



STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025

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School Overview

School Contact Information

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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 realize that not all students learn the same way and that education should be personalized. We constantly strive to measure the effectiveness of our school so that every one of our students is successful.

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 work product is due by the student. The school year comprises eight learning periods ranging from 19-25 days each. 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.



2024-2025 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

September	October	November	December	January
Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su M Tu W Th F Sa 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
February	March	April	May	June
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LEARNING PERIODS	
LP 1 - 24 days	Sept. 3 - Oct. 4, 2024
LP 2 - 20 days	Oct. 7 - Nov. 1, 2024
LP 3 - 19 days	Nov. 4 - Dec. 6, 2024
LP 4 - 24 days	Dec. 9, 2024 - Jan. 24, 2025
LP 5 - 24 days	Jan. 27 - Feb. 28, 2025
LP 6 - 25 days	March 3 - April 4, 2025
LP 7 - 20 days	April 14 - May 9, 2025
LP 8 - 19 days	May 12 - June 6, 2025

HOLIDAYS	
Labor Day	September 2, 2024
Veterans Day	November 11, 2024
Thanksgiving Break	November 25-29, 2024
Winter Break	December 23, 2024 - January 3, 2025
Martin Luther King Jr Day	January 20, 2025
Presidents' Day	February 17, 2025
Spring Break	April 7-11, 2025
Memorial Day	May 26, 2025

SPECIAL DATES	
First Day of School	September 3, 2024
1st Semester (87 days)	September 3, 2024 - January 24, 2025
2nd Semester (88 days)	January 27, 2025 - June 6, 2025
Last Day of School	June 6, 2025

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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.

Non-Compliance and Involuntary Withdrawal

Epic'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.

No student shall be involuntarily removed by Epic for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) school days before the effective date of the action ("Withdrawal Notice").

The Withdrawal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights, including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the Charter School issues a final decision.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Withdrawal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Withdrawal Notice. If a parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing, the student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

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:

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of student to attend three special education service sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 non-compliance notice.
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Second Student Non-Compliance

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

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: 9th grade
- 50-99 credits: 10th grade
- 100-149 credits: 11th grade
- 150 or more credits: 12th 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
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

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

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.

Steps for Consideration of School-Initiated Retention	Timeline
<p>1. Parent and teacher: School-provided remediation steps occur, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SST meeting -Academic screenings -Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports, including Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 intervention -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 	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 appealing party to show why the decision of the school should be overruled (Ed Code 48070.5(f))</p>	Parent – Within one week of retention decision.
Steps for Consideration of Parent/Guardian-Initiated Retention	Timeline

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.

Grading Scale

Epic California Academy uses the following grading scale:

A+ = 99-100

A = 90-98

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 assessments 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 Testing

Epic shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress ["CAASPP"]). Students are expected to participate in annual summative 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.

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

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school leader will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without

consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosed to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performance of his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (Note: FERPA requires the school to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

4. "School officials" are employees with general or specific responsibility for promoting the educational objectives of the school or third parties under contract with the school to provide professional, business, and similar administrative services related to the school's educational mission. Individuals whose responsibilities place them within this category include teachers; advisers; counselors; deans, department chairpersons, directors, and other administrative officials responsible for some part of the academic enterprise or one of the supporting activities; health staff; administrative and faculty sponsors of officially recognized clubs, organizations, etc.; members, including students and alumni, of official committees, staff personnel employed to assist school officials in discharging professional responsibilities; and persons or entities under contract to the school to provide a specific task or service related to the school's educational mission. Access by these officials is restricted where practical, and only to that portion of the student record(s) necessary for the discharge of assigned duties.
5. "Legitimate educational interests" are defined as interests that are essential to the general process of public education prescribed by the body of policy adopted by the Governing Board. Legitimate educational interests include teaching, research, public service, and such directly supportive activities as academic advising, general counseling, discipline, vocational counseling and job placement, advisement, medical services, safety, and academic assistance activities. In addition, the school officially recognizes appropriate co-curricular activities that are generally supportive of the overall goals of the institution and contribute generally to the well-being of the entire student body and specifically to many individuals who participate in these activities. These activities include varsity and intramural sports, specific interest clubs, and student government.
6. The right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office U. S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, S. W. Washington, D. C. 20202-5920

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.

Notice to Parents Regarding Release of Directory Information

The FERPA, a federal law, requires that the school, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the school may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without a parent's written consent unless you have advised the school to do the contrary in accordance with procedures. "Directory information" is information that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released and can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. The term "directory information" may include the following:

1. Student's name
2. Address
3. Telephone listing
4. Electronic mail address
5. Photograph
6. Date and place of birth
7. Major field of study
8. Dates of attendance
9. Grade level
10. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
11. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
12. Most recent school attended

The school has not included any of the above-listed categories of student information within the term "directory information." As a result, unless a parent or eligible student notifies the school in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of enrollment of each school year of their election to have the school release any of the above information (each category of information must be specifically requested), the school will not disclose any information which may be considered "directory information."

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.

Revised 9/15/2024