



**DEER VALLEY**  
*Unified School District*

**K-6**  
**PROMOTION, RETENTION, ACCELERATION**  
**& GRADING HANDBOOK**  
**2019-2020**



**Superintendent**  
**Dr. Curtis Finch**

**Governing Board:** Jenny Frank Ann O'Brien Ann Elizabeth Ordway Julie Read Darcy Tweedy

**Mission Statement:**

***Our mission is to provide extraordinary educational opportunities to every learner.***

Deer Valley Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability in admission to its programs, services, or activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals, or in any aspect of their operations.

Deer Valley Unified School District no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, género, edad o discapacidad en la admisión a sus programas, servicios o actividades, en el acceso a ellos, en el tratamiento de las personas, o en cualquier aspecto de sus operaciones.

# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	Page 4
Promotion and Retention Arizona State Statutes	Page 5
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade State Testing Requirement	Page 5
DVUSD Governing Board Policy	Page 7
Guidelines	Page 7
Intervention in Education	Page 7
Standards and Definitions	Page 8
Placement of New Students & Entry of Home Schooled Students	Page 10
Home Schooled Students Wanting to Participate in DVUSD Extra-Curricular Activities	Page 10
Parent Retention/Promotion Information (Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook)	Page 11
English Learner Promotion and Retention	Page 11
Special Education Promotion and Retention	Page 12
<b>Promotion</b>	Page 13
K-6 Promotion Procedures	Page 14
K-6 Criteria	Page 14
Promotion Parent Appeal Process	Page 15
<b>Retention</b>	Page 17
Retention Procedures	Page 18
K-6 Criteria and Notification Timeline	Page 20
K-6 Retention Parent Appeal Process	Page 21
<b>Acceleration</b>	Page 22
Acceleration Information	Page 23
Whole Grade Acceleration (Grade Skipping)	Page 24
Early Entry to Kindergarten	Page 26
Early Entry to First Grade	Page 27
Single-Subject Acceleration (Content Replacement)	Page 28
<b>Grading and Reporting</b>	Page 30
Reporting Parent Communication, PowerSchool, Progress Report, Special Programs, Conferences and Canvas	Page 31
Traditional Grading vs. Standards-Based Grading	Page 31
Gradebook Guidelines	Page 33
Traditional Grading Guidelines	Page 34
Standards Based Grading Guidelines	Page 35
How PowerTeacher Gradebook Calculates Grades	Page 36
Report Card Standard Tagging Requirements	Page 36
Procedures for Incomplete Grades, Grades 1-6	Page 36
Performance Level Guidelines	Page 37
Grading in Special Programs	Page 38

# Table of Contents (cont.)

## **Grading and Reporting (cont.)**

Accommodations/Modifications/Acceleration	Page 42
Grading Procedures - Kindergarten	Page 45
Student Citizenship (Conduct) - Kindergarten	Page 46
Grading Procedures - Grades 1 & 2	Page 47
Student Citizenship (Conduct) - Grades 1 & 2	Page 48
Grading Procedures - Grades 3-6	Page 49
Student Citizenship (Conduct) - Grades 3-6	Page 51
Home Practice Policy and Philosophy	Page 52
Home Practice Guidelines and Procedures	Page 54
Make Up Opportunities	Page 55
Academic Recognition for Grades K-6 (Principal's List/ Honor Roll)	Page 56
Committee Members	Page 57
Notification Letters/Forms	Page 58
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian Forms and Letters</b>	Page 59-62

# Foreword

Deer Valley Unified School District (DVUSD) is dedicated to each student's continuous development. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information on student promotion, retention, and acceleration. This handbook also delineates grading and reporting guidelines for teachers and administrators. The guidelines outlined in this handbook adhere to the requirements of the Arizona Revised Statutes and DVUSD policies and regulations.

Grading is the process by which teachers assess student learning and progress towards mastering the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards and the Arizona K-12 State Standards. Reporting is the process by which teachers communicate information to parents/guardians about students' mastery of taught subject matter and skills.

This handbook is reviewed annually by a Handbook Review Work Team and adjustments are made as necessary.

**Note:** *This handbook is reviewed and revised each spring, typically during the time that the Arizona Legislature is in session. Therefore, if there are changes in statute that affect the information contained herein, we will update these changes as they occur in the electronic version of this handbook that can be found on our district web site, <https://www.dvUSD.org/handbooks>.*

# Arizona State Statutes

The statutory authority to retain or promote a student in an elementary grade or to pass or fail a student in high school is set forth in A.R.S. § 15-701.

## **A.R.S. § 15-342(11) Discretionary powers states:**

The governing board of a district may:

*Review the decision of a teacher to promote a pupil to a grade or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school.*

While the teacher has the primary responsibility to make these decisions, it is the Governing Board that has the authority to prescribe standards or criteria for promotion that may be in addition to those prescribed by the State Board of Education. (A.R.S. § 15-701.C and 701.01.C). However, once these criteria are set, a school district cannot delay graduation for a student who has achieved the necessary credits. (Ariz. Atty. Gen. Op. 189-095).

## **A.R.S. § 15-516 Teacher immunity states:**

A full-time teacher who is employed by a school district or a charter school is immune from personal liability for all acts done and actions taken in good faith in evaluating or grading any student.

## **A.R.S. § 15-521 Duties of teachers' states:**

Every teacher shall:

1. Make student learning the primary focus of the teacher's professional time.
2. Hold pupils to strict account for disorderly conduct.
3. Take and maintain daily classroom attendance.
4. Make the decision to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school. Such decisions may be overturned only as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11.
5. Comply with all rules and policies of the governing board that relate to the duties prescribed in this section.

## **A.R.S. § 15-701 Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit (2a) states:**

*A requirement that a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, or a successor test, that demonstrates that the pupil's reading falls far below the third grade level.*

A school district or governing board MAY choose to promote a pupil who earns an AIMS\* score that falls far below the third grade level for the following reasons:

1. A good cause exemption if the pupil is an English learner or a limited English proficient student as defined in section 15-751 and has had fewer than two years of English language instruction.
2. A child with a disability as defined in section 15-761 if the pupil's individualized education program team and the pupil's parent or guardian agrees that promotion is appropriate based on the pupil's individualized education program.

[A.R.S §15-701](#) requires that an Arizona student not be promoted from the third grade if the student scores far below the third grade level on the AzMERIT statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

1. Is an English Language Learner (ELL) who has received less than two years of English instruction.
2. Has a disability and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate or the student is in the process of being evaluated for an IEP.
3. Has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment (including dyslexia).
4. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of assessments approved by the State Board of Education.

**A.R.S. § 15-701 Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit states:**

E. A teacher shall determine whether to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school as provided in section 15-521, paragraph 4 on the basis of the prescribed criteria. The governing board, if it reviews the decision of a teacher to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11, shall base its decision on the prescribed criteria.

**A.R.S. § 15-821 Admission of children; required age states:**

A. Unless otherwise provided by article 1.1 of this chapter or by any other law, all schools shall admit children who are between the ages of six and twenty-one years, who reside in the school district and who meet the requirements for enrollment in one of the grades or programs offered in the school. A school may refuse to admit a child who has graduated from a high school with a recognized diploma.

C. If a kindergarten program is maintained, a child is eligible for admission to kindergarten if the child is five years of age. A child is deemed five years of age if the child reaches the age of five before September 1 of the current school year. A child is eligible for admission to first grade if the child is six years of age. A child is deemed six years of age if the child reaches the age of six before September 1 of the current school year. The governing board may admit children who have not reached the required age as prescribed by this subsection if it is determined to be in the best interest of the children. For children entering the first grade, such determination shall be based upon one or more consultations with the parent, parents, guardian or guardians, the children, the teacher and the school principal. Such children must reach the required age of five for kindergarten and six for first grade by January 1 of the current school year.

# DVUSD Governing Board Policy

The following are Deer Valley Unified School District Governing Board policies and regulations that are important for us to know with the use of this handbook.

<b>IKA</b>	GRADING / ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS
<b>IKAB</b>	REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS
<b>IKACA</b>	PARENT CONFERENCES
<b>IKB</b>	HOMEWORK
<b>IKD</b>	HONOR ROLLS
<b>IKE</b>	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
<b>IKE-RA</b>	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
<b>IKE-RB</b>	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS: Competency Requirements for Promotion of Students from Third Grade
<b>IKEA</b>	MAKE UP OPPORTUNITIES
<b>IKEA-R</b>	MAKE UP OPPORTUNITIES
<b>IKEB</b>	ACCELERATION

## Guidelines

Promotion, retention, acceleration, and grading guidelines are designed to establish a procedure for providing an appropriate academic intervention and/or enhancement program for each student in Deer Valley Unified School District. It is every teacher's professional responsibility to recognize and assist struggling students or challenge academically capable students at each grade level. This handbook provides an overview of professional responsibilities for classroom teachers, local school and district level administrators. In each case, an in-depth examination of student needs should be conducted by all professionals.

## Standards

Students must demonstrate accomplishment and proficiency of the academic standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies adopted by the State Board of Education.

In addition to these standards, test scores, grades, teacher recommendations, and other pertinent data will be used to determine promotion or retention.

If a parent or legal guardian disagrees with a teacher's promotion or retention decision as provided in A.R.S. §15-521.10, the parent or legal guardian may request in writing that the Governing Board review the teacher's decision.

## Intervention in Education

An instructional intervention is a specific program or set of steps to help a student improve in an area of need. Instructional interventions focus on subjects like reading or math. Interventions are designed so that you and the school can track your child's progress. In an effort to ensure success for all students, Tier II and Tier III Interventions have been structured at all grade levels. Middle school intervention classes are provided as exploratory classes for qualifying students. Parents and students will have timely

communication in the spring semester regarding a student's enrollment in academic interventions transitioning into middle school and high school.

## Definitions for Grades K-6

<b>504 Plan</b>	The <b>504</b> Plan is a plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives <b>accommodations</b> that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.
<b>Acceleration:</b>	The early promotion of individual students to the next grade or higher (based on their academic achievements or readiness for higher level work or advancing them in one or more content areas).
<b>Accommodations:</b>	Accommodations are supports provided to help a student access the general education curriculum and validly demonstrate learning. They assist students in learning the same material and content, allowing them to meet the same expectation as their peers.
<b>DIBELS:</b>	The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade.
<b>ELD</b>	English Language Development is the teaching of English language skills to students who are in the process of learning English. It is distinguished from other types of instruction, e.g., math, science, social studies, in that the content of ELD emphasizes the English language itself. ELD instruction focuses on phonology (pronunciation – the sound system of a language), morphology (the internal structure and forms of words), syntax (English word order rules), lexicon (vocabulary), and semantics (how to use English in different situations and contexts).
<b>EL</b>	Students whose first language is not English, and encompasses both students who are just beginning to learn English (often referred to in federal legislation as “limited English proficient” or “LEP”) and those who have already developed considerable proficiency is considered an English Learner “EL”.
<b>Exclusions and Exemptions From School Attendance Agreement</b>	This is an instructional agreement for students with chronic health conditions. The agreement provides an exemption from school attendance only not from required school assignments and assessments that may occur.
<b>Exclusions and Exemptions From School Attendance – Medical Certification</b>	This is a companion document that provides a licensed Physician's medical certification of students with chronic health conditions.
<b>Gifted Cluster</b>	Gifted students are grouped together in a classroom with teachers who are trained to adapt the curriculum and environment for gifted students. Available at all schools in grades K-2, many schools extend cluster grouping through higher grade levels with the support of a Gifted Specialist.

<b>Iowa Acceleration Scale:</b>	The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) is a tool for use by a team of school professionals when whole-grade acceleration (grade skipping) is being considered. The IAS was designed for use with students in grades K-8. The IAS provides a systematic and defensible way to generate recommendations and guidelines that will help make educated and appropriate placement decisions for students who demonstrate high ability and who have the capacity to process greater amounts of information and knowledge than they are able to acquire in their present learning environments.
<b>Light's Retention Scale:</b>	The Light's Retention Scale (LRS) is a powerful tool that assists school professionals when making sensitive and often difficult decisions about promoting or retaining a child. LRS provides opportunities for dialogue between parents and educators and assures all involved that the decision is based on thoughtful, professional findings. (Academic Therapy Publications)
<b>Modifications:</b>	Modifications are individualized changes made to the content and performance expectations for students with significant intellectual disabilities.

<b>MTSS:</b>	In Deer Valley, Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a systematic and comprehensive approach to student learning in which collaborative communities utilize a problem-solving and tiered framework to ensure high quality, differentiated, and responsive instruction, enrichment, and intervention (academic and behavioral) for all students. The goal of MTSS in DVUSD is for 100% of our students to achieve at high levels.
<b>Renaissance:</b>	All-day self-contained learning experience addressing the individual needs of highly gifted students in grades 1-8. Full application process.
<b>Retention:</b>	Not meeting the criteria for promotion and remaining at the same grade level.
<b>SAGE:</b>	Students Achieving through Gifted Education (Content Replacement). Identified students are pulled daily to the SAGE classroom in place of the general education classroom to receive their instruction in English Language Arts and/or Math from the school's Gifted Specialist. Usually serves grades 3-6. Qualification based on gifted identification score of 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile or higher or using the Gifted Matrix.
<b>SPARK:</b>	Supporting Potential and Achievement in Remarkable Kids (Enrichment Program). SPARK is an ongoing enrichment learning program that addresses the unique needs of gifted, high achieving, and high potential students at our participating schools. Students attend certain days during the week, depending on the schedule of the school, during RTI periods in grades K-6. Qualification based on gifted identification score of 90 <sup>th</sup> percentile or higher or using the Gifted Matrix.
<b>Walk-Up to Math:</b>	Qualifying students walk up (usually as a group or cluster) to the next grade level's gifted cluster math class. The school's Gifted Specialist works with the Gifted Cluster Teacher to help instruct students in the classroom and pull out small groups of students as needed. Students are pre-assessed for the content and are able to go to the grade level that is appropriate for their individual needs in grades 2-8. Qualification based on rubric.

## **Placement of Transfer Students New to the District or Entry of Home Schooled Students**

Home schooled students or students entering without a current grade report should be placed in the age appropriate grade level for the district's academic school year. Observation and evaluation over a period of three weeks will determine appropriate placement. Evaluation will include reading, writing, math and social consideration. After three weeks, the school will determine if the data supports maintaining age appropriate placement or if the data supports a change in grade level.

The principal will determine whether there should be any change in the grade-level placement of the student. In making such determination, the principal will refer to the teacher recommendations and consultation with the parents/legal guardians. (DVUSD Policy JG-R)

A student's class assignments are the principal's responsibility. The principal will consider the student's grade level assignment, the prerequisite completion, the student's achievement, and classroom limitations or class size guidelines. (DVUSD Policy JG-R)

Children may be admitted to first grade who are six years of age, or shall be deemed six years of age if they reach such age prior to September 1 of the current school year. Children entering first grade who are not six years old on or before August 31, but will be six years old by December 31 of the current school year will be tested through the Early Entry testing process. (A.R.S. § 15-821 Admission of children; required age)

## **Home Schooled Student Participation in DVUSD Extra-Curricular Activities**

Students who are being home schooled at the K-6 level may participate in special area and/or exploratory classes and/or after-school sports at their home DVUSD school. All registration paperwork is required, including immunization records, proof of residence, etc. If sports participation applies, athletic paperwork is required. If a home schooled student wants to participate in special area and/or exploratory classes at a DVUSD school that is not their home school, open enrollment must be completed and all open enrollment rules and procedures will be followed for placement in the school and class. A copy of the Affidavit of Intent for Homeschooling filed with Maricopa County is required.

Students attending a charter school may not participate in DVUSD exploratory classes or athletics. (A.R.S. § 15-802.01: Homeschool students' eligibility to participate)

Promotion and Retention Parent or Legal Guardian Information

# Promotion and Retention Parent or Legal Guardian Information

(From the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook)

The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision to promote or retain should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

## The Statutes

The statutory authority to retain or promote a student in an elementary grade or to pass or fail a student in high school is set forth in **A.R.S. 15-701, Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit.**

### **A.R. S. 15-701 states:**

E. A teacher shall determine whether to promote or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school as provided in section 15-521, paragraph 3 on the basis of the prescribed criteria. The governing board, if it reviews the decision of a teacher to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11, shall base its decision on the prescribed criteria.

### **Parental or Legal Guardian Rights A.R.S. 15-102 states:**

7. Procedures by which parents may learn about parental rights and responsibilities under the laws of this state, including the following:

(e) The promotion requirements prescribed in section 15-701.

### **A.R.S. 15-342 states:**

11. Notwithstanding Title 38, chapter 3, article 3.1, the governing board shall review the decision of a teacher to promote a pupil to a grade or retain a pupil in a grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school in executive session unless a parent or legal guardian of the pupil or the pupil, if emancipated, disagrees that the review should be conducted in executive session and then the review shall be conducted in an open meeting.

## K-6 English Learner Promotion and Retention

The decision to retain a student who qualifies for English language support may not be related to the student's acquisition of the English language.

## **K-6 Special Education Promotion and Retention**

Guidelines for students receiving special education services should be the same as those for general education students. The IEP team should not be used to retain a student who, by general education standards, would not otherwise be retained.

However, an exception to this guideline could be made if a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student with a disability has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP team and the pupil's parent or guardian could agree that promotion is appropriate based on the pupil's individualized education program (IEP). This decision would need to be made in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, prior to the end of the school year.

## **K-6 English Learner Promotion and Retention Appeal Process**

### **Process for Parents or Legal Guardians**

**If a parent or legal guardian choose to contest the teacher's decision to retain or promote a student:**

1. Within five days from the notification of intent to retain or promote, parent or legal guardian will complete a Retention Appeal form (page 63) or Promotion Appeal form (page 62), submit it to the school secretary and schedule a meeting with the principal.
2. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/legal guardian's completion and submission of an Appeal form.
3. The teacher must fill out a Teacher Promotion or Teacher Retention Justification Form and attach the required documentation.
4. The principal collects all forms, with the required documentation, and forwards the packet to the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for review.
5. If warranted, the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will then schedule a hearing conference with the Governing Board.

The Light's Retention Scale (LRS – reference p. 6 Definitions) is a powerful tool that assists school professionals when making sensitive and often difficult decisions about promoting or retaining a child. LRS provides opportunities for dialogue between parents and educators and assures all involved that the decision is based on thoughtful, professional findings. (Academic Therapy Publications)

# PROMOTION

According to A.R.S. § 15-521.10, each teacher shall make the decision for promotion or retention of students. All recommendations for promotion must be documented by the teacher. Recommendations that do not comply with the stated criteria must be substantiated by the teacher.

## K-6 Promotion Procedures

Student progression in grades K-6 is determined by a variety of indicators, as defined by state standards and district expectations, which are aligned with the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards (AZCCRS) and the Arizona K-12 State Standards. These expectations include specific levels of student performance on locally determined assessments, including universal screenings and ongoing progress monitoring, and results of statewide assessments.

Promotion from one level to the next is based upon each student's progress toward the accomplishment of high standards that are both challenging and achievable. The evaluation of each student's progress will be based upon the student's classroom work, observations, tests, district and state assessments, and other relevant information.

Arizona Statute requires that *a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, or a successor test, that demonstrates that the pupil's reading falls far below the third grade level.*

A school district or governing board MAY choose to promote a pupil who earns an AIMS\* score that falls far below the third grade level for the following reasons:

3. A good cause exemption if the pupil is an English learner or a limited English proficient student as defined in section 15-751 and has had fewer than two years of English language instruction.
4. A child with a disability as defined in section 15-761 if the pupil's individualized education program team and the pupil's parent or guardian agrees that promotion is appropriate based on the pupil's individualized education program.

[A.R.S §15-701](#) requires that an Arizona student not be promoted from the third grade if the student scores far below the third grade level on the AzMERIT statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

5. Is an English Language Learner (ELL) who has received less than two years of English instruction.
6. Has a disability and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate or the student is in the process of being evaluated for an IEP.
7. Has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment (including dyslexia).
8. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of assessments approved by the State Board of Education.

### Promotion Criteria for Grades K-6 include:

At the K-6 level, it is the responsibility of the teacher to notify parents, via the fourth quarter report card, of the intent to promote to the next grade.

- A. Achievement: Students must demonstrate accomplishment of the standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies as adopted by the State Board of Education. In grades K-6, the student will be promoted when the student receives a teacher's recommendation for promotion.
- B. Attendance: The minimum attendance standard for the Deer Valley Unified School District is 90% of the days of the school year per A.R.S. §15-802 and A.R.S. § 15-803.

Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. Students who are absent 10% of the school year, or 18 days, may need to be retained.

- If a teacher notices a pattern of absences and/or tardies that is affecting student performance, the teacher may contact the parents/legal guardians. Student absences for each grading period are to be recorded on the report card. If the absences are a reason for low grades, the teacher may wish to write a comment on the report card. Attendance issues may not be the sole criterion for retention.
- According to Arizona State Law, A.R.S.§15-802, students who are identified as having chronic health problems must have the opportunity to keep up with class work through homework assignments.

Social & Emotional Component:

The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. Schools will use the *Light's Retention Scale* (see page 9) for student data.

## K-6 Promotion Appeal Process

**Parent/legal guardian-**

**Within five days from the notification of intent to promote:**

1. Complete a Promotion Appeal Form and submit it to the school principal or secretary.
2. Notify the school principal to schedule a meeting.

NOTE: The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/legal guardian's completion and submission of a Promotion Appeal Form.

**Teacher –**

Fill out a **Teacher Promotion Justification Form** and attach the following required documentation:

1. Promotion Appeal Form from parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
2. Copies of report cards
3. Copy of the student's attendance record
4. Test results from district assessments (DIBELS Next, reading or math assessments, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), teacher-made tests, etc.) and state mandated assessments
5. Examples of the student's work and examples of an average student's work (be sure to remove the average student's name from the papers)
6. Copy of the student's Intervention Plan or documentation collected by the campus MultiTiered System of Support (MTSS) team

7. Records of communication with the student's parents/legal guardians (telephone logs and copies of written/electronic communication)
8. Verification of conferences with parents/legal guardians (signed forms with a list of items discussed)
9. *Light's Retention Scale* Rating (see page 9)

**Principal –**

1. Meet with parents.
2. Sign the Teacher Justification Form.
3. Collect all forms, with the required documentation, and forward the packet to the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for review and decision.

NOTE: If warranted, the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will then schedule a hearing conference with the Governing Board.

# **RETENTION and REASSIGNMENT**

According to A.R.S. § 15-521.10, each teacher shall make the decision for promotion or retention of students. All recommendations for promotion must be documented by the teacher. Recommendations that do not comply with the stated criteria must be substantiated by the teacher.

# Retention Procedures

When considering retention, it is Deer Valley Unified School District's belief that the school staff must make a concerted, proactive effort to provide the learning opportunities and support systems that meet students' needs for success. Conducting a campus Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team meeting to determine the appropriate academic and behavioral interventions for potential retainees is necessary. It is important for teachers to document instructional strategies used as interventions for underachieving students.

*Students who were retained or had delayed kindergarten entry are more likely to drop out of school compared to students who were never retained, even when controlling for achievement levels. The probability of dropping out increases with multiple retentions. Even for single retentions, the most consistent finding from decades of research is the high correlation between retention and dropping out. A recent systematic review of research exploring dropping out of high school indicates that grade retention is one of the most powerful predictors of high school dropout.*

from <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://www.uwec.edu/HDC/upload/Research-Findings-on-Retention-from-the-National-Association-of-School-Psychologists.doc>

Promoting students annually is desirable. However, it is recognized that under certain circumstances retention must be considered for some students. Retaining elementary school students shall conform to the following:

*Every effort shall be made to identify potential retainees as early as possible during the school year and to work with the students' parents/legal guardians to improve academic performance. Attendance regulations set forth by Arizona Department Education ARS 15-803 shall be enforced.*

**Promotion of students in grade 3 shall follow requirements set forth in A. R. S. 15-701, Common school; promotions; requirements; certificate; supervision of eighth grades by superintendent of high school district; high school admissions; academic credit:**

*Effective the 2013-2014 school year, no third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student obtains a score on the third grade state reading test that indicates he or she is reading far below third grade.*

[A.R.S §15-701](#) requires that an Arizona student not be promoted from the third grade if the student scores far below the third grade level on the AzMERIT statewide assessment. A third grader who does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills may be promoted to fourth grade if the student:

9. Is an English Language Learner (ELL) who has received less than two years of English instruction.
10. Has a disability and the IEP team agrees promotion is appropriate or the student is in the process of being evaluated for an IEP.
11. Has been diagnosed with a significant reading impairment (including dyslexia).
12. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills or adequate progress toward sufficient reading skills through a collection of assessments approved by the State Board of Education.

At the K-6 level, it is the teacher or counselor's responsibility to notify the parents/legal guardians of intent to retain. The staff completing the notification must provide a copy to the principal. The teacher makes the final decision to retain with the use of the *Light's Retention Scale* (see page 9). Consultation with the principal and other staff members and involvement of parents/legal guardians in all steps of the retention process is vital. **No decision for retention shall be made without parent/legal guardian involvement.**

If parents/legal guardians feel retention is not in the best interest of the child they should:

1. Meet with the child's teacher to share concerns.
2. Complete a Retention Appeal Form and submit it to the child's teacher.
3. Schedule a meeting with the school principal to review school and home documentation and the retention process.
4. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/legal guardian's completion and submission of a Retention Appeal Form.

### **K-8 English Learner Retention\***

#### English Language Learners Retention

A team consisting of the EL teacher and/or EL CIAS and the classroom/core teacher will determine retention of an English Learner.

The decision to retain a student in DVUSD who qualifies for English Language Development can be made *if* the student has received English Language Development for a minimum of three years *or* if the reason to retain is not related to the student's acquisition of the English language.

#### **A. In order to retain an English Learner, teachers must:**

- Demonstrate a student's inability to meet grade level curriculum with accommodated classwork and document those accommodations.
- Make recommendations for improved student learning on Individual Language Learner Plan (ILLP) Attachment B and implement recommendations
- Implement a Written Individual Compensatory Plan, written in collaboration with the parent, classroom teacher, and EL teacher/EL CIAS, and must be in place and on record in the student's green language folder for at least one grading period before retention is discussed.
- Show that the student has not made appropriate gains on district or state assessments with appropriate accommodations.

B. The classroom/core teacher does not have the sole right or responsibility to promote or retain EL students.

C. Teachers must follow the process of retention as determined by DVUSD.

## **Retention Criteria for Grades K-6 include:**

- A. Achievement: Students must demonstrate accomplishment of the standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies as adopted by the State Board of Education.
- Students who are identified intensive on DIBELS and have reading diagnostic screener results indicating discrepancy of one grade level or more should receive notification at the end of the first quarter that they may be good candidates for retention. Possible retention letters should be sent at the end of second quarter if updated winter benchmark DIBELS and screener scores show the same gaps. For grades 4-6, the RI, District Assessments, and weekly assessments may be used as indicators for possible retention. Every effort should be made through the MTSS process to provide intervention to close the gap.
- B. Attendance: The minimum attendance standard for the Deer Valley Unified School District is 90% of the days of the school year per A.R.S. §15-802 and A.R.S. § 15-803. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis. Students who are absent 10% of the school year, or 18 days, may need to be retained.
- If a teacher notices a pattern of absences and/or tardies that is affecting student performance, the teacher may contact the parents/legal guardians. Student absences for each grading period are to be recorded on the report card. If the absences are a reason for low grades, the teacher may wish to write a comment on the report card. Attendance issues may not be the sole criterion for retention.
  - According to Arizona State Law, A.R.S. §15-802, students who are identified as having chronic health problems must have the opportunity to keep up with class work through homework assignments.

### Social & Emotional Component:

The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. Schools will use the *Light's Retention Scale* (see page 9) for student data.

### **K-6 Retention Notification Timeline: Following the end of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter:**

- Parents/legal guardians are notified that their child is experiencing academic difficulty during their first conference time
- Teacher will notify and conference with administration regarding concerns
- A MTSS Team meeting is scheduled to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress ▪ Information in PowerSchool log entries entered by principal/secretary

### **Following the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter:**

- Parents/legal guardians are notified of possible retention
- Use K-6 Notification of Possible Retention letter (Principal must sign letter)
- Update information in PowerSchool

**Six weeks into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, upon documentation of teachers' final grades:**

- Parents/legal guardians are notified of intent to retain
- Use K-6 Notification of Retention letter/Appeal letter (Principal must sign letter)
- Update information in PowerSchool

**Within five days of the date of notification of retention,** parents/legal guardians may appeal the decision to retain by completing the Grade K-6 Retention/Promotion Appeal Form. A meeting is held with parent/legal guardian, teachers, and Principal.

## **K-6 Retention Appeal Process**

### **Parent/legal guardian-**

**Within five days from the notification of intent to retain:**

1. Complete a Retention Appeal Form and submit it to the school principal or secretary.
2. Notify the school principal to schedule a meeting.

NOTE: The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/legal guardian's completion and submission of a Retention Appeal Form.

### **Teacher –**

Fill out a **Teacher Retention Justification Form** and attach the following required documentation:

1. Retention Appeal Form from parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
2. Copies of report cards
3. Copy of the student's attendance record
4. Test results from district assessments (DIBELS Next, reading or math assessments, Reading Inventory (RI), teacher-made tests, etc.) and state mandated assessments
5. Examples of the retained student's work and examples of an average student's work (remove the average student's name from the papers)
6. Conduct a MTSS Team meeting to review pertinent data, determine targeted intervention strategies, and make plans for monitoring and reviewing student progress
7. Records of communication with the student's parents/legal guardians (telephone logs and copies of written/electronic communication)
8. Verification of conferences with parents/legal guardians (signed forms with a list of items discussed)
9. *Light's Retention Scale* (see page 9) Rating

### **Principal –**

1. Meet with parents.
2. Sign the Teacher Justification Form.
3. Collect all forms, with the required documentation, and forward the packet to the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for review and decision.

NOTE: If warranted, the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will then schedule a hearing conference with the Governing Board.

# ACCELERATION

In accordance with DVUSD Governing Board policy IKEB the final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Superintendent.

# Acceleration Information

## **DVUSD Board Policy I.7300 IKEB states:**

When circumstances indicate that acceleration in grade placement is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents/legal guardians and all school personnel involved is imperative. Each student's placement will be considered individually and decisions will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to the student's growth and development. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

The final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Superintendent. Parental/legal guardian involvement in all steps of the process is vital. Parental consent to the acceleration of a student should be in writing.

If parents do not approve of a decision regarding the acceleration of the student, they may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. Further appeal, if necessary, may be made to the Board.

## **What is Acceleration?**

Acceleration is one of the most effective ways to meet high achieving and/or gifted students' educational needs. While DVUSD wants acceleration opportunities to be accessible to students whom it will benefit, we also acknowledge that decisions to accelerate must be well-reasoned and evidence based. The decision to accelerate changes the path of a child's education and should be made carefully.

**Grade Based Acceleration** (see Whole Grade Acceleration – Grade skipping below) shortens the number of years a student spends in K-12 schooling. Students are placed by factors other than age and are given opportunities to master content faster. This also includes early entrance.

Forms of grade-based acceleration include:

- Early admission to Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- Whole-grade skipping
- Early entrance into middle or high school

**Content Based Acceleration** (see Single-subject Acceleration on next page) provides students with content, skills, or understanding that is beyond their grade level or age. Students can work on the

advanced content either within their current grade level, in a content replacement pull-out class for gifted identified students known as SAGE in most schools, or in a classroom above their age grade level. Opportunities for content-based acceleration include:

- Single-subject acceleration
- Curriculum compacting \*
- Deer Valley Online Learning Program (DVOLP) classes

**\*Curriculum compacting** -- Standard curriculum is compressed into a shorter period of time, allowing the gifted student to study related material while classmates master standard content.

# Acceleration Procedures

## **Whole Grade Acceleration (Grade Skipping)**

When a student displays significant academic, emotional, and social maturity, the child's age-grade might not be the optimal placement. Parents, school staff, and the child can initiate consideration for grade skipping.

The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) will be used by all schools when considering grade skipping in grades K-8. It is a tool commonly used to guide decisions about whole-grade acceleration. The IAS provides a systematic, objective process by using data to inform the decision. It uses factors such as ability, motivation, attitude, and peer relationships in addition to ability, aptitude, and achievement. The result is a prediction of success with grade skipping, and a recommendation for or against whole-grade acceleration. Early Entry testing for Kindergarten and First Grade utilizes alternate testing tools to determine eligibility. Early entry testing is described in detail on page 22.

If parents/legal guardians feel whole-grade acceleration is in the best interest of the child they should complete a Request for Whole Grade Acceleration form and submit it to the principal. The principal will contact the Gifted Services Coordinator to start the acceleration review process. The Gifted Services Coordinator will provide the IAS materials and will guide the principal and school team through the process.

### **Timeline for Requesting Whole Grade Acceleration:**

Parents and schools requesting whole grade acceleration must do so before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter to be considered for skipping a whole grade level in the next school year. Once a parent/legal guardian request form has been received by the school principal (by a parent/guardian or school team), the principal will set up meeting with the parents/guardians and the student's teacher(s) to discuss the request. If the decision is to proceed with the acceleration process, the school will have 30 school days (unless an extension is required) to go through the review process and submit the team's decision (to accelerate or not accelerate the student) to the Gifted Services Coordinator. Principals may not be able to consider summer requests until school staff returns from summer break.

If it is determined that the acceleration process is necessary, the principal will:

1. Request the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) and Summary and Planning Record from the Gifted Services Coordinator.
2. Form an acceleration team that includes the following people:
  - a. Principal
  - b. Current teacher
  - c. Receiving teacher
  - d. Parents or legal guardians
  - e. Counselor and/or school psychologist
  - f. Any specialists who work with the child (gifted, EL, special education, etc.), if applicable
3. Gather available assessment data including: Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement (required for the IAS completion). Options for each area include but are not limited to:

- **Ability-** Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities (WJ-Cog); these assessments may be administered by a gifted teacher or school psychologist. Parents may provide a report completed by a private psychologist if it meets the State of Arizona’s criteria for gifted identification
  - **Aptitude-** DVUSD benchmark exams given above grade level (at the level being considered for placement)
  - **Achievement-** State standardized assessments, Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ-ACH); these tests may be administered by a school psychologist or qualified teacher
4. Schedule testing for any areas (ability, aptitude, and achievement) where scores are not already available. School psychologists, gifted specialists/teachers, and other qualified staff may administer the assessments.
  5. Meet with the acceleration team to complete and discuss the IAS.
    - The team will review the required data to complete the IAS including ability, aptitude, and achievement scores. Using the IAS, the team will make a recommendation for or against whole grade acceleration and the principal will contact the Gifted Services Coordinator.
    - The team will use the IAS Summary and Planning Record to outline subsequent steps to ensure success. This process is detailed below.
    - Should the team not find 30 days enough time to acquire the data to make an informed decision (i.e. the student is showing potential, but it is too early in the school year or a student is new to the school), the team will meet with the parents/guardians and recommend pausing the process and restarting after the grading period has ended and more data can be collected.
    - If the team recommends whole grade acceleration, the principal will forward the IAS Planning Record to the Gifted Services Coordinator. The Coordinator will then meet with the Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment to review the documentation. The Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will forward the recommendation to the Superintendent, who will make the final recommendation for or against acceleration. Further appeal, if necessary, may be made to the DVUSD school Board.
    - If the recommendation is to accelerate, the goal is to make placement changes at the end of the current grading period, and allow the student to begin the next level in the new grading period.
    - If the decision is made not to skip a whole grade, the team should consider single subject acceleration. See the Single Subject Acceleration (Content Replacement) section below.

**Planning and Monitoring for Success:**

After a decision to whole grade accelerate, the team will complete the IAS Summary and Planning Report. This document summarizes all of the important information from the IAS and outlines:

- a step-by-step plan of the program change
- a transition plan
- a monitoring plan

Each member of the acceleration team should receive a copy of the plan. One must also be placed in the student's cumulative file, and one must be sent to Gifted Services Coordinator.

A follow-up meeting with the acceleration team should take place within eight weeks of the grade change. At this time, the team may establish a need for continued monitoring or other interventions to ensure success. A whole grade accelerated student may need a semester or longer to fully adjust to the new placement. During this time, staff should closely monitor the student for gaps in academic understanding or social difficulties. Should problems arise, factors other than the placement change may be contributing to the problem. Be sure to examine all issues and possible related factors before making further decisions.

***Whole Grade Acceleration When Moving to Another Building (K-6 to MS):*** For students at a K-6 school accelerating into middle school, parents and school will follow the identified acceleration process found on the preceding pages. However, the team should include all current core content teachers and a counselor (if appropriate) and administrator from both schools. The team should identify a contact person at the receiving school who will monitor the student's transition for the first semester and will coordinate interventions, if necessary.

### **Early Entry to Kindergarten**

Children who are 5 years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> are eligible to enroll in kindergarten. However, children who turn 5 between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> may be assessed to determine readiness for early entrance into kindergarten.

The intent of early entrance is to identify highly capable children who miss the regular September 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff for kindergarten entrance. Early entry is specifically geared for children whose curriculum achievement level far exceeds the norm. In order to be considered for the early entrance exception, the

child must exhibit advanced skills in language arts, mathematics, and in social, emotional and motor development as measured by tests administered by Deer Valley Unified School District **by July 31<sup>st</sup>** of the upcoming school year.

No age exceptions will be granted after the start of the first day of the school year unless unique circumstances exist with children transferring from another school, state or country. In these unique circumstances, all rules and procedures described above will be followed. No screenings from other schools will be accepted.

### ***Thirty Day Classroom Observation Period***

The kindergarten teacher will observe the early enrolled kindergarten student's work habits and maturity in the classroom setting during the first thirty (30) calendar days enrolled. The classroom teacher will complete the Early Entry Readiness Checklist after the 30 day observation period and the appropriateness of placement will be discussed with site administration. The administrator and the teacher will meet with the parent to discuss the appropriateness of the placement at the end of the 30 days if it is determined that the child is struggling academically, socially, or behaviorally. The principal will make a determination about the continuation of placement in early entry kindergarten after reviewing all data. The administrator's decision is final.

For additional information about testing, please go to: <http://www.dvusd.org/Page/30453>.

## **Early Entry to First Grade**

Children who are 6 years old on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> are eligible to enroll in first grade. However, children who turn 6 between September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> may be assessed to determine readiness for early entrance into first grade.

The intent of early entrance is to identify highly capable children who miss the regular September 1<sup>st</sup> cutoff for first grade entrance. Early entry is specifically geared for children whose curriculum achievement level far exceeds the norm. In order to be considered for the early entrance exception, the child must exhibit advanced skills in language arts, mathematics, and in social, emotional and motor development as measured by tests administered by Deer Valley Unified School District.

No age exceptions will be granted after the start of the first day of the school year unless unique circumstances exist with children transferring from another school, state or country. In these unique circumstances, all rules and procedures described above will be followed. No screenings from other schools will be accepted.

### ***Thirty Day Classroom Observation Period***

If a student passes the first grade readiness test, the first grade teacher will observe the early enrolled student's work habits and maturity in the classroom setting during the first thirty (30) days enrolled. Appropriateness of placement will be communicated with parents and site administration. The principal and the teacher will meet with the parent at the end of the 30 days if it is determined that the child is struggling academically, socially, or behaviorally. The principal will make a determination about the continuation of placement in early entry first grade after reviewing all data. The administrator's decision is final.

For additional information about testing please go to: <http://www.dvUSD.org/Page/30454>.

## **Special Circumstances:**

### **Mandarin Immersion Acceleration**

Students are encouraged to enroll in the Mandarin Immersion program in kindergarten and first grade. If there is a request for a student to enroll in the program after first grade, parents can make a request to the principal for enrollment.

The principal will form a team that includes the following people:

- Principal
- Current content area teacher
- Receiving content area teacher
- Parents or guardians
- Any specialists who work with the child (gifted, EL, special education, etc.)

The team will look at pertinent data, including but not limited to the state achievement test, grade level content, DVUSD Benchmark exams, and grades from the current class. The team will consider any gaps that may exist or develop because of skipped language content and create a plan to fill them. Additionally, the team will develop a transition plan to support the student with social and emotional factors and to monitor success throughout the remainder of the school year. It is recommended that the student demonstrate a strong desire to be in the program and have a willingness to study at home.

If a team decides that enrollment in the Mandarin Immersion program, after first grade, will be suitable for the student, they will proceed with placement and monitor progress as planned. The final decision to enroll a student rests with the school principal.

### **Renaissance Program**

The Renaissance Highly Gifted Program is a combination of enrichment and acceleration provided to meet the unique needs of highly gifted students. Students are typically learning at levels one to two grades above their current grade level. Because of this, **whole grade level acceleration is not available either into or within the Renaissance program.**

### **Single Subject Acceleration (Content Replacement)**

Some students are ready to move through single subject areas (usually math or reading) at a faster pace than their grade level peers. Other students have had earlier exposure to content and, if they have reached mastery of grade level content, need to accelerate in order to learn new material. If a child has mastery of the grade level material in a subject area, it may be appropriate to allow them to go to a higher grade level for that subject area. This is considered content replacement, and the student will be graded on the expectations of the accelerated grade level for that subject. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors.

In DVUSD, students who are identified as gifted or above grade level typically have the opportunity to accelerate in math and/or reading. Accelerated programs for gifted identified students include SAGE (content replacement) and Walk Up to Math with a traditional or online option. If a student is not identified gifted and parents/legal guardians want to request single subject acceleration they should complete a Request for Single Subject Acceleration Form and submit it to the principal.

The principal will form a team that includes the following people:

- Principal
- Current content area teacher
- Receiving content area teacher
- Parents or guardians
- Any specialists who work with the child (gifted, EL, special education, etc.)

The team will look at pertinent data, including but not limited to the state achievement test, grade level content, DVUSD Benchmark exams, and grades from the current class. They should consider any gaps that may exist or develop because of skipped content and develop a plan to fill them. Additionally, the team should develop a transitional plan to support the child with social and emotional factors and to monitor success throughout the remainder of the school year.

If a team decides that content area acceleration is in the child's best interest, they will proceed with placement and monitor progress as planned. **The final decision to accelerate a student in a single subject grade level rests with the school principal.**

### **Online Learning Opportunities:**

**Online Classes- [dvusd.org/onlinelearning](https://dvusd.org/onlinelearning)**

The school administrator/counselor/designee contacts the Deer Valley Online Learning Program to begin the registration process for online classes. ***Access to technology and internet is a requirement to be in an online class.*** Although online learning provides flexibility, there are weekly due dates that must be met. The DV Online Program provides on-going support as needed to ensure success for the online teacher and the online students and families.

### **Online Middle School Courses**

When a student in a K-6 school takes online 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math, the DV Online Learning Program works with a school team to set up the PowerSchool sections and enroll the student. Students complete an orientation and the course within the regular 18-week semester timeline (there is a three-day delay at the beginning of each semester for set up). There is no charge for accelerated online Math at the middle school.

# GRADING & REPORTING

**A.R.S. § 15-516 states:**

A full-time teacher who is employed by a school district or a charter school is immune from personal liability for all acts done and actions taken in good faith in evaluating or grading any student.

**A.R.S. § 15-521 states:**

Every teacher shall:

1. Make student learning the primary focus of the teacher's professional time.
2. Hold pupils to strict account for disorderly conduct.
3. Take and maintain daily classroom attendance.
4. Make the decision to promote or retain a pupil in grade in a common school or to pass or fail a pupil in a course in high school.  
Such decisions may be overturned only as provided in section 15-342, paragraph 11.
5. Comply with all rules and policies of the governing board that relate to the duties prescribed in this section.

# Grading & Reporting

## **DVUSD Beliefs about Grading and Reporting**

All students must graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary success in college, careers and citizenship. Learning standards define what students must know and do to be college and career ready. The purpose of grading and reporting is to communicate students' academic progress toward meeting learning standards.

Effective communication between school and home is a contributing factor to academic success. A positive, productive teacher-parent/guardian relationship contributes to cooperative efforts toward a student's academic achievement. The following means of communication are used to keep parents informed of their children's progress.

## **Parent Communication**

Deer Valley Unified School District strongly values a parent/guardian's role in a child's education. It is through communication that teachers can help parents stay involved. In addition, ongoing communication helps parents stay informed about their child's academic progress. Parent contact or attempt to contact parents by phone, conference, or e-mail should be kept on file by the teacher. Records should include the date, student name, parent name, phone number, and notes concerning the contents and results of the conversation. For more information, contact your campus administrator.

## **PowerSchool**

Deer Valley Unified School District provides parents with a means of staying up-to-date with their child's progress. PowerSchool is a secure website used by classroom teachers to input and maintain student grades electronically. All parents and students have the opportunity to use PowerSchool to access attendance, activities, assignments, and grades (both current and historical) throughout the school year.

## **Progress Reports**

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. It is part of the district standard that parents/legal guardians are provided a progress report each quarter. In an effort to "go green", all progress reports will be available digitally unless specifically requested in hard copy from the teacher. Parents/legal guardians will receive a reminder via email, newsletter, or School Messenger to check grades on PowerSchool no later than halfway through the grading period.

All students participating in District sanctioned athletic events must maintain a passing grade in all classes. Teachers' academic records will be surveyed each week and a failing student will receive notification of "pending ineligibility". A student failing two consecutive weeks will be ineligible to participate, unless a subsequent check after one week indicates a passing grade.

In the 2018-2019 school year, 6th grade English Language Arts (ELA) is one grade on the report card which includes reading, writing, speaking and listening and taught and an ELA block. This change has been made to integrate quality reading and writing instruction and promote the spiraling of the AZ ELA standards. This will be a change for your parent community. This important change will be necessary to highlight with your students and parents. The benefit of this change will be that students will have a strong foundational understanding of how all of our ELA standards play an integral role in quality communication.

## **Special Program Reporting**

Grade reporting for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, or English Learner (EL) Accommodations must be issued at the same frequency as general education students.

Also, IEP goal progress updates would must be sent home on an at least a quarterly basis in alignment with grade reporting.

## **Conferences**

Conferences between parents and teachers are encouraged. This one-on-one interaction promotes involvement of both the home and the school, fosters mutual understanding of the student's progress, clarifies the student's strengths and needs, and allows for the exchange of information and ideas needed to strengthen and reinforce student performance. An alternative that many schools use is student-led conferences that engage students in their own learning and allows them to be an active part of the conference between a teacher and parent. While both formats take some time and effort, research is clear on the importance of parental involvement to student success. **Four early release days have been built into the DVUSD calendar to provide teachers with an opportunity to meet with parents.**

## **Canvas/Google Classroom**

Deer Valley USD uses Canvas to support the district's technology initiative. Designed specifically for K-12 teachers and students, Canvas is an easy-to-use, cloud-based learning management system (LMS) that connects all the digital tools and resources teachers use into one simple place. It integrates seamlessly with hundreds of apps, empowering teachers and students with countless tools to make teaching and learning easier and more engaging. Canvas provides a secure way for teachers to deliver instruction and also provides a user friendly way to virtually interact with students, provide performance feedback, and record and update grades.

The Canvas grade book is connected to our student information system, PowerSchool. Parents can create a Canvas parent account to track progress, view grades and sign up to receive teacher announcements and notifications. To sign up for the parent "observer" account go to [dvusd.instructure.com](http://dvusd.instructure.com). On the main login page, find "create a parent account" and authenticate using your student's username and password which is their main school computer login.

Teachers of 1st-5th graders may choose to use Google Classroom instead of Canvas. Google Classroom allows teachers to create and organize assignments, provide feedback to students, and communicate with their classes. Google Classroom helps students organize their work, complete and turn in assignments, and communicate directly with their teachers and peers.

# **Traditional vs. Standards-Based Grading**

## **General Overview**

**Grades convey how students are performing on DVUSD's curriculum. We use grades to communicate with parents, students, and other academic institutions about how a student is progressing toward the mastery of the standards in a given content area.**

**The visual below, comparing traditional grading practices with standards-based grading practices, is for informational purposes only. Specific grading guidelines can be found on the next page.**

Traditional Grading	Standards-Based Grading
Based on assessment methods (quizzes, tests, homework, projects, etc.). One grade/entry is given per assessment.	Based on learning goals and performance standards. One grade/entry is given per learning goal.
Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be dependent on individual teachers.	Standards are criterion or proficiency-based. Criteria and targets are made available to students ahead of time.  Measures achievement only OR separates achievement from effort/behavior. No penalties or extra credit given.
All assignments and assessments can be included in the gradebook and the grade is averaged. Gradebook is organized by sources of information or grading tasks: quizzes, tests, homework, etc.	Selected assessments (tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) are used for grading purposes. Gradebook is organized by learning topics which are based on grade level learner expectations.
Homework assignments are averaged into the calculation of the report card grade.	Responses to student homework are focused on feedback, not grades. Homework is practice, not a demonstration of proficiency.
Include every score, regardless of when it was collected. Assessments record the average - not the best - work.	Emphasize the most recent evidence of learning when grading.

Adapted from O'Connor K (2002). *How to Grade for Learning: Linking grades to standards (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

## Grading

Grading is the method of evaluating the performance of independently completed student work. Evaluation is the attachment of grades to independently completed student work that is representative of academic performance. Grades are assigned once the instructional material (reflective of grade level instructional objectives) has been taught and sufficiently practiced. Criteria used for grading are clearly articulated to students. The grading system recognizes progress toward achievement of established standards, even if additional instruction is required to demonstrate mastery of the standards. Note that student learning is compared to standards, not to the learning of other students.

Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate evidence (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, assessments, etc.).

### **Gradebook Guidelines**

- Kindergarten teachers will keep records of on-going formative assessments to document student progress.
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are to maintain final grades for the school year and are to be maintained in the student's cumulative permanent record.
- Teacher grade books are auditable documents and are maintained digitally by network services. Every effort should be made to record a minimum of one grade per week for each content area. Gradebooks are to be updated on a weekly basis (e.g. weekly assessments or project name and due date for multi-week summation projects).
- At the end of the school year, Principals may still require their teachers to print grade books to turn in, however this is a campus decision.
- Teachers should take no more than five (5) school days (with exceptions only for major projects and essays) from the assignment due date to enter its grade.

**Many of our classrooms utilize a traditional grading system while others may utilize a standards-based grading system or a hybrid between traditional and standards-based. (See your school's specific grading procedures regarding retakes and redo's of assignments).**

### **Traditional Grading Guidelines**

The following list contains research-proven procedures that help students obtain mastery in their learning and as such are grading guidelines for the systematic collection, analysis, and use of data about student learning.

- Kindergarten teachers will keep records of ongoing formative assessments to document student progress.
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are to maintain final grades for the school year and are to be maintained in the student's cumulative permanent record.
- Formative and diagnostic instruments, such as Universal Screeners and running records, are not to be taken for a grade.
- Home practice (also known as homework) will not be weighted more than 5% of the overall grade. (Additional information on home practice guidelines and procedures can be found on page 48.)
- Students should have every possible opportunity for demonstrating mastery of the curriculum.
- Grades for an assessment retake shall be replaced with the higher grade with no penalty.
- Grades shall not be recorded on introductory skills. Grades are to be an evaluation of academic standards and content mastery.
- Citizenship (conduct) grades are to be an evaluation of a student's attitude and behavior; they do not reflect academic proficiency. It should not change the grade in the academic area. State law requires that academic grades are a reflection of relative content mastery (§15-342, §15521, §15-701). Behaviors such as turning in work late, not writing name on paper, or other academic

behavior concerns should be reflected in the citizenship (conduct) grade, as with other concerns of this nature. Students with repeated problems may require a behavioral intervention.

- Students are not to receive an academic grade or bonus points for bringing classroom supplies, school or district paperwork, such as classroom syllabus, etc. In addition, students are not to be academically penalized for not bringing in classroom supplies, school or district paperwork, etc.

### **Standards-Based Grading Guidelines**

The following list contains research-proven procedures that help students obtain mastery in their learning and as such are grading guidelines for the systematic collection, analysis, and use of data about student learning.

- Kindergarten teachers will keep records of on-going formative assessments to document student progress.
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are to maintain final grades for the school year and are to be maintained in the student's cumulative permanent record.
- Formative and diagnostic instruments, such as Universal Screeners and running records, are not to be taken for a grade.
- Home practice (also known as homework), is not calculated into a final grade that represents student's overall understanding of a standard. Homework's role should be as formative assessment - assessment for learning that takes place during learning. Homework's role is not assessment of learning; therefore it is not graded. (Additional information on home practice guidelines and procedures can be found on page 48.)
- Multiple opportunities allow students to demonstrate their level of competence with respect to a standard. This requires additional learning on the part of the student, and possibly additional teaching by the teacher. Wherever possible/practical, students should be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their current level of understanding and mastery of standards. (See your school's specific grading procedures regarding the retaking and redoing of assignments and assessments.)
- Grades for retaught concepts shall be replaced with the higher grade and no penalty.
- Grades shall not be recorded on introductory skills. Grades are to be an evaluation of academic standards and content mastery.
- The use of zeroes for missing or incomplete assignments is misleading. In the context of a standards-based grading system, a zero indicates the lack of any knowledge or skills. Therefore, a zero for missing or incomplete assessments/assignments does not accurately represent a student's level of knowledge in regard to the standards. A student should be held accountable for work. Lowering the grade each day may give the student a message that there is no point in completing the work. (See your school's specific grading procedures regarding zeros).
- Citizenship (conduct) grades are to be an evaluation of a student's attitude and behavior; they do not reflect academic proficiency. It should not change the grade in the academic area. State law requires that academic grades are a reflection of relative content mastery (§15-342, §15521, §15-701). Behaviors such as turning in work late, not writing name on paper, or other academic behavior concerns should be reflected in the citizenship (conduct) grade, as with other concerns of this nature. Students with repeated problems may require a behavioral intervention.
- Students are not to receive an academic grade or bonus points for bringing classroom supplies, school or district paperwork, etc. In addition, students are not to be academically penalized for not bringing in classroom supplies, school or district paperwork, etc.

## **How PowerTeacher Gradebook Calculates Grades**

The internal working of PowerTeacher Gradebook calculates grades based on total points, taking into consideration any category weight. PowerTeacher Gradebook displays the percentage for informational purposes only. The bottom of the report shows a breakdown of the Category/Assignment Summary.

## **Report Card Standard Tagging Requirements, Grades 1-6**

### **What is tagging?**

Tagging is associating a specific standard or standards to an assessment entered into PowerTeacher Gradebook. After tagging, teachers enter a Performance Level (1-4) based on how the student performed on the task linked to the given standard(s).

### **What should be tagged?**

The Teacher of Record should tag assessments (formative or summative) and final projects. Every standard has to be tagged at a minimum of one time per school year.

### **When should teachers tag?**

Tagging of standards is completed when the teacher puts a grade into the grade book.

### **How many standards should be tagged to each assessment?**

This is up to the teacher as long as the other requirements of tagging are fulfilled.

### **Can a teacher override performance levels?**

Overriding the final performance level for each standard is discouraged. In rare instances, an override would need to be approved by the administrator at that school.

## **Procedures for Incomplete Grades – Grades 1-6**

If incomplete grades are to be issued in academic or special area classrooms, there must be:

- Prior approval from the principal
- Documentation from the teacher with a completion plan
- A reasonable timeline set, generally not to exceed 10 school days, for the student to complete all required coursework as outlined in the completion plan

**It is the responsibility of the teacher to notify the Registrar and parents of the changed grade and a new report card will be printed and sent home.**

NOTE: Every effort should be made so a DVUSD student does not have the option to choose to fail by not completing work or turning in assignments. It is the expectation that all possible interventions will be implemented to assist students struggling with these expectations. Campus procedures should reflect a specific process for identifying and supporting these students per the determined intervention process. Parents/guardians should be a part of this process.

# DVUSD Report Cards

The purpose of the student report card is to communicate formally to parents their student's performance on the grade-level instructional objectives taught during each of the four nine-week grading periods. The DVUSD report cards (grades K-6) are to reflect each student's individual growth and acquisition of the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards.

- Progress in Kindergarten is indicated through Performance Levels (1-4). Kindergarten teachers may opt to use the PowerTeacher Gradebook or PowerSchool.
- Progress in Grades 1-2 is indicated through Academic Letter Grades (E-U) and Performance Levels (1-4).
- Progress in Grades 3-6 is indicated through Academic Letter Grades (A-F) and Performance Levels (1-4).

In addition to the overall percentage and letter grades reported on the elementary K-6 report card, parents also will find performance levels. Performance levels on the DVUSD K-6 report card indicate a student's level of proficiency in relation to grade level standards and content. Performance levels are not correlated with traditional letter grades such as A, B, C, D.

**The following descriptors can be used to interpret performance levels on the report card.**

The Performance Levels indicated by 1-4 are not based on a percent. It is a performance indicator based on the student's performance toward meeting grade level standards.

**4=Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently**

**3=Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently**

**2=Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support**

**1=Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support**

## Description of Performance Levels

### **4 = Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently**

- ▶ The student consistently demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently for this reporting period.\*
- ▶ A performance level "4" indicates the student is consistently demonstrating above grade level proficiency for a particular standard. A student's progress exceeds standards because s/he has demonstrated mastery in terms of knowledge, but also independently applies that knowledge in ways that go beyond expectations. Typically, very few children would be at this level.

### **3=Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently**

- ▶ The student consistently demonstrates proficiency for the grade level concepts and skills independently for this reporting period.\*
- ▶ A Performance Level "3" indicates that a student consistently demonstrates proficiency for a particular standard. Success is independent and requires little or no support to demonstrate proficiency. A student at the top of his/her class, successfully mastering skills and content, may

find themselves at level “3” all year, which indicates strong or excellent work, which is expected at grade level.

### **2=Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support**

- ▶ The student usually demonstrates the skill or understands the concepts and meets grade level expectations with support for this reporting period. \*
- ▶ A Performance Level “2” indicates a student’s progression with skills and information is usually in the expected range, but requires the support of others and / or accommodations to show success for a particular standard.

### **1=Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support**

- ▶ The student performs below grade level with support and is not meeting expectations for this reporting period. \*
- ▶ A Performance Level “1” indicates that a student’s progress is below grade level proficiency for a particular standard even with supports. His/her instructional level is characterized by maximum teacher support.

\*Independently = The ability to demonstrate proficiency of standards without assistance after being taught a concept or skill

## **Grading in Special Programs**

We believe students have a right to receive grades that represent an accurate evaluation of achievement and that thoughtful, informed assessment promotes learning. Students should be graded on their academic performance at **their** grade level not the grade at which they are placed. We want to instruct and assess English Learner (EL) students at the level in which they are functioning. Our goal is to use assessment as an instructional tool for students to verify what they know and build on what they do not know.

A student’s **progress** in the mastery of the curriculum must be the grading criteria for content course work. Grades must NOT be adjusted according to the ability level of the student. Use of EL strategies and accommodations are to facilitate a student’s participation and comprehension of course work. If a student is not being successful then the accommodations or EL strategies need to be revisited with the support of Teacher EL Specialist or CIAS.

### **ELD Classes K-6**

Students participating in ELD/SEI 4 hour block programs will be held accountable for the content area courses they attend during the day. English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards are aligned to grade level ELA standards and will be reflected in the Reading and Writing grades. Students in the 4 hour block will receive a letter grade at all levels of proficiency.

Students will be held accountable for content grades with accommodations at the students English Proficiency Level.

### **Students with Individual Language Learner Plans (ILLP) K-8**

The teacher of record for the student with an Individual Language Learner Plan (ILLP) will issue content area grades based upon accommodated content at the students English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level. ELP Standards and their Performance Indicators (PI) will be embedded in the content curriculum. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to ensure EL students learn the content through the use of English Language strategies. Performance Indicators will be evaluated through accommodated course work and

reflected in the ILLP Attachment B at the end of the quarter. It is recommended that teachers responsible for ILLPs work in consultation with the Teacher EL Specialist on their campus when administering grades to English Language Learners.

**Pre-emergent/ Emergent (PE/E)** students, as identified through AZELLA Placement test, new to the country and/or first full academic year in an EL program are graded on course content as Pass/Fail with accommodations, until they meet requirements on transition rubric- as assessed by Teacher EL Specialist.

**Basic (B)** Students as identified by AZELLA placement or reassessment can be held accountable to core content standards with documented accommodations. Core content standards are those that have been identified by PLCs as need to master in order to be prepared for the next grade or content level. Accommodations must be documented on ILLP data form and indicated on the ILLP attachment B. If accommodations are not used and documented, students cannot fail the course.

**Low/High Intermediate (LI/HI)** Students as identified by AZELLA placement or reassessment can be held accountable to core content standards with documented accommodations. Core content standards are those that have been identified by PLCs as need to master in order to be prepared for the next grade or content level. Accommodations must be documented on ILLP data form and indicated on the ILLP attachment B. If accommodations are not used and documented, students cannot fail the course.

**Monitor Students-** Students who have scored proficient on AZELLA and exited the EL program in the last two academic years (As indicated as 1 or 2 in PowerSchools) can still receive accommodations and grades can be a reflection of accommodated assignments if needed.

#### **Failing Grades for EL Students**

ELL students should receive a failing grade **if** the contributing factor for failure is unrelated to second language acquisition such as poor attendance, or an unwillingness to try or complete work.

\*Secondary Model Refinement:

Provide an option for SEI English teacher(s) and / or ELL Coordinators to reduce, up to 2 hours, the time required within the SEI Models for ELLs who:

- Demonstrate overall proficiency at the intermediate level on the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA), and
- Are in at least their 2nd year of English language development (ELD) instruction.

For those ELLs for which the SEI English teacher(s) and / or ELL Coordinator have determined that flexibility is appropriate, the SEI English teacher(s) shall recommend course selection based on individual student data that includes AZELLA and at least one other form of data which could include the state assessment, local formative assessment, student work or course grades.

<https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=55257a811130c008a0c55bd4>

#### **Sources:**

Smith, L. "Grading of ELLS." *Grading of ELLs*, Collier School District, 2013, old.collierschools.com/ell/docs/Grading%20of%20ELLs.pdf.

## **Written Individual Compensatory Plans (WICPS)**

Compensatory instruction means instruction given in addition to regular classroom instruction, such as individual or small group instruction, extended day classes, summer school or intersession school. In accordance with the Flores vs. Arizona Consent Decree and House Bill 2010, compensatory instruction shall be provided for English Learners (ELs) and exited ELs who are not making adequate grade level progress.

Before English Learners, or exited English Learners can be considered for retention or a failing grade, a WICP must be written and in place for a minimum of one grading period. The classroom teacher, EL teachers, and parents will collaborate to design instruction to support students' mastery of state standardized core content. In order to document the scope and type of services that will be provided to an EL to overcome the identified language and academic deficiencies, the WICP (Written Individualized Compensatory Plan) will be maintained. (If the parent is unable to attend the WICP meeting, the parent will be notified in writing and will receive the copy of the WICP form). Translators will be utilized as necessary. The teacher of compensatory instruction shall incorporate research-based strategies and methods for helping English Learners acquire English and achieve adequate academic progress.

### **Sources:**

Smith, L. "Grading of ELLs." *Grading of ELLs*, Collier School District, 2013, [old.collierschools.com/ell/docs/Grading%20of%20ELLs.pdf](http://old.collierschools.com/ell/docs/Grading%20of%20ELLs.pdf).

## **Gifted Students**

- Ensure grade level material is learned.
- If students are doing enrichment material only, the grade still represents mastery of on-gradelevel material. A teacher may choose to use an addendum to the report card, such as a rubric, to provide feedback on advanced material. Feedback may also be given in the comment section of the report card. This typically applies to gifted cluster classrooms.
- If the course name indicates advanced material (Algebra I Honors, IB MYP, Advanced Science, English 1-2), then teachers grade against those advanced standards.
- If the student has been accelerated (in a content area) by one grade level or more, he or she will be graded against the same standards as his/her older classmates. (e.g. SAGE, Walk-Up Math, or Walk-Up ELA/Reading)

Adapted from Wormeli, R (2007-2008). *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*.

## **Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

All students with an IEP receive grades based upon grade level standards. If a student is taking the alternate assessment and receives modified instruction, the teacher of record enters a letter grade and checks the appropriate performance level from 1-4. The teacher of record will then check the "Modification" box. For all other students with disabilities, the teacher of record will enter the grade, check the appropriate performance level from 1-4, and check the "Accommodation" box.

The teacher of record for a student with an IEP is the teacher who is highly qualified and provides the core instruction related to the grade level academic standards. Only teachers who are highly qualified may provide the grade for a student with an IEP.

## **Homebound Students**

For homebound students, the teacher of record is always the campus teacher. For homebound students participating with the Deer Valley Online Learning Program, the teacher of record is the online learning teacher.

Homebound or hospitalized means a student who is capable of profiting from academic instruction but is unable to attend school due to illness, disease, accident, or other health conditions, who has been examined by a medical doctor and who is certified by that doctor as being unable to attend on-campus classes for a period of not less than three school months during the school year or a student who is able of profiting from academic instruction but is unable to attend school regularly due to chronic or acute health problems, who has been examined by a medical doctor and who is certified by that doctor as being unable to attend campus classes for intermittent period of time totaling three school months during a school year.

A.R.S.15-761 and Arizona school code 1995 15-901.

### **Homebound Teacher Responsibilities**

- Homebound Instructor will contact the counselor/Special Education Strategist at the student's school to assist in coordinating the student's initial services meeting within one school day of contact from the school.
- The Homebound Instructor is responsible for providing quality instruction, utilizing appropriate materials and techniques to keep student working at his/her assigned grade level. This will be done in unison with the classroom teacher. Completed assignments will be returned to the classroom teacher on a weekly basis.
- The Homebound Instructor will work with the classroom teacher to submit grades for the student at the end of each quarter so the student's transcripts/records will accurately reflect his/her grades and performance. The Homebound Instructor will provide assignments, assessments, and documentation to the classroom teacher to support the final grade.
- The Homebound Instructor is responsible for the coordination of administering classroom, state, and district assessments.
- The Homebound Instructor reviews Deer Valley Online Learning grades twice a month, if applicable.
- The Homebound Teacher will ask for a meeting with appropriate school staff and the parent if the process is not working or the student is not progressing with passing grades.

### **Classroom Teacher of Record Responsibilities**

- The classroom teacher determines the plan of action for assignments missed prior to the initiation of homebound services, in conjunction with the parent, as homebound does not go backwards and cover work prior to the initiation of services start date.
- Teachers must adhere to the 504 plan or IEP accommodations/modifications.
- The classroom teacher(s) must attend initial services meeting and additional meetings related to homebound instruction.
- The classroom teacher will ensure that the student has the appropriate textbooks, materials and assignments. Classroom teachers will provide hard copies of assignments, power points,

assessments etc., in lieu of electronic copies except when the student is enrolled in Deer Valley Online courses.

- The school is responsible for providing technology to enable the student to access the curriculum.
- The classroom teacher is the teacher of record and will provide the homebound instructor a basic outline of concepts covered, materials, notes, answer keys and tests on a weekly basis.
- The classroom teacher works closely with the homebound instructor to provide a final grade to the student.

## **Accommodations/Modifications/Acceleration**

Accommodations are changes to the way a child is expected to learn or how he/she is tested. Accommodations eliminate obstacles that would interfere with a student's ability to perform or produce at the same standard of performance as all general education students.

Accommodations do not change the curriculum or content. Accommodations change how students access and express knowledge on a daily basis. All students may receive accommodations, including students in general education, English learners on an Individual Language Learn Plan (ILLP), students in the MTSS process, those on a 504 plan and students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Accommodations:

- Are changes in instruction that enable children to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom or assessment/testing setting
- Are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's academic or behavioral deficits/Do not reduce learning expectations

Accommodations can be provided for:

- Instructional method and materials
- Assignments and assessments
- Learning environment
- Time demands and scheduling
- Special communication systems

Examples of Accommodations:

- Reading a test to a student (with no additional help). This does not apply to reading or state testing such as Science AIMS or Math AzMERIT (unless noted on IEP).
- Allowing extra time to take the same test or complete the same assignment
- Signing an assignment book
- Breaking down work into smaller segments, but still expecting all elements to be completed
- Staying after school for homework help
- Preferential seating
- Providing an extra set of books at home
- Home-School communication journal
- Provide audio recordings of lectures or books on tape

- Provide copies of teacher's lecture notes
- Use large-print books, braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Provide answers to essay-type questions by speaking, rather than writing them down; allowing answers to be given orally or through dictation
- Use of a calculator for math assessments when calculation skills are not being assessed

Modifications are changes to what a child is expected to learn. Modifications are changes that actually lower the standards of performance. In order to provide modifications, modifications must first be identified on a student's Individual Education Program (IEP).

Modifications should be marked only for students with a significant cognitive disability who qualify to take the alternative assessment in accordance with their IEP. The essential learnings for students who receive modifications are known as Core Content Connectors and can be found at [https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core\\_Content\\_Connectors](https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Core_Content_Connectors).

Modifications:

- Are substantial changes in what the student is expected to demonstrate
- May be changes in instructional level, content, and performance criteria, and may include changes in test form or format or alternative assignments
- Can increase the gap between the achievement of students with academic/behavioral deficits and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level

Examples of Modifications:

- Reading a reading test to a student
- Reading a test and rewording/re-explaining questions on the test
- Tests created at the student's reading level
- Tests created including pictures or other visual aids
- Construction of test items at the student's cognitive level of development
- Shortening a spelling test or other assignment

Acceleration

Content Acceleration provides students with content, skills, or understanding that is beyond their grade level or age. Students can work on the advanced content within their current age grade level, in a content replacement pull-out class, or in a classroom above their age grade level.

Students can be accelerated either by skipping to a higher grade or by receiving accelerated instruction in a single subject. On the K-6 report cards, acceleration should be checked when the student is receiving content replacement in one or more areas. For example:

- The student leaves his/her classroom to go to a classroom at a higher grade level each day for math, reading, or another content
- The student receives math or reading services in the SAGE program or enrichment in the SPARK program.
- The student attends Renaissance Academy, grades 1-6

For students receiving gifted services but not acceleration, the teacher should not choose acceleration. He/she should designate the type of services in the comments section (examples: differentiation through enrichment in the gifted cluster classroom; flexible grouping for high ability).

### **Accommodations Modifications Acceleration**

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodation, modification as they relate to student instruction it is appropriate to write *“The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, or modified to meet student needs”*. Do not refer to a student as English Learner (EL), having an Individualized Education Program (IEP), etc. as this information could lead to discrimination when report card information is disseminated to entities outside of the parents and school district.

### **Grading & Reporting Procedures — Kindergarten**

#### **General Information**

Kindergarten grades are indicated through Performance Levels (1-4). Kindergarten teachers may opt to use the PowerTeacher Gradebook or PowerSchool to record final quarter grades.

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. Kindergarten teachers will share student assessment data through quarterly progress reports.

Before marking a citizenship (conduct) concern on a report card, parent contact must be made.

Report cards are required for new students who have attended a DVUSD school at least 10 days during the quarter and may reflect grades from the previous school.

#### **Special Populations**

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodations, or modifications as they relate to student instruction, it is appropriate to write *“The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, modified to meet student needs”*. **It is not appropriate to refer to a student as EL, Gifted, having a 504 etc. in the “comments” section of the report card.**

#### **Grading in Academic Subjects**

Mastery of grade level standards may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to be comprised of written paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher should monitor and provide feedback to students for activities and assignments, the feedback does not have to be in the form of a single grade.

The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, tests, performance assessments, etc.). The grade a student receives on any assignment will reflect an accurate assessment of the student’s performance on the assessment. **No one test, performance assessment, assignment or project should be more than 25% of the total grade.**

The following grading system for Kindergarten will be used on the report card in all academic subjects including: Mathematics, English Language Arts Reading, English Language Arts and Writing, Science and Social Studies.

**Performance Levels**

**4 = Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently**

**3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently**

**2 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support**

**1 = Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support**

**Description of Performance Levels**

The Performance Levels indicated by 1-4 are not based on a percent. It is a performance indicator based on the student’s performance toward meeting grade level standards.

**4 = Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently**

The student consistently demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently for this reporting period.\*

**3=Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently**

The student consistently demonstrates proficiency for the grade level concepts and skills independently for this reporting period. \*

**2=Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support**

The student usually demonstrates the skill or understands the concepts and meets grade level expectations with support for this reporting period.

**1=Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support**

The student performs below grade level with support and is not meeting expectations for this reporting period.

\*Independently = The ability to demonstrate proficiency of standards without assistance after being taught a concept or skill

**Grading in Special Areas**

Two separate grades will be used for grading in the special areas (Art, Music, Physical Education or other courses): an individual achievement grade and a citizenship (conduct) grade. Each special area teacher should prepare guidelines for grading that identify the criteria to be used in student evaluation. These guidelines should be made available to the principal, classroom teachers, parents/legal guardians, and students.

The following grading scale will be used for Special Area achievement and citizenship (conduct) grades:

90-100	E	Exceeds the Standards
70-89	S	Standards Met
60-69	N	Needs Improvement
59 & below	U	Unsatisfactory

**Achievement:** The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. A variety of evaluative techniques should be used for determining a child’s achievement grade. Such techniques may include class discussion, knowledge testing, skill testing, and teacher observation.

**Student Citizenship (Conduct) - Kindergarten**

The citizenship (conduct) grade is to be based on a combination of effort and behavior. Consult your school’s discipline plan for guidelines in evaluating student behavior. Parent contact must be made and documented in an effort to resolve any citizenship (conduct) issues. If behaviors persist, the teacher will mark areas of needed improvement on the report card with an “X” to indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship (conduct) needing improvement. **If improvement is not needed, do not mark with “X.”**

**Citizenship (Conduct) Area**

**Explanation**

Listens attentively	Actively listens and is involved in instructional presentation
Follows directions	Follows teacher’s instruction promptly without excessive reminders
Stays on task	Is appropriately engaged in classroom activities
Works well independently	Works independently without undue assistance from teacher or others
Is prepared for class	Has necessary items, including assignments and supplies
Completes work in a timely manner	Turns in completed assignments at the time the teacher has specified
Respects rights and property of all	Respects and accepts differences among others including the property of others
Exhibits self-control	Is able to stay in seat, respond appropriately to requests and conversations, and respects others’ learning
Functions as a group member	Works cooperatively with others
Follows school and classroom rules	Obeys all campus and classroom rules
Displays appropriate playground behavior	Interacts appropriately with peers and uses the equipment in a responsible manner

# Grading & Reporting Procedures – Grades 1 & 2

## General Information

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. It is part of the district standard that parents/legal guardians are provided a progress report each quarter. In an effort to "go green", all progress reports will be available digitally unless specifically requested in hard copy from the teacher. Parents/legal guardians will receive a reminder via email, newsletter, or School Messenger to check grades on PowerSchool no later than halfway through the grading period.

Before marking a citizenship (conduct) concern on a report card, parent contact must be made.

Report cards are required for new students who have attended a DVUSD school at least 10 days during the quarter and may reflect grades from the previous school.

## Special Populations

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodations, or modifications as they relate to student instruction, it is appropriate to write "The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, modified to meet student needs". **It is not appropriate to refer to a student as EL, Gifted, having a 504 etc. in the "comments" section of the report card.**

## Achievement in Academic Subjects

Mastery of grade level standards may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to be comprised of written paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher should monitor and provide feedback to students for activities and assignments, the feedback does not have to be in the form of a single grade.

The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, tests, performance assessments, etc.). The grade a student receives on any assignment will reflect an accurate assessment of the student's performance on the assessment. **No one test, performance assessment, assignment or project should be more than 25% of the total grade.**

The following grading system for first grade will be used on the report card in all academic subjects: Mathematics, English Language Arts Reading, English Language Arts and Writing, Science and Social Studies. Plus and minus signs may be used for academic subjects in first grade.

## Academic Subject Grade

90-100	E	Exceeds
70-89	S	Standards Met
60-69	N	Needs Improvement
59 & below	U	Unsatisfactory (traditional grading)
49-59	U	Unsatisfactory (standards based grading)

**Performance Level Indicator**

- 4 = Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently
- 3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently
- 2 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support
- 1 = Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support

**Grading in Special Areas**

Two separate grades will be used for grading in the special areas (Art, Music, Physical Education or other courses): an individual achievement grade and a citizenship (conduct) grade. Each special area teacher should prepare guidelines for grading that identify the criteria to be used in student evaluation. These guidelines should be made available to the principal, classroom teachers, parents/legal guardians, and students.

The following grading scale will be used for Special Area achievement and citizenship (conduct) grades:

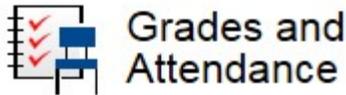
90-100	E	Exceeds the Standards
70-89	S	Standards Met
60-69	N	Needs Improvement
59 & below	U	Unsatisfactory

PowerSchool does not allow the use of plus and minus signs for citizenship (conduct) grades in Special Areas.

**Achievement:** The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. A variety of evaluative techniques should be used for determining a child’s achievement grade. Such techniques may include class discussion, knowledge testing, skill testing, and teacher observation.

**Parents View of Current and Historical grades**

Parents may view their student(s) current grades and current year stored grades in their parent portal by logging into power schools at <https://ps.dvusd.org/public/>. Your student(s) information will be located under Grades and Attendance on the left side of the screen.



Parents may view historical grades for all years under Grade History.



**Student Citizenship (Conduct) – Grades 1 and 2**

The citizenship (conduct) grade is to be based on a combination of effort and behavior. Consult your school’s discipline plan for guidelines in evaluating student behavior. Parent contact must be made and documented in an effort to resolve any citizenship (conduct) issues. If behaviors persist, the teacher will mark areas of needed improvement on the report card with an “X” to indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship (conduct) needing improvement. **If improvement is not needed, do not mark with “X.”**

**Citizenship (Conduct) Area****Explanation**

Listens attentively	Actively listens and is involved in instructional presentation
Follows directions	Follows teacher's instruction promptly without excessive reminders
Stays on task	Is appropriately engaged in classroom activities
Works well independently	Works independently without undue assistance from teacher or others
Functions as a group member	Works cooperatively with others
Is prepared for class	Has necessary items, including assignments and supplies
Completes work in a timely manner	Turns in completed assignments at the time the teacher has specified
Respects rights and property of all	Respects and accepts differences among others including the property of others
Exhibits self-control	Is able to stay in seat, respond appropriately to requests and conversations, and respects others' learning
Follows school and classroom rules	Obeys all campus and classroom rules
Displays appropriate playground behavior	Interacts appropriately with peers and uses the equipment in a responsible manner

## **Grading Procedures – Grades 3-6**

### **General Information**

Teachers will maintain ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding academics, behavior, grading practices and procedures. It is part of the district standard that parents/legal guardians are provided a progress report each quarter. In an effort to "go green", all progress reports will be available digitally unless specifically requested in hard copy from the teacher. Parents/legal guardians will receive a reminder via email, newsletter, or School Messenger to check grades on PowerSchool no later than halfway through the grading period.

Before writing a citizenship (conduct) concern in the comment section of the report card, parent contact must be made.

Report cards are required for new students who have attended a DVUSD school at least 10 days during the quarter and may reflect grades from the previous school.

**Special Populations**

On the report card, when describing acceleration, accommodations, or modifications as they relate to student instruction, it is appropriate to write “The curriculum has been accelerated, accommodated, modified to meet student needs”. **It is not appropriate to refer to a student as EL, Gifted, having a 504 etc. in the “comments” section of the report card.**

**Grading in Academic Subjects**

Mastery of grade level standards may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary for all grades to be comprised of written paper work, nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher should monitor and provide feedback to students for activities and assignments, the feedback does not have to be in the form of a single grade.

The individual achievement grade takes into consideration mastery of standards and skill development. Grading should be fair, consistent, reliable, and comprehensive. All grades should be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, portfolios, rubrics, projects, tests, performance assessments, etc.). The grade a student receives on any assignment will reflect an accurate assessment of the student’s performance on the assessment. **No one test, performance assessment, assignment or project should be more than 25% of the total grade.**

The following grading system will be used on the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Report Card in all academic subjects: Reading, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies. All teachers in grades 3-6, including Special Ed, EL, and Gifted will provide midterm progress reports and quarterly grades. The grading system A, B, C, D, and F will be used. Plus and minus signs will be used where appropriate (see chart).

Exceeds the Standards	Standards Met	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
100 – 98 = A+	89 – 88 = B+	69 – 68 = D+	59 - 0 = F (Traditional Grading)
93 – 97 = A	83 – 87 = B	63 – 67 = D	
90 – 92 = A-	80 – 82 = B- 79 – 78 = C+	60 – 62 + D-	59 – 49 = F (Standards-Based Grading)
	77 – 73 = C		
	72 – 70 = C		

In addition to the overall percentage and letter grades being reported on the elementary report card, parents also will find performance levels. Performance levels on the DVUSD 3-6 report card indicate a student’s level of proficiency in relation to grade level standards and content.

**Performance Level Indicator**

- 4 = Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently
- 3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently
- 2 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support
- 1 = Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support

## Grading in Special Areas

Two separate grades will be used for grading in the special areas (Art, Music, Physical Education or other courses): an individual achievement grade and a citizenship (conduct) grade. Each special area teacher should prepare guidelines for grading that identify the criteria to be used in student evaluation. These guidelines should be made available to the principal, classroom teachers, parents/legal guardians, and students.

The following grading scale will be used for individual achievement grades in special areas:

Exceeds the Standards	Standards Met	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
100 – 98 = A+	89 – 88 = B+	69 – 68 = D+	59 - 0 = F (Traditional Grading)
93 – 97 = A	83 – 87 = B	63 – 67 = D	
90 – 92 = A-	80 – 82 = B- 79 – 78 = C+	60 – 62 + D-	59 – 49 = F (Standards-Based Grading)
	77 – 73 = C		
	72 – 70 = C		

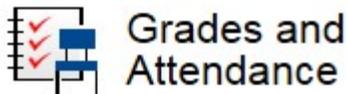
The following grading scale will be used for Special Area citizenship (conduct) grades:

90-100	E	Exceeds the Standards
70-89	S	Standards Met
60-69	N	Needs Improvement
59 & below	U	Unsatisfactory

PowerSchool does not allow the use of plus and minus signs for citizenship (conduct) grades in Special Areas.

## Parents View of Current and Historical grades

Parents may view their student(s) current grades and current year stored grades in their parent portal by logging into power schools at <https://ps.dvusd.org/public/>. Your student(s) information will be located under Grades and Attendance on the left side of the screen.



**Grades and  
Attendance**

Parents may view historical grades for all years under Grade History.



**Attendance  
History**

## Student Citizenship (Conduct) – Grades 3-6

The citizenship (conduct) grade is to be based on a combination of effort and behavior. Consult your school's discipline plan for guidelines in evaluating student behavior. Before marking a citizenship (conduct) grade of N or U, parent contact must be made in an effort to resolve the issue(s). If behaviors

persist and a student earns a citizenship grade of N or U, the teacher will indicate the specific area(s) of citizenship needing improvement in the comment box of the report card.

A student’s citizenship (conduct) will be based on the following criteria:

<b><u>Citizenship (Conduct) Area</u></b>	<b><u>Explanation</u></b>
Listens attentively	Actively listens and is involved in instructional presentation
Follows directions	Follows teacher’s instruction promptly without excessive reminders
Stays on task	Is appropriately engaged in classroom activities
Works well independently	Works independently without undue assistance from teacher or others
Functions as a group member	Works cooperatively with others
Completes work in a timely manner	Turns in completed assignments at the time the teacher has specified
Prepares for class	Has necessary items, including assignments and supplies
Respects rights and property of others	Respects and accepts differences among others including the property of others
Respects authority	Respects and accepts direction from school staff
Exhibits self-control	Is able to stay in seat, respond appropriately to requests and conversations, and respects others’ learning
Follows school and classroom rules	Obeys all campus and classroom rules
Displays appropriate playground behavior	Interacts appropriately with peers and uses the equipment in a responsible manner
Displays appropriate cafeteria behavior	Behaves appropriately in a cafeteria setting

**Citizenship (Conduct)**

Teachers will assign one conduct grade E, S, N, U for each subject which will reflect the student’s attitude, level of learning, enthusiasm, responsibility, and participation in learning. **Citizenship (conduct) grades do not affect inclusion on Honor Roll or Principal’s List but could impact the ability to participate in extracurricular sports and activities.**

## Home Practice

**DVUSD Board Policy IKB, Homework, states:**

The Board recognizes that development of study skills and self-discipline are integral and indispensable elements of a quality educational process.

Homework should be assigned on a routine and systematic basis consistent with the maturity, special needs, potential, and achievement level of the individual student. The student should learn that he/she has a responsibility for actively pursuing knowledge without immediate supervision outside of as well as within the classroom.

It is critical that all students, regardless of their intellectual capacity, understand that mastery of skills is not always possible within the time constraints of the classroom. All students should exit the system with a firm foundation for pursuing knowledge and developing skills on an independent\* basis.

Homework should not carry the stigma of punishment. Its assignment should be specifically addressed to the objectives outlined herein.

The Superintendent is responsible for procedures that will achieve the following objectives through homework:

- Elevation of deficient performance to acceptable standards.
- Reinforcement and mastery of critical skills and concepts. Special emphasis will be placed on mastery of basic skills.
- Challenge through exploration of concepts and skills that complement and elaborate those introduced in the classroom.
- Feedback from the teacher through correction and clarification of all outside assignments.

## Home Practice Philosophy

Home practice, sometimes referred to as homework, is essential for increasing and reinforcing student learning and achievement for course standards. Through home practice, teachers provide students opportunities to increase their understanding of essential knowledge relating to course standards. Home practice means a student is engaged in applying new learning in order to get to as close to mastery of a standard as possible. Teachers should assign home practice work that extends course learning in a manner that is appropriate to a student's age, grade level, and achievement level. Home practice work may also be differentiated to meet an individual student's learning needs to help increase student mastery of skills. Student participation is critical in order to receive specific feedback on how to improve and become successful in meeting course standards. In addition to increasing student achievement, home practice also provides the student opportunities to develop critical, independent\* study skills and self-discipline for their own educational journey.

The three main types of homework are:

1. **Practice exercises** – providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:
  - Finishing class work, physical activities, projects and assignment tasks (classwork sent home should not need the direct supervision of the teacher and can be completed independently\* by the student)
  - Consolidation exercise e.g. math problems
  - Practicing for mastery e.g. spelling words
  - Reading for pleasure
  - Completing writing tasks

2. **Preparatory homework** – providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:
  - Background reading
  - Discussion of topics with parents
  - Researching topics for a class unit or work
  - Collecting items e.g. geometric shapes
  - Preparing and practicing public speaking notes
3. **Extension assignment** – encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually, including:
  - Writing e.g. a book review
  - Making or designing something e.g. an art work
  - Investigations e.g. science, social science
  - Researching e.g. history, local news
  - Information and retrieval skills e.g. using a home computer to find material on the Internet

\*The homework is independent practice which reinforces the lesson and is directly related to the lesson. When the student can perform the skill or process without major errors, then s/he is ready to develop fluency by practicing without the availability of the teacher. The parent should not need to monitor the practice as the student is doing it, but should check the finished product. Children whose parents are

engaged with their education are more likely to be successful, occasionally students may have take-home projects that may require parental engagement and thus, help increase student achievement. In the upper grades, less dependence on parents in the project taken home is expected.

## Home Practice Guidelines and Procedures

Research provides strong evidence that, when used appropriately, home practice benefits student achievement. To make sure that home practice is appropriate, follow these guidelines:

### Time Guidelines

- Carefully assign home practice so that it is appropriate to students' age and achievement levels. Also, be careful that home practice does not take too much time away from other home activities (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).
- Home practice directly related to the standards-based instructional objectives can be assigned using the following time guidelines:
  - Grades K-1: **up to 30** minutes per night across all content areas
  - Grades 2-3: **up to 60** minutes per night across all content areas
  - Grades 4-6: **up to 90** minutes per night across all content areas
  - Grades 7-8: **up to 120** minutes per night across all content areas
- Content areas need to collaborate on how much work is given each evening.
- Larger projects or assignments should be split up over multiple days.
- Home practice times can be differentiated for the needs of each student.

### Assigning Home Practice

- Assign purposeful work for students to practice at home. Focus on giving students home practice tasks such as practicing a skill that has been addressed in class to deepen the students' understanding and knowledge, providing students opportunities to extend their learning through independent\* investigation, or allowing for differentiation that allows students to explore topics of their own interest (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).

- Create home practice opportunities that maximize chances for student completion and success. Ensure home practice is the appropriate level of difficulty for each student so that they may complete the assignments with success independently\*. Home practice should also be challenging enough to make it interesting and valuable as a learning tool (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).
- When evaluating home practice, the teacher will provide students valuable feedback on their learning in a variety of ways. Feedback is critical for improving student achievement. Home practice should be no more than 5% of the grade.

### Parental Involvement

- Parental involvement in home practice should be supportive of student learning without the expectation that parents are teachers at home or are there to police the students' homework completion, possibly have parents assist by listening to their students summarize their learning. It is important to recognize that each student has a different support system at home and that successful home practice should be possible for each student in each different home environment (Marzano & Pickering, 2007).
- Parent access to the PowerSchool portal, [ps.dvusd.org](http://ps.dvusd.org), can assist in reviewing assignment due dates, emailing teachers and viewing current grades. Please see the front office staff for login information.

Reference: Marzano, R. & Pickering, D. (2007). The Case for and Against Homework. *Responding to Changing Demographics*, 64(6), 74-79. Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar07/vol64/num06/The-Case-For-and-Against-Homework.aspx>

\*Homework is independent practice which reinforces the lesson and is directly related to the lesson. When the student can perform the skill or process without major errors, then s/he is ready to develop fluency by practicing without the availability of the teacher. The parent should not need to monitor the practice as the student is doing it, but should check the finished product. Children whose parents are engaged with their education are more likely to be successful, occasionally students may have take-home projects that may require parental engagement and thus, help increase student achievement. In the upper grades, less dependence on parents in the project taken home is expected.

## Make Up Opportunities

### DVUSD Board Regulation IKEA-R (I-7261):

When a student is absent from school, teachers shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up work for any absence in order to close learning gaps from time away from school. A student who is absent from school misses a valuable part of the benefit of in-school education and may experience challenges in understanding content and curriculum that was missed which may put the student at risk from meeting content standards. Adjustments may be made when it is in the best interest of the student(s).

- Each teacher will provide the student's assignment(s) and any handout or materials necessary for accomplishment of such assignment(s), allowing a minimum make up period of one (1) day for each day absent. Teachers may adjust time based on the individual needs of the student or assignment.

- School sanctioned and/or approved events should not negatively impact a student's grade.
- Students who miss school work because of unexcused absences or suspensions will be given the opportunity to make up missed work for credit. Teachers shall assign such make up work as necessary to ensure academic progress, not as a punitive measure.
- When age appropriate, the student is responsible to go to his/her teacher(s) the first day back from an absence to find out what work was missed and to develop a plan to make up those assignments. This would include, but is not limited to, such things as notes, homework, tests, laboratory assignments, performances, and projects.
- If the teacher is unable to supply the student with a make-up assignment, the student will not be held responsible for that make up assignment.
- If work is not turned in by the time the assignment is due, and the student fails to provide an acceptable explanation of the extenuating circumstances that would merit an extension, the teacher may choose to not accept the student's make up work and may seek alternative assignments or assessments to determine proficiency on subject matter.
- Daily Assignments vs. Long-Term Projects: There is an important distinction between daily/formative assignments and long-term/summative projects. Make up policies regarding long-term/summative projects are at the discretion of the individual teacher based on the timeframe of the student's absence and the requirements of the long-term project.
- In situations where the student will be absent for more than (3) three days, due to illness, or when the parent notifies the office that the student will be absent more than one (1) week for other reasons, teachers may provide required assignments in advance or send assignments with the student.
- In the case of school absences for up to three months due to chronic health conditions certified by a doctor, procedures in DVUSD board regulation, Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance (JHD, J-1961) will be followed for student make up work.

## **Academic Recognition Grades 3-6**

In order to be eligible for academic recognition, students must have full-time status.

### **Principal's List**

All A's (including special area and other elective courses)

No Incompletes

### **Honor Roll**

A's or B's (including special area and other elective courses)

No C's, D's, or F's (including special area and other elective courses)

No Incompletes

### **Citizenship (Conduct)**

Teachers will assign one conduct grade E, S, N, U for each subject which will reflect the student's attitude, level of learning, enthusiasm, responsibility, and participation in learning. **Citizenship (conduct) grades do not affect inclusion on Honor Roll or Principal's List.**

# Committee Members

The Promotion, Retention, Acceleration & Grading Handbook was revised in order to align the state regulatory statutes and district guidelines for the schools and the district stakeholders. Thank you to the following committee members:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/ School Location</u>
Gayle Galligan	Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment - DO
Jaime Aldred	Coordinator of Instructional Supports & Inclusive Practices - DO
Sonja Buist	Software Specialist – IS&T
Kathy Borgesen	Manager of Academics & Assessment – DO
Judith Centa	CIAS / ELA Literacy – DO
Kathryn Coleman	Counselor – Highland Lakes
Denise Darre	Counselor – Deer Valley High School
Megan Wibel	CIA / ELA Literacy - DO
Lisa Crain	Manager of Federal Programs – DO
Liz Keith	Teacher – Norterra Canyon
Tricia Graham	Principal – Canyon Springs
Kristy Hirschberg	Manager of Instructional Technology & Innovative Programs – DO
Adam Laningham	Gifted Services Coordinator – DO
Nikki Powell	Principal – Deer Valley Middle School
Jessica DeVriendt	Teacher- Sonora Foothills
Christina Myers	Teacher – Copper Creek
Melissa Sepuka	Principal - Esperanza
Chad Segersten	Principal- Gavilan Peak
Melinda Splitek	Teacher - MRHS
Amanda Lynn	CIA Administrative Assistant- DO
Beverly Kerr	CIAS / EL - DO
Joan Wick	Principal – Park Meadows

**DVUSD would like to thank the following parents who took the time to review the 2019-2020**

**PRAG:**

<b>Parent</b>	<b>School:</b>
Larissa Boden	Terramar and Mountain Ridge High School
Ninfa Ceja	Arrowhead
Stacie Clouser	Copper Creek
Maureen Daly	Copper Creek
Cindy Doss	Desert Sky Middle School

# Notification Letters/Forms

Parent letters and forms referred to in this document begin on page 55. District letters and forms are sent electronically to administrators, school secretaries, and counselors. These forms include K-8 acceleration, promotion, and retention forms, K-6 retention forms, and a checklist for early entry.

## Promotion, Retention, Acceleration & Grading K-6 Handbook Appendix – School Letters & Forms

### **Acceleration**

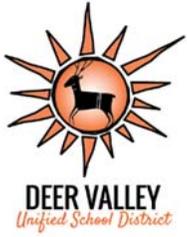
*K-8 Parent/Legal Guardian Request for Whole Grade Acceleration Form* Page 59

*K-8 Parent/Legal Guardian Request for Single-Subject Acceleration Form* Page 60

### **Appeal**

*K-8 Parent/Legal Guardian Promotion Appeal Form* Page 61

*K-8 Parent/Legal Guardian Retention Appeal Form* Page 62



## Parent/Legal Guardian Request for Whole Grade Acceleration K-8

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Phone \_\_\_\_\_

When circumstances indicate that acceleration in grade placement is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents/legal guardians and all school personnel involved is imperative. Each student's placement will be considered individually, and decisions will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to the student's growth and development. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time, and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

If parents/legal guardians feel grade acceleration is in the best interest of the child they will:

1. Complete this form and submit it to the school's principal
2. Provide academic data that indicates the student has exceeded achievement as measured by Arizona state standards and district expectations for the current grade level.

The principal will meet with parent/legal guardian and acceleration team as defined in the "Acceleration" section of the "Promotion, Retention, Acceleration and Grading Handbook," and will forward the Iowa Acceleration Scale Summary and Planning Record to the Superintendent for review. The final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Superintendent. Parental/legal guardian involvement in all steps of the process is vital.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent's Decision:

\_\_\_\_\_ Acceleration request approved                      \_\_\_\_\_ Acceleration request not approved

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Parent/Legal Guardian Request for Single-Subject Acceleration K-8

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Requesting acceleration in (content area) \_\_\_\_\_

When circumstances indicate that acceleration in a single subject is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents/legal guardians and all school personnel involved is imperative. Each student's placement will be considered individually and decisions will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to the student's growth and development. The student's academic achievement level and cognitive ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. A decision should be based on sufficient data collected over a period of time, and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

If parents/legal guardians feel single-subject acceleration is in the best interest of the child they will:

1. Complete this form and submit it to the child's teacher
2. Provide the team with academic data that indicates the student has exceeded achievement as measured by Arizona state standards and district expectations for the current grade level.

The principal will meet with parent/legal guardian and acceleration team as described in the "Acceleration" section of the "Promotion, Retention, Acceleration and Grading Handbook" to determine the best placement for the student. The final decision to accelerate a student in a single subject rests with the principal. Parental/legal guardian involvement in all steps of the process is vital.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Principal's Decision:

\_\_\_\_\_ Single-subject acceleration request approved for \_\_\_\_\_ school year  
\_\_\_\_\_ Single-subject acceleration request not approved

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## K-8 Parent/Legal Guardian Promotion Appeal Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Within five days from the notification of intent to promote, parent or legal guardian will complete a Promotion Appeal form, submit it to the school secretary and schedule a meeting with the principal.
2. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/legal guardian's completion and submission of an Appeal form and all documentation.
3. Parent appeals to the Governing Board will be reviewed in June.

**Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):** Please state your position as factually as possible using the space below. If additional sheets are required, please attach them to this form. Gather all pertinent data and documentation to support your appeal and attach to this form.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## K-8 Parent/Legal Guardian Retention Appeal Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Within five days from the notification of intent to retain, parent or legal guardian will complete a Retention Appeal form, submit it to the school secretary, and schedule a meeting with the principal.
2. The appeal process will start immediately upon the parent/legal guardian's completion and submission of an Appeal form and all documentation.
3. Parent appeals to the Governing Board will be reviewed in June.

**Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s):** Please state your position as factually as possible using the space below. If additional sheets are required, please attach them to this form. Gather all pertinent data and documentation to support your appeal and attach to this form.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_