



**Journey Community Schools  
2022-2023 Grading Policy**

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## Grading Philosophy

- **We believe** course grades should communicate individual student *achievement of expected learning outcomes* to students and families and serve to motivate students to take ownership of their learning and continuously improve.
- **We believe** teachers should provide students *multiple opportunities* to demonstrate mastery of grade level content, revising grades as mastery increases.
- **We believe** *conduct and work habits*, which impact student learning but are distinct from outcomes, should be communicated separately from course grades.

This grading policy is intended to provide a consistent region-wide approach to grading that gives students and families a clear picture of performance that is aligned to our partner districts and schools. Schools with SCS charters should follow the authorizing district policy where components differ.

## Grading Scales

K-2	
Academic Grades	Conduct Grades
<b>E</b> 90-100 Excellent <b>G</b> 80-89 Good <b>S</b> 70-79 Satisfactory <b>N</b> 60-69 Needs Improvement <b>U</b> 0-59 Unsatisfactory	<b>E</b> Excellent <b>G</b> Good <b>S</b> Satisfactory <b>N</b> Needs Improvement <b>U</b> Unsatisfactory

3-8	
Academic Grades	Conduct Grades
<b>A</b> 90-100 Excellent <b>B</b> 80-89 Good <b>C</b> 70-79 Satisfactory <b>D</b> 60-69 Needs Improvement <b>F</b> 0-59 Unsatisfactory	<b>E</b> Excellent <b>G</b> Good <b>S</b> Satisfactory <b>N</b> Needs Improvement <b>U</b> Unsatisfactory

## Weight and Types of Assignments

EOMs/Interims	Assessments	Classwork + Other Assignments
5%	35%	60%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of Mods</li> <li>• Interims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checkpoints</li> <li>• Weekly quizzes</li> <li>• Exit ticket</li> <li>• Focus writing tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TDQs</li> <li>• Problem set</li> <li>• Classwork</li> <li>• Published writing</li> <li>• Projects</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Labs</li> <li>• Do Nows</li> <li>• Checks for Understanding</li> </ul>

Homework is practice and may **not** be included in the academic grade. It is appropriate to include homework in the conduct grade.

Pursuant to [T.C.A. § 49-1-617](#), charter schools are required to use TCAP scores as a percentage of a student's overall grade if the raw scores are received from the state at least five instructional days before the end of the course.

- **2nd Grade:** TCAP scores are NOT to be included in the student's overall grade.
- **3rd - 5th Grade:** The state allows for TCAP scores to count for 0% - 25% of 3rd - 5th graders' overall grade. **JCS will count TCAP scores as 0% of 3rd - 5th graders' overall grade.**
- **6th - 8th Grade:** The state allows for TCAP scores to count for 10% - 25% of the 6th - 8th graders' overall grade. **JCS will count TCAP scores as 10% of 6th - 8th graders' overall grade.**

## Cumulative Performance

Students should have multiple opportunities to show growth on specific skills. Teachers may take into account student growth over the course of the term when assigning final grades.

## Number of Grades

- Each quarter, teachers must collect at least 10 grades per subject.
  - Within the 10 grades, there must be at least one interim and/or End of Module assessment.
  - The *Assessments* and *Classwork + Other Assignments* categories should each have a minimum of 5 items to ensure a single assignment is not weighed too heavily

## No Zero (0) Policy for Missing Assignments

- All Missing or incomplete assignments should be entered into the gradebook as an M (Missing), which will assign a value of 50%, preventing a single assignment from significantly impacting a scholar's class average.\*
- A zero (0) should NOT be given for missed assignments.
- See retake policy for more details.

\*MSCS charters who do not have an M code should enter the missing assignment as an F/50%

## Missing Assignment Policy

In the event that a student misses an assignment (for any reason), the following action steps should be taken. Please note that assignments may be made up all the way until the last day of the grading period.

- Communicate with the family that the scholar is missing assignments.
- Provide the student an opportunity to complete the assignment(s).
- In extreme circumstances where a student has been unable to complete a missing assignment (and the makeup policy is not able to be enacted), you may exclude the score of the missing assignments, and calculate the final grade based on assignments that have been submitted.
  - The maximum number of grades per course that can be excluded for a given term is 3.
  - Summative assessments (interim, end of module, quarterly common assessment) may **not** be excluded from grades.
- If there has not been an extreme circumstance and the assignment has not been made up, it should remain in the gradebook as an M (50%).
  - Please note that giving a student an M (50%) prevents a single assignment from significantly impacting a scholar's class average.

## Incomplete Term Grades

The grade of I (Incomplete) may only be given when extended illness or other unusual circumstances warrant giving the student additional time to fulfill the course work. These grades must be removed within six weeks of the next semester, or they become an "F".

## Retake Policy

It is the responsibility of teachers to provide all students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate independent mastery of grade level content. The retake policy ensures that students who need more time or practice or have an isolated poor showing have additional opportunities to show mastery. Retakes should cover the same content originally assessed, though students may be asked to respond to different questions or tasks than the original assignment or assessment. Retakes may be offered on any assessment, with the exception of an interim or end of module.

This policy establishes minimum requirements which may be exceeded or further detailed by individual school policies.

Retake opportunities may include:

- Retake of original assessment
- Resubmission of an assignment with identification of errors and corrections made
- Written explanation of why their answer was wrong and why the correct answer is right. (In Kindergarten the explanation may be verbal.)
- Alternate, equally rigorous, version of the original assessment if readily available

The conditions for retakes should ensure students are able to show *independent* mastery of the content being reassessed. Students may complete retakes at home (where appropriate and practical), before school, after school, during breaks in instruction such as lunch or recess, or during the personalization block. Students should not miss tier 1 instructional time to complete retakes.

### Retake Frequency

Teachers will provide students the opportunity to retake a minimum of 4 assignments per quarter. Per school policy, these may be defined ahead of time and shared with students, selected in response to student performance during the term, or selected by the students themselves.

Retake Grade Adjustments:

- Retakes must be completed within a set timeframe determined by the school and no later than the last week of the term.
- Teacher records the higher of the two scores in the gradebook.

### Gradebooks

- Students and families may monitor grades and performance on specific assignments through the PowerSchool parent portal. Schools will provide directions and passwords to families on an annual basis and as requested.

## School Leader Responsibilities for Gradebook Monitoring

- Please refer to [this document](#) to ensure you are meeting the required milestones to ensure accurate report cards and grading for all scholars.

## Communicating with Families

A report card should not be the first time a family receives information about their scholars' performance. Between report cards, school communication with families at minimum should include:

- Mid-quarter progress reports
- Phone calls documented in Dean's List for scholars who are having challenges
- Written notification for scholars at risk of failing

## School Choice

The above guidelines are the floor of our grading policy. Schools are free to add detail to these requirements. Some examples of things that schools could decide (but are not required):

- Number of assessments that are included in the 10 assignments outside of the ones required
- Timing around submission of makeup assignments
- Identifying the actual assignments that will be collected
- Weighting assignments within the weighted categories
- Schoolwide policy for ensuring students have multiple opportunities to show growth (retakes)

\*In the event that a situation arises that is not addressed with this grading policy, please reach out to your manager to determine the best solution to represent student performance.

# Grading & Retention Policy for Students with Disabilities and English Learners

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## Our Mission

We **engage** families and community partners in our scholars' learning journey; **cultivate** a safe, positive and joyous learning environment and **empower** teachers and leaders with support to **deliver** an inclusive, innovative and rigorous education.

## Our Vision

To develop a community of lifelong learners who excel in all areas of life.

## Our Slogan

*Paving Pathways to Success*

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## Journey Community Schools Grading Philosophy

- *We believe course grades should communicate individual student achievement of expected learning outcomes to students and families and serve to motivate students to take ownership of their learning and continuously improve.*
- *We believe teachers should provide students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of grade level content, revising grades as mastery increases.*
- *We believe conduct and work habits, which impact student learning but are distinct from outcomes, should be communicated separately from course grades.*

## Research on the Impacts of Grade Retention Research Findings

- *Grade retention does not help students to “catch up.” Retained students may appear to do better in the short term, but they are at a much greater risk for future failure than their equally achieving, non-retained peers are. Some groups of students are more likely to be retained than others.*
- *Those at highest risk for retention are minority children, low-income children, highly mobile children, children with attention problems, children with behavior problems, and/or children with reading problems—including ELs.*
- *Grade retention is associated with negative outcomes in all areas of student achievement (e.g., reading, math, and oral and written language) and social and emotional adjustment (e.g., peer relationships, self-esteem, problem behaviors, and attendance). Students who are retained are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to graduate by age 20.*

Consequently, we desire to provide students with quality and differentiated instruction, opportunities for to improve their work, and we believe in intervening early to ensure students are set on the pathway to success in every grade level.



# Grading & Retention Policy for Students with Disabilities

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## **Alignment with TDOE Special Education Framework (Updated 2018)**

In 2015, the Tennessee Department of Education outlined its vision, goals, priorities, and strategies in the **Tennessee Succeeds** strategic plan (here). This plan is anchored in the foundational belief that all students can achieve and all students deserve access to postsecondary and career opportunities after graduation. In alignment with the TDOE, as we place students on the pathway to success in our K-8 classrooms, we are committed to developing a community of lifelong learners who excel in all areas of life. This is our vision for all students, including our students with disabilities.

The beliefs at the forefront of our work are as follows:

- Special education is not a place; it is the most intensive intervention along the continuum of service, defined by individual need, services, and placement.
- Strong leadership at every level is the foundation of a collaborative and inclusive environment that supports all students.
- All students are general education students first, and every student can learn and demonstrate growth. Thus, all students must have access to high quality, evidence-based instruction that maximizes his/her potential in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
- Educators are the key to student success and should be supported instructionally and professionally.
- All students can achieve postsecondary success.

A significant part of ensuring a student's needs are met is the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a document that identifies a student's disability, outlines clear goals and objectives, and explains how the student will be supported. The IEP guides how our schools—Hanley Elementary, Hanley Middle School, Coleman, and East Academy, configure their special education resources in order to provide opportunities for a student with disabilities to achieve desired outcomes.

In this policy, JCS teammates and families will learn about our grading policy for our students with disabilities.

## **Alignment with Special Education Federal and State Law**

The federal United States Department of Education (USDE) provides a variety of legal perspectives about grading students with disabilities under the following offices: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and the Family Policy Compliance Office.

- ***The Office of Special and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS):***

- OSERS administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA does not have specific provisions on student report cards or transcripts. However, it requires that the individualized education program (IEP) for a student with a disability include a description of (1) how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals set forth in his or her IEP will be measured and (2) when periodic reports on the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be provided. These progress reports may be separate from or included as part of the regular report cards.
- **The Office for Civil Rights (OCR):**
  - The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has no enforcement authority under IDEA. However, OCR has enforcement responsibilities under two of the applicable federal laws: Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, including public elementary and secondary school systems, regardless of federal financial assistance. Section 504, like IDEA, requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified individuals with disabilities in their jurisdiction.
  - Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. This means that with respect to grades, class ranking, honor roll, graduation, and diplomas, students with disabilities must be treated the same as all other students. Section 504 and Title II do not have specific provisions addressing report cards or transcripts. While the laws prohibit public entities from treating persons differently on the basis of disability, they may provide a different aid, benefit or service to persons with disabilities where necessary to provide supports that are as effective as that provided to others. Among the aid, benefits, and services provided to students and parents are report cards and transcripts.
  - OCR has stated that the report card may reflect grades based on the student's grade level with respect to students who are not participating in grade level classes but are taught different course content using a modified or alternative education curriculum for a portion of the day. OCR further stated that it would be up to the state education agency and the LEA to establish standards to reflect progress or the level of achievement for different course content. In both cases, grades earned in special education classes or in general education classes with the support of special education services must be included in district wide grade point average standings that lead to a ranking of students by grade point average for honor roll and college scholarship purposes, but that the grades may be weighted based on objective rating criteria. The grades on a report card for a student with a disability for classes with different course content would be based on state and/or local standards. Given this, a LEA may distinguish between special education programs, services, and general curriculum classes on the report card of a student who has an IEP.
  - A transcript may indicate that a student took classes with a modified or alternate education curriculum. However, OCR has determined it would be a violation for a student's transcript to indicate that the student received accommodations in a general education classroom. In addition, transcripts may not indicate that a student has been enrolled in a special education program. In one investigation, OCR found classes on a transcript designated as Independent Learning Center did not violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 regulations.

- ***The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act***

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy interests of parents and students with regard to educational records. In general, a policy or practice of disclosing personally identifiable information from educational records without consent is prohibited except under specific exceptions. Disability status, report cards, and transcripts are subject to the protections of FERPA and IDEA.

***Alignment with the Educational Benefit Argument (1982)***

On March 22, 2017, the Supreme Court released a unanimous decision in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County District*, reversing the Tenth Circuit and remanding the case for further proceedings.

- The Court rejected the “merely . . . more than de minimis test” that the circuit court applied to determine whether the school district provided a child with a disability a free appropriate public education, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- In its place, the Court held that “[t]o meet its substantive obligation under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriately in light of the child’s circumstances.”
- Although the decision does not go as far as the petitioners advocated—the Court rejected a “substantially equal” standard—many parent and child advocates consider the decision an important victory for children with disabilities.

For Questions and Answers on Report Cards and Transcripts for Students with Disabilities Attending Public Elementary and Secondary Schools more information click [here](#).

## **Journey Community Schools Grading Practices For Students with Disabilities**

### **1. What should happen when a student is making adequate progress on his/her IEP goals and objectives?**

First, all students with disabilities' present levels of performance and impact of disability should be documented clearly in the IEP and substantiated by multiple data sources. This means the students' strengths and areas of growth should be indicated and should drive the development of the IEP in terms of their goals and objectives, services, accommodations, modifications and services to also include related services. If a student is making adequate progress, this progress should be reflected and documented in their IEP via the present levels of performance (PLOP), progressive goals and objectives, special education progress reports, and report cards. Additionally, a student may show progress if he/she transitions to a least restrictive environment based on their attainment of goals and objectives, classroom performance, and other assessment measures.

### **2. What should happen when a student with disabilities is not making adequate progress on his/her IEP goals and objectives?**

The expectation is that all IEPs for students with disabilities will be implemented with fidelity as agreed upon by the IEP team in the meeting as it relates to services, related services, accommodations, and modifications.

After the IEP has been implemented with fidelity **and** data has been collected indicating the student's **lack of progress** in any identified deficit area and/or context--general education or special education environment, the case manager should reconvene the IEP team to discuss the following:

- a) Student's present levels of performance--academic, behavioral, or adaptive; and/or change in performance
- b) Impact of the student's disability on his or her performance or the impact on the student or others receiving an education
- c) The need for any adjustment in the student's services, accommodations, and modifications with a clear rationale in how the change will meet the student's needs
- d) The need for adding or adjusting additional goals or objectives to ensure the student's success
- e) Timeline to reconvene to discuss student's progress

### **3. What should happen to ensure a student with disabilities is making adequate progress in grade level skills and content in the general education setting?**

To ensure a student with disabilities is making adequate progress in the general education curriculum the following should take place:

- a) There must be ongoing collaboration between the Ed. Specialist case manager and the student's general education teacher and related service providers (as applicable) to:
  - i. Ensure the GE teacher has access to the student's IEP at a glance so that he/she is aware of and understands the student's impact of their disability on accessing grade level goals, and how to effectively implement the student's accommodations and modifications.
  - ii. Meet regularly to discuss student's progress in the general education curriculum and be proactive in addressing student's challenges

- iii. Plan and collaborate to ensure the student has access to grade level standards and curriculum.

**4. What should happen when a student with disabilities is not making adequate progress in the self-contained setting?**

When a student with disabilities is not making adequate progress the following should take place.

After the IEP has been implemented with fidelity and data has been collected indicating the student's lack of progress in any identified deficit area and/or context--general education or special education environment, the case manager should reconvene the IEP team to discuss the following:

- a) Student's present levels of performance--academic, behavioral, or adaptive, and/or change in performance
- b) Impact of the student's disability on his or her performance or the impact on the student or others receiving an education
- c) The need for any adjustment in the student's services, accommodations, and modifications with a clear rationale in how the change will meet the student's needs
- d) The need for adding or adjusting additional goals or objectives to ensure the student's success
- e) Timeline to reconvene to discuss student progress
- f) There must be ongoing collaboration between the Ed. Specialist case manager and related service providers.

**5. What should happen when a student with a disability is at risk of retention?**

In *Endrew F. v. Douglas County District*, the 10th Circuit Court held that "[t]o meet its substantive obligation under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." Consequently, we expect our JCS teammates to align with this obligation as we seek to meet the individual and diverse needs of our students with disabilities.

After the IEP has been implemented with fidelity and data has been collected indicating the student's lack of progress in any identified deficit area and/or context--general education or special education environment, the case manager should reconvene the IEP team to discuss the following:

- a) Student's present levels of performance--academic, behavioral, or adaptive; and/or change in performance
- b) Impact of the student's disability on his or her performance or the impact on the student on others receiving an education
- c) The need for any adjustment in the student's services, accommodations, and modifications with a clear rationale in how the change will meet the student's needs
- d) The need for adding or adjusting additional goals or objectives to ensure the student's success
- e) Timeline to reconvene to discuss student's progress and to make any additional adjustments.  
There should be a minimum of **two** adjustments to the student's services **prior to quarter 3**.

After completing the steps above and the student is still not making adequate progress as based on data, the IEP team should consider the following questions:

1. Should the student be evaluated to test for the presence of an initial disability that may be impacting the students' performance in the general education curriculum?

- a. If the team determines the student **needs** to be re-evaluated, retention should be considered on a case-by-case basis and the Special Education Program Specialist **or** MD of SP/SS and the school principal must be in attendance.
2. If the team determines the student **does not need** to be re-evaluated, retention should be considered on a case-by-case basis and the Special Education Program Specialist **or** MD of SP/SS and the school principal must be in attendance.
3. When deciding on retention, the team should also consider if the students' need for retention is a manifestation of his or her disability.

**Quarterly Steps for SWDs Being Considered for Retention**

End of Progress Report 1	END OF QUARTER 1	End of Progress Report 2	END OF QUARTER 2	End of Progress Report 3	END OF QUARTER 3	End of Progress Report 4	END OF QUARTER 4
<i>SPED Leads facilitate data meeting to discuss progress of all SWDs</i>	<i>Principal - Verifies grades</i>	<i>SPED Leads facilitate data meeting to discuss progress of all SWDs</i>	<i>Principal - Verifies grades</i>	<i>SPED Leads facilitate data meeting to discuss progress of all SWDs</i>	<i>Principal - Submits list of students recommended for retention + required documentation</i>	<i>SPED Leads facilitate data meeting to discuss progress of all SWDs</i>	<i>MD of SP/SS submits a list of SWDs recommended for retention (if necessary) along with the required documentation.</i>
<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>If SWD is not making progress, an IEP meeting should be scheduled to make adjustments as needed. (1)</i>	<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>If SWD is not making progress, an IEP meeting should be scheduled to make adjustments as needed. (2)</i>	<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>If SWD is not making progress, an IEP meeting should be scheduled to make adjustments as needed (3). Team will discuss retention after 2 adjustments have been made.</i>	<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>The MD of SP/SS + Director of Student Services + VP of Schools - staff the case for review and approval.</i>
<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and she will follow with case managers to IEP implementation.</i>		<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and she will follow with case managers to IEP implementation.</i>	<i>Teammates - Deliver additional supports as outlined in the SST documents</i>	<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and she will follow with case managers to IEP implementation.</i>	<i>Teammates - Deliver additional supports as outlined in the SST documents</i>	<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and she will follow with case managers to IEP implementation.</i>	<i>Principal sends letter of retention to parents</i>

**6. Who assigns grades for students with disabilities?**

The teacher of record in PowerSchool assigns grades.

- Teachers of students in Functional Skills classes will enter grades under the specific “SPED” designation for core subjects (Ex: 5<sup>th</sup> SPED vs. 5th).

The Ed Specialist and teacher of record should be communicating on each student’s progress to determine if adjustments are needed to the IEP or instructional plans (i.e. accommodation, modifications)

**7. How should students with disabilities be graded?**

Students with disabilities MUST receive their services and allowable accommodations and/or modifications as outlined in their IEPs, which are designed to ensure that students have access to grade level instruction and standards.

If the IEP is implemented with fidelity, students with disabilities should then be held to the same expectations as any other student when grading, unless it is noted specifically in their IEP.

**8. Can students with disabilities have a modified grading scale?**

Yes but in very rare cases. The Program Specialist MUST approve a modified grading scale in advance. Students with disabilities should be held to the same expectations as any other student when grading unless the IEP team has determined the student qualifies for a modified grading scale

If the IEP team determines that the student qualifies for a modified grading scale, the scale should be defined by the team and communicated to all teachers that instruct the student.

Modified Grading Scale should be explained in detail. How will it be modified? What is the new scale? What type of assignments will be graded differently than non-disabled peers? What type of assignments will the student be graded similar to non-disabled peers?

**If you have any additional questions about grading for students with disabilities, please contact:**

**MD of SP/SS**

**or**

**Special Education Program Specialist**

## **Journey Community Schools: Grading & Retention Policy for English Learners**

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### **Alignment with TDOE English as a Second Language Manual (2018)**

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) defines an EL as “[an individual] who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English language proficiency [...and] whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual:

- The ability to meet the state’s proficient level of achievement on state assessments
- The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or
- The opportunity to participate fully in society.”

Students classified as ELs are entitled to services specifically designed to improve their English proficiency, which is needed for ELs to access the Tennessee Academic Standards.

In Tennessee, an alternative language program for ELs, known as English as a Second Language (ESL), is defined as, “English instruction especially designed for speakers of other languages.” Districts are federally mandated to identify all ELs, determine their English proficiency level, and provide effective ESL programs. Under ESSA, all ELs are expected to meet the same academic standards as their non-EL peers.

A significant part of ensuring a student’s needs are met is the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a document that describes the academic and language needs of, and goals for, an EL. It is created by ESL teachers in collaboration with other teachers, leaders, counselors, parents, and/or the student. The purpose of developing ILPs for ELs is to ensure all students are being served and on track to meet the linguistic and academic expectations each year.

In this policy, JCS teammates and families will learn about our grading policy for our students with disabilities.

### **Alignment with Federal and State Law**

#### ***Every Student Succeeds Act***

(ESSA) (2015) “The purpose [...] is to provide all children a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.”

#### ***U.S. Supreme Court***

Lau v. Nichols (1974) “There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” In a unanimous decision, the Court ruled that failure to provide students who do not speak English with English language instruction, or other adequate instruction, is a violation of the civil rights laws.



## **Journey Community Schools Grading Practices For English Learners**

1. **Will our ELs follow a separate JCS grading policy?** No. Our ELs will follow the same grading policy as non-EL students.
2. **Should EL students be retained so they have more time to develop their English skills?** No. Retention of EL students will not facilitate English language acquisition. The process of language acquisition should occur at all grade levels.
3. **Under what circumstances is it legally permissible to retain an EL student?** Retaining an EL may be considered for extreme absenteeism or having been enrolled too young in the grade.
4. **Who decides whether a student should be retained or promoted to the next grade?** In many districts, principals and/or teachers make the final determination regarding whether a student should be retained or promoted to the next grade. For EL students, an ESL teacher should be involved in this decision to ensure that the student's low English proficiency is not the reason for their retention.

Per the ESL Handbook, the team must note:

- Retention of ELs will not facilitate English language acquisition. The process of language acquisition should occur at all grade levels.
- Prior to considering retention of an EL, the following should be addressed in consultation with the student's ESL teacher:
  - Has the student been enrolled in the district for more than one full academic year? If not, the child may have spent more than one-half of the year in a "silent period." Two to nine months may be inadequate for meeting educational goals.
  - Are classroom accommodations being made in the following areas? • Classroom • Assignments • Homework • Assessments
  - Are all accommodations documented? Has there been a discussion with the ESL coordinator?
  - Has the student been considered as an individual and received differentiated instruction? Have accommodations and differentiation been documented?
  - Is a beginning to intermediate student receiving an hour of ESL daily? Is a more advanced student receiving enough ESL for instruction to be meaningful?
  - Do all teachers modify grading through a rubric or contract?

If the above points have not occurred in a sufficient manner, retention is not appropriate. [NOTE: Retention policies, especially for ELs, should not be based on one specific piece of data, or any sole criterion. In most cases, retention does not help the child with academic achievement. Every effort should be made to move the child to the next level of academic work and allow the child to continue in the grade that is age appropriate.]

5. **What documentation is necessary if an EL student is to be retained?** There must be documentation indicating that the EL has had meaningful accommodations and necessary modifications to have made accessing grade level standards possible. The district is responsible for seeing that this has taken place and been properly documented.
6. **When does our retention policy need to be communicated to parents?** JCS shall develop, implement, and communicate retention policies annually to students and parents.

## 7. **What are some alternatives to retention?**

The following are alternatives to retention that research has found to be effective. These measures are not exhaustive nor mandatory and, if used, should be adapted to the context of the specific needs of the school and its students.

- Parental involvement in their children's school and education (e.g., frequent contact with teachers, supervision of homework, etc.)
- Age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instructional strategies to accelerate progress in the classroom
- Early developmental programs and preschool programs to enhance language and social skills
- Systematic assessment strategies (e.g., continuous progress monitoring, formative evaluation) to enable ongoing accommodation of instructional efforts
- Early reading programs
- School-based mental health programs to promote the social and emotional adjustment of children
- Behavior management and cognitive behavior accommodation strategies to reduce classroom behavior problems
- Student support teams with appropriate professionals to assess and identify specific learning or behavior problems, design interventions to address those problems, and evaluate the efficacy of those interventions
- Tutoring and mentoring programs focusing on promoting specific academic or social skills
- Comprehensive school-wide programs to promote the psychological and academic skills of all students

8. **What are some legal considerations for ELs?** ELs must not be retained in grade level because of their language skills. These students should be even more carefully evaluated than their non-EL peers before retention is recommended to ensure that low English proficiency skills are not being mistaken for poor achievement or behavior.

If you need technical assistance at your school site, please refer to your EL teacher or contact Dr. L. Sha Fanion.

9. **What should happen if a school team or parent feels an EL should be retained?** Retention of ELs will not facilitate English language acquisition. The process of language acquisition should occur at all grade levels. Prior to considering retention of an EL, the following should be addressed in consultation with the student's ESL teacher:

- a. Has the student been enrolled in the district for more than one full academic year? • If not, the child may have spent more than one-half of the year in a "silent period." Two to nine months may be inadequate for meeting educational goals.
- b. Are classroom accommodations being made in the following areas?
  - i. Classroom
  - ii. Assignments
  - iii. Homework
  - iv. Assessments
- c. Are all accommodations documented?
- d. Has there been a discussion with the EL coordinator?

- e. Has the student been considered as an individual and received differentiated instruction?
- f. Have accommodations and differentiation been documented?
- g. Is a beginning to intermediate student receiving an hour of ESL daily? Is a more advanced student receiving enough ESL for instruction to be meaningful?
- h. Do all teachers modify grading through a rubric or contract?

If the above points have not occurred in a sufficient manner, retention is not appropriate.

### Quarterly Steps for ELs Being Considered for Retention

End of Progress Report 1	END OF QUARTER 1	End of Progress Report 2	END OF QUARTER 2	End of Progress Report 3	END OF QUARTER 3	End of Progress Report 4	END OF QUARTER 4
<i>MD of SP/SS or EL Lead facilitates data meeting to discuss progress of all ELs</i>	<i>Principal - Verifies grades</i>	<i>MD of SP/SS or EL Lead facilitates data meeting to discuss progress of all ELs</i>	<i>Principal - Verifies grades</i>	<i>MD of SP/SS or EL Lead facilitates data meeting to discuss progress of all ELs</i>	<i>Principal - Submits list of students recommended for retention + required documentation</i>	<i>MD of SP/SS or EL Lead facilitates data meeting to discuss progress of all ELs</i>	<i>MD of SP/SS submits a list of ELs recommended for retention (if necessary) along with the required documentation.</i>
<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>If EL is not making progress, EL teacher and GE teacher should make adjustments as needed to ILP. (1)</i>	<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>If EL is not making progress, EL teacher and GE teacher should make adjustments as needed to ILP. (2)</i>	<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>If EL is not making progress, EL teacher and GE teacher should make adjustments as needed to ILP. (3). Team will discuss retention after 2 adjustments have been made.</i>	<i>For any students not making progress, discuss next steps or any adjustments needed.</i>	<i>The MD of SP/SS + Director of Student Services + VP of Schools - staff the case for review and approval.</i>
<i>Send names to MS of SP/SS and s/he will follow with case managers to determine what needs to be updated in ILP.</i>		<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and s/he will follow with case managers to determine what needs to be updated in ILP.</i>	<i>Teammates - Deliver additional support as outlined in the ILP or SST team meeting.</i>	<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and s/he will follow with case managers to determine what needs to be updated in ILP.</i>	<i>Teammates - Deliver additional supports as outlined in the ILP or SST documents</i>	<i>Send names to MD of SP/SS and s/he will follow with case managers to determine what needs to be updated in ILP.</i>	<i>Principal sends letter of retention to parents</i>