

**RESCIND BOARD REPORT 04-0324-PO3
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION POLICY AND
ADOPT A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION POLICY**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Board rescind Board Report 04-0324-PO3 "Elementary School Promotion Policy" and adopt a new Elementary School Promotion Policy.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide the standards and guidelines for the promotion and retention of elementary school students. In providing these guidelines, the Board demonstrates its commitment to several key objectives: (1) promoting high educational standards for its students; (2) ensuring that there is consistency in the educational opportunities provided to all students; (3) implementing a plan of system-wide monitoring to verify that the quality of instruction and type of instructional materials provided to students are calculated to achieve student mastery of the skills and knowledge which are assessed in making promotion decisions; (4) early identification of at-risk students and the implementation of systematic academic intervention as the most effective method to help all children achieve success in school and avoid grade retention; and (5) ensuring that the District's educational objectives are met in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

POLICY TEXT:

I. Definitions

Unexcused absences: Shall be as defined in the Board's Absenteeism and Truancy Policy, Board Report 05-0126-PO2, as amended.

District-wide assessment (DWA): The district-wide assessment will be either the norm-referenced component of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) or the summer assessment.

Satisfactory completion of summer school: Shall mean a student who: (1) has a summer school attendance record of no more than three (3) unexcused absences; and (2) has received a passing grade on the summer report card in both reading and mathematics.

Benchmark Grades: Grades third, sixth and eighth are considered benchmark grades.

Achievement Level 1 (Above Range): Shall mean students in the benchmark grades with DWA reading and mathematics scores at or above the 35th National Percentile Ranking.

Achievement Level 2 (Within Range): Shall mean students in the benchmark grades with: (a) DWA reading and mathematics scores ranging from the 24th through the 34th National Percentile Ranking, or (b) a DWA score in one of the two subject areas (reading or mathematics) at or above the 35th National Percentile Ranking but with the other DWA score (reading or mathematics) in the range from the 24th through the 34th National Percentile Ranking.

Achievement Level 3 (Below Range): Shall mean students in the benchmark grades with: (a) DWA reading and mathematics scores that are below the 24th National Percentile Ranking, or (b) a DWA score in one of the two subject areas (reading or mathematics) at or above the 24th National Percentile Ranking but with the other DWA score (reading or mathematics) that is below the 24th National Percentile Ranking, or (c) with no DWA scores in either reading or mathematics, except for those students who are not required to take the ISAT.

Personal learning plan: A plan developed by the school for a retained student that may include, as appropriate, in-school, after-school, year-round components and other interventions developed with the principal, counselor, teacher and parent(s) that target the student's assessed learning deficiencies.

II. Elementary School Promotion Standards For Students in 3rd, 6th and 8th Grades

Students in the benchmark grades will be promoted to the next grade if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade levels as demonstrated on multiple measurements by their academic performance, attendance, conduct and DWA scores as described below.

A. Achievement Level 1 (Above Range)

Students in the benchmark grades with Achievement Level 1 DWA scores will be reviewed to see if they also meet the following three criteria:

Academic Performance

1. Final passing report card grade in reading
2. Final passing report card grade in mathematics

Attendance

3. No more than nine (9) unexcused absences (for the 2005-2006 school year, only unexcused absences occurring after November 9, 2005 will be counted.)

Those students who meet all three criteria shall automatically be promoted in June to the next grade level.

Those students who fail to meet all three criteria shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.

B. Achievement Level 2 (Within Range)

Students in the benchmark grades with Achievement Level 2 DWA scores will be reviewed to see if they also meet the following four criteria which indicate that the student is sufficiently prepared to perform satisfactorily at the next grade level:

Academic Performance

1. Final report card grade in reading "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year
2. Final report card grade in mathematics "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in mathematics and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year

Attendance

3. No more than nine (9) unexcused absences (for the 2005-2006 school year, only unexcused absences occurring after November 9, 2005 will be counted)

Conduct

4. A student's conduct during the academic year was satisfactory, i.e. there was an absence of any significant disciplinary infractions

Those students who meet all four criteria shall automatically be promoted in June to the next grade level.

Those students who fail to meet all four criteria shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.

C. Achievement Level 3 (Below Range)

Students in the benchmark grades with Achievement Level 3 DWA scores will be reviewed to see if they also meet the following four criteria:

Academic Performance

1. Final report card grade in reading "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year
2. Final report card grade in mathematics "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in mathematics and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year

Attendance

3. No more than nine (9) unexcused absences (for the 2005-2006 school year, only unexcused absences occurring after November 9, 2005 will be counted)

Conduct

4. A student's conduct during the academic year was satisfactory, i.e. there was an absence of any significant disciplinary infractions

Those students who meet all four criteria shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.

Those students who fail to meet all four criteria shall be required to attend summer school, and take a mandatory end of summer school assessment in the subject(s) where the students' DWA score is below the 24th percentile. These students will be promoted to the next grade only upon (a) satisfactory completion of summer school, and (b) a score on the required summer assessment(s) at or above the 24th percentile.

D. Review of Promotion Status

1. Automatic Review of Academic Performance, Attendance and Conduct

The performance of all benchmark grade students shall be *automatically* reviewed through a centralized process. The District shall maintain a centralized process that is applied consistently throughout the District for determining whether any benchmark grade student should be promoted if their performance falls below Achievement Level 1. Immediately after the District receives the DWA test results, appropriate District officials shall identify the Achievement Level status of all benchmark grade students.

2. Parent Notification

During the last week of school following the automatic review process, parent(s)/guardian(s) of all benchmark grade students shall receive notification regarding the promotion of their child(ren). The parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who cannot be promoted in June shall be informed by mail and by notice provided to the student that, in order to be promoted to the next grade in August, their child(ren) must: (1) attend and successfully complete summer school; (2) have a summer school attendance record of no more than three (3) unexcused absences; (3) receive passing summer school grades in reading and mathematics; and (4) in the case of students who are required to take the summer assessment in one or more subjects, score at or above the 24th percentile in the required test(s).

3. Parent Appeal

For students in benchmark grades, at the end of summer school parents/guardians will receive a promotion determination notice identifying whether their child satisfies all the requirements for promotion. Parents/guardians shall have five calendar days following the receipt of the promotion determination notice to submit in writing to the Chief Education Officer or designee an appeal to review their children's academic performance or attendance records. As part of the appeal the parent/guardian may provide any additional information regarding their child that would justify waiving the requirements set forth in this policy and promoting the students to the next grade. For students in non-benchmark grades, parents/guardians may appeal a promotion determination pursuant to procedures established by the Office of Instruction and School Management.

E. Additional Elementary Promotion Requirements

All elementary students must pass the United States and State of Illinois Constitution tests in order to graduate and continue on to high school. English Language Learners (ELLs) may take the Constitution tests in English or it may be administered in their native language, as deemed appropriate in the judgment of the classroom teacher in consultation with other knowledgeable persons, including the parents. Achievement academies will offer Constitution tests for students who have not successfully completed this requirement.

F. Promotion of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, (including English Language Learners with a disability) receiving special education and related services under an Individual Education Program (IEP) are expected to meet the same promotion criteria as their non-disabled peers. For standardized testing, students with disabilities must be provided the accommodations/modifications outlined on their IEP. The designated DWA scores and other criteria used to determine promotion as described in this policy shall apply to students with disabilities unless the IEP modifies the promotion criteria in whole or in part. Promotion decisions that are based on standardized test scores can only be made if the student was afforded the accommodations/modifications that are delineated on the student's IEP.

IEPs are reviewed annually. The Office of Specialized Services mandates that during these annual reviews of IEP's that promotion decisions for students with disabilities are made in conformance with their IEPs and that the IEP contain full and complete information concerning the promotion criteria.

Students receiving accommodations/modifications pursuant to a Section 504 plan may not have the promotion criteria described herein modified. For standardized testing, students on a 504 plan must be provided the accommodations/modifications outlined on their 504 plan. Promotion decisions that are based on standardized test scores can only be made if the student was afforded the accommodations/modifications as indicated on the 504 plan.

G. Promotion of English Language Learners

Since the ISAT is not administered to ELL students, the following modified promotion requirements will apply. ELL students will complete the general curriculum in their native language and/or English. All ELL students will complete the English as a Second Language ("ESL") curriculum and their general academic curriculum in their native language and/or English. ELL students in the benchmark grades may be promoted if they demonstrate the following:

1. Academic Performance: The student has a final report card grade of "C" or better in reading and mathematics for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and mathematics and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year.

2. Attendance: The student's attendance record during the academic year has no more than nine (9) unexcused absences (for the 2005-2006 school year, only unexcused absences occurring after November 9, 2005 will be counted).
3. Conduct: A student's conduct during the academic year was satisfactory, i.e. there was an absence of any significant disciplinary infractions.

The academic performance of ELL students in Bilingual Program Years zero, one and two will be evaluated in the language of instruction. The level of English proficiency for ELL students in Bilingual Program Years zero, one and two shall not be considered as a determining factor for promotion. The academic performance of ELLs in Bilingual Program Years three and beyond will be evaluated in English.

The Principal shall make promotion determinations for ELL students based on teacher recommendations as they relate to the promotion criteria listed above. An ELL may not be retained based on their English Language Proficiency level regardless of Bilingual Program Year. The Office of Language and Cultural Education shall identify language support offerings to assist ELL students during the school year and, where possible, during the summer.

H. Incoming Students

Students who were previously enrolled in private schools or other school districts who enroll in the Chicago Public Schools in any grade may be evaluated for appropriate grade placement. Further, schools shall follow the Office of Specialized Services' bulletin on students with disabilities transferring from other school districts.

III. RETENTION

Students in grades 1-8 can be retained in a grade for a second year **only one time during the following grade cycles: 1-3, 4-6 and 7-8**. Students in the benchmark grades who are required to attend summer school who do not successfully complete summer school will be retained in the grade they were in the previous year if holding them back would constitute a first retention. However, if retaining a student would be a second retention, the student shall, upon completion of summer school, be promoted to the next grade, or, for eight graders and other qualifying students, to an achievement academy. Schools may retain students at non-benchmark grades based on the guidelines issued by the Office of Instruction and School Management. A parent or guardian may appeal a school's decision to retain a student at a benchmark or non-benchmark grade in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in Section II.D.3. of this policy. Kindergarten students may not be retained.

A. Grades 1-8

The school shall develop a personal learning plan for each retained student that may include, as appropriate, in-school, after-school, year-round components and other interventions developed with the principal, counselor, teacher and parent(s) that target the student's assessed learning deficiencies. Each retained student shall participate in a personal learning plan.

B. 8th Grade Students

1. Students in 8th grade who do not meet the promotion requirements described herein who will not be 15 years old on or before December 1st of the following school year and who do not satisfactorily complete summer school will be assigned to an elementary school unless it would constitute a second retention as described in Section III.B.2. below. Such students retained in elementary school shall participate in personal learning plans that target students' assessed learning deficiencies. School administrators shall monitor closely the academic performance of students retained in eighth grade during the retention year.

2. Students in 8th grade who do not meet the promotion requirements who will not be 15 years old on or before December 1st of the following school year, who do not satisfactorily complete summer school, and have been previously retained in the 7-8 grade cycle will be assigned to an achievement academy. The curriculum of the achievement academies provides intensive skill development in reading and mathematics in smaller classroom settings as well as other academic development support.

C. 15 Year Old Students

Students who do not meet the promotion requirements who are 15 years old or will be 15 years old on or before December 1st of the following school year will be assigned to a designated achievement academy. The curriculum of the achievement academies provides intensive skill development in reading and mathematics in smaller classroom settings as well as other academic development support.

IV. Parental Notifications During the School Year for All Elementary Grades

A. All principals, teachers, students and parents will be notified in writing of the promotion policy of the District by the first report card pickup day for parents who pickup the report card, and by the end of the 12th week for parents who do not pickup the report card.

B. Principals shall notify parents in writing on a quarterly basis if their child is in danger of receiving a failing grade in reading or mathematics. Such quarterly notices shall be in addition to the regular progress reports issued for students in all grades.

1. Student assistance may be provided at the earliest point the child is identified as being at risk of obtaining a failing grade in either reading or mathematics.

2. If the student receives a failing grade in reading or mathematics and the parent or guardian does not attend a report card pick-up conference at the end of the first or third reporting period, notification must be sent to the parent by mail. Notification shall include the likelihood of the student attending summer school or being retained for continued lack of academic achievement.

3. Students in the benchmark grades whose parents have not received a failing notice in accordance with this section IV.B due to satisfactory grades may otherwise be eligible for summer school and possible retention based on their DWA scores or other promotion criteria identified in this policy.

C. If a student has accumulated five (5) days of unexcused absences, schools shall notify the parent or guardian by regular mail that the student may be retained and may be required to attend summer school due to lack of attendance.

V. Assessment Validation and Maintenance of Data

ISAT is an assessment developed by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in coordination with its nationally recognized test development partners. The District annually administers the ISAT to Chicago Public Schools students in accordance with State mandates. The District relies on ISBE's evaluation of the test development, revisions, and construct validity of the ISAT to ensure that testing measures are both accurate and appropriate for the knowledge bases measured and the student populations for which the measures are obtained. In the event the District develops its own assessment, the District will, on a periodic basis, perform similar evaluations on such assessment.

The District will maintain all testing data by race and ethnicity of test-takers and shall annually review this data in regard to students who are promoted and retained pursuant to the requirements of the policy in order to ensure that there is no disparate impact based upon race or ethnicity created by operation of the policy. All such data shall be made available to a parent upon request.

VI. System-Wide Monitoring of Instruction and Instructional Materials

CPS affirms the critical importance of high-quality classroom instruction and use of appropriate instructional materials in fostering student academic achievement. In particular, because student promotion decisions will evaluate, in addition to district wide assessment scores, classroom grades and attendance, CPS will undertake the following steps to ensure that student achievement is maximized, that the utilization of the designated educational criteria is done in a manner that ensures consistency throughout the school system, and that there is a strong alignment between the tests and other assessment criteria, the curriculum and the classroom instruction.

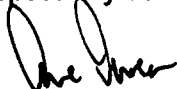
All schools must ensure that instruction is conducted at the correlative grade level for each grade. To promote accountability with this mandate, the Chief Education Officer or his/her designee and the Area Instruction Offices will implement a system for monitoring classroom instruction that will include random unannounced classroom visits conducted to confirm that instruction at grade level is occurring and that the assignment of student grades for classroom work is consistent with CPS policy.

Reviewed for Consideration:



Barbara Eason-Watkins
Chief Education Officer

Respectfully Submitted:



Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer

Noted:



John Maiorca
Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to Legal Form 



Patrick J. Rocks
General Counsel