

**Board Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention**

**Status:** ADOPTED

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It is the policy of the Sumter County Board of Education that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program be based on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the educational setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement. The Board further requires that each principal shall annually notify parents or guardians that the promotion, placement or retention of a student will be based on the academic achievement of the student and criteria established by the Sumter County Board of Education.

**DEFINITIONS**

- a. **Accelerated instruction** – challenging instructional activities that are intensely focused on student academic deficiencies in reading and/ or mathematics. This accelerated instruction is designed to enable a student who has not achieved grade level, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement, to meet grade-level standards in the shortest possible time.
  
- b. **Additional instruction** – Academic instruction beyond regularly scheduled academic classes that are designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement, to grade level performance. It may include more instructional time allocated during the school day, instruction before and after the school day, Saturday instruction, and/ or summer/inter-session instruction.
  
- c. **Differentiated instruction** – instructional strategies designed to meet individual student learning needs.
  
- d. **Grade level** – the standard of performance as defined by the Office of Student Achievement.
  
- e. **Placement** – assignment of a student to a specific grade level based on the determination that such placement will most likely provide the student with instruction and other services needed to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.
  
- f. **Placement committee** – the committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet established criteria to be considered on grade level. This committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student’s parents or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) in which the student did not achieve grade level.
  
- g. **Promotion** – the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student’s achievement of established criteria in the current grade level.
  
- h. **Retention** – the re-assignment of a student to the current grade level during the next school year.

**Promotion, Placement or Retention for Kindergarten**

- A. Documentation that supports promotion, placement, or retention shall be on file in the student’s permanent

record.

**All of the following (Steps 1-3) must be true for a student to be promoted to the next grade.**

1. A student must demonstrate readiness by scoring "Ready for 1<sup>st</sup> grade" on the state kindergarten assessment;
2. A student must master an acceptable number, as defined by a committee of kindergarten administrators and teachers, of skills identified in reading, language arts and math;
3. Attendance/Tardies – A student in kindergarten must not be absent for more than 15 days in a school-year. If a pupil is absent more than 15 days, he/she shall be retained.
4. The retention decision may be appealed to the principal within 10 working days.

B. Should a student be recommended for retention in kindergarten, then:

1. The information obtained by the state kindergarten assessment shall be considered as part of the required documentation.
2. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the retention decision.
3. Should a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) appeal the retention; the principal shall convene a placement committee to determine the appropriate placement of the student.
4. A locally developed rubric/and or set of content mastery criteria will be used by the placement committee to determine placement.
5. To override the recommendation to retain the student requires unanimous support of the placement committee.
6. When a student is retained, an alternative, developmentally appropriate instructional program shall be provided.

## **Promotion, Placement or Retention for Grades 1-5**

A. Documentation that supports promotion, placement, or retention shall be on file in the student's permanent record.

**All of the following (Steps 1 and 2) must be considered for a student to be promoted to**

**the next grade:**

1. A student in grades 1-5 must achieve a final grade of 70 or above in reading, language arts, and math courses.
2. Attendance/Tardies – A student in grades 1-5 must not be absent more than 15 days in a school-year. If a pupil is absent more than 15 days, he/she shall be retained.
3. The retention decision may be appealed to the principal within 10 working days.

**B. Should a student be recommended for retention in grades 1-5, then:**

1. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the retention decision.
2. Should a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) appeal the retention; the principal shall convene a placement committee to determine the appropriate placement of the student.
3. A locally developed rubric/and or set of content mastery criteria will be used by the placement committee to determine placement.
4. To override the recommendation to retain the student requires unanimous support of the placement committee.
5. When a student is retained, an alternative, developmentally appropriate instructional program shall be provided.

## **Promotion, Placement or Retention for Grades 6-8**

- A. Documentation that supports promotion, placement, or retention shall be on file in the student's permanent record.

**All of the following (Steps 1 and 2) must be true for a student to be promoted to the next grade.**

1. A student in grades 6-8 must achieve a final grade of 70 or above in at least three out of four academic subjects and at least one exploratory course.
2. Attendance/Tardies – A student in grades 6-8 must not be absent more than 15 days in a school-year. If a pupil is absent more than 15 days, he/she shall be retained.

3. The retention decision may be appealed to the principal within 10 working days.

**Grades 6-8:**

B. Should a student be recommended for retention in grades 6-8, then:

1. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the retention decision.
2. Should a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) appeal the retention; the principal shall convene a placement committee to determine the appropriate placement of the student.
3. A locally developed rubric/and or set of content mastery criteria will be used by the placement committee to determine placement.
4. To override the recommendation to retain the student requires unanimous support of the placement committee.
5. When a student is retained, an alternative, developmentally appropriate instructional program shall be provided.

**1. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 3, 5, AND 8.**

a. Promotion of a student shall be determined as follows.

1. No third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not receive a grade level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.

2. No fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student

does not receive a grade level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and attain an achievement level of "Developing Learner", "Proficient Learner", or "Distinguished Learner" on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.

3. No eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not receive a grade level reading determination of "On/Above Grade Level" on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and attain an achievement level of "Developing Learner", "Proficient Learner", or "Distinguished Learner" on the mathematics section of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessment and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.

4. The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy.
- b. When a student does not perform at grade level in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments specified in section (a) above, then the following shall occur:
1. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments individual student scores, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student regarding the following:
    - i. The student's below-grade-level reading designation and/or the mathematics achievement level on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments;
    - ii. The specific retest(s) to be given the student and testing date(s);
    - iii. The opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments; and
    - iv. The possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next school year.
  2. The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity; and
  3. The student shall be retested with appropriate section(s) of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and this board.
- c. When a student does not perform at grade level on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in grades 3, 5, and 8, and also does not perform at grade level on a second opportunity to take the assessment, then the following shall occur:
1. The school principal or designee shall retain the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided for in this policy.
  2. The school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher(s) regarding the decision to retain the student.
    - i. The notice shall describe the option of the parent or guardian or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student;
    - ii. The notice shall describe the composition and functions of the placement committee; it shall describe the option of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), or principal to invite individuals who can provide information or facilitate understanding of the issues to be discussed to

attend the placement committee meeting (*note that this is sample verbiage and is not mandated for inclusion in the policy*); and

- iii. The notice shall include the requirement that the decision to promote the student must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), and principal or designee.
3. If the parent or guardian or teacher(s) appeals the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee shall establish a placement committee to consider the appeal.
  - i. The placement committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) of the subject(s) of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments or the alternative assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level.
  - ii. The principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian and teacher(s) of the time and place for convening the placement committee.
  - iii. The placement committee shall review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the performance on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments or the alternative assessment instrument and promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends, and make a determination to promote or retain.
  - iv. The decision to promote must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee and must determine that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the school year.
  - v. The placement committee shall prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year.
  - vi. The placement committee shall provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
4. A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed for each student who does not achieve grade level performance in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments specified in section (a) above whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year.
5. A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in language arts and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and this board. Placement or promotion of these students shall follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve

- grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
6. A student's failure to take the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments in grades 3, 5, and 8 in language arts and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and this board shall result in the student being retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth in this rule.
  
  7. For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.

#### **Decision of Placement Committee**

The decision of the placement committee shall be final.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION K-12**

Special Education students shall meet criteria for promotion or placement as established in their Individualized Education Plan. The IEP committee shall serve as the placement committee for these students.

## **PROMOTION REQUIREMENT FOR GRADES 9-12**

### **Credit for Courses in Grades 9-12 and Lower Grades where High School Credit is Awarded**

For a student to earn high school credit, all of the standards must be met as listed below:

- A. To earn credit for a course, the student must have a passing grade of 70 or higher. The number of units required for promotion shall be specified in the student handbook.

\*To graduate, students must meet the requirements established by the Sumter County Board of Education.

- B. Meet attendance requirements established by the Sumter County Board of Education.
  
  - C. Meet assessment requirements as listed in State Rule 160-3-1.07 (Testing Programs – Student Assessment) and the testing requirements established by the Sumter County Board of Education.
  
  - D. Students passing a Georgia Milestone course with a 70 or higher grade but not making at least 68 on the assessment shall receive an Incomplete (I) for the course and must complete 8 to 10 hours of remediation and retake the Milestone for that course. This will be a one- time retake.
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