

Introduction

School systems should maintain efforts to provide student learning opportunities for the remainder of the regularly scheduled academic year. The Department has provided resources, which are now available on [the Department's COVID-19 web page](#), including various distance education models; samples of daily schedules and communication systems; an inventory of instructional materials, most of which have been deemed top-tier through the Department's [nationally recognized review process](#); and guidance on how to identify and manage staffing needs.

K-11 Assessment Requirements

Louisiana will not require standardized testing for the 2019-2020 school year. The U.S. Department of Education approved Louisiana's waiver request of assessment, accountability, and reporting requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Promotion and Retention for grades K-8

In 2019-2020, promotion and retention for grades K-8 are local decisions based on a preponderance of evidence from student learning throughout the school year. Performance on classroom assignments, course grades, and any benchmark assessments are examples of items school systems can use when making a local decision. Struggling students should continue to be identified early and receive intensive support to ensure growth and the ability to stay on track academically.

Grade 4 Academic Improvement Plan Requirements

School systems may elect to create Individual Academic Improvement Plans (IAIP) for struggling students based on evidence from student learning throughout the school year, though no mandate will be enforced. The LEAP 360 diagnostic assessments will be available to assist with plans for individualized support and intervention in 2020-2021 for English language arts and mathematics. A [template](#) for the IAIP is available in the policy library.

Grades 5-7 Academic Improvement Plan Requirements

Students placed on an Individual Academic Improvement Plan (IAIP) at the end of 2018-2019 should continue to receive supports and interventions. The LEAP 360 diagnostic assessments will be available to assist with plans for updated support and intervention in 2020-2021 for English language arts and mathematics. A [template](#) for the IAIP is available in the policy library.

Grade 8 Promotion Requirements

Student placement for the 2020-2021 school year in grade 8, T9, or grade 9 remains at the discretion of the local school or school system, in consultation with the student's parents, where the student was enrolled in 8th grade.

Placement in transitional ninth grade can be based on data from the following sources:

1. Benchmark assessment results
2. Classroom assessment results
3. Course grades
4. Student growth
5. IEP goals
6. Attendance records

The decision should be made by the sending school no later than **July 31, 2020**.

Parent Meetings

School systems should continue to communicate with parents of struggling students in order to discuss promotion/retention, and to update Individual Academic Intervention Plans (IAIP). School systems should work with parents to determine how best to have these conversations using safe social distancing practices. The Department suggests documenting the meeting date and time, and obtaining an electronic signature on the parent agreement form to keep on file when in-person meetings are not possible.

The Department released a [Special Education Timelines and Documentation During Extended School Closures](#) guidance document that provides detailed information on communicating with parents/guardians of students with Individual Accommodation Plans (IAPs) and Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs).

Awarding High School Course Credit

School systems should determine if students have demonstrated proficiency in the grade-level content and/or courses to award credit. If it is determined that they have not, schools can provide options that can help students meet credit requirements via distance learning options, online coursework, written work packets, project-based learning portfolios, or work-based learning (where current high school course standards align with a student's job).

Grades will be awarded on an A-F scale for non-seniors in accordance with the state uniform grading scale as outlined in Bulletin 741 §2302 *Uniform Grading Policy*.

Entering High School Academic Records into the Student Transcript System (STS)

The school system should enter the grade and course(s) into STS when the course is completed. STS is open through September to enter courses and grades from the previous year/summer and for students needing more time to complete a course as a result of COVID-19.

Jump Start Career Diploma LEAP 2025 and IBC requirements

The LEAP 2025 initial testing waivers will allow Algebra I students on a Jump Start Career diploma pathway that do not take Geometry to meet mathematics testing requirements for graduation as long as they are never enrolled in

Geometry. The regulatory flexibilities for the Jump Start IBC credential requirement are only for the 2020 graduating senior class. Students whom would have taken an IBC related to their Jump Start pathway will have the opportunity to continue engaging with content and take an on-time exam or have an opportunity to take an exam at later date as part of continuous learning in their Jump Start pathway this spring/summer or in the subsequent school year(s).

Dual Enrollment

Board of Regents is bringing a policy recommendation forward in April 2020 that will allow a student to:

- continue the course via distance learning options through the higher education institution and earn credit when the course ends;
- opt for an “In Progress” designation and have until August 31, 2020, to complete the course and earn credit; or
- opt for an “Administrative Withdrawal” and exit the course with no credit and nothing posted to the official college transcript.

These options should be coordinated and determined through the students IGP planning process. If it has been determined locally that a student has demonstrated proficiency in the requisite high school course content, schools may opt to switch the course to a regular high school course code and award credit without the dual enrollment credit on the higher education institution transcript. The dual enrollment portion of the credit can be registered at a later time.

Individual Graduation Plans

To the extent possible, school systems should complete the Individual Graduation Planning (IGP) process for student planning and scheduling for the 2020-2021 school year prior to the end of the regularly scheduled school year. Graduation planning starts in the 8th grade. Each student’s [Individual Graduation Plan](#) lists the courses the student will take in subsequent years and identify the diploma path they choose in 10th grade. The plan is reviewed and updated annually.

Act 833

A student entering ninth grade with a current IEP may become eligible for Act 833 if they have not met state established benchmarks on state assessments for any two of the three most recent school years prior to high school. IEP teams shall use state assessment scores from three most recent administrations of state assessment (fifth, sixth, and seventh grade) to determine eligibility for Act 833 for 8th grade students who did not take the LEAP 2025 assessment during the 2019-2020 school year.

Senior Course Credit and Graduation Guidance

The Department issued [specific guidance](#) for students who are graduating seniors in 2019-2020 that clarifies waivers of policy for instructional time, credential requirements, and assessment requirements.