



PREPARING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND:

OVERVIEW OF THE 8th GRADE PROMOTION POLICY



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

OUR GOAL

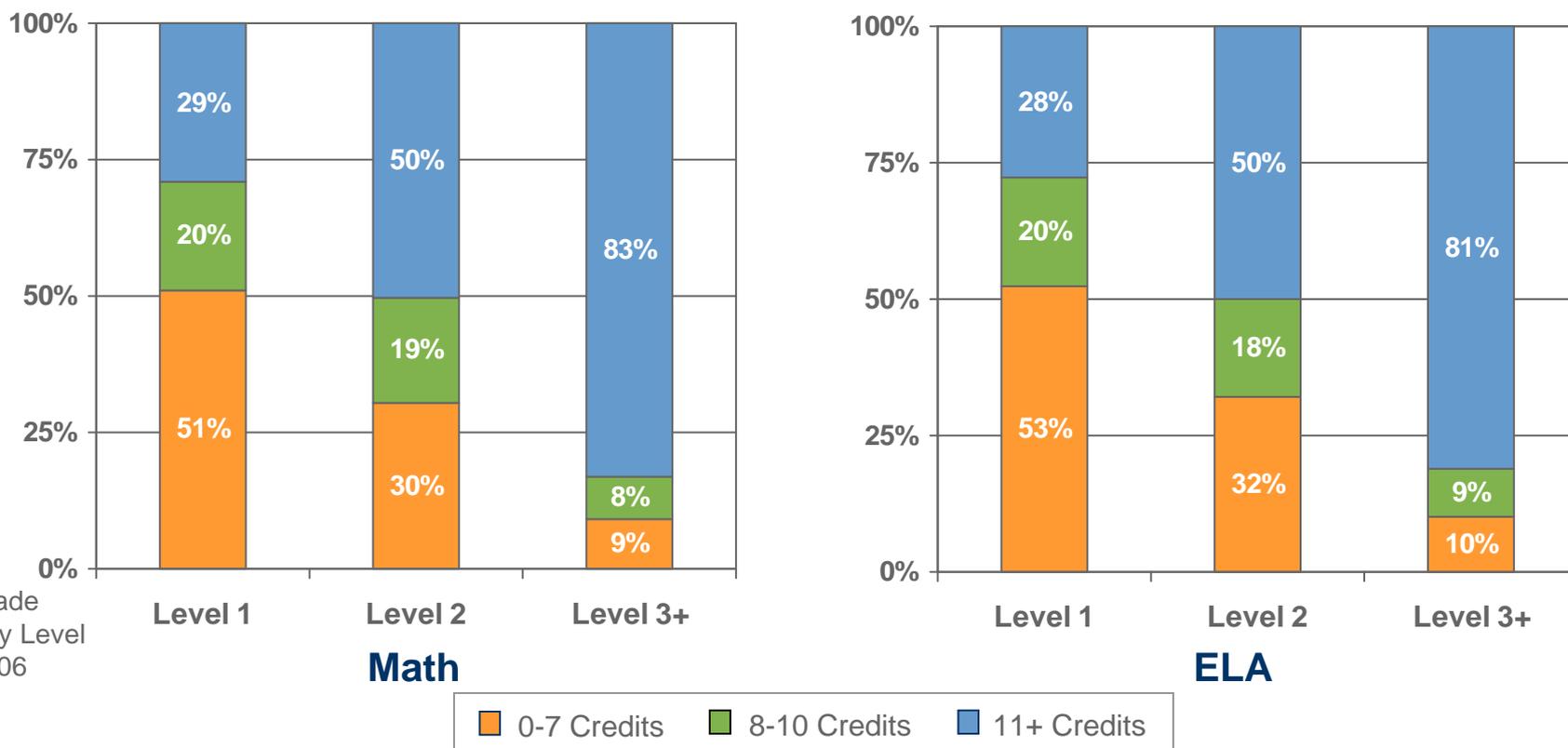
Our goal is to provide middle school students with the foundation they need to graduate from high school and succeed in college and careers.

- **We will start early.** We will work with students and their families when they enter middle school to chart a course for middle school success. We will help students develop the skills, knowledge, and habits they need to enter high school prepared to handle 9th grade work.
- **We will give our students the instruction—and supports—they need.** We owe it to our children and their families to prepare them every inch of the way, starting in kindergarten, for the challenges they'll face in high school and beyond. This means providing rigorous courses, engaging instruction, and targeted academic support.
- **We will make this a partnership.** Parents, educators, students, and our entire community must work together to make student success a reality.

STUDENTS WHO ARE PREPARED FOR HIGH SCHOOL PERFORM BETTER ONCE THERE

Students at proficiency on 8th grade exams are more likely to earn high school credits once they're in the 9th grade.

2006-07 9th Grade Credit Accumulation by 8th Grade Proficiency Level



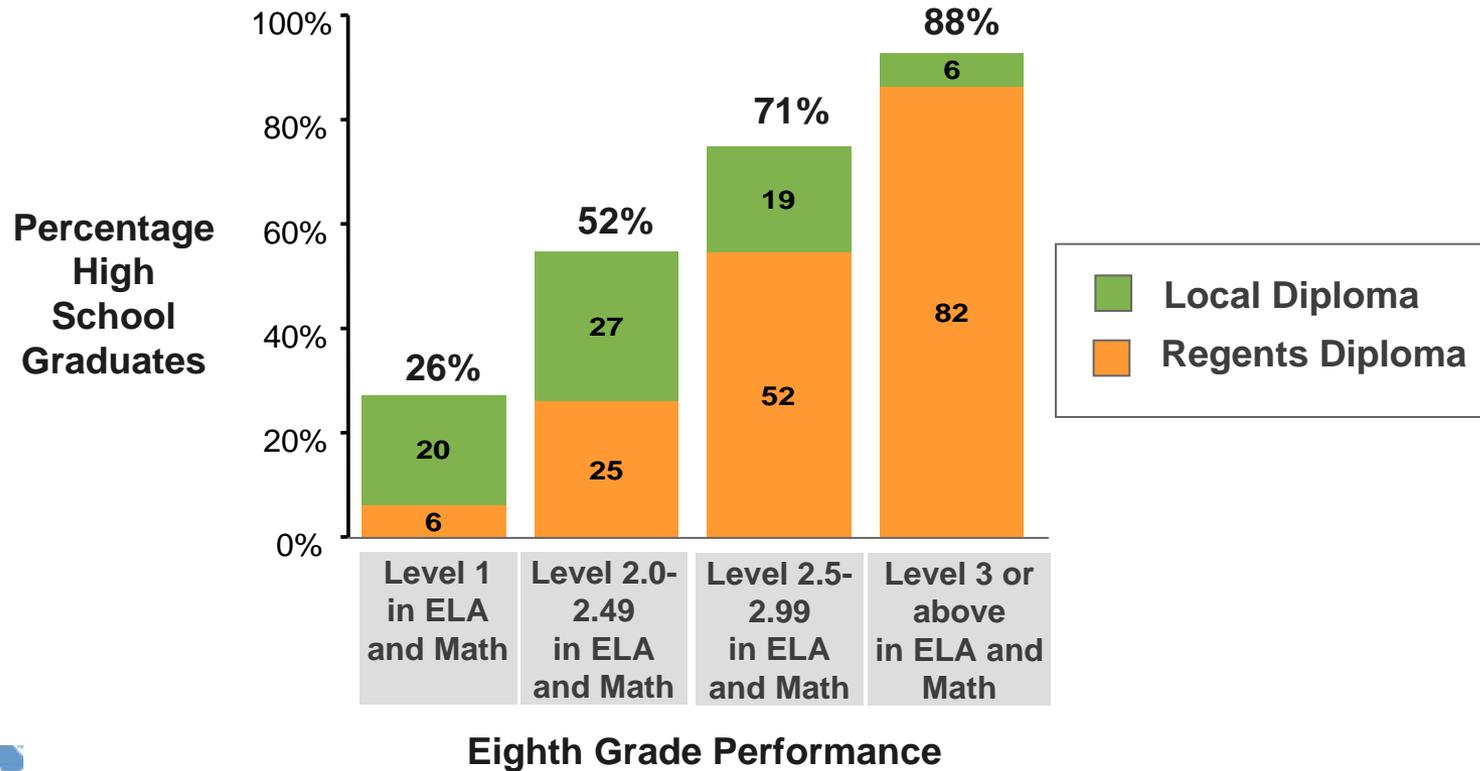
8th Grade Proficiency Level in 2006

Note: includes only General Education students who earned credits. Students must accumulate a minimum of 8 credits in order to be promoted to 10th grade, and must have a total of 44 credits to graduate from high school.

SUCCESSFUL EIGHTH GRADERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

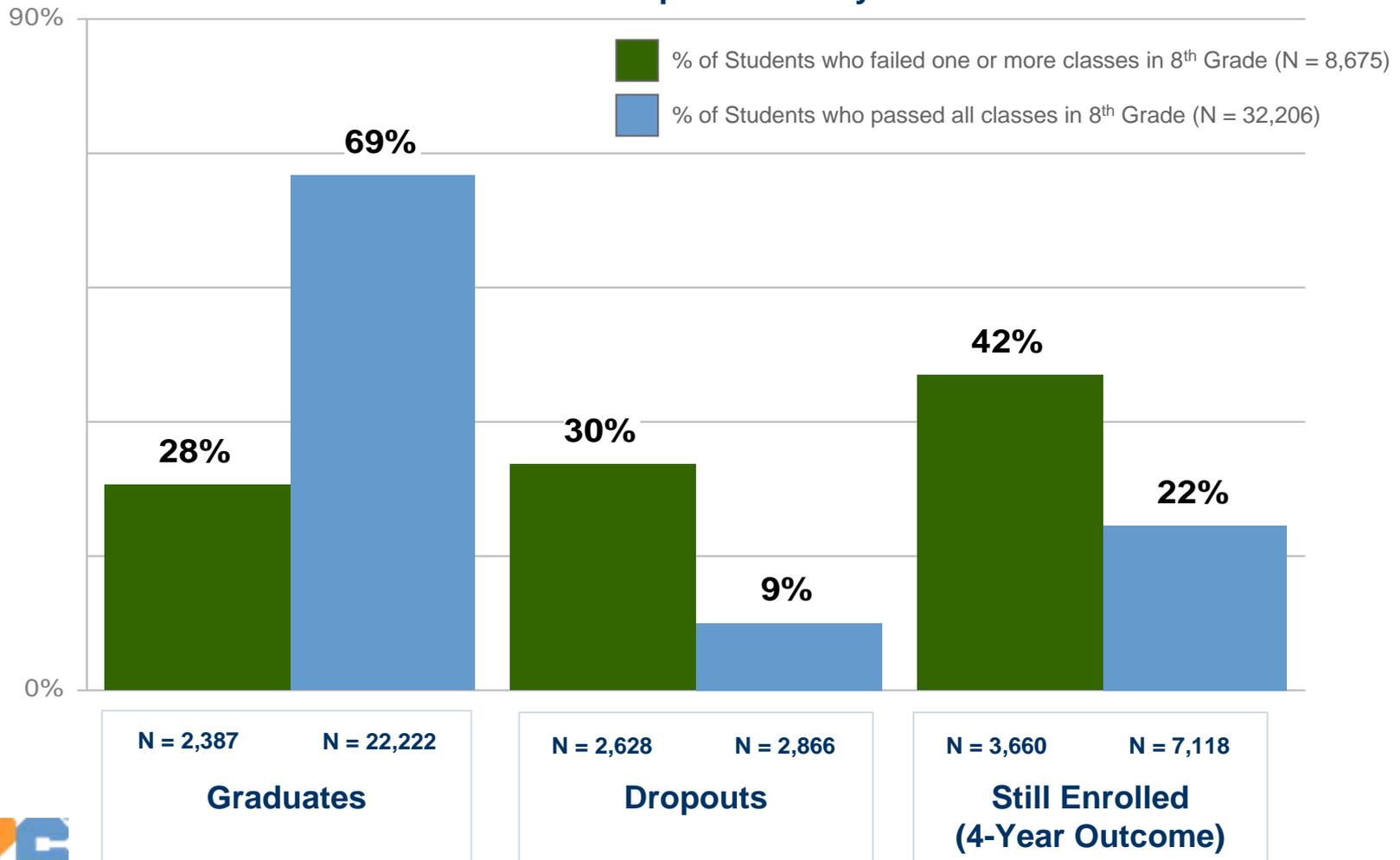
Preparation matters:

- Beginning in the 2008-09 school year, all students must earn a Regents diploma to graduate. A local diploma will no longer be an option.
- Students who entered high school on track graduated with more advanced diplomas than their less-prepared peers.
- Students who entered high school behind stayed behind, even if they beat the odds to graduate.



STUDENTS WHO PASS CORE SUBJECTS IN 8th GRADE ARE MORE LIKELY TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

2006-07 Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates by 8th Grade Courses Passed



*Results for students in the Class of 2006 General Education cohort.

OVERVIEW OF THE NEW POLICY

Starting in the 2008-09 school year:

8th graders will be promoted to high school if they meet BOTH of the following requirements:

- Score at Level 2 or above on Math and ELA assessments
AND
- Pass all core academic subjects (ELA, math, social studies, science)

An appeals process will remain in place for all students who do not meet these requirements during the school year:

- Automatic appeal in June using a rubric that demonstrates that students have acquired the skills necessary for promotion
- Opportunity to attend summer school and retake tests or failed courses

RIGOROUS PROMOTION STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS

This policy holds **ALL** students to high expectations, but recognizes the challenges some of our students face.

- **English Language Learners** will be held to promotion standards based on their number of years in NYC public schools.
 - 1st year ELLs and SIFEs¹ must pass core subjects
 - 2nd and 3rd year ELLs must:
 - Score at Level 2 in math and make expected gains in ELA²
 - Pass core subjects
 - 4th year ELLs will be held to the same standards as English proficient students
- **Special Education students** will be held to the promotion standards stated in their IEPs – modified or not.
 - Students whose IEPs do not specify modified promotion criteria will be held to the same promotion policy as General Education students
 - Students with disabilities receiving special education services who participate in State and Citywide assessments (with or without modifications) and whose IEPs specify a modified promotion standard due to the nature or severity of the disability, will be promoted based on meeting the IEP standard

¹Students with Interrupted Formal Education

² Expected scale score gains to be determined by the Office of Accountability. 2nd year ELLs will be held to expected gains between January and June on a TBD ELA assessment, while 3rd year ELLs will be held to expected gains on the state ELA assessment.

Note: ELLs may take assessments with available accommodations

Note: All procedural elements of the appeals process remain in place for ELLs and special education students

DIFFERENTIATED OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO DO NOT MEET STANDARDS

Recognizing the particular challenges faced by students who are over-age¹ or who have been previously retained in middle school, this policy includes differentiated options to support these students.

▪ **Students who are over-age and/or have been previously retained in middle school** will have the opportunity to attend summer school at a high school. They will be:

- Promoted if standards are met – by passing the summer tests and/or coursework during summer school, or through the appeals process
- Promoted if effort is demonstrated², with a school-based support program in their freshman year
- Retained if standards are not met or no effort is demonstrated¹

¹ Over-age students are designated as over-age if they will turn 16 by December 31st.

² Demonstration of effort to be determined using standardized criteria during the appeals process

WE WILL WORK WITH FAMILIES AND STUDENTS TO PROVIDE THEM WITH EARLY NOTICE AND SUPPORT

- **Communication with families starting with students' entry into middle school**
 - We will work with families beginning with the students' entry into middle school (in the fall of 6th grade) to identify students whose performance indicates they are not on the path to establish the foundation needed to succeed in high school.
- **Early notification for students at risk of not meeting promotion standards**
 - Early in the fall of 8th grade, we will notify students and their families who are at risk of not meeting the promotion standards
 - Guidance counselors, teachers, and principals will work with students who are struggling to get back on course so they are ready for high school.

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Schools will receive multiple supports to help students succeed in 8th grade and beyond.

- > *8th Grade Portfolio of Supports.* Schools will receive student data, communications resources, professional development offerings, tools to motivate and empower students, and curriculum resources.
- > *Periodic Assessments.* Schools use custom assessments and computer adaptive tests to closely monitor student progress relative to areas targeted for intervention.
- > *Academic Interventions.* The DOE is identifying best practices schools can choose to use to support under-performing students.
- > *Guidance.* Guidance Counselors and school administrators will make sure that students and their families are aware of the promotion standards and of the supports available to help them succeed.
- > *Summer School.* All students who do not meet promotion standards can attend summer school; over-age students can attend at a high school.
- > *Accelerated Supports.* High schools will offer over-age, promoted students intensive, school-based acceleration programs tailored to their particular needs.
- > *ELL Support.* Differentiated help for SIFE and long-term ELLs in literacy and math, including the development of academic language.
- > *Special Education Support.* In addition to the supports they receive through their IEPs, special education students will be able to attend programs with the accommodations they need.

TOOLS TO HELP ALL STUDENTS SUCCEED:

Through our Children First reforms, we are giving schools the tools and incentives they need to help all students, especially those who are struggling, succeed.

- **Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS)** – This first-of-its-kind system provides detailed information about student performance and progress. It helps teachers and principals identify and address students’ strengths and weaknesses and create tailored game plans to support student success.
- **Fair Student Funding** – Schools are now funded at unprecedented levels, with more dollars going to high-needs students, including English Language Learners and students who perform at the lowest levels on State tests. This gives schools the resources they need to help these high-needs students.
- **Progress Reports** – All schools now receive letter grades based on academic achievement and progress of students and survey results from parents, students, and teachers. Schools earn extra credit for helping the lowest performing students make gains.