



GRADING, PROMOTION, and RETENTION PROCEDURES

2024-2025



Mission

Our mission is to prepare all students, grades K-8, for a successful future in college, careers, and/or entrepreneurial endeavors. Through self-efficacy and student empowerment, LIFE helps students achieve mastery of high academic standards and lifelong ambitions.

Vision

The vision of LIFE3 Academy is to create the next generation of civically responsible, global leaders through the execution of a culturally relevant, holistic educational program. We believe that all students deserve a learning environment that embraces their whole being.

Preface

The Life Academy grading, promotion, and retention procedures are published for the following reasons:

- Law and policy require that we establish procedures to ensure that grades are reflections of essential knowledge and skills mastered.
- Grading must be as consistent as possible from teacher to teacher within the district to assure fairness.
- scholars and their parents have a right to know exactly how grades are determined.
- Grading has serious implications for individual scholars, for the school, and for the district and the community as a whole.
- Regulations are important support for teachers in the event a grade is challenged.

These guidelines, supported through Board policies, outline broad parameters that allow teachers enough flexibility to fit the needs of their particular course requirements. This applies to all teachers in all subject areas across the district. Teachers must become familiar with the contents of this document to ensure fairness and standardization across the district. The principal and teacher will be held responsible for compliance with these procedures. Parents will have access to these guidelines through the school's website: www.lifeacademyal.org.

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Life Academy

Grading, Promotion, and Retention Procedures

1) Numerical Basis for Grades:

- a. The scale for determining the quarter grade, semester grade, and yearly grade for a subject is stated below:

A = 90 - 100

B = 80 - 89

C = 70 - 79

D = 60 - 69

F = 0 - 59

Note: The maximum number of points allowed for grading purposes is one hundred (100). PowerSchool will not accept grades over 100. "I" (Incomplete) is not to be inserted in lieu of a grade.

- b. The numerical scale for the quarter grade, semester grade, and yearly grade shall determine the values assigned for learning activities (reports, projects, portfolios, and other criterion-based assignments).
- c. In averaging grades, any fractional part .5 (1/2) or over will be rounded *up* to the next whole number (examples: 90.5 = 91; 81.6 = 82; 59.51 = 60).
- d. The determination of passing or failing a subject is made by converting the letter grades and getting the average of the quarter grades and semester exam. If the average is below 60, the subject is failed.

2) Grading

Excessive unexcused absences may result in a loss of academic credit, grade retention, or referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation. Extenuating circumstances will be considered. (*Guidelines are listed in Policy 6.1.4*)

- a. The teacher must always be able to provide evidence (graded materials) to justify a grade given on an assignment for a quarter period, semester, or year.
- b. All grades assigned must be on grade level content standards. Assignments completed by scholars below grade level can **NOT** be used as part of the grade.

- c. Assignments made via any online platform may not have a due date and time outside of normal school hours. It is recommended that the work be made due at the beginning of the school day or class period.
- d. The teacher must document that a review of the scholar's performance and formal intervention have been completed for any scholar failing a core content course including but not limited to re-teaching and reassessing on standards not mastered. Re-teaching is an integral part of good instruction. Teachers should continuously monitor the progress of scholars to make sure the concepts and skills are mastered. When teachers identify scholars who do not understand the concepts presented, either by formal or informal assessment, they will select re-teaching activities that present the content in a new or different learning modality using evidenced-based instructional strategies and interventions. When a scholar receives a failing grade, a re-test may be given. Standalone standards-based assessments should not be administered strictly to obtain a passing grade. Re-teaching should be continued throughout the year on standards previously taught, and not mastered by scholars. These standards may be included on new or comprehensive assessments administered to all scholars. The documentation of the review and intervention should take place throughout the grading period.
- e. Grades must be determined on the basis of several factors (projects, class assignments, activities, etc.) rather than one source, such as a test. Quarter grades will be determined by the following scale: 60% major grades (tests projects, etc.) and 40% class work. Homework should not be taken for a grade unless it is derived from a major project. In high school, Advanced Placement (AP) teachers should work with principals to ensure that AP guidelines pertaining to grading are followed.
- f. All subject areas are expected to administer a minimum of 4 different (see letter E for clarification of different) major and 8 different minor grades during a grading period to give an overall indication of the scholar's performance. A minimum of 2 different major and 4 different minor grades must be administered by the middle of the nine week grading period. The number of minor grades must exceed the number of major grades. (If an adopted school calendar has a quarter with less than 9 weeks, the number of required assignments can be altered at the principal's discretion for that particular marking period.) Major grades are defined as tests, projects, essays, research papers, etc. Minor grades are defined as daily classroom grades, i.e., progress monitoring, quizzes, checklists, observations, etc. Class participation grades count as a minor grade and may be administered only once per grading period. The number of grades should not exceed the number of days in the grading period. If more than 4 major and 8 minor grades

are given, the same 4:8 ratio must be met.

- g. **The digital gradebook should not have any empty cells.** There should be a grade recorded for each scholar for each activity.
- h. Lesson presentations must be uploaded into the lesson plan drive and must not exceed a five-day time span from the start date to the end date. That is to say that the same lesson plan is not to be copied for more than five days.
- i. All elementary and secondary grades will be calculated in PowerSchool.
- j. Each graded assignment must be recorded in the digital gradebook. The activity name for each graded assignment in PowerSchool will include the standard covered, as well as the task performed. For example - L10.12 Vocab. In addition to referencing the standard in the activity name, all standards covered in the assessment *must be* attached to the activity.
- k. The emphasis and importance of an activity or test should be reflected in the value assigned to it in the overall evaluation design used by the teacher and communicated to the class.
- l. A scholar will have the opportunity to make up exams, tests, or work which occurred during an excused absence or suspension. When a scholar returns to school after an excused absence, he/she has three (3) days or the number of days equal to the number of days of consecutive absences; whichever is greater, following the scholar's return to class to make up work. It shall be the responsibility of the scholar or the scholar's parents, guardians, or custodian to arrange with teacher to make up work. If the same assessment is not given to the scholar as make up work, then the work given must be an *alternate but equal form of the work* done by the class. Adding value to a benchmark test to substitute for a make-up test or other assignment is *not* in keeping with the system's procedure. Creating an assignment that has additional standards or content different from the original work done by the class is also *not* in keeping with the system's procedure. This plan yields different evaluation designs for scholars in the same class.

Any absence not falling into the categories listed below or otherwise excused by the principal will be unexcused.

- a. Personal Illness

- b. Serious Illness in the family verified by school personnel
 - c. Death in the immediate family (not to exceed one week)
 - d. Absence for the observance of recognized holidays of the child's own faith
 - e. Inclement weather which makes it dangerous to attend school
 - f. Court-required appearances
 - g. Emergency conditions as determined by the Executive Director or principal
 - h. Prior approval from the principal
- m. An assignment that has a specific due date may have points associated with the scholar submitting the assignment on time. Penalty points for turning in such an assignment late cannot exceed 5 points per day. (That is to say that the beginning grade value must not drop below 95 (or A) after day one, 90 (or B) after day two, etc.)
- n. Conduct is **not** to be considered in determining academic grades.
- o. Progress reports and nine-week report cards will be monitored by school administrators to prevent and address high failure rates.
- p. The teacher will have the numerical average in the grade book and/or section reports for academic work for quarter periods. The numerical average and letter grade for each quarter period will be recorded on report cards.
- q. The teacher will retain scholar papers for the documentation of grades earned during a given year and will keep these papers until report cards are distributed after the first semester of the following year. Scholar records must be readily available to school and district administrators throughout the school year, including the summer months. Teachers must not delete any work done in Google Classroom or any other online platform from the previous year.
- r. A scholar will not participate in classes offered for remediation/intervention during the school day if he/she is required to miss regular classroom instruction in any core subjects.

3) Report Cards/ Section Sheets

- a. PowerSchool will not accept grades above an average of 100.
- b. The final/yearly grade will be an average of the two-semester grades

for one-year courses.

- c. Schools should follow the guidelines established by the Director of Operations for generating report cards.
- d. The numerical average and letter grade for each quarter period and semester will be recorded on the report cards.
- e. The direct entry option will not be available to teachers without first obtaining a work order to document the rationale of overriding the grade book grade earned.
- f. Grades on report cards will not be changed without written authorization from the principal following the grade correction procedures. **Once grade posting is complete for any quarter/semester, request for grade corrections must be made using the district's Grade Correction Procedures. The principal will submit documentation for any post-quarter grade changes to the Director of Operations office.**
- g. Principals will devise a method of documenting the scholar/parent's receipt of report cards. (i.e., scholars will sign for receipt of report cards.)

4) Progress Reports/Placement of Grades in PowerSchool

- a. Progress reports generated by PowerSchool will be provided to parents at the midpoint of each grading period for **all** scholars via the PowerSchool online platform. Parents will be notified in writing when progress reports are available for viewing (grades may be viewed at any time).
- b. Major grades must be placed in PowerSchool no more than 7 days (school days) after the assignment is received. Minor Grades must be placed in PowerSchool no more than 5 days (school days) after the assignment is received. This will be monitored by both school administrators and central office personnel. Please note that this applies to work done via blended learning programs as well as work done by scholars receiving homebound services.

5) Academic Promotion and Credits

Elementary Details for Kindergarten promotion are found in the Elementary section of this manual. A scholar in grades 1-2 must pass reading and math for the year to be promoted to the next grade. A scholar in grades 3-5 must pass English-language arts, reading, mathematics,

science, and social studies to be promoted to the next grade level. **New -** K-3 scholars will work to fulfill the requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act, and K-5 scholars must meet the requirements of the Alabama Numeracy Act. Third-grade scholars **MUST** meet the requirements according to the Alabama Literacy ACT in order to be promoted to the next grade level unless a special exemption is met and promotion is determined by the committee. Promotion for all scholars may be determined by a committee if they don't meet the minimum requirements due to extenuating circumstances that occurred during the current school year.

Middle School: A scholar in grades 6-8 must pass English language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies to be promoted to the next grade level. Promotion for all scholars may be determined by a committee if they don't meet the minimum requirements.

6) Academic Honor Rolls

- a. Any scholar with all “A”s in all academic subjects will qualify for the “A” Academic Honor Roll.
- b. Any scholar with any combination of “A”s and “B”s in all academic subjects will qualify for the “A-B” Academic Honor Roll.
- c. Any scholar with “B”s in all academic subjects will qualify for the “A-B” Academic Honor Roll.
- d. Conduct, effort, and attendance will not be factors in identifying scholars for academic honor rolls.

7) Transfers into the System

- a. Transfers from district-approved Accredited Schools (State or Regional)

A scholar entering the Life Academy from an accredited school is placed conditionally until his/her records are received from the school previously attended.

If a scholar transfers to another school during the school year, records will not be forwarded until the receiving school makes a request. Transfer Records should not be given to parents to deliver to the receiving school.

If a scholar transfers to another school that is not in the system, the originating school should send a copy of the

cumulative card to the receiving school upon written request.

b. Transfers from Non-accredited Schools (State, Regional, or Home)

A scholar entering Life Academy from a non-accredited school should be evaluated for grade/course placement by the school principal or his/her designee. Placement will be determined by using a variety of data sources including transcripts and standardized test scores. For scholars in grades 9, academic core courses will be validated by the scholar passing a content-based, course specific test developed by the school system. The validation test may be administered in the school setting.

c. Absence of Records

In the event of controversial records/transcripts or the absence of records, scholars in grades 9-12 shall take placement tests consisting of the school's previous semester tests for core courses. Guidelines are listed in the

Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) 290-3-1-.02(7). scholars in grades 1-8 shall take placement tests consisting of the school's previous quarterly tests for core courses.

d. Transfers of scholars with Disabilities

1. A scholar with a disability who transfers from a system in Alabama, within the same school year, and enrolls in Life Academy (LIFE), with a current IEP, must be provided a free and appropriate public education. These services will be comparable to those described in the child's previously held IEP until such time as LIFE adopts the previously held IEP or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP.
2. A scholar with a disability who transfers from out of state, within the same school year, and enrolls in Life Academy, with a current IEP, must be provided a free and appropriate public education. These services will be comparable to those described in the child's previous IEP, until LIFE conducts a new evaluation and determines eligibility. If an evaluation is determined to be necessary by the IEP Team, that evaluation will be considered to be an initial evaluation.

3. If a reasonable attempt is made to obtain the scholar's records and an IEP is not available, LIFE is not required to provide services. LIFE must place the child in a general education program and conduct an initial evaluation. The IEP team will determine eligibility and appropriate special education services.

8) Grading/Promotion/Retention for Scholars with Disabilities

- a. At the beginning of each school year, the case manager will assess all data available on each scholar to determine subjects significantly affected by the disability. A copy of the appropriate section of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be given to the scholar's general education teacher(s).

The case manager will inform each teacher of his/her specific responsibilities including the specific accommodations, modifications, and/or supports related to implementing the scholar's IEP. General education teachers must sign the scholar's *Persons Responsible for IEP Implementation* verifying they have been given access to the IEP and have been informed of their responsibility in implementing the IEP.

- b. The scale to be used in determining grades for a scholar is:

A = 90 - 100

B = 80 - 89

C = 70 - 79

D = 60 - 69

F = 0 - 59

- c. Each annual goal on the IEP will be evaluated in terms of the criteria stated.
- d. Progress reports (indicating whether the progress, if continued, is sufficient to meet the annual goal) will be sent to parents in accordance with timelines established in the IEP.
- e. The teacher(s) must be able to provide evidence to justify all subject area grades. Evidence must be available to justify the evaluation listed for an IEP goal.

9) Evaluation of scholars with Disabilities

- a. General education teachers are to ensure that scholars with

disabilities in general education courses are not penalized because of time spent out of the general education program for resource instruction.

- b. A scholar with a disability should not be expected to do all the class activities missed while participating in a resource program. If a test is missed because of participation in a resource program, provision is to be made for a make-up test without penalty to the scholar.
- c. Self-contained scholars will receive instruction at the appropriate level and will be graded on their progress according to their specified pathway.

10) Gifted Program

a. Definition

Gifted scholars are those who perform at high levels in academic and/or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These scholars require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. scholars possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor.

The Alabama Administrative Code requires that LEAs must utilize a variety of service delivery options that may include but are not limited to resource room pull-out, consultation, mentorships, advanced classes, and independent study. Gifted scholars' need for complexity and accelerated pacing must be accommodated for in the general education program. Accommodations may include strategies such as flexible skills grouping, cluster grouping with differentiation, curriculum compacting, subject and grade acceleration, dual enrollment, and advanced classes. Each LEA must establish and implement a procedure for considering any requests for subject or grade acceleration.

b. Service Delivery

LIFE has selected the following service delivery options in senior high schools:

 K-2 Consultation (gifted specialist consults with general education teachers to address the needs of gifted scholars in the general education classroom).

■ 3-5 Resource room pull-out in the elementary school

■ 6-8 Enrichment

■ 9 Enrichment

c. Referral Process

- (1) A scholar may be referred for the gifted program by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, or other individuals with knowledge of the scholar's abilities.

For each scholar referred, information is gathered in the following three areas:

Aptitude Assessed through an individual or group test of intelligence or creativity.

Characteristics A behavior rating scale designed to assess gifted behaviors is completed by a classroom teacher.

Performance At least three indicators at a gifted level such as achievement test scores, grades, products, work samples, and/or portfolios.

- (2) Tests and evaluative materials selected should be sensitive to cultural, economic, and linguistic differences and must be administered by qualified personnel under the supervision of an LEA.
- (3) For scholars who exhibit creative thinking, the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking must be administered unless the scholar has been determined eligible with a verbal or nonverbal assessment. The scores from the assessment/items used are entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the scholar qualifies for gifted services.
- (4) To initiate a referral for gifted services, contact the Chief Academic Officer at (334) 451-3127 and the information will be relayed to the contracted gifted specialist.

d. Evaluation of Gifted scholar's Elementary scholars Only

Elementary Resource Room Pullout

- i. General education teachers are to ensure that scholars are not penalized because of time out of the regular program to participate in the gifted program.
- ii. A gifted scholar should not be expected to do the class activities missed while participating in the program and the number of grades should be adjusted accordingly.
- iii. If a test is missed because of participation in the program, provision is to be made for a make-up test without penalty to the scholar. Since a scholar will miss the same day of regular class each week, provision may need to be made for the scholar to make up scheduled tests on a regular basis (e.g., Friday spelling tests could be administered on Thursday).
- iv. The scholar will receive an evaluation from the gifted teacher at the end of each unit of study. Units of credit are not to be awarded for participation in the gifted program as in the regular program.
- v. If a gifted scholar does not perform satisfactorily in the majority of his/her regular program classes, the provision will be made for a parent conference. A Gifted Specialist should participate in the conference. A gifted scholar may not be denied gifted services because of classroom performance or behavior without written consent from the parent.

11) General Grading Procedures/Regulations Related to English Learners – ELs

Each school will follow specific procedures for identifying ELs. These procedures are outlined in the *LIFE Comprehensive Plan for Serving Limited-English Proficient scholars*. All faculty and administrators should be familiar with this document which is in accordance with the requirements established by the Alabama State Department of Education regarding programs and services for English language learners under Title III, Part A, Subpart 1, of *No Child Left Behind*, 2001.

a. Guidelines for Classroom Teachers of **ELs**

(Also read “Grading and Grading Systems” in the current *LIFE Plan* carefully)

- (1) The same methods and criteria applied to the peers of ELs cannot always be used to assess scholars who lack English language proficiency.
- (2) Teachers should maintain high expectations for scholar learning while providing accommodated lessons and assignments so that ELs can progress.
- (3) Assessments should be accommodated so that ELs can demonstrate their knowledge and skills. **Accommodations must be documented on all assignments and/or assessments.**
- (4) Grades should be based on work that has been accommodated to diminish language barriers. Teachers will use the *ESL Grading Guidelines* document for guidance.
- (5) If a scholar **can** demonstrate knowledge and skills in a particular subject, i.e., math, he/she should be assigned an achievement grade.
- (6) ELs **must not be failed in a content area on the basis of lack of English language proficiency**. Appropriate instructional accommodations are the key to appropriate grading.
- (7) Language-minority scholars may receive failing grades and may be retained when their failure is due to problems other than those caused by lack of language proficiency (e.g. participation). **Participation in the learning process**, in direct or accommodated methods, **is required** for all scholars. **Failure to participate requires that a failing grade be sent to parents**. No scholar should be left behind in the learning process, and no EL should be failed or retained without proof of accommodated instruction being provided.
- (8) Involvement of ELs in the learning process should not be postponed because of language limitations. Teachers should find ways to include ELs in the learning process. Non-meaningful grades should not be assigned to ELs.
- (9) Specific accommodations and strategies are outlined in the

LIFE Comprehensive Plan for Serving Limited-English Proficient scholars and should be followed. Specific training in how to accommodate ELs will be provided to grade level and content area teachers. Teachers who need other assistance or training should contact the school principal.

- (10) For **beginning** ELs (non-English proficient or limited-English proficient) alternative assessment is a preferred option. Examples include, but are not limited to; asking scholars to prepare portfolios, present projects or oral reports, make lists and other products that express what scholars have learned.
- (11) Teachers, under the leadership of the EL Committee, will document instructional services provided to and progress made by each EL.
- (12) All progress reports and daily or weekly grades sent home by the teacher should be explained on the EL progress report so that the parents will understand exactly where the scholar is performing in terms of educational goals. Copies of graded work should be kept in the profile folder of each EL with documentation of accommodations provided.
- (13) **Scholars in Grades 9-12** must be given the opportunity to earn credits toward graduation. scholars should be given grades on accommodated work as outlined above.

b. Summary

- (1) ELs must receive accommodated content work when needed. (2) Grading is based on accommodated work.
- (3) ELs must not be failed on the basis of lack of English language proficiency.
- (4) Grades placed in a scholar's cumulative folder must reflect the scholar's academic achievement on grade level academic content and scholar academic achievement standards.

(5) scholars who participate in pull-out ESL instruction should receive grades for learning in that context.

(6) All schools serving ELs must be able to demonstrate progress in the achievements of their language-minority scholars. Accommodations should be measurably effective.

c. State Mandated Testing

Only ELs who are in their first year of enrollment in an English-speaking US school may be excluded from certain tests. At this time, all other ELs participate in state assessments. The LIFE Testing Coordinator and Director of Operations will keep schools apprised of current requirements.

12) State Regulations for Testing scholars of Special Populations

- a. All scholars of special populations must have the opportunity to participate in the existing Alabama testing program as well as to earn the necessary Carnegie units to meet high school graduation requirements.
- b. In administering any of the tests included in the state program, appropriate accommodations will be made to ensure that scholars of special populations receive individual consideration of their disabilities or barriers without changing the nature, content, or integrity of the test.
- c. All decisions regarding participation in the testing program and/or accommodations must be made on an individual basis and will be justified and documented in the IEP, 504 Plan, and/or LEP Plan. Accommodations are only those that have been practiced regularly in the classroom when the scholar receives instruction and/or takes subject area tests. These decisions must be reviewed on an annual basis or more often as needed.

13) Summer School / After School Enrichment

- a. Summer School programs and After School Enrichment are offered in accordance with the Alabama Literacy (K-3) and Numeracy (K-5) Act for scholars who exhibit deficiencies with foundational reading and math problem-solving skills. It is offered as a courtesy for scholars in grades 6-12 and is based on funding.
- b. Time requirements governing one unit of credit during summer school shall be a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction, or scholars may

demonstrate mastery of Alabama course of study content standards without specific instructional time. *Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) 290-3-1-10(6)*

- c. A scholar must secure written approval from the principal of the school he/she is presently attending prior to enrollment in any school other than the school he/she is presently attending, if credit is desired.
- d. If a course is offered at a Life Academy summer school, credit will not be given for that course taken at another school.
- e. The teacher must always be able to provide evidence (graded materials) to justify a grade given on an assignment for a quarter period, semester, or year. This evidence is to remain at the host site.
- f. The school will retain scholar papers for the documentation of grades earned during a given summer school and will keep these papers until report cards are distributed after the first semester of the following year. scholar records must be readily available to school and district administrators. This documentation is to remain at the host site.
- g. scholars must meet the Summer School criteria to be eligible to participate. This eligibility includes that an elementary (K-5) scholar must have a minimum final grade of a 50(F) and a secondary (6-12) scholar must have a minimum final grade of a 40(F) to participate. The school principal may submit, to the chief academic officer, a written request to grant exceptions to the eligibility criteria. The request may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

14) Exchange of Information and Transfer of Records

a. Transfer During The Year

- (1) If a scholar transfers to another school during the school year, records will not be forwarded until the receiving school makes a request. Transfer Records should not be given to parents to deliver to the receiving school.
- (2) If a scholar transfers to another school outside the system, the originating school should send a copy of the cumulative card to the receiving school upon written request.
- (3) If a scholar transfers from another school outside the

system, the school counselor must ensure receipt of records from the previous school in a timely manner. The counselor or designated employee must put incoming records on the transcript in PowerSchool within three weeks of transfer.

- (4) If a scholar transfers to another school within the LIFE system during the school year, the originating school should send copies of the following and keep originals:

(a) With Transfer Form

(1) Transfer/Withdrawal Notice (form)

(2) Grade Summary Sheet (report card)

(3) Immunization Certificate (a copy must remain at the school)

(b) Written Request of Records from the receiving school:
(Should be provided within 48 hours by the receiving school)

(1) Withdrawal form

(2) State standardized test results (labels should be placed on the cumulative records by the sending school.)

(3) Grade/Credit Recovery Documentation Forms

(4) Cumulative Record card – send a copy, keep original

(5) Immunization Certificate

(6) scholar Health Folder, Annual Health Screening Record, and Individual Medication Chart – send copy, keep original

(7) Educational Planning Worksheet

(8) Copy of Social Security Card

(9) Copy of Birth Certificate

(10) 504 records, ESL records, RTI records, (all hand delivered and signature receipt received).

(11) ESL folders, if applicable, must be hand-delivered

(12) Final Grade Summary Report (report card)

(13) Registration card (scholars with disabilities only)

(14) Academic/Career Plan folder and Career Interest Inventory, Grade 8

(15) Documentation of parental understanding of high school graduation requirements.

b. Special Education Records

Eligibility and IEP folders for scholars with disabilities will remain at Life Academy. Electronic records can be requested via Special Programs in PowerSchool.

c. End-of-the-Year Transfer to the Next Grade Span

- (1) Within fifteen (30) work days after the end of the school year, “sending” school principal must furnish all “receiving” schools with a comprehensive list, with of all regular program scholars being promoted to the “receiving” school. (Example the Primary school would send the list of regular program 4th graders being promoted to the 5th grade to the Intermediate school.)
- (2) Copies of the following records must be on file in the record room for all scholars and both schools should have access to:
 - (a) Immunization Certificate
 - (b) Kuder Inventory Profile
 - (c) Cumulative Record card
 - (d) Grade/Credit Recovery Documentation Forms 1, 6, 7 (As Applicable)
 - (e) scholar Health Folder, Annual Health Screening Record, and Individual Medication Chart
 - (f) State standardized test results (labels should be placed on the cumulative records by the sending school.) Since assessment results may not be received before August in the succeeding academic year, Assessment results should be sent within 15 days of receipt.
 - (g) Home Language Survey form
 - (h) 504 records, ESL records, RTI records (all hand delivered and signature receipt received).
 - (i) ESL folders, if applicable, must be hand-delivered
 - (j) Final Grade Summary Report (report card)
 - (k) Registration card (scholars with disabilities only)
- (3) Include all items listed above, with each scholar’s cumulative record. Alphabetize the folders. (labels should be placed on cumulative records by the sending school)
- (4) All records from sending school must be forwarded to receiving schools within five (5) working days after the end of summer school.

- (5) Within fifteen (15)) work days after the end of the school year, eligibility folders for scholars with disabilities, ELs, and 504 plans, and all records listed in handled according to the designated coordinators.

d. Obtaining Accurate Dropout Data

Secondary school principals will follow procedures established by the Director of Operation for documenting scholar movement out of their buildings.

15) Scheduling

Scholar schedule changes may occur at any time throughout the year to accommodate the needs of the school and scholar. However, no schedule changes involving course changes may occur after the fourth week of the school year. For example, a secondary school scholar may ***NOT*** request a schedule change from Environmental Biology to Physical Science after the fourth week of the school year. An elementary scholar may NOT be moved to a lower grade level after the fourth week of the school year.

16) Military Interstate Compact Agreement

All 50 states have signed the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The goal of the compact is to replace the widely varying policies affecting transitioning military scholars. The compact leverages consistency:

- It uses a comprehensive approach that provides a consistent policy in every school district and in every state that chooses to join.

- The compact addresses key educational transition issues encountered by military families including enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation. -Children of active duty members of the United States uniformed services, National Guard, and Reserve on active duty orders, and members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year are eligible for assistance under the compact. For more information regarding the application of the Military Interstate Compact Agreement, contact the Central Office.

17) Converting Letter Grades and Standards-Based Grades to Numerical Grades

When scholars transfer into the district from an accredited school that utilizes letter grades or standards-based grades for the report cards and transcripts, they can be converted to numeric grades using the following procedure.

- a. First, contact the sending school/district and ask for any conversion table that they use for their records. If the school is able to provide this information, and use their system for conversion.
- b. If the sending school's conversion system is non-existent or unavailable, use the following recommendation for converting grades for the transferring scholar.

Glossary

1. **ACCELERATION** - the process of enabling a scholar to advance in an academic course of study.
2. **ALABAMA CONNECTING CLASSROOMS, EDUCATORS, & scholars STATEWIDE (ACCESS)** – A statewide distance learning initiative that provides high school scholars with basic courses and electives.
3. **ACCOMMODATIONS** - a change to the delivery of instruction or a method of scholar performance that does not significantly change the content or the conceptual difficulty of the curriculum.
4. **ACCREDITED SCHOOLS** - schools that meet the necessary requirements and standards set by the State Department of Education to improve scholar performance.
5. **ACT** – a curriculum and standards-based educational and career planning tool that assess scholars' academic readiness for college.
6. **Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program** – a longitudinal assessment for scholars in grades 3-8. ACAP is aligned to common core curriculum standards in the content areas of English, math, reading and science with direct writing at all grades.
7. **Alabama Literacy Act** - the Alabama Literacy Act primarily focuses on improving reading proficiency for students in grades K-3. Research shows that reading at grade level by third grade is a crucial predictor of future academic success.
8. **Alabama Numeracy Act** - the Alabama Numeracy Act centers on improving students' mathematical abilities and numeracy skills in grades K-5.
9. **ASSESSMENTS** - anything used for measuring the skill, knowledge, or aptitudes of an individual or group (tests, worksheets, projects, term papers, and authentic assessments such as portfolios).

- 10. BENCHMARK** - a point of reference from which a scholar's progress may be measured.
- 11. BELL-SHAPED CURVE** - the characteristic shape of a graph for the normal distribution of grades.
- 12. CARNEGIE UNITS** – a “unit” earned toward high school graduation based upon a scholar demonstrating mastery of academic standards.
- 13. CORE SUBJECTS** - Mathematics, Science, English, and Social Studies are core subjects.
- 14. CREDIT RECOVERY (CR)** - is a course-specific, skill-based learning opportunity for scholars who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering content/skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion.
- 15. CUMULATIVE CARD** - the official cumulative record of a scholar's scholarship.
- 16. ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELs)** - any scholar who is not fluent in English because it is not their first (primary) language.
- 17. EXCUSED ABSENCE** - any absence not falling into the categories listed below or otherwise excused by the Executive Director, principal or the Executive Director's designee will be unexcused.
- a) Personal illness
 - b) Serious illness in the family verified by official school personnel
 - c) Death in the immediate family (not to exceed one week)
 - d) Absence for the observance of recognized holidays of the child's own faith
 - e) Inclement weather which makes it dangerous to attend school
 - f) Court-required appearances
 - g) Emergency conditions as determined by the Executive Director or principal
 - h) Prior permission of the principal with request from the parent, guardian, or legal custodian. Parent should complete the “Prior Approval of Absence” form (obtained from the school office) which must be signed by the principal before the absence takes place.
- 17. HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY** - a questionnaire required of all scholars enrolling in a Life Academy. It identifies scholars whose primary language is one other than English.

- 18. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)** - a written plan for the provision of special education and related services for a scholar with disabilities.
- 19. INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) team** - a team consisting of the parent(s) of a scholar with a disability, at least one general education teacher of the scholar, the special education teacher serving the scholar, the Local Education Agency (LEA) representative, an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluations, the scholar (when appropriate), and others at the discretion of the parent or LEA. This team writes the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the scholar.
- 20. INDIVIDUALIZED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PLAN (I-ELP)** - a plan required for all language minority scholars who qualify for ESL services. Each plan determines the level and range of services for identified scholars.
- 21. INDIVIDUALIZED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PLAN (I-ELP) team** - a team consisting of the administrator, parent, ESL teacher (if available), ESL facilitator, the regular classroom teacher, special education teacher (if needed). This team writes the I-ELP for the scholar.
- 22. PowerSchool SIS** - the data management software used to report scholar data.
- 23. INTERVENTION / STRATEGIES** – Response to Instruction (RtI) is a framework that combines core instruction and ongoing formative assessment, progress monitoring, and intervention/acceleration within a three tiered system of support to maximize scholar achievement and reduce behavior problems.

Examples of Intervention Strategies can be, but are not limited to the following:

ABC Brainstorm, Anticipation Guide, Chunking the Text, Comparison-Contrast Charts, Frayer Model Graphic Organizer, Guided Reading, Inquiry Chart, Jigsaw, K– W – L, Prereading Plan, Problem-Solution Chart, Retell, Sequential Order, Summarizing, Think Aloud, Think-Pair-Share, Turn and Talk, Venn Diagrams, Vocabulary Quilts, Word Wall

- 24. MAJOR GRADES** - may include chapter tests, unit tests, teacher made tests, projects, essays, speeches, post-tests, and other local assessments.

- 25. MINOR GRADES** - may include daily classroom work, quizzes, checklists, and observations.
- 26. MODIFICATIONS** - a change to the delivery of instruction or method of scholar performance that changes the content or conceptual difficulty of the curriculum.
- 27. PROBLEM SOLVING TEAM (PST)** – a model to guide general education intervention services for all scholars who have academic and/or behavioral difficulties. The PST is central to the school’s successful implementation of the Response to Instruction (RtI) framework.
- 28. QUARTER** - one of four periods of instruction within an academic year.
- 29. RESOURCE TIME** - this environment includes children with disabilities who receive special education and related services outside the general education setting from 021 hours per week.
- 30. RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION (RtI)** – Refers to an instructional framework that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, gifted, supplemental, and special education services in providing high-quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to scholars’ academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. RtI combines core instruction, assessment, and intervention within a multitiered system to increase scholar achievement and reduce behavioral problems.
- 31. RESPONSE to INSTRUCTION (RtI) Tiers:**
- Tier 1 – Classroom teachers will use a variety of instructional strategies and positive behavioral supports within the core curriculum to address individual instructional needs
 - Tier 2 – Based on assessments, discipline, grades, attendance, and other data, scholars who are unsuccessful with Tier 1 will be provided additional researchbased interventions
 - Tier 3 – scholars who continue to misbehave or struggle in Tier 2 will be referred to the PST and receive more intensive interventions
- 32. SALUTATORIAN** - the scholar having the second highest grade point average in the graduating senior class.

- 33. SCHOOL AUTHORIZED ACTIVITY** - any school function authorized by the school principal.
- 34. SELF-CONTAINED** - this environment includes children with disabilities who receive special education and related services outside the general education setting for more than 21 hours per week.
- 35. SEMESTER** - one of the two 18-week periods of instruction into which the academic year is divided.
- 36. TESTS** - anything used for measuring the skill, knowledge, or aptitudes of an individual or group (tests, worksheets, projects, term papers, and authentic assessments such as portfolios).
- 37. UNDERAGE scholar** - a scholar that is not age appropriate for attendance in a public school according to the Code of Alabama 16-28-4.
- 38. UNEXCUSED ABSENCE** - any absence for which a written excuse was not provided within three (3) days of the absence. In addition, truancy,
- missing a bus or ride, unauthorized trips, birthday or other celebrations will be considered unexcused.
- 39. VALEDICTORIAN** - the scholar having the highest grade point average in the graduating senior class.
- 40. WEIGHTED** - having extra value added to a final grade for advanced classes. For Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual Enrollment courses, scholars will receive 1.0 extra quality point and high school scholars will receive 0.5 extra quality point for Advanced/Honors courses

GRADING, PROMOTION, and
RETENTION PROCEDURES
in
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
(Grades K-5)

Elementary School GPR Specific Information

1) Reporting of Progress in Kindergarten

- a. The scale for determining the quarter grade, semester grade, and the yearly grade for a subject is stated below:

Mastering Standards	90 - 100	5	Excellent
Meeting Standards	80 - 89	4	Good
Partially Meeting Standards	70 - 79	3	Satisfactory
Approaching Standards	60 - 69	2	Needs Improvement
Not Meeting Standards	0 - 59	1	Unsatisfactory

Note: The maximum number of points allowed for grading purposes is one hundred (100). PowerSchool will not accept grades over 100. "I" (Incomplete) is not to be inserted in lieu of a grade.

- b. Teachers will assign grades in the areas of English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education.
- c. The teacher will use the 1 to 5 performance scale when entering grades in the grade book. The graded activities in PowerSchool should be set up as follows; Total: 100 points, Weight Multiplier: 1.0, and Weight Addition: 0.0. The digital gradebook will automatically convert the grade to the appropriate scale.
- d. All activities should be assigned a gradebook category of KINDERGARTEN, which carries a weight of 100%.
- e. The teacher must always be able to provide evidence to justify grades given for a quarter period, semester, or for a year (e.g. scholar work samples, graded materials, scholar checklist).
- f. Before any scholar can receive a failing grade in any core content area, the teacher must document that a review of

the scholar's performance and possible formal interventions have been completed.

Promotion/Retention in Kindergarten

State rules and regulations, as well as District requirements, will be followed regarding assessment procedures and criteria used to determine the readiness of a kindergarten scholar for first grade. Multiple, state approved, sources of data will be used to identify each scholar's strengths and needs, determine the appropriate placement for each scholar, and to assist with the design of appropriate instructional programs and teaching methods. Because kindergarten is not required in the state of Alabama, the teacher, parent or guardian, and principal must agree upon the necessity for retention of a kindergarten child based on records kept by the teacher. Appeal of the decision may be made to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in writing prior to July 1st. The scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the final placement decision.

2) Code for Reporting Progress in Core Subjects (Grades 1-5)

- a. Basic Social and English Language Arts core subjects are defined as:
 - i) math
 - ii) science
 - iii) social studies
 - iv) reading
 - v) language arts-(includes grammar/spelling/handwriting)
- b. A scholar's academic performance is to be evaluated based on grade level proficiency criteria in regular program classes. For example, if a scholar is in third grade, evaluation is to be based on success at the third grade level.
- c. The teacher must always be able to provide evidence (graded materials) to justify a grade given on an assignment for a quarter period, semester, or year.

3) Code for Reporting scholar Progress in Music and Physical Education, (Grades K-5)

- a. Grades for these areas will be reported numerically using the same grading scale as core academics. The grades will all be weighted equally, as 100%, and entered as the category Elementary Elective Grade.

- b. The teacher must always be able to provide evidence (graded materials) to justify a grade given on an assignment for a quarter period, semester, or year.
- c. Teachers are expected to assign a minimum of four grades during each grading period for all non-core courses.

5) Progress Reports

- a) Parents/guardians are informed regarding scholar progress by receiving work samples every two weeks beginning the first week in September.
- b) All elementary school scholars will receive a mid-quarter report of academic progress available through the PowerSchool online platform. This is to notify parents/guardians of all scholars of their progress.

GRADING, PROMOTION, and
RETENTION PROCEDURES
in
MIDDLE SCHOOLS
(Grades 6-8)

Middle School GPR Specific Information

1) Grade Reporting.

The numerical averages for each quarter period are used at the end of the year (6th, 7th, and 8th) to determine the letter grade for the year.

2) Progress Reports

All middle school scholars will receive a mid-quarter report of academic progress each grading period via PowerSchool online platform. Schools may issue progress reports more often than this minimum requirement.

APPENDIX 1

I. Scholars

- 6.1.1 Compulsory Attendance and Entrance Age – All persons between the age of six (6) and seventeen (17) years of age are required by state law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed

by the State Board of Education unless the person holds a certificate of exemption issued by the Executive Director or is otherwise exempt under state law.

- a. *Kindergarten Age Requirement* – A scholar must be five years old on or before September 1, the date set by State guidelines, to be admitted for kindergarten for the current school year.
- b. *First Grade Age Requirement* – To be admitted to the first grade for the current school year, a scholar must be six years old on or before December 31st of that school year, which is the date set by the State guidelines.

However, a scholar who has successfully completed a qualified out-of- state kindergarten, according to that state's entrance code, during the past year and is not six years old by the date set by the State guidelines can attend Grade 1 in the Montgomery County Schools. In addition, a scholar who started Grade 1 in another state, according to that state's entrance code, and is not six years old by the date set by the State guidelines, is considered a transfer and admitted to school to continue in Grade 1. Appropriate documentation must be presented. A scholar transferring to Life Academy from private schools within Alabama may enter first grade only if the state age requirement for entry has been met.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-3 (1975)]

- a. *Admission Policy for Homeless, Migratory, Immigrant, and Limited English Proficient scholars and Children in Foster Care* – All homeless, migrant, and immigrant scholars, children in foster care, and English language learners will have equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including public preschool education, provided to other children and youth and will be provided the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and state scholar performance standards to which all scholars are held without being stigmatized or isolated.

The enrollment of homeless, migrant, and immigrant scholars, children in foster care, and limited English proficient children and youth shall not be denied or delayed due to any barriers that are specifically prohibited by applicable law, which may include the following:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts

- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
 - Guardianship or custody requirements ■ Lack of social security card

b. *Homeless scholars* –

- (i) *Enrollment.* Homeless scholars will be permitted to enroll without regard to residency status and will not be denied services offered to other scholars in the school system. Homeless scholars may also be entitled to other accommodations under federal law.

Homeless scholars may continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless for the duration of their homelessness, or for the remainder of the academic year if the scholar becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Otherwise, a homeless scholar may be enrolled in any school in the system that non-homeless scholars who live in the attendance area in which the scholar is living are eligible to attend.

- (ii) *Dispute Resolution.* When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless scholar in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The school will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The principal of the school will notify the Board's Homeless Liaison of the dispute. The Homeless Liaison will expeditiously carry out the system's dispute resolution procedures as detailed in the Board's homeless scholar plan.

c. *scholars in Foster Care* – A scholar in foster care will enroll or remain in the scholar's school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in such scholar's best interest.

If it is not in a scholar's best interest to stay in the school of origin, a scholar in foster care may be enrolled in any school in the system that serves the attendance area in which the scholar is living, even if the scholar is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.

d. *scholars Expelled or Suspended from Other School Systems* – Any

APPENDIX 2

Code of Alabama Chapter 290-3-1 Scholar Placement

Chapter 290-3-1 Education

(k) Transfers from Non-Accredited Schools/School Setting(s). Any school/school setting not accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education shall be considered a non-accredited school for the purpose of transfer of class/grade credit. Core courses shall be defined as English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

1. The transfer of credits and/or appropriate placement shall be as follows: (i)

Credit for elective courses shall be transferred without validation. (ii)

Non-contested credit for core courses shall be transferred as follows:

(I) Using all official records and nationally standardized tests, the principal or his/her designee shall determine placement and notify the scholar and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

(II) If the parent(s)/guardian(s) agrees with the placement decision, the scholar shall be placed.

(III) Following placement, for any initial core course successfully completed, transfer of previous credit earned at a non-accredited school(s) in that subject area shall be accepted without further validation.

(iii) Contested credit for core courses shall be transferred as follows:

I. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) disagree with the placement decision, the principal or his/her designee shall supervise the administration of the school's most recent semester test

for each prerequisite core course in which the parent/guardian is requesting enrollment. For each test the scholar passes as determined by the school grading scale, the scholar shall be placed in the next level core course and credit shall be transferred for prerequisite courses.

II. For any test failed, placement shall be made as originally recommended by school officials and no credit shall be transferred for the prerequisite course(s) in that subject.

2. In the event of controversial records/transcripts or the absence of records, the scholar shall take placement tests consisting of the school's previous semester tests for core courses.

(I) Transfers from Accredited Schools: A scholar transferring to an Alabama public school from a public or nonpublic school accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of Education will have all credits and current class/grade placement accepted without validation upon the receipt of an official transcript(s).

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