Your child should NOT be held back because of his/her limited English proficiency.

Is your child a SIFE?

SIFE stands for Students with Interrupted Formal Education and applies to students who live in a home in which a language other than English is spoken. A student qualifies as SIFE if he/she has enrolled in a U.S. school after 2nd grade, has had two years less schooling than peers, and functions at a minimum of 2 years below expected grade level in reading and/or math in the home language.

8th Grade

If your child has attended a U.S. school for **1-2 years** **OR** if your child qualifies as **SIFE**, he/she must:

- Demonstrate sufficient ENL progress towards Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) standards based on student work, course grades, and tests.
- Demonstrate sufficient progress towards Common Core Math standards in native language or English using ENL methods.

If your child has attended a U.S. school for **2-4 years**, he/she must:

- Demonstrate expected gains on the NYSESLAT, other tests given to ELL students, **or** demonstrate sufficient progress towards Common Core ELA standards.
- Demonstrate sufficient progress towards Common Core Math standards in native language or English using ENL methods.

If your child has attended a U.S. school for **more than 4 years**, he/she will be evaluated using the same standards as other students. Promotion will be determined through a review of the student's work over the course of the year, including:

- State test scores
- Course grades
- Report cards
- Samples of student writing
- Projects
- Assignments

If your child has attended a U.S. school for **less than 1 year**, he/she will not be held to promotion standards.

TIP:

Your child's school is not required to meet with you to discuss your child's promotion before a promotion decision is made. It is important for you to approach your child's teacher frequently to make sure your child is making progress throughout the year.

State Tests for Grades 3—8

After one year in a U.S. school, ELLs are required to take State exams along with all other students.

State exam scores are not the sole basis for making promotion decisions. An ELL *cannot* be held back simply because of a State exam test score.

ELLs are entitled to testing accommodations during State exams, including:

- Receiving more time to complete exams
- Taking tests in a separate location or small groups
- Using a bilingual dictionary

Grades 3—8 Math exams are available in Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. The 4th and 8th grade Science exams and the 4th and 8th grade Social Studies exams are available in Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. Students who speak other languages can have tests translated. On Math, Science, and Social Studies tests, students can write down answers to open-ended questions in their native language.

NOTE: These accommodations are not permitted during the NYSESLAT exam, which tests your child's English skills.

What if my child is not meeting the requirements for promotion?

Your child's teacher will notify you during the Fall Parent-Teacher Conference and you will have an opportunity to discuss how to help them; you can continue this discussion at the Spring Parent-Teacher Conference.

What is a "Promotion in Doubt" letter?

If your child is at risk of not being promoted, you will receive a written letter stating this on or before **February 15**. It is important that you speak to your child's teacher and principal to discuss what can be done to help your child.

After I receive a "Promotion in Doubt" letter, how will the principal decide if my child will be promoted?

For students in K—2, the principal will make promotion decisions after talking with the teacher and the parents. For students in grades 3—8, the teacher will submit a promotion portfolio containing student work and assessments to the principal. The principal will evaluate whether the student has met the minimum promotion benchmarks necessary for promotion to the next grade.

What if I don't get a "Promotion in Doubt" letter?

Even if your child's school does not officially notify you, they could still hold your child back—it would help to approach your child's teacher at least once before February and ask what they need to do to not be held back.

What happens if my child is not promoted at the end of the year?

You will receive a letter in June if your child has not been promoted. This letter often recommends that your child attend summer school. If you want to send your child to summer school, respond to your child's principal with a letter indicating your interest. If you do not receive a letter, however, your child can still be held back.

Will my child be promoted if he/she attends summer school?

Not necessarily. The principal will review promotion decisions in August. Summer school work and test scores will be evaluated alongside the promotion portfolio submitted by your child's teacher in June. If your child now meets the minimum promotion benchmarks, he/she will be promoted.

How can I appeal if my child is not promoted after summer school?

You may submit a written appeal to the principal by the end of August. The superintendent will review the principal's decision and make the final determination.

Still have more questions?

Please Call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline

Monday through Thursday

10am to 4pm

1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

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