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STUDENT AND FAMILY  
HANDBOOK

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2025-2026

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# School Overview

## *School Contact Information*

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**Principal:**

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### *Charter Authorizer*

Epic California Academy is proud to be authorized by the Orange County Board of Education.

### *School Philosophy*

Epic believes in parental choice and personalized learning. We offer the finest curriculum choices available for grades TK-12. At Epic California Academy, we recognize that not all students learn in the same way and that education should be tailored to individual needs. We continually strive to measure the effectiveness of our school so that every one of our students achieves success.

### *Mission Statement*

Fulfilling every student's individual potential by personalizing an educational plan that focuses on school and family partnership to achieve optimal student performance

### *Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)*

Epic students will aspire to

- Appreciate learning as a continuous process.
- Meet or exceed California state grade-level standards.
- Attain college readiness by graduation.
- Communicate ideas clearly, creatively, and effectively.
- Solve problems and develop problem-solving strategies.
- Develop and practice critical thinking and study skills.
- Demonstrate responsibility, integrity, and respect for self and others,
- Seek personal excellence.

### *WASC Accreditation*

Epic California Academy students are enrolled in a school that is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

School accreditation

- Certifies to the public that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning.
- Validates the integrity of a school's program and student transcripts.
- Fosters improvement of the school's program and operations to support student learning.
- Assures the school community that the school's purposes are appropriate and accomplished through a viable educational program.

Additionally, WASC accreditation is important because other schools, colleges, universities, and the military often require applicants to have transcripts from accredited schools. Accreditation certifies to other educational institutions and the public that an institution meets established criteria or standards and is achieving its stated objectives. WASC and five other regional associations in the United States grant "institutional accreditation" after a comprehensive self-study followed by an on-site evaluation of the programs and services of the total institution. This means that all diploma or degree programs and educational activities offered by the institution are covered by the institution's accreditation. The evaluation determines whether the institution qualifies for regional recognition. More importantly, periodic self-study and review promote improvement in educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

To remain accredited, a school must report annually on the progress of its submitted improvement plan and its ability to continue meeting accreditation standards. Periodically, the school engages in a thorough self-study process and hosts a visiting accreditation team. For more information, go to <http://www.acswasc.org/>.

### *Glossary of Terms*

**CAST** – California Science Test. The CAST is required for all students in grades five and eight and once in high school.

**Learning period (LP)** – The time period in which academic work is assigned to a student by a supervising teacher, and the work product is due from the student. The school year comprises eight learning periods, each ranging from 19 to 25 days. There are four learning periods per semester. Students must meet face-to-face with their supervising teacher at least once every learning period.

**Learning period meeting** - The meeting in which the student and parent meet with their supervising teacher once every learning period to review the learning that took place, assign work for future learning periods, assess the student for progress, complete attendance, and offer support to the parent and student. At the learning period meeting, the supervising teacher will review the student's complete body of work/learning for that period.

**MAP assessment** – Measures of Academic Progress assessment. Students take grade-level-specific MAP assessments three times a year. MAP results help supervising teachers gauge student grade-level proficiency and assist with the personalization of learning.

**Master agreement (MA)** - An enrollment agreement between the parent/guardian, student, school, and supervising teacher. The MA specifies the policies and procedures students must follow to participate in Epic California Academy. A master agreement signed by all parties is necessary for enrollment in the school. Student attendance cannot be awarded until a complete MA is executed.

**PFT** – Physical Fitness Test. The PFT is required annually for all students in grades five, seven, and nine.

**SBAC** – Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium; also commonly referred to as "state testing." The SBAC utilizes computer-based tests and performance tasks that allow students to show what they know and can do. It is based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. The SBAC is administered to students in grades three through eight and 11.

**Supervising teacher** - The supervising teacher is a California-credentialed teacher who works with the family to identify, support, and implement a personalized learning plan for each student on their roster.

School Calendar



SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER							JANUARY								
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa		
	1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4							1			1	2	3	4	5	6						1	2	3
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31		

  

FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL							MAY							JUNE						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4				1	2						1	2	3	4	5	6	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
							29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				

**LEARNING PERIODS**

LP 1 - 24 days	Sept 2 - Oct 3, 2025
LP 2 - 20 days	Oct 6 - Oct 31, 2025
LP 3 - 19 days	Nov 3 - Dec 5, 2025
LP 4 - 24 days	Dec 8 - Jan 23, 2026
LP 5 - 24 days	Jan 26 - Feb 27, 2026
LP 6 - 25 days	Mar 2 - Apr 10, 2026
LP 7 - 20 days	Apr 13 - May 8, 2026
LP 8 - 19 days	May 11 - Jun 5, 2026

**HOLIDAYS**

Labor Day	Sept. 1, 2025
Veteran's Day	Nov. 11, 2025
Thanksgiving Break	Nov. 24-28, 2025
Winter Break	Dec. 22, 2025 - Jan 2, 2026
Martin Luther King Jr Day	Jan. 19, 2026
President's Day	Feb. 16, 2026
Spring Break	Mar. 23-27, 2026
Memorial Day	May 25, 2026

**SPECIAL DATES**

First Day of School	Sept. 2, 2025
Semester 1 (87 days)	Sept. 2-Jan 23, 2026
Semester 2 (88 days)	Jan 26, 2026 - June 5, 2026
Last Day of School	June 5, 2026

[WWW.EPICCALIFORNIA.ORG](http://WWW.EPICCALIFORNIA.ORG)

## Independent Study and Attendance

Epic California Academy serves five southern California counties: Orange, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino, and Riverside. Students must live within these five counties to attend Epic California Academy. Proof of residency is required, and students and their families must provide residency documentation at least once per year to ensure attendance accuracy/compliance.

Academic progress is dependent on regular attendance, which is expected of all Epic students. Epic is required to maintain and report daily attendance for all students. These reports determine the school's "average daily attendance" (ADA), the basis for most of Epic's school funding. Students must log into their curriculum and submit work daily each day (Monday through Friday) that school is in session. Students are expected to stay on pace to advance toward graduation.

Students are expected to make adequate progress in order to complete all assigned work in each learning period. Students should expect to spend at least 20–30 hours per week engaged in assigned work. Students are required to meet with teachers and mentors regularly and to share the complete body of work with supervising teachers. Students may also be asked to provide specific work samples to

validate their progress. Epic California Academy complies with all applicable requirements regarding independent study, in accordance with Education Code Section 51745, et seq.

Under an independent study contract (master agreement), the student's supervising teacher creates and executes detailed lesson plans and assignments for the student to complete under the immediate supervision of their parent/guardian. To comply with applicable attendance requirements, students in an independent study program are expected to complete academic coursework each school day in accordance with the independent study policy and each student's master agreement. Students must complete all assignments by the due date as determined by the supervising teacher. If a student's parent/guardian cannot provide sufficient guidance and supervision for a student's lessons, this impacts the efficacy of an independent study program.

Students must follow the school calendar. Parents/guardians should contact their student's teacher for any absence or missed assignment. In accordance with the independent study policy and master agreement, the school shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study based on the triggers outlined therein.

Since Epic is a nonclassroom-based instructional program, ADA is calculated based on the work completed by the student and submitted by the due dates established in the independent study master agreement. The assigned teacher subsequently assesses the student's work to determine whether the time value amounts to a full day of work. It's important to keep a regular work schedule/calendar so your student can clearly identify each school day in that calendar on which they engaged in required educational activities to an extent sufficient to constitute at least one day of time value.

In California, each person between six and 18 years of age, unless otherwise exempt by law, is required to attend school full-time with regular and punctual attendance, and schools are required to enforce this compulsory attendance law (Ed. Code, § 48200 et seq.) A student's failure to complete assignments on time may subject the student to discipline, disenrollment from the program, and/or being classified as truant and reported to the proper authorities.

### *The Parent/Guardian Role*

- Regularly support your student in daily learning during the school day, following the educational plan you and the supervising teacher agree to.
- Treat all Epic California Academy teachers and staff with respect and professionalism.
- Work with your supervising teacher, ensuring your student participates fully in their independent study learning journey.
- Ensure your student participates in online or other intervention supports as assigned by your supervising teacher.
- Ensure your student's camera is on during synchronous instruction sessions.
- Ensure your student completes the Measures of Academic Progress online assessment three times per school year as required.
- Support the student in attending state-mandated testing (SBAC, CAST, and Physical Fitness Test).
- Practice consistent communication to enhance collaboration through daily checks of email and voicemail.
- Attend scheduled learning period meetings and any other necessary meetings (on the phone, via web conference, or in person) with Epic staff and the student.

- Align all work, meetings, and progress monitoring with the school calendar to ensure all compliance items are fulfilled during the appropriate timeline.
- Ensure submission of all required student assignments and/or work samples as assigned by the supervising teacher.

The parent/guardian must follow the expectations listed above. Not maintaining these expectations could result in your supervising teacher initiating the non-compliance process.

### *Attendance, Non-Compliance, and Involuntary Withdrawal*

Epic California Academy’s Attendance, Non-Compliance, and Involuntary Withdrawal Policy applies to all students at Epic. The school’s goal is for students to be successful and to achieve high academic standards. The purpose of this policy is to outline the school support that will be provided and the steps that will be taken if the responsibilities outlined in this policy are not fulfilled.

For students 18 years of age or older, all references to “parent/guardian” in this policy apply to the student themselves, unless otherwise specified.

Parent/guardian and student responsibilities:

- Ensuring all work assigned by the supervising teacher is completed each learning period
- Ensuring that all completed work is made accessible to the supervising teacher
- Attending all required school meetings, including but not limited to learning period meetings
- Attending all required learning sessions, including special education services
- Abiding by all school/Governing Board policies
- Participating in all required school assessments
- Abiding by the school’s Satisfactory Educational Progress Policy

### **Involuntary Withdrawals**

For purposes of this policy, “involuntary withdrawal” includes disenrollment, dismissal, transfer, or termination, **but does not** include suspensions or expulsions. The Charter School has separate policies for disciplinary withdrawals and will follow all applicable suspension and expulsion procedures.

Students with IEPs and/or 504 plans may also be subject to involuntary withdrawals described in this policy. If the at-risk student has an IEP and/or 504 plan, the teacher will contact the special education department. Epic will comply with all applicable federal and state laws when a special education student is being considered for an involuntary withdrawal.

## **Violations that May Result in a Recommendation for Involuntary Withdrawal**

Involuntary withdrawal may be recommended for violation of any of the following non-disciplinary school policies:

- Attendance
- Academic Integrity
- Civility
- Acceptable Use
- Satisfactory Educational Progress

Involuntary withdrawal may also be recommended for any of the following non-disciplinary reasons consistent with state law:

- Student failure to complete all mandated school assessments
- Failure to provide documentation and information to the school in order to calculate and record attendance in accordance with applicable laws
- Failure to provide requested documentation for continued enrollment, such as proof of residency
- Failure to attend and respond to school communications
- Providing false information to the school regarding student's residence, academic history, grade level, previous or pending retentions, or program participation

### ***Attendance***

"Attendance" means the attendance of Epic students while engaged in educational activities required of them, as assigned by their supervising teacher, on days when school is in session. The supervising teacher awards attendance in accordance with applicable law according to the time value of student work product or the combined time value of pupil work product and pupil participation in synchronous instruction.

Attendance is based on the overall amount of learning assignments completed and the number of school days in which the student engaged in assigned learning activities. As indicated in the Governing Board's independent study policy, once a student has three missed assignments, a student is no longer in good standing. For purposes of attendance, an "assignment" is defined as the work assigned by the supervising teacher that a student must complete to earn attendance credit on a given school day.

The supervising teacher uses professional judgment and school guidelines to determine the amount of attendance credit that a student has earned each learning period. Parents/guardians and students are responsible for ensuring the entire body of work assigned by the supervising teacher and completed by the student is made accessible to the supervising teacher. Supervising teachers will review attendance claims at the end of each learning period and notify parents/guardians within a week of the close of the learning period if a student is in violation of the attendance policy.

### *Initial Attendance Evaluation Period*

The first twenty academic days of a student’s enrollment in an Epic school year are considered the Initial Attendance Evaluation Period. During this time, if a student fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress in their assigned curriculum or if the supervising teacher is unable to contact the student or the student’s education rights holder, an involuntary withdrawal will be initiated.

### **Violation of Other Board Policies or Non-Disciplinary Reasons**

The school will notify parents/guardians if the supervising teacher or school administrator has identified a violation of a board policy or non-disciplinary violation. The school will follow the re-engagement process outlined below, and the notification will include a copy of the Attendance, Non-Compliance, and Involuntary Withdrawal Policy.

### *Student Re-Engagement Process*

#### **First Student Non-Compliance**

If a parent/guardian or a student fails to meet the responsibilities outlined above, the school will notify the parent/guardian that the student has failed to meet the minimum standards of independent study and/or has failed to comply with Governing Board policies. The letter will include the reason for the non-compliance so the parent/guardian and the student are aware that they are not fulfilling their independent study responsibilities. Remedies for the following violations include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

<b>Violation</b>	<b>Remedy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student accrual of three or more cumulative absences</li><li>• Student failure to make satisfactory educational progress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A student support meeting will be scheduled with the student’s educational team, including, as appropriate, the student, parent/guardian, and teacher.</li><li>• This meeting will be held within five school days.</li><li>• The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a plan to support the student’s academic success.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure of student or parent/guardian to attend a required school meeting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The meeting will be rescheduled within five school days. Failure to attend will result in a second notice of non-compliance</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure of student to participate in a required school assessment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The assessment session will be rescheduled. Failure to participate will result in a second notice of non-compliance.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure of student to attend three special education service sessions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student must attend the next scheduled special education service. An IEP meeting may be held. Failure to attend the next or subsequent sessions will result in a second</li></ul>

	non-compliance notice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure of student to attend five MTSS intervention sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student must attend the next scheduled intervention. An MTSS meeting may be held to address additional supports.</li> </ul>

### Second Student Non-Compliance

If a parent/guardian or student fails to meet the responsibilities outlined above or fails to meet other responsibilities for a second time within the same school year, the school will notify the parent/guardian that the student is in violation of Governing Board policies. The letter will include the reason for the non-compliance so the parent/guardian and the student are aware that they are not fulfilling their independent study responsibilities. Remedies for the following violations will include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

Violation	Remedy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student accrual of three or more cumulative absences</li> <li>Student failure to make satisfactory educational progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A student support meeting will be scheduled with the student's educational team, including, as appropriate, the student, parent/guardian, and teacher.</li> <li>This meeting will be held within five school days.</li> <li>The purpose of the meeting will be to develop a plan to support the student's academic success.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure of student or parent/guardian to attend a required school meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting will be rescheduled within five school days. Failure to attend will result in a third notice of non-compliance and potential recommendation for involuntary removal.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure of student to participate in a required school assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment session will be rescheduled. Failure to participate will result in a third notice of non-compliance and potential recommendation for involuntary removal.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accrual of three or more cumulative special education service sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student must attend the next scheduled special education service. An IEP meeting may be held. Failure to attend the next or subsequent sessions will result in a third non-compliance notice and potential recommendation for involuntary removal.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accrual of five or more MTSS intervention sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student must attend the next scheduled intervention session. An MTSS meeting may be held to address additional supports.</li> </ul>

	Failure to attend the next or subsequent sessions will result in a third non-compliance notice and potential recommendation for involuntary removal.
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If the student is eligible for special education or has a Section 504 plan, Epic may convene an IEP or Section 504 meeting, respectively, within a reasonable amount of time to discuss whether the reason for the non-compliance is related to the student’s disability and whether the IEP or Section 504 plan needs to be updated.

**Third Student Non-Compliance and Recommendation for Involuntary Withdrawal**

If a parent/guardian or a student fails to meet the responsibilities mentioned above for a third time within the same school year, an evaluation will be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study. If the evaluation finds that it is not in the best interest of the student to remain in independent study, the student may be involuntarily withdrawn. A written record of the findings of any evaluation shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation, and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record will be forwarded to that school.

The school will send written notice to the parent/guardian informing the family that the student has failed to meet the minimum standards of independent study and/or comply with Governing Board policies, including the results of the evaluation. The notice will also state whether the student may be involuntarily withdrawn and identify a date at least five school days after the date of the notification for the involuntary withdrawal, consistent with this policy.

- No student shall be involuntarily withdrawn for any reason unless the parent/guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to disenroll the student no less than five school days before the effective date of the action. This written notice will be sent by registered mail, and if the student is a foster child/youth or a homeless child/youth, it will also be sent to the student's educational rights holder. The notice shall inform the student, the student's parent/guardian, or the student's educational rights holder of the basis for which the student is being involuntarily withdrawn and the student's right to request a hearing to challenge the involuntary withdrawal.
- If the student's parent/guardian or educational rights holder requests a hearing, Epic shall provide the hearing consistent with this policy, and the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be disenrolled until Epic issues a final decision.
- If the student is eligible for special education or has a Section 504 plan, Epic may convene an IEP or Section 504 meeting, respectively, prior to disenrolling the student to discuss whether the reason for the involuntary withdrawal is related to the student’s disability and whether the IEP or Section 504 plan should be updated. If the team determines the reason is related to the disability, the IEP or Section 504 team will also determine whether additional assessment is recommended and/or whether the IEP or Section 504 plan should be amended. Epic will follow all applicable state and federal laws for both the evaluation and IEP/Section 504 meetings. If needed to accommodate the assessment process, or IEP or Section 504 meeting, the

involuntary withdrawal process may be paused pending the outcome of the evaluations and subsequent meeting.

- This letter will be sent by registered mail, and the student's district of residence will be notified. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made because of missed assignments shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation, and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.
- If no hearing is requested, the student will be disenrolled five school days from the date of the notice, consistent with this policy.

### **Involuntary Withdrawal Hearing Procedures**

This section outlines the process for parents/guardians to appeal an involuntary withdrawal decision, including how to request a hearing and what to expect during the hearing.

1. Request a hearing: The parent/guardian or educational rights holder must request a hearing on or before the date of the involuntary withdrawal identified in the written notice.
2. Scheduling the hearing
  - a. Epic will convene the hearing within 30 calendar days from the date of the hearing request.
  - b. The student shall remain enrolled at Epic pending the results of the hearing.
3. Hearing notice: Epic will send written notice to the parent/guardian, educational rights holder, or student eighteen or older, which shall include the following information:
  - a. The date, time, and address of the involuntary withdrawal hearing
  - b. Notice that an Epic representative will be present at the hearing to present testimony, evidence, and/or witnesses to support the recommendation for involuntary withdrawal
  - c. Notice that the student may present testimony, evidence, and/or witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses
  - d. Notice of the student's right to bring legal counsel or an advocate
  - e. Notice that the parent/guardian or educational rights holder must notify Epic if they wish to have such representation so that Epic can determine if it will also be represented
  - f. Notice that the parent/guardian or educational rights holder must be present at the hearing
4. Hearing procedure
  - a. **If the parent/guardian or educational rights holder is not present on the date of the hearing, the hearing will be canceled, and the student will be involuntarily withdrawn as of the hearing date.**
  - b. A neutral hearing officer, appointed by the Principal or designee, will conduct the hearing.
  - c. Both Epic and the student will have the opportunity to present their cases.

5. Decision and notice
  - a. The hearing officer will make a decision within five school days of the hearing
  - b. Written notice of the decision will be issued to the parent/guardian or educational rights holder and to the Principal.
6. Effect of decision
  - a. If the decision is to involuntarily disenroll, the student will be considered disenrolled as of the date of the written notice.
  - b. If not disenrolled, the student shall remain enrolled at Epic.
  - c. The decision does not prevent Epic from making similar recommendations in the future.

Students involuntarily withdrawn from Epic California Academy are not eligible to re-enroll during the current school year the student was withdrawn or the following school year.

## Academic Requirements

### *Promotion*

**TK–8 Promotion:** Each TK–8 student will be enrolled in five core subjects: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education. Optional enrichment opportunities include art, music, world languages, technology, field trips, and virtual and in-person community experiences, providing a well-rounded education. Students shall progress through the grade levels by demonstrating growth in learning and meeting grade-level standards.

**High School Promotion:** High school students can select courses from a variety of learning programs. Students will be enrolled in a minimum of 20 credits per semester (four classes). If the student is taking courses at a community college, they must meet with their counselor to obtain approval before enrolling in the community college courses. Students will progress to the next grade level based on the number of credits they have earned. Student grade levels are determined in the fall based on the classification below. While sometimes permitted, midyear reclassification is not guaranteed.

- 0-49 credits: 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- 50-99 credits: 10<sup>th</sup> grade
- 100-149 credits: 11<sup>th</sup> grade
- 150 or more credits: 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Four-Year Plan for High School Students:** The school will develop a four-year individual graduation plan for each high school student. The graduation plan will be reviewed by the college and career readiness team and revisited at least annually.

The four-year individual graduation plan will include:

- Student’s intended courses
- Courses completed
- College and/or career path

## *Acceleration*

When high academic achievement is evident, the teacher or parent, with the assistance of a Student Study Team (SST), may recommend a student for acceleration into a higher grade level (“skipping a grade”). Academic, social, physical, and emotional maturity factors all play a role in determining if acceleration is appropriate for a child, along with determining if the potential benefits outweigh the potential harmful effects.

Students will not be considered for acceleration if their assessment results (school and/or statewide) do not indicate that the student is performing above grade level.

**Kindergarten Mid-Year Grade Level Acceleration:** A child who was not age-eligible for kindergarten and who attended a California private school kindergarten for a year is viewed by the CDE as not legally enrolled in kindergarten, pursuant to EC Section 48000 requirements. Therefore, this child, upon enrollment in public school, is enrolled in kindergarten, assessed, and may (but is not required to) be immediately promoted to first grade if the child meets the following State Board of Education criteria, pursuant to Title 5, Section 200:

- The child is at least five years of age.
- The child has attended a public school kindergarten for a long enough time to enable school personnel to evaluate the child's ability.
- The child is in the upper 5 percent of the child's age group regarding general mental ability.
- The physical development and social maturity of the child are consistent with the child's advanced mental ability.
- The parent or guardian has filed a written statement with the district that approves placement in first grade.

A statement, signed by the school and parent/guardian, is placed in the official school records for these five-year-olds who have advanced to first grade (EC Section 48011). This action prevents a subsequent audit exception for first-grade placement of an age-ineligible student. A combination of the following may be used to assess the student's readiness to accelerate:

- Benchmark data indicating that the student has mastered current grade level content/state standards
- Benchmark results in mathematics and ELA indicating the student is advanced at current grade level content/state standards.
- Student work samples demonstrating proficiency above current grade-level standards.

**Kindergarten Acceleration Procedure and Timeline:** Parents/supervising teacher will request student acceleration by submitting the school-provided request and following the steps and timeline outlined below.

Steps for Kindergarten Acceleration	Timeline
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Teacher - If the student’s teacher agrees that a review for a kindergarten mid-year grade-level promotion is appropriate, the teacher will complete a request for acceleration.	Teacher - By December 1 of the current school year
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**Grade 1–8 Grade Level Acceleration:** The decision to accelerate a student for the upcoming school year will be made only after careful consideration of the academic and social-emotional interests of the student. Parent requests for student acceleration are due by the end of March of the current school year. The student’s teacher will request an SST meeting to discuss acceleration with the guidance department.

Grade-level accelerations are reviewed, and determination meetings will be held in May.

A combination of the following may be used to assess the student’s readiness to accelerate:

- Benchmark data indicating the student has mastered or exceeded current grade-level content standards
- SBAC results (if available) indicating the student has met or exceeded standards
- Student work samples demonstrating proficiency above current grade-level standards as determined by the Student Study Team
- The student’s level of social, physical, and emotional maturity

**Grades 1–8 Acceleration Procedure and Timeline:** Parents/supervising teacher will request student acceleration by submitting the school-provided survey and by following the steps and timeline outlined below.

Steps for Acceleration	Timeline
1. Parents may request that the teacher promote their child by one grade level.	Parent - By the end of March
2. The teacher requests a Student Study Team meeting through the guidance department to discuss acceleration and review student records with the SST.	Teacher – By the end of March
3. The Student Study Team meets to consider factors related to the student’s grade-level placement for the next school year. The SST may require additional information before making a final recommendation to approve or deny the acceleration request.	Student Study Team - By the end of May

4. The guidance department makes the final determination and communicates the decision to all relevant parties.	Guidance department – By the end of the current school year
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### *Retention*

Epic California Academy is committed to making individual decisions about grade retention based on the best interests of the student in the long term. Epic is committed to helping all students realize their fullest potential, including remediation for students experiencing difficulty. Retention may be appropriate for a student experiencing extreme academic difficulty or serious health or family emergencies. Students may not be retained more than once (at Epic or from a previous school) throughout grades 1-8.

When a student is being considered for retention, a review of records will be completed to look at possible factors influencing the student's achievement and success and the impact and effectiveness of a school grade retention for the student.

Reviewing the student's academic records and the request for retention will allow the Student Study Team to consider, among other things, the factors below:

- Source of referral—teacher/principal/parent/student
- Level of academic growth, achievement, and grade level
- Possible learning disabilities
- Language proficiency
- Social and emotional maturity: ability to communicate, social adaptability, emotional difficulties, motivation to learn, interest in school
- Attendance history
- Ages and grade placements of siblings, family transiency, family situation
- Previous retention
- Student's and parent/guardians' attitudes toward school and retention
- Parental educational rights
- Special or unique circumstances

No grade-level retention requests are accepted after the academic school year has started. The executive director may suspend parent-initiated retention requests at any time.

**Continuation in Kindergarten:** Students can be retained in kindergarten based on current law. Kindergarten students who have completed one year of kindergarten shall be admitted to first grade unless the parent or guardian of the child and the school agree that the child may continue in kindergarten for not more than an additional school year (Ed Code 48011). Whenever a student continues in kindergarten for an additional year, the school staff shall secure an agreement, signed by the parent/guardian, stating that the student shall continue in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year (Ed Code 46300).

**Grades 1–8 Retention:** If a student is identified as performing below the minimum standard for promotion based on their progress on grade-level curriculum, internal assessments, and/or state

standardized testing, the student may be retained in their current grade level pending all criteria met and with final approval through the Retention Procedure and Timeline (see below). Both the parent and teacher must document on the school-provided retention request form any reasons retention should be considered for the student. This explanation shall specify the reasons that retention is appropriate for the student and shall include recommendations for interventions necessary to assist the student in attaining acceptable levels of academic achievement. If the teacher and parent are not in agreement with the recommendation for retention, please see below for the appeal process. The burden of proof for the appeal rests with the appealing party (Ed Code 48070.5).

**Grades 1–8 Retention Procedure and Timeline:** Parents/supervising teachers will request student retention by submitting the school-provided survey and by following the steps and timeline outlined below.

<b>Steps for Consideration of School-Initiated Retention</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<p>1. Parent and teacher: School-provided remediation steps occur, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SST meeting</li> <li>-Academic screenings</li> <li>-Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports, including Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 intervention</li> <li>-Curriculum review/parent-teacher conference to review the current curriculum and how it is being implemented and to provide any suggested changes that may benefit the student</li> </ul>	Teacher – Before recommending a student for retention
<p>2. The teacher recommends retention consideration for the student and explains in writing on the school-provided request why retention is recommended.</p>	Teacher - By May 1 of the current school year
<p>3. The Student Study Team meets to review factors considered regarding the student's grade placement for the next school year. Factors to be considered include analyzing remediation data (results from SST plans, interventions, etc.).</p>	Teacher/Student Study Team - May of the current school year
<p>4. The guidance department makes a decision and informs the parent or guardian.</p>	Guidance department - Before the school year has ended.
<p>5. The parent/guardian may appeal the retention decision in writing to the executive director. If an appeal is made, the burden shall be on the</p>	Parent – Within one week of retention decision.

appealing party to show why the decision of the school should be overruled (Ed Code 48070.5(f))	
<b>Steps for Consideration of Parent/Guardian-Initiated Retention</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
1. Parent/guardian completes enrollment paperwork for the upcoming school year and indicates a request for grade-level retention.	Parent – Before the start of the school year
2. Parent/guardian completes Grade-Level Retention Request form	Parent – Before the start of the school year
3. The Epic guidance department reviews the retention request and informs the parent/guardian of the decision.	Epic – Before the start of the school year
4. All education rights holders must sign the Grade-Level Retention Acknowledgement form if approved for retention.	Student education rights holders – Before the start of the school year
5. Students approved for retention will be required to participate in social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum as a component of their educational program.	Student – During the school year

**Grades 9–12 Retention:** The state does not require school districts to have student retention criteria beyond the last year of middle school to the first year of high school. Progress toward high school graduation shall be based on the student's ability to pass the subjects and electives necessary to earn the required credits.

### **Appeals and Parent Rights**

Parents have the right to appeal a decision made by the school. If a parent wishes to appeal, they must complete the following steps:

- Appeal to the guidance team administrator in writing
- Guidance team administrator responds to written appeal within two (2) weeks
- If not resolved, parents may appeal to the executive director
- The executive director or designee will send the parent or guardian a response to the appeal, in writing, within a week of the appeal

### **IDEA/504 Students**

Students who participate in special education/504 plans have their education program and decision-making process affected by state and federal regulations; therefore, decision-making in the area of

grade promotion/retention is first governed by state and federal requirements. If a student has an active IEP, an IEP meeting must be held prior to a final retention decision being made for a student.

### *High School*

Epic provides a personalized learning experience where parents and students are actively supported in selecting curricula that align with each student's individual needs, goals, and academic rigor. With comprehensive guidance from the supervising teacher, content specialists, the college and career readiness department, and the learning coach, students are equipped with a relevant, grade-appropriate course of study that effectively prepares them to meet California state content standards.

All high school students who enroll ten days after the semester begins must submit in-progress grades from their previous school.

### *Course Transferability and College Entrance Requirements*

Parents and students are informed that the transferability of Epic California Academy courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements, including University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) A-G requirements, are determined by the receiving institution. While Epic strives to offer courses aligned with state standards and college readiness expectations, acceptance of credits and A-G approval is subject to review by the receiving school, district, college, or university.

### *Grading Scale*

Epic California Academy uses the following grading scale:

A+ = 98-100

A = 93-97

A- = 90-92

B+ = 88-89

B = 83-87

B- = 80-82

C+ = 78-79

C = 73-77

C- = 70-72

D+ = 68-69

D = 63-67

D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

### *Minimum and Maximum Course Policy*

The minimum and maximum course policy, designed to ensure academic success, also offers flexibility to accommodate individual student needs and goals.

- The minimum number of courses high school students can register for is four per semester.
- Twelfth graders who have earned 180 credits before the start of their senior year can register for four courses per semester, equaling 40 credits for the school year. Seniors with fewer than 40 credits may be able to take all remaining classes in the first semester. Courses are reviewed, and teachers are consulted in making this determination.
- If a student participates in concurrent enrollment, then a minimum of four Epic high school-level courses must be taken each semester they are registered for a college course.
- The maximum number of courses high school students can register for is eight per semester, including concurrent enrollment courses.

### *Dropping Courses*

Students dropping a course can only do so within ten school days of enrollment without potentially affecting their transcript.

Courses dropped after the tenth school day in the first and/or second semester will receive a “W” or “WF” on the report card/transcript. Determination is based on attendance review.

Withdrawals may only be issued to students holding at least five courses before the withdrawal. Dropping a course may prevent a student from graduating on time. Seniors carrying five courses may drop to a minimum of four courses as long as they have sufficient credits to graduate.

Individual curriculum providers each have their own refund policies. Please work with your supervising teacher if you have any questions on this.

### *Graduation Requirements*

#### **College and Career Readiness Graduation Track – 220 Units**

Social Science – 30 Units (World History, US History, and Government/Economics)

English – 40 Units

Mathematics – 30 Units (including Algebra I)

Science – 20 Units (including 10 units of Life Science and 10 units of Physical Science)

Foreign Language/Visual and Performing Arts – 10 Units (10 Units must be completed in one of these two areas)

Physical Education – 20 Units

Electives – 70 Units

#### **Concurrent Enrollment/Advanced Placement Courses**

Several curricula offered by Epic California Academy include opportunities for advanced placement. These courses will be clearly identified. If your student is interested in concurrent enrollment or

advanced placement courses, please contact the counseling department. They will guide you through the process.

### **Concurrent Enrollment**

Epic encourages students to enroll in community college courses to earn credits toward a college degree. However, only courses in specific subject areas not offered by Epic will count toward Epic's graduation requirements. Since many colleges do not permit courses to fulfill multiple purposes, Epic prioritizes earning college credits over high school credits for these courses. For more information, please contact the college and career readiness department.

Concurrent enrollment course letter grades have the following GPA weights:

A: 5.0 B: 4.0 C: 3.0 D: 2.0 F: 0.0

Credits will be awarded as follows: Year-long courses listed on the UC course list will earn 10 credits. Four-unit academic courses not on the UC course list will earn five credits. Non-academic courses will receive credits based on their face value. For three-unit college courses not pre-approved for 10 credits, the counseling department will review them upon request by a parent or teacher.

### **Advanced Placement**

Epic California Academy offers AP courses in a variety of curricula options. AP courses give high school students an introduction to college-level work and an opportunity to earn college credit before graduating from high school.

AP course letter grades have the following weight:

A: 5.0 B: 4.0 C: 3.0 D: 2.0 F: 0.0

### **Honors Courses**

Honors-level courses at Epic are advanced courses tailored for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders who have already completed foundational work in a subject area. Ninth-grade courses, even if locally designated as "honors," are not eligible for the UC honors designation. Additionally, honors courses at Epic are not weighted.

### **Graduation Participation**

To qualify for graduation, students must complete all coursework requirements by the official last day of school. Adhering to this deadline is essential for ensuring a successful academic journey.

### ***Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating***

Epic strives to maintain a culture of academic honesty and integrity and to foster a learning environment based on trust, responsibility, and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is the commitment to uphold honesty, responsibility, and ethical conduct in all aspects of learning, including assignments, assessments, research, and collaboration. Students are expected to complete their work independently, giving proper credit to all sources used. Plagiarism, cheating, and unauthorized collaboration are strictly prohibited. Students must adhere to specific guidelines provided by

teachers for each assignment, project, or assessment. Misrepresentation, falsification, or fabrication of information in any form is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action.

### *MAP Growth Retesting Policy for Student Disengagement*

#### **Purpose**

This policy establishes guidelines for addressing student disengagement during MAP Growth assessments, as indicated by rapid guessing behavior. The goal is to ensure the validity and reliability of test results, which are crucial for accurately measuring student achievement and growth.

#### **Background**

NWEA research indicates that rapid guessing, or providing "disengaged responses," can significantly impact the validity of a student's test score. According to NWEA, "the greater the number of disengaged responses during a student's test event, the greater the impact on the validity of a student's final RIT score" (NWEA, 2017). To maintain the integrity of our assessment data, we have established the following procedures based on NWEA's guidance.

#### **Procedures**

##### **1. Rapid Guessing at 30% or Higher**

When a student provides disengaged responses on 30% or more of test items:

- The NWEA system automatically invalidates the test.
- The teacher will have a conversation with the student and guardian about the importance of engagement during testing.
- The teacher will complete a [Rapid Guessing Reporting Form](#) to document the incident.
- The student will be required to retest.

**Justification:** NWEA states that "when this much rapid guessing occurs, it severely limits our ability to estimate a credible score for a student" and recommends retesting in these cases (NWEA, 2017).

##### **2. Rapid Guessing Between 10% and 29%**

When a student provides disengaged responses between 10% and 20% of test items:

- The teacher will have a conversation with the student and guardian about the importance of engagement during testing.
- The teacher will complete a Rapid Guessing Reporting Form to document the incident.
- The student is not required to retest for the first occurrence.
- Each future instance of rapid guessing at 10% or higher will require retesting.

**Justification:** NWEA guidance suggests that "the decision on whether or not to retest a student when the proportion of disengaged responses is between 10% and 30% is a matter of professional judgment for educators" (NWEA, 2017). Our policy balances the need for valid data with practical considerations while emphasizing the importance of consistent engagement over time.

### **3. Rapid Guessing Below 10%**

No formal action is required.

**Justification:** NWEA indicates that "when students provide disengaged responses on less than 10% of items during a test event, the resulting impact on test score validity is generally minimal" (NWEA, 2017).

## **Implementation**

This policy will be implemented consistently across all testing terms. Teachers and administrators are responsible for following these procedures to maintain the integrity of our MAP Growth assessment data.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with current NWEA recommendations and best practices in educational assessment.

## *Assessments and Interventions*

## **Report Cards**

Report cards showing your child's progress in school will be issued twice a year at the end of each semester. Multiple measures of assessment are developed for each grade level and are used to monitor each child's overall progress. If you have any questions regarding the information contained in these reports, please contact your child's supervising teacher.

## **State and Internal Assessments**

Epic California Academy is committed to fostering student success and maintaining our charter's high standards. As part of this commitment, we annually administer required state-mandated assessments, such as those included within the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System, the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC), and the Physical Fitness Test (PFT), to applicable grades as required by California Education Code (§ 47605(c)(1)). These assessments provide critical data to monitor student progress, ensure readiness for college and career, and support our school's accountability requirements.

CAASPP assessments, administered each spring, evaluate student performance in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and/or California Alternate Assessments in ELA and mathematics are administered to students in grades 3-8 and 11. The California

Science Test (CAST) or the California Alternate Assessment in science is administered to students in grades 5, 8, and once in high school (typically in grade 10). Parents receive individual student score reports, which include an overall score and a description of their child's achievement level. These results help families and educators understand student progress and identify areas for growth. The California School Dashboard uses CAASPP and other assessment data to highlight our school's strengths, identify areas for improvement, and ensure equitable support for all students.

While California law (Education Code § 60615) allows parents to opt out of some state-mandated assessments by submitting a written request, Epic California Academy strongly recommends against opting out. **Participation in state testing has no direct impact on individual student records or advancement, but is vital for our school's performance evaluation.** Low participation rates result in the assignment of the lowest possible scale scores for non-participating students, significantly lowering our school's overall performance metrics on the California School Dashboard. This can jeopardize our charter renewal, threaten school funding under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and limit our ability to sustain the innovative educational model we offer.

In addition to state-mandated assessments, Epic California Academy requires students to participate in internal assessments designed to evaluate student progress and meet our charter's accountability standards. These school-specific assessments are distinct from state tests and are a condition of enrollment, as outlined in our charter agreement. There is no legal provision for opting out of these internal assessments, and participation is mandatory. Students who miss required internal assessments may receive a non-compliance notice and may be subject to involuntary withdrawal from Epic California Academy.

Student performance and participation in both state-mandated and internal assessments are critical for demonstrating academic achievement, a key factor in charter approval and renewal processes (Education Code §§ 47607(c)(2), 47607(a)(3)(A)). Robust assessment data, alongside metrics such as graduation rates, attendance, and English Learner reclassification, ensure Epic California Academy can continue to provide high-quality education. We encourage all families to support their students in participating in all assessments to strengthen our school community and secure our charter's future. No state law permits a student to opt out of the PFT, ELPAC, or internal school assessments.

### **English Learners**

Epic is committed to the success of its English learners, and support will be offered both within academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English language learning. Epic will meet all applicable legal requirements for English learners, including annual notification to parents, student identification and placement, program options, English learners and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. Epic will implement policies to ensure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English learners and the rights of students and parents.

### **Special Education/Students with Disabilities**

Epic is dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of the academic environment and society. Epic provides special

education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (“IDEA”), Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and procedures of the El Dorado County SELPA. These services are available for special education students enrolled at Epic. Epic offers high-quality educational programs and services for all our students per each student's assessed needs. Epic collaborates with parents, the student, teachers, and other agencies, as may be indicated, to appropriately serve the educational needs of each student.

Pursuant to the IDEA and relevant state law, Epic is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating children enrolled at the Charter School with known or suspected disabilities to determine whether a need for special education and related services exists. This includes children with disabilities who are homeless or foster youth. The Charter School shall not deny nor discourage any student from enrollment solely due to a disability. Please contact your supervising teacher if you believe your child may be eligible for special education services.

### **Section 504**

Epic recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of the Charter School. Any student who has an objectively identified disability that substantially limits a major life activity, including, but not limited to, learning, is eligible for accommodations by the Charter School. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for accommodations under Section 504 may make a referral for an evaluation to Epic.

### **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**

Epic California Academy is dedicated to ensuring every student achieves academic, social-emotional, and behavioral success. To support this goal, we implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a comprehensive framework designed to address the diverse needs of all students. MTSS integrates data-driven instruction, intervention, and support services to promote student growth and create an inclusive learning environment.

MTSS at Epic California Academy operates on three tiers of support:

- **Tier 1: Universal Support** – All students receive high-quality, evidence-based instruction and positive behavioral supports in the general education setting. This includes differentiated teaching strategies, social-emotional learning, and school-wide expectations to foster a supportive community.
- **Tier 2: Targeted Support** – Students who need additional assistance receive small-group interventions tailored to specific academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs. These supports are designed to help students catch up and succeed alongside their peers.
- **Tier 3: Intensive Support** – For students requiring more individualized attention, intensive interventions are provided, often involving personalized plans, small group and/or one-on-one support, or specialized services to address significant challenges.

### **Why MTSS Is Important**

MTSS is critical to Epic California Academy's commitment to student success. By using data to identify student needs early, we can provide timely interventions to prevent academic or behavioral difficulties from escalating. This proactive approach ensures that all students, regardless of their starting point, have the opportunity to thrive. MTSS also fosters collaboration among teachers, families, and support staff, creating a unified effort to support student growth.

Regular attendance at intervention learning sessions is essential for students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. These sessions are carefully designed to address specific student needs and promote academic and personal success. Consistent participation ensures students receive the targeted instruction and resources necessary to close achievement gaps and meet their goals. Failure to attend intervention sessions may result in non-compliance and ultimately involuntary withdrawal. We encourage families to prioritize these sessions and communicate with our staff to support their child's success.

We encourage families to engage with our MTSS process by communicating with teachers and participating in discussions about their child's progress. Together, we can build a supportive environment that empowers every student to reach their full potential and contributes to the long-term success of Epic California Academy.

## Learning Fund

### *Learning Fund Overview*

The learning fund is an allocation of monetary credit on a student's account that can be used to purchase learning resources and extracurricular activities. The fund amount may fluctuate yearly, depending on several factors, such as the current economic climate and educational regulations. Teachers and parents decide what to spend the funds on, starting with the selection of a core curriculum. Our learning fund department approves or denies purchases according to state requirements.

The learning fund is a value-added feature to the high-quality instruction and services students receive from Epic.

Curriculum, extracurricular activities, school supplies, and other academic items that support student learning may be purchased with the learning fund. All items purchased must possess educational merit. After deducting the price of a core curriculum, parents and teachers can decide to use the remaining balance for supplemental curricula, extracurricular activities, and/or educational items/technology. Check the learning fund section of the Epic website for information related to what can and cannot be purchased with the learning fund.

### *Learning Fund Policies*

- Parents/teachers cannot be reimbursed for any educational expenses.
- Parents/teachers cannot be paid directly to purchase educational items or for services provided.
- Epic must purchase the products or services for students for the learning fund to pay.
- The learning fund balance will be prorated for students enrolled after September 30. (Please note that this deadline is subject to change each school year.)
- Students who maintain 95% or greater attendance can utilize 100% of their learning fund balance.

- A learning fund attendance reserve will be deducted for students with an attendance rate of 94% or less. The learning fund attendance reserve will equal the student's attendance percentage x the learning fund starting balance. Example: If a student's attendance percentage is 91%, their attendance reserve will be \$270 ( $\$3000 - (91\% \times \$3000)$ ). Attendance is calculated after each learning period, so a student's attendance reserve may go up or down after each learning period based on the student's attendance percentage. The best practice is keeping student attendance at or above 95%!
- Families can share funds among students listed under the same family ID.
- All non-consumable physical items and products are the property of Epic California Academy and must be returned upon withdrawal or graduation.
- The learning fund cannot be used, given, or donated—directly or indirectly—for any religious materials, teachings, or organizations, as required by California state guidelines.
- Upon withdrawal or high school graduation, remaining funds are returned to the general fund for future students. The learning fund is not like a bank account students/families can keep or use for personal items. These funds are provided by the state for independent study students' educational support.
- If unexpected budgetary situations occur, Epic California Academy reserves the right to manage the learning fund program as necessary.

## Disclaimers and Notices

### *Non-Discrimination Statement*

Epic California Academy prohibits discrimination in the educational activities and programs, admission of students, and the selection and/or employment on the basis of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, veteran status, or disability. Epic California Academy complies with the federal and state regulations for implementing Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, Title VI, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

### *Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice*

Epic California Academy complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. As emphasized in the U.S. Department of Education's March 2025 directives to schools, Epic ensures straightforward, non-adversarial processes for parents and eligible students to exercise their rights without unnecessary barriers or complexity. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Below is an overview of key rights, procedures, and related protections.

### **Key Rights for Parents and Eligible Students**

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or enter a postsecondary institution at any age (referred to as "eligible students"). Parents and eligible students have the right to:

- **Inspect and Review Education Records:** You may request to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Submit a written request to Epic's registrar at [info@epiccalifornia.org](mailto:info@epiccalifornia.org), identifying the records you wish to inspect. The school will make

arrangements for access and notify you of the time and place where the records may be inspected, within 45 days of the request (34 CFR §99.10).

- **Request Amendment of Records:** If you believe the education records contain information that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights, you may ask the school to amend the record. Submit a written request to the registrar at [info@epiccalifornia.org](mailto:info@epiccalifornia.org), clearly identifying the part of the record you want changed and why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record, it will notify you of the decision and your right to a hearing. If the hearing results in no change, you may place a statement in the records commenting on the contested information (34 CFR §§99.20-99.22).
- **Consent to Disclosures:** Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records without consent under certain exceptions (see below).
- **File a Complaint:** If you believe Epic has violated FERPA, you may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education. Complaints must be filed in writing and contain specific allegations. Contact Epic's registrar first at [info@epiccalifornia.org](mailto:info@epiccalifornia.org) to attempt local resolution. If needed, submit complaints to the Student Privacy Policy Office (formerly Family Policy Compliance Office), U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920 (34 CFR §§99.60-99.67).

Epic provides annual notification of these rights through this handbook and other communications. For students with disabilities, these rights also apply to records maintained under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.), and parents may contact Epic's Special Education Coordinator for assistance.

### *Notice to Parents Regarding Release of Directory Information*

FERPA defines "directory information" as information contained in an education record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. This may include the student's name, address, telephone listing, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade level, enrollment status, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, degrees, honors and awards received, and the most recent educational agency or institution attended (34 CFR §99.3).

Epic may disclose directory information without consent, but must provide public notice of the types of information designated as directory information and allow parents or eligible students a reasonable time to opt out. Directory information may be shared with entities such as colleges, universities, or military recruiters unless they are opted out. To opt out, submit a written request to [info@epiccalifornia.org](mailto:info@epiccalifornia.org). Opt-outs remain in effect until rescinded in writing and do not prevent disclosures required for school operations, such as class lists or ID badges (34 CFR §99.37).

### **Exceptions to Consent for Disclosure**

Schools may disclose personally identifiable information from education records without obtaining prior written consent under the following conditions (34 CFR §99.31):

- To school officials (including teachers, administrators, and contractors) with legitimate educational interests, such as performing tasks related to the student's education or providing services.
- To officials of another school where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to enrollment or transfer.
- To authorized representatives of federal, state, or local educational authorities for audits, evaluations, or compliance activities.
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received.
- To organizations conducting studies to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction, provided there is a written agreement ensuring data protection and destruction after use.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena (with notice to the parent/student unless the order prohibits it).
- In the case of a health or safety emergency, if necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others.
- For directory information (subject to opt-out).
- To parents of students under 21 at postsecondary institutions regarding violations of laws or school rules on alcohol or controlled substances.
- To victims of alleged perpetrators of crimes of violence or non-forcible sex offenses, disclosing the final results of disciplinary proceedings.

Epic defines "school officials" and "legitimate educational interests" in its policies to ensure disclosures are limited and appropriate.

### **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Protections**

Related to FERPA, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. §1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) provides parents and eligible students with rights regarding certain surveys, analyses, or evaluations funded by the U.S. Department of Education or involving sensitive topics (e.g., political affiliations, mental or psychological problems, sexual behavior or attitudes, illegal or self-incriminating behavior, critical appraisals of family members, privileged relationships, religious practices, or income other than required for program eligibility).

- Parents have the right to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum, surveys created by third parties, or instruments used to collect personal information for marketing or sales.
- For surveys involving sensitive topics, schools must obtain prior written consent before requiring student participation.
- Parents may opt out of: (1) activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing; (2) any non-emergency invasive physical exam or screening (except hearing/vision/dental screenings or those required by law); and (3) certain surveys.

As noted in recent U.S. Department of Education guidance, Epic develops local policies on student privacy and parental notification to ensure transparency and ease of access. No major amendments to PPRA have been announced in 2025, but the Department continues to enforce compliance through investigations and directives.

For more information or assistance, contact Epic's registrar at [info@epiccalifornia.org](mailto:info@epiccalifornia.org) or visit the U.S. Department of Education's Student Privacy Policy Office website at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov>.

### *Pregnant and Parenting Students*

Epic recognizes that pregnant and parenting pupils are entitled to accommodations that provide them with the opportunity to succeed academically while protecting their health and the health of their children. A pregnant or parenting pupil is entitled to eight (8) weeks of parental leave, or more if deemed medically necessary by the pupil's physician, which the pupil may take before the birth of the pupil's infant if there is a medical necessity and after childbirth during the school year in which the birth takes place in order to protect the health of the pupil who gives or expects to give birth with the infant.

Upon return to the school after taking parental leave, a pregnant or parenting pupil will be able to make up work missed during his or her leave, including, but not limited to, makeup work plans and re-enrollment in courses. Notwithstanding any other law, a pregnant or parenting pupil may remain enrolled for a fifth year of instruction at Epic if it is necessary in order for the pupil to be able to complete any graduation requirements unless Epic determines that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the graduation requirement in time to graduate from high school by the end of the pupil's fourth year in high school.

### *Disclaimer*

The policies and regulations of Epic California Academy, or any changes to the policies and regulations after the publication of this guide, supersede all information provided in this handbook. Families are encouraged to contact the administration office or access updates online for more detailed information.