



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

High School Promotion and Graduation Policy in New York City Public Schools for English Language Learners (ELLs)

English Language Learners (ELLs) are generally held to the same promotion standards and graduation requirements as all other students.

What are the requirements for ELLs to be promoted in high school?

To be promoted each year, your child needs 8 credits in 9th grade, 20 credits in 10th grade (at least 4 from English/ESL classes and 4 from Social Studies), and 30 credits in 11th grade.

What happens if my child is not promoted to the next grade?

If your child does not have the minimum number of credits to be promoted to the next grade, you will receive a letter from your child's school in June. In order to make up the credits, your child will have to attend summer school and pass the necessary number of classes. Some schools also offer night school or other programs known as "credit recovery" programs. Ask your child's school about the types of credit recovery programs that they offer.

How many credits does my child need to graduate?

Your child needs 44 course credits in order to graduate. These must include:

- 8 English/ESL credits
- 8 Social Studies credits
- 6 math credits
- 6 science credits
- 4 physical education credits
- 2 foreign language credits
- 2 arts credits
- 1 health education credit
- 7 elective credits

Can my child receive credit for courses taken in a different country?

Yes. The principal will review your child's transcript and award course credits based on a comparison of the course to New York State standards.

If my child entered a NYC school for the first time in high school, can he/she graduate with fewer than 44 credits?

No. Regardless of when your child entered the NYC school system, he/she still needs 44 course credits in order to graduate.

Does my child need to pass any exams in order to graduate with a high school diploma?

Students are required to pass (score of 65 or higher) 5 New York State Regents exams or 4 Regents exams and one other approved New York State test. If your child entered a NYS public school before 11th grade, he/she must pass the following Regents exams:

- English Language Arts (English) exam
- One History exam (Global or U.S. History)
- One Math exam (Algebra I, II, or Geometry)
- One Science exam (Living Environment (Biology), Chemistry, Physics, or Earth Science)
- One other approved exam: e.g., Career Technical Education (CTE) exam, Advanced Placement (AP) exam, SAT II exam

All students may appeal two exams with a score of 60, 61, 62, 63, or 64 and pass if they meet certain requirements. See our Appeals Fact Sheet for more information:

http://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/regents_exam_appeal_options.pdf.

What if my child entered a NYS public school for the first time in 11th grade?

If your child entered a NYS public school for the first time in 11th grade, he/she must pass 4 Regents exams in English, Math, U.S. History, and Science. The principal may exempt ELL students who recently arrived from the Global History exam.

What if my child entered a NYS public school for the first time in 12th grade?

If your child entered a NYS public school for the first time in 12th grade, he/she must pass 3 Regents exams in English, Math, and U.S. History. The principal may exempt ELL students who recently arrived from the Science exam and the Global History exam.

Do ELLs have to take the English Regents exam?

Yes. All ELLs must pass the English Regents exam in order to graduate. **ELLs who entered school in the US for the first time in 9th grade or later may appeal the English Regents Exam and graduate with a score of 55-59.** In order to appeal an exam, students must:

- Have taken the exam at least 2 times
- Have received academic help in English Language Arts
- Have an average of a passing grade in their English Language Arts classes
- Be recommended by the student's teacher English teacher or the chair of the English department

Students who appeal the English Regents exam may also appeal one other exam with a score of 60, 61, 62, 63, or 64.

Does my child have to take the other Regents exams in English?

It depends. U.S. History, Global History, Algebra I, Living Environment (Biology), and Earth Science exams are available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Haitian Creole. If a test is not available in your child's native language, he/she can have tests orally translated. Open-ended answers can be written in your child's language when the student is given the test in his/her native language. However, *all* questions and answers on the English Regents exam must be read and written in English.

What other testing accommodations can ELLs receive on the Regents exams?

ELL students can receive the following testing accommodations:

- Extended testing time, often "time and a half"
- ELLs may take Regents exams in a separate location individually or in a small group
- On the English Regents exam, students may hear the listening passage 3 times instead of 2
- Students are allowed to use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, except for the English Regents exam

Do these testing accommodations apply to students who are no longer classified as ELLs?

Students can receive Regents testing accommodations for 2 years after receiving a proficient score on the NYSESLAT (New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test), the English proficiency test that all ELLs take every spring. Students who are no longer classified as ELL do not qualify for the English Regents exam appeal that is explained above.

**Still have more questions?
Please Call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline**
Monday through Thursday • 10 am to 4 pm
1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

This fact sheet does not constitute legal advice. This fact sheet attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

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