

A. Purpose

To provide guidance on the academic placement and promotion of students.

B. Background

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to ensuring that every student is prepared to thrive in college, careers, and the community, and to providing each student with rigorous learning experiences and personalized support through each step of their journey towards college and career readiness. When students need additional help, FCPS provides pathways that support student learning, and when students show early readiness, provides opportunities for acceleration. Sometimes students may need both support and acceleration, based on individual needs, or adjusted timelines for advancement of grade levels or specific courses.

C. Definitions

1. “Academic Placement Plan” is defined to mean a documented plan of action created for individual students whose parent/guardian has requested academic placement different from that recommended by school staff. The written agreement will specify length and conditions of the probationary placement.
2. “Individualized Education Plan” (IEP) is defined as a written plan for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
3. “Individual Learning Plan” is defined to mean a documented plan of action created for individual students who are being considered for or has been identified for non-promotion. The plan will include essential objectives that need to be mastered, appropriate interventions and the actions that will be taken by staff to accelerate learning.
4. “Interventions” is defined to include a variety of intervention programs offered by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) that are beyond the regular day-to-day teaching, for students who need help in specific academic areas. The goal is to provide short-term, intensive teaching to help students meet grade-level standards as quickly as possible.
5. “Promotion” is defined to mean the typical progression of a student from one grade to the next, based upon successful completion of coursework.
6. “Retention” or “Non-Promotion” is defined to mean the act of continuing a student’s enrollment in a current grade level based upon unsuccessful completion of coursework.

7. “Section 504 Plan” is defined as a written document developed for an eligible student that allows the student to receive a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

D. Procedures

1. Placement

- a. Access to advanced coursework and/or educational rigor is a fundamental educational right for every FCPS student. Appropriate placement decisions are best made through a collaborative process involving school staff, parents, and the individual student. Placement decisions should be based on providing a pace of learning and level of challenge commensurate with the student’s achievement level and abilities. When making placement decisions, expanding access and eliminating disproportionality is a priority.
- b. When a parent/guardian disagrees with a school-recommended placement decision, they may request an academic placement review. The academic placement review request must be in writing and submitted to the principal. The letter requesting a placement review should provide an explanation of why the student should be enrolled in an advanced class or program and include any supporting documentation that supports the request.
- c. Once the request for an academic placement review is received, the principal and selected staff members will review the letter/documentation and consult with the parent/guardian. If it is determined that a placement change is appropriate, the principal and parent may create an [Academic Placement Plan](#) placing the student in the parent-requested placement on a probationary basis. The [Academic Placement Plan](#) will specify length and conditions of the probationary placement. If the student successfully completes the plan within the probationary period, the probationary status and plan will be removed and the student will remain in the placement. If a student does not successfully meet the expectations of the plan during the probationary period, the principal may reinstate the school-recommended placement or extend the plan.

2. Promotion and Non-Promotion in Elementary School (Grades 2-5)

a. Promotion/Advanced Grade Placement

- i. In elementary school, students are promoted from one grade to the next as they progress through the essential curriculum toward the attainment of the essential goals. It is expected that all students are meeting grade level standards by the beginning of Grade 4. If a student is not meeting grade level standards, using a collaborative process with the student’s parent/guardian, a school team will review and address barriers to meeting this expectation.
- ii. In accordance with [Code of Maryland Regulations \(COMAR\) Sec. 13A.04.07, Gifted and Talented Education](#), as well as [FCPS Regulation 400-88, Gifted and Talented Education](#), FCPS universally screens and identifies students for gifted and talented (GT) services prior to the end of Grade 2. Additional identification occurs within the 3-5 and 6-9 grade bands. Occasionally, a student may be an outlier from the group of identified GT students in their assigned grade in terms of both math

and reading performance. Only in these instances may a student be a candidate for full-grade acceleration, the highest level of GT services in FCPS.

- iii. When it becomes evident that a student might be considered a candidate for review for full-grade acceleration, the parent(s) are consulted. The principal, identified school staff and the parent(s) will meet to discuss the use of a specific protocol of formal assessment and reviews of ability, aptitude, achievement, developmental and social emotional indicators: the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition is used. The results of this instrument inform the school's multidisciplinary team decision. If the decision is made for full-grade acceleration, a conference will be held with the student's parent(s) as early in the last marking period as possible. Full-grade acceleration represents a conditional placement and requires the implementation of the [Academic Placement Plan](#) defined under section C(1).
 - iv. In cases in which a parent requests that a student be placed in Grade 1 without completing Kindergarten, the process outlined in [FCPS Regulation 400-89, Kindergarten-Early Entrance](#), will be followed. Otherwise, the student shall initially be placed in Kindergarten and, pending additional data collection and review, be considered for an [Academic Placement Plan](#).
- b. **Non-Promotion**
- i. When extraordinary circumstances occur after multiple attempts at intervention and review of multiple learning indicators, and a recommendation is made by a multidisciplinary team and/or parents that a student not be promoted, the principal will:
 - 1. Meet with the parent(s) to discuss the recommendation;
 - 2. Consult with the grade level instructional team;
 - 3. Review student performance data and provision of interventions including tutoring or supplemental instruction;
 - 4. If applicable, review the student's Section 504 Plan or IEP progress to ensure that the Section 504 Plan or IEP has been implemented. Retention decisions for students with an IEP are the responsibility of the IEP team through an IEP meeting, and for students with a Section 504 Plan, the Section 504 team through a Section 504 Plan meeting. The principal is responsible for monitoring the final decision. If a student's parent disagrees with the IEP team or Section 504 team's decision, they have the right to appeal the decision according to legally mandated due process procedures outlined in [FCPS Regulation 508-02, School Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Team \(formerly 400-22\)](#) and [FCPS Regulation 400-66, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#); and,
 - 5. Determine if extraordinary circumstances exist, and then determine if non-promotion is in the best interest of the child.
 - ii. Ideally, any judgment made about non-promotion will be a collaborative one, shared by the school staff and parent(s). However, when disagreement occurs, the principal will provide a final decision after conferring with the instructional director.
 - iii. **Appeal of Principal's Decision.** A parent may appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent or their designee, in accordance with [Board Policy 105, Appeal and Hearing Procedures](#).

- iv. If a student is being considered for or has been identified for non-promotion, an [Individual Learning Plan](#) will be developed by school staff in cooperation with the parents to identify the essential objectives that need to be mastered and the response by the school to deploy supports, including appropriate interventions to accelerate learning.
- 3. Promotion and Non-Promotion in Middle School**
- a. **Promotion**
 - i. In Grades 6-8, a student who passes all four core subjects (mathematics, English/language arts, science or social studies) will be promoted.
 - ii. A parent/guardian may request a social promotion to the next grade level if a student is two years or more above the age of their current grade level peers. If the parent desires the student to be advanced and the staff does not agree, the principal will provide the final decision after conferring with the instructional director.
 - b. **Non-Promotion**
 - i. When extraordinary circumstances occur after multiple attempts at intervention and review of multiple learning indicators, and a recommendation is made by a multidisciplinary team and/or parents that a student not be promoted, the principal will:
 - 1. Meet with the parent(s) to discuss the recommendation;
 - 2. Consult with the grade level instructional team;
 - 3. Review student performance data and provision of interventions including tutoring or supplemental instruction;
 - 4. If applicable, review the student's Section 504 Plan or IEP progress to ensure that the Section 504 Plan or IEP has been implemented. Retention decisions for students with an IEP are the responsibility of the IEP team through an IEP meeting, and for students with a Section 504 Plan, the Section 504 team through a Section 504 Plan meeting. The principal is responsible for monitoring the final decision. If a student's parent disagrees with the IEP team or Section 504 team's decision, they have the right to appeal the decision according to legally mandated due process procedures outlined in [FCPS Regulation 508-02, School Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Team \(formerly 400-22\)](#) and [FCPS Regulation 400-66, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#); and,
 - 5. Determine if extraordinary circumstances exist, and then determine if non-promotion is in the best interest of the child.
 - ii. Ideally, any judgment made about non-promotion will be a collaborative one, shared by the school staff and parent(s). However, when disagreement occurs, the principal will provide a final recommendation after conferring with the instructional director.
 - iii. If a student is being considered for or has been identified for non-promotion, an [Individual Learning Plan](#) will be developed by school staff in cooperation with the parents to identify the essential objectives that need to be mastered and the response by the school to deploy supports, including appropriate interventions to accelerate learning. If a student has a Section 504 Plan or an IEP, the creation of an additional [Individual Learning Plan](#) is not necessary.

- iv. In Grades 6-8, non-promotion may be considered by the principal when a student meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - 1. Fails more than two core subjects (mathematics, English/language arts, science or social studies) for the year;
 - 2. Chronic absences;
 - 3. Developmental and/or emotional factors that are documented and shared with school staff by a licensed medical/or mental health professional.
- v. A parent or guardian may request non-promotion for their child. When a parent or guardian makes a request for non-promotion, the principal will meet with the parent or guardian, consult with the grade level instructional team, and use the criteria listed above to evaluate each request to determine if non-promotion is the best option.
- vi. Due to the overwhelming body of research noting the strong correlation between non-promotion and "dropping out" of school, any identified student who may not be promoted to the next grade will have an intervention plan developed by the instructional team to reduce the likelihood of non-promotion. The intervention plan will be based on identified needs and include appropriate interventions. Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in the creation of the intervention plan so they can support both their child's performance and the school staff. If a student has a Section 504 Plan or an IEP, the creation of an additional intervention plan is not necessary
- vii. When it becomes evident that a student will not be recommended for promotion to the next grade level by the instructional team or by a parent/guardian, the principal and parent/guardian will meet to discuss the recommendation(s) and review the student's strengths, challenges, prior non-promotions and, if applicable, Section 504 Plan or IEP progress. Ideally, any decision made will be a cooperative one, shared by the school and parent(s). When agreement cannot be reached regarding the non-promotion of a student, the final decision will be made by the principal after conferring with the instructional director.
- viii. If a student is retained in the current grade, the instructional team for that grade will review interventions provided to the student during the current school year and make revisions designed to accelerate the student's pace of learning for the following year.
- ix. In Grades 6-8, students not on or above grade level in reading and/or mathematics will participate in appropriate reading and mathematics interventions, based on identified needs as determined by the middle school staff.
- x. At the end of Grade 8, students not on or above grade level in reading and/or mathematics, will be recommended for enrollment in appropriate interventions offered in Grade 9 and may access designated summer courses for summer learning when offered. (*See [FCPS Regulation 400-40, Summer Session Programs.](#)*)
- xi. If the student has a Section 504 Plan or an IEP, the Section 504 team or the IEP team will consider and review placement and promotion options for students who are working toward a Maryland High School Certificate of Completion.

4. Promotion and Non-Promotion in High School

- a. Promotion in high school is based upon progress toward meeting the minimum twenty-one (21) credit requirement for a Maryland high school diploma and four (4) additional credits required by FCPS. (See [Board Policy 405, Graduation](#), and [COMAR 13A.03.02, Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland](#).)
- b. Participation in interscholastic athletics will not affect a student's grade placement.
- c. The requirements for a Maryland high school diploma issued by FCPS include:
 - i. Successful completion of approved programs unless one of the alternatives in COMAR is satisfied.
 - ii. The accumulation of a minimum of twenty-five (25) credits, which includes four (4) additional credits required locally by FCPS. Credits earned must reflect:
 - 1. Successful completion of specific subject area requirements; and,
 - 2. Successful completion of a completer program which includes a series of courses in a specialized career area.
 - iii. Student promotion to the next grade is based upon the cumulative number of credits earned. Students not earning the requisite minimum number of units for promotion at the end of the school year may earn additional credit by attending summer school, enrolling in courses offered by the Frederick County Virtual School program, or participating in other credit recovery programs offered by FCPS; these additional credits will count toward [promotion to the next grade level and graduation requirements. The minimum cumulative number of credits required for promotion is as follows:
 - 1. Promotion to Grade 10: Six (6) credits earned.
 - 2. Promotion to Grade 11: Twelve (12) credits earned.
 - 3. Promotion to Grade 12: Eighteen (18) credits earned.
 - iv. Meet the state's graduation assessment requirements.
 - v. Meet requirements for Student Service Learning.
- d. **Transcript Review for Students Enrolling in FCPS**
 - i. Credits presented for review/credit from students transferring from a private school or public school shall be evaluated by the school counselor in accordance with guidelines established by the Maryland State Department of Education to determine if courses will be accepted as equivalent to FCPS high school courses and approved for credit. The school counselor may confer with the school principal and/or content area curriculum specialists in rendering a decision about awarding credit. (See [FCPS Regulation 400-74, Enrollment of Foreign Exchange Students](#), and [FCPS Regulation 400-49, Home Instruction for Students](#), for evaluating credit for foreign exchange students and evaluating credit for home instruction students.)
 - 1. If the student has a Section 504 Plan or an IEP, the Section 504 team or the IEP team will consider and review placement and promotion options for students who are working toward a Maryland High School Certificate of Completion. Retention decisions for students with an IEP are the responsibility of the IEP team through an IEP meeting, and for students with a Section 504 Plan, the Section 504 team through a Section 504 Plan meeting. The principal is responsible for monitoring the final decision. If a student's parent disagrees with the IEP team or Section 504 team's decision, they have the right to appeal the decision according to legally mandated due process procedures outlined in [FCPS Regulation 508-02, School Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#)

[Team \(formerly 400-22\)](#) and [FCPS Regulation 400-66, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.](#)

5. Credits

- a. Maryland State Board of Education High School Graduation Requirements indicate that, in addition to earning credits during the regular school day and year, a student may earn credits at the discretion of the local school system in various other programs.
- b. The Frederick County Virtual School (FCVS) offers virtual programs that meet graduation requirements and are recorded on the school transcript.
 - i. As an alternative to a comprehensive high school, students may enroll full-time in virtual programs offered by FCVS.
 - ii. Students enrolled in comprehensive high schools may earn credit in supplemental virtual programs offered by FCVS during, after and beyond the school day.
 - iii. FCVS Summer Session Programs offer online courses to currently enrolled and attending FCPS students who wish to earn new credits or improve a previously earned grade. (See [FCPS Regulation 400-10, Commencement Procedures and Ceremonies.](#))
- c. Work-study, job entry training, or experience outside the school are recognized as valid ways of learning. Credit toward graduation shall be granted for cooperative work-study, pre-apprenticeship, student service learning, mentoring/internship and other school-to-community experience.
- d. College credit is available through our Dual Enrollment program with prior approval of the principal. College credits earned may also meet high school graduation requirements. (See [FCPS Regulation 400-94, College and Career Readiness and College Completion.](#))
- e. Credit by demonstrated mastery (CDM) is offered by FCPS; through the Linking Youth to New Experiences (LYNX) program offered exclusively at Frederick High School (FHS); however, credit by examination is not offered.
- f. Independent study is available. Credit toward high school graduation may be earned for independent study in which students successfully demonstrate specific course objectives.
- g. In addition to earning credit during the school day, COMAR allows credits to be earned at the discretion of the local school system through various programs that include:
 - i. Summer school offered by approved public and nonpublic institutions in or outside of Maryland if the principal of the student's home school authorizes the study in advance.
 - ii. Acceptable summer study offered by approved public and nonpublic institutions in or out of Maryland, if the principal of the student's own school authorizes the study in advance.
- h. Middle school students who complete designated high school courses and earn final passing grades will receive high school credit. Earned credit will appear on their high school transcript and their final course grade(s) will be factored into their high school grade point average.

E. Related Information

1. **Board Policy**
 - a. [Policy 105, Appeal and Hearing Procedures](#)
 - b. [Policy 405, Graduation](#)
2. **Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)**
 - a. [COMAR 13A.03.02, Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland](#)
 - b. [COMAR 13A.04.07, Gifted and Talented Education](#)
3. **FCPS Regulations**
 - a. [Regulation 400-10, Commencement Procedures and Ceremonies](#)
 - b. [Regulation 400-40, Summer Session Programs](#)
 - c. [Regulation 400-49, Home Instruction for Students](#)
 - d. [Regulation 400-66, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
 - e. [Regulation 400-74, Enrollment of Foreign Exchange Students](#)
 - f. [Regulation 400-88, Gifted and Talented Education](#)
 - g. [Regulation 400-89, Kindergarten-Early Entrance](#)
 - h. [Regulation 400-94, College and Career Readiness and College Completion](#)
 - i. [Regulation 508-02, School Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Team \(formerly 400-22\)](#)
4. **FCPS Resources**
 - a. [Academic Placement Plan Form](#)
 - b. [Individual Learning Plan Form](#)
 - c. [FCPS Student Service Learning Webpage](#)
5. **Federal Law**
 - a. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - b. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

F. Regulation History (Maintained by Legal Services)

<i>Responsible Office</i>	System Accountability & School Administration; Equity and Organizational Development
Adoption Dates	11/01/78
Review Dates	
Revision Dates	02/17/23; 05/22/25