

January 25, 2023

RESCIND BOARD REPORT 09-1028-PO2 AND ADOPT A NEW FINAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION POLICY

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Board rescind Board Report 09-1028-PO2 and adopt a new final Elementary Promotion Policy. This policy was posted for public comment from November 22, 2022 until December 22, 2022.

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 academic standards for its students; (2) ensuring that there are equitable 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.

EQUITY STATEMENT:

The CPS Elementary Promotion policy will be grounded in equity. The Office of Teaching and Learning is engaging in ongoing work to develop guidelines to ensure an equity lens is used during implementation and to operationalize the CPS Equity Framework through this policy within the locus of our control.

POLICY TEXT:

I. Definitions

- A. Summer School: The summer studies program, or combination of programs, identified for a student by the Chief Education Officer, that is aligned to a student's educational needs.
- B. Benchmark Grades: For school year 2022-2023 only, grades third, sixth and eighth are considered benchmark grades. Beginning school year 2023-2024, grades second, fifth, and eighth are considered benchmark grades.
- C. 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 Benchmark Grades

A. School Year 2022-2023

Students in third, sixth, and eighth will be promoted to the next grade level if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade levels as demonstrated on multiple measurements by their academic performance as described below.

- i. Grades
 - 1. Final report card grade in reading “C” or better for the current academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of assignments during the year.
 - 2. Final report card grade in mathematics “C” or better for the current academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in mathematics and consistent completion of assignments during the year.
- ii. Interventions

In the event that a student does not achieve a final report card grade of “C” or better in the applicable content area for the current academic year, student will be promoted to the next grade level if there is evidence of intervention implementation and the student is meeting identified goals in response to interventions.

Those students who fail to meet all applicable Academic Performance criteria noted above will be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.

B. Beginning in School Year 2023-2024

Students in the second grade will be promoted to the next grade level if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade level as demonstrated on multiple measurements by their academic performance as described below.

- i. Grades
- Final report card grade in reading “C” or better for the current academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of assignments during the year.
- ii. Interventions

In the event that a student does not achieve a final report card grade of “C” or better in the applicable content area for the current academic year, student will be promoted to the next grade level if there is evidence of intervention implementation and the student is meeting identified goals in response to interventions.

Students in the fifth and eighth grade will be promoted to the next grade level if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade levels as demonstrated on multiple measurements by their academic performance as described below.

- i. Grades
 - 1. Final report card grade in reading “C” or better for the academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of assignments during the year.
 - 2. Final report card grade in mathematics “C” or better for the academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in mathematics and consistent completion of assignments during the year.
 - 3. Final report card grade in science “C” or better for the academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in science and consistent completion of assignments during the year.
 - 4. Final report card grade in social science “C” or better for the academic year. A report card grade of “C” must, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in social science and consistent completion of assignments during the year.

ii. Interventions

In the event that a student does not achieve a final report card grade of “C” or better in the applicable content area for the current academic year, student will be promoted to the next grade level if there is evidence of intervention implementation and the student is meeting identified goals in response to interventions.

Those students who fail to meet all applicable Academic Performance criteria noted above will be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.

C. Review of Promotion Status

i. Automatic Review of Grades and Evidence of Intervention

The performance of all benchmark grade students will 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.

ii. Parent Notification

During the last week of school following the automatic review process, parent(s)/guardian(s) of all benchmark grade students will receive notification regarding the promotion of their child(ren). The parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who cannot be promoted in June will 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 attend and successfully complete summer school/program.

iii. Parent Appeal

For students in benchmark grades, at the end of summer school/program, parents/guardians will receive a promotion determination notice identifying whether their child satisfied 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 form, that can be accessed at cps.edu/academics/getting-back-on-track/summer-bridge-and-summer-acceleration/, 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 Teaching and Learning.

D. 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. Summer programs will offer Constitution tests for students who have not successfully completed this requirement.

E. 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 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 Diverse Learner Supports and Services mandates that during these annual reviews of IEPs 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.

F. Promotion of English Language Learners (“ELL”)

Students that are English Language Learners are expected to meet the same promotion criteria as their peers.

G. Academic Centers

Eighth grade students attending an Academic Center, as described in the Board's Admissions Policy for Magnet, Selective Enrollment and Other GoCPS Schools and Programs policy, are enrolled in a high school and taking high school level courses and therefore are not subject to the requirements of this policy.

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:

For school year 2022-2023:

1-3, 4-6 and 7-8.

For school year 2023-2024:

1-2, 3-5, and 6-8.

Students in the benchmark grades who are required to attend summer school/program who do not satisfactorily complete summer school/program, as defined by the Chief Education Officer or designee, 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 within a grade cycle, the student will, upon completion of summer school/program, be promoted to the next grade.

Schools may retain students at non-benchmark grades based on the guidelines issued by the Office of Teaching and Learning. 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.C.3. of this policy. Kindergarten students may not be retained.

A. Personal Learning Plan

The school will 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. Age Cycle 15 Supports

Students who are 15 years old or will be 15 years old on or before September 1st of the following school year and/or any student who have been previously retained in the 7-8 grade cycle will receive the following supports:

1. The school shall have quarterly checkpoints with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the student's progress and make recommendations for additional student support.
2. Additional supports, as determined by the Chief Education Officer or designee.

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

A. Beginning in school year 23-24, all principals, teachers, students, and parents will be notified in writing of the promotion policy of the District by the first district mandated parent-teacher conference day for parents who attend, and by the end of the 12th week for parents who do not attend.

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

i. Student assistance will be provided at the earliest point the child is identified as being at risk of obtaining a failing grade in any course.

ii. If the student receives a failing grade in any course, and the parent or guardian does not attend the district mandated parent-teacher conference at the end of the first or third reporting period, the school must send notification to the parent by mail. Notification must include the likelihood of the student attending summer school or being retained for continued lack of academic achievement.

iii. 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 the promotion criteria identified in this policy.

V. System-Wide Monitoring of Instruction and Instructional Materials

CPS affirms the critical importance of high-quality, culturally responsive classroom instruction and use of appropriate instructional materials in fostering student academic achievement. In particular, because student promotion decisions will evaluate 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 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 Network 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.

Approved for Consideration:

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