

## Board Policy Promotion and Retention

Descriptor Code: IHE

### STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

#### Promotion and Retention of Students

Stephens County Schools believes that all students can learn when the following are present: engaging work, quality instruction, relevant content and intrinsic motivation. The Stephens County Board of Education holds high expectations for staff, students, parents, and community and believes accountability must be shared by all.

#### (1) DEFINITIONS

- (a) **Academic class** – math, reading, language arts, science or social studies.
- (b) **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 Education Accountability, to meet grade-level standards in the shortest possible time.
- (c) **Additional instruction** – academic instruction beyond regularly scheduled academic classes that is designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, to grade level performance. It may include more instructional time allocated during the school day, instruction before and after the school day, and/or summer/inter-session instruction.
- (d) **Differentiated instruction** – instructional strategies designed to meet individual student learning needs.
- (e) **Grade level** – standard of performance, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, on a Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.
- (f) **Placement** – the 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.
- (g) **Placement committee** – the committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet expectations on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. This committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) in which the student did not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.
- (h) **Promotion** – the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student's achievement of established criteria in the current grade.
- (i) **Retention** – the re-assignment of a student to the current grade level during the next school year.
- (j) **Student Support Team** – a team, composed of members knowledgeable of the needs of the student, that works to improve the delivery of instructional services to students experiencing problems of an academic, social or behavioral nature in school and serves as a

resource for teachers and other educators in the delivery of these services.

## **(2) PROMOTION STANDARDS AND CRITERIA**

To be considered for promotion students must meet local promotion requirements.

The school principal or designee shall annually notify parents or guardians that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program will be based on the academic achievement of the student, performance on criterion-referenced assessments and other criteria established in this policy.

### **Promotion Criteria for Grades 1-8**

#### **I. Grades**

- For students in grades 1-2 a student's achievement of the skills for the grade to which he is assigned and his readiness for work at the next grade level shall be considered when determining assignment to the next grade. Data gathered from performance on the following assessments may be used to determine grade assignment.
  1. Comprehensive Reading Test (CRT)
  2. STAR Test
  3. Reading Level as determined by running records
  4. Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests
  5. Classroom Performance
  6. Report Card Grades
- Students in grades 3-5 must pass reading, language arts, and math classes in order to be eligible for promotion.
- Students in grades 6-8 must pass reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science as well as 3 out of 4 semesters of connections courses in order to be eligible for promotion.

#### **II. Criterion-referenced Test**

- When administered by the Georgia Department of Education, students in grades 3-8 must score at or above Level II (scaled score of 300) on the Georgia Criterion-referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in reading, mathematics, and English/language arts to be eligible for promotion.

## **(3) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 1-2**

(a) Each school principal or designee shall distribute student data from the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised to teachers at the beginning of each school year if the results are available to the district at that time. Each teacher shall use this and other assessment data to focus instruction on identified student needs.

(b) Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.

(c) Each school principal or designee shall establish a Student Support Team for each student in grades 1-2 who does not achieve grade level on the reading section of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). The Student Support Team shall:

1. Determine if each student shall be retained or promoted based on a review of the overall academic achievement of the student as well as the student's CRCT performance;
2. Develop an accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction plan for each student

who does not achieve grade level on the reading section of the CRCT;

3. Develop a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.

#### **(4) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 3-8**

(a) Each school principal or designee shall distribute student data from the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test to teachers prior to the beginning of each school year if the results are available to the district at that time. During the first 20 days of school teachers will review the CRCT data, classroom work, previous assessment data, and other performance data to identify students who are at risk of not meeting the standard on the spring Georgia-Referenced Competency Test. A list of identified students will be provided to the school principal by the 21<sup>st</sup> day of school. Each school principal will send letters to parents notifying them of that their child is at-risk of not meeting the standard on the CRCT. The parents will be invited to schedule a meeting with the Student Support Team to discuss the development and implementation of a plan for accelerated, differentiated or additional instruction. This plan shall include intervention and monitoring strategies. Each teacher shall use data to focus instruction on identified student academic performance in grades 3-8.

(b) Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.

(c) When a student in grades 3-8 does not perform at or above Level II (scaled score of 300) on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test sections of reading, English/language arts and/or mathematics the following shall occur:

1. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test 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 performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests;

- (ii) The opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests; and

- (iii) 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.

3. Upon successful completion of the accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction the student shall be eligible for promotion.

(d) When a student does not perform at grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in grades 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 and also does not successfully complete the accelerated, differentiated or additional instruction the principal or designee shall establish a placement committee for each student. The placement committee will determine whether each student shall be retained or promoted based on a review of the overall academic achievement of the student, attendance, and CRCT performance on all subtests.

(e) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.

(f) The decision of the placement committee is final.

(g) Each school principal or designee shall establish a Student Support Team for each student in grades 3-8 who did not achieve grade level on reading, English/language arts and/or mathematics sections of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. The Student Support Team shall develop an accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction plan for each student. The Learning Acceleration Plan shall include intervention strategies and shall be monitored and in place for the subsequent school year.

**(5) 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 achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy.
2. No fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy.
3. No eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy.
4. The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test 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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test(s) specified in section (a) above, then the following shall occur:

1. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test 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 performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests;
  - (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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests; 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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test(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.

(c) When a student does not perform at grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test 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 option of the parent, guardian, or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student.
  - (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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test 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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test 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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test(s) 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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and/or mathematics on the second administration day(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. 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 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading 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.

The decision of the placement committee is final.

## **(6) PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 9 – 12**

(a) To be promoted from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade a student must earn a total of 6 units of credit and the following must occur:

(i.) One (1) of the units earned must be an English unit

(b) To be promoted from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade a student must earn a total of 13 cumulative units of credit and the following must occur:

(i) Two (2) of the units earned must be English units

(ii) One (1) of the units earned must be either a world history or world geography unit

(iii) One (1) of the units earned must be a mathematics unit

(iv) One (1) of the units earned must be a science unit

(c) To be promoted from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade a student must earn a total of 21 cumulative units of credit and the following must occur:

(i) Three (3) of the units earned must be English units

(ii) Two (2) of the units earned must be either a world history or world geography unit and a US History unit

(iii) Two (2) of the units earned must be mathematics units

(iv) Two (2) of the units earned must be science units

(d) In order to graduate a student must earn 28 cumulative units as defined in policy IHF(4).

Stephens County Schools

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