STUDENT PROMOTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY *Policy Code:* 3420

A. PURPOSE

The board believes that students should progress to the next level of study only after they are proficient in their knowledge and application of the current curriculum level. To the extent reasonably possible, students should be given as much time or as little time as they need to be proficient at a particular level of study. Students will be promoted to the next level of study as described in this policy.

B. STUDENT PROMOTION STANDARDS

The superintendent shall develop (1) proposed promotion standards and (2) a process to be used in determining a student's readiness to progress to the next level of study and shall submit the standards and process to the board for approval. The standards will be based, in part, upon proficiency in reading. The standards and process must provide multiple criteria for assessing a student's readiness to progress to the next level of study, such as standardized test scores, formative and diagnostic assessments, grades, a portfolio or anthology of the student's work, and, when appropriate, accepted standards for assessing developmental growth. The standards and process will incorporate all state law and State Board of Education policy requirements, including those for the assessment and promotion of third grade students as described in G.S. 115C-83.6 *et seq.* and State Board of Education Policies KNEC-002 and -003.

Principals shall ensure that the promotion standards are used by teachers and school administrators in assessing each student's readiness to progress to the next level of study. Principals have the authority to promote or retain students based upon the standards approved by the board and any applicable standards set by the State Board of Education.

To reduce the number of students who do not meet promotion standards, the board directs school administrators and teachers to address the needs of students who are not making adequate academic progress as required by policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure.

C. DIPLOMA STANDARDS

To receive a North Carolina high school diploma, a student must complete the requirements set forth in policy 3460, Graduation Requirements.

D. APPEALS OF PROMOTION DECISIONS

1. Appeal to the Superintendent

   Within five workdays of receiving the principal's written decision to promote or retain a student, the student's parents may appeal the decision to the superintendent.

The superintendent may overturn the principal's decision only upon a finding that the principal's decision was arbitrary and capricious (i.e., without a rational basis) or was otherwise an abuse of discretion.

The superintendent must render a decision within 10 workdays of receiving the appeal. The superintendent may support the principal's decision, remand it back to the principal for consideration of additional issues, or reverse the decision.

The superintendent's findings must be in writing and must be provided to the parents.

2. Appeal to the Board of Education

The superintendent's decision to promote or retain a student may be appealed to the board in accordance with the procedures set forth in subsection E.5 of policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.

E. LITERACY INTERVENTIONS

1. Reading Camps

The board will provide reading camp opportunities as required by law at no fee for students who are entitled to this intervention under state law. The superintendent or designee shall encourage parents of eligible students to enroll their students in a reading camp. To the extent resources permit, the board will offer fee-based reading camp opportunities for students in eligible grades who are not entitled to attend at no cost. Annually, the board will establish criteria for priority enrollment in its fee-based reading camps and will set the attendance fee at an amount not to exceed the statutory limit. The superintendent or designee shall notify interested parents of the application procedure for the fee-based reading camps.

2. Individual Reading Plans

Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) will be developed in accordance with state law for any student in kindergarten through third grade demonstrating difficulty with reading development based on the results of either (1) the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the school year or (2) the first diagnostic or formative assessment of the second semester of the school year. The student's teacher shall notify the parent or guardian that the student has demonstrated difficulty with reading development and that an IRP has been developed for the student. The notice provided must include all other information required under G.S. 115C-83.6B(b) and should be in the parents' native language when appropriate foreign language resources are readily available.

3. Digital Children's Reading Initiative

The school system will provide access through the school system website to available resources from the Department of Public Instruction's Digital Children's Reading Initiative as required by law. Printable activities from those resources will be provided in hard copy to students who do not have digital access at home.

4. Approval of Literacy Intervention Plan

   By the established deadline each year, the superintendent or designee shall submit to the Department of Public Instruction for approval a plan for the literacy interventions the school system will offer in the following school year, as required by G.S. 115C-83.6A.

F. PROMOTION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To the extent possible, students with disabilities must be held to the same promotion standards as all other students. However, for students who take alternative assessments in lieu of the end-of-grade (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) tests, promotion decisions must be based on criteria recommended by the IEP team.

All intervention strategies and other opportunities, benefits, and resources that are made available to students without disabilities must be made available to those students with disabilities who are subject to the student promotion standards. Such opportunities must be in addition to the special education services provided to the student.

G. CREDIT BY DEMONSTRATED MASTERY

The superintendent shall provide opportunities for students in grades 9 through 12 to earn course credit by demonstrating mastery of course material without first completing the regular period of classroom instruction in the course. Students in grades 6 through 8 may earn credit by demonstrated mastery for high school courses offered in middle school. To earn credit by demonstrated mastery, students must demonstrate a deep understanding of the content standards and application of knowledge through a multi-phase assessment, in accordance with standards established by the State Board of Education and any additional standards established by the superintendent.

H. CREDIT RECOVERY

Students who fail a high school course may retake parts of the course through credit recovery to earn credit for the course. Credit recovery delivers a subset of the blueprint of the original course in order to specifically address deficiencies in a student's mastery of the course and target specific components of a course necessary for completion. A pre-assessment of the student's understanding of the course material will be administered at the beginning of the course and the credit recovery will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual student. The length of a credit recovery course is dictated by the skills and knowledge the student needs to recover and not a fixed length of seat time.

Any EOC exam associated with the credit recovery course will be administered no later than 30 days upon completion of the credit recovery course. The credit recovery will be graded as pass or fail and will not impact the student's grade point average. The original grade for the course will remain on the student's transcript.

The superintendent shall develop procedures addressing the implementation of credit recovery opportunities across the school system.

I. REPEATING A COURSE FOR CREDIT

1. Repeating a Previously Failed Course

   As provided in State Board of Education Policy CCRE-001, high school students who fail a course for credit may repeat that course. To take advantage of this option, the student must repeat the entire course. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, when a student initially fails a high school course and successfully repeats the course for credit, the new course grade will replace the original failing grade for the course on the student's transcript and in calculations of the student's GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility. The superintendent may develop procedures for students to indicate their intent to repeat a course for credit under this paragraph and may establish any other rules as necessary and consistent with State Board policy.

2. Repeating a Course for which Credit was Earned (Grade Replacement)

   The board recognizes that high school students may need to repeat a course for which they have earned credit in order to increase their understanding of the course content, to improve skill mastery, or to meet postsecondary goals. Students may repeat a course for which they have previously earned credit, subject to the following preconditions and any other reasonable rules established by the superintendent:

   a. the student must have earned a letter grade of C or lower in the course on the first attempt;

   b. the student must make a written request to repeat the course;

   c. the principal or designee must approve the request;

   d. there must be space available after seats have been assigned to students who are taking the course for the first time or repeating a previously failed course;

   e. the course to be repeated must be a duplicate of the original class and must be taken during the regular school day at a high school in this school system or through the North Carolina Virtual Public School;

f. upon completion of the repeated course, the new course grade will replace the student's original grade on the student's transcript and in calculations of the student's GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility, regardless of whether the later grade is higher or lower than the student's original mark;

g. credit towards graduation for the same course will be given only once;

h. a course may be repeated only one time; and

i. students may repeat a maximum of four previously passed courses during their high school careers.

The superintendent shall require notice to students and parents of these preconditions and of any other relevant information deemed advisable by the superintendent.

J. CREDIT FROM STUDYING ABROAD

The board encourages students to participate in foreign exchange student programs to enhance their high school academic experience and heighten their awareness and knowledge of global cultures. With careful planning, students may receive credit for courses taken abroad that have substantial equivalency to school system high school courses in content and in hours.

Students who wish to receive high school credit for courses taken during the school year in a foreign country should file a request for study abroad credit with the principal or designee by July 1 of the year preceding the proposed study. To receive credit, the student must submit a copy of the syllabus of the course with the hours of study and grading system described. The student should promptly notify the principal or designee of any course changes.

K. ACCELERATION

Some students may need less time to learn the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to challenge these students by expanding the curriculum, providing opportunities to explore subjects in greater detail, or providing different types of educational experiences. To challenge a student sufficiently, the principal may reassign the student to a different class or level of study and/or may identify concurrent enrollment or other curriculum expansion options (see policy 3101, Dual Enrollment).

The principal, after consulting with the professional staff and the student's parents, may determine that skipping a grade level is appropriate.

Students also have the option of using an accelerated pathway to complete high school in three years rather than four (see policy 3460, Graduation Requirements).

L. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Superintendent's Report to the Board

   At least on an annual basis, the superintendent shall provide the board with the following information for each school:

   a. aggregate student performance scores on state-mandated tests and any other standardized tests used by a school or the school system;

   b. the number and percentage of students retained and/or not meeting the standards for their grade level;

   c. the number and percentage of third grade students exempt from mandatory third grade retention by category of exemption as listed in state law; and

   d. remedial or additional educational opportunities provided by the school system and the success of these efforts in helping students meet promotion standards.

2. Report to the North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction

   Pursuant to statutory requirements and standards established by the Department of Public Instruction, all required information regarding student performance will be provided annually to the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction.

3. Publication on the School System Website

   Information about the reading performance of first, second, and third grade students will be posted on the school system website in accordance with state law.

M. RESOURCES

Consistent with the objective of improving student performance, the board will provide schools with maximum flexibility in the allocation of state funds. School personnel are expected to budget financial resources in a manner that will meet the standards established in this policy. The board will consider requests to transfer funds from other funding allotment categories to intervention strategies as part of the school improvement plan submitted by school officials. All funds will be used in a fiscally sound manner in accordance with policy 8300, Fiscal Management Standards.

N. NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS

The superintendent or designee shall provide information regarding promotion standards

to all students and parents. In addition, if a kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade student (1) is demonstrating difficulty with reading development or (2) is not reading at grade level, the student's teacher shall provide the student's parents timely written notice advising that if the student is not demonstrating reading proficiency by the end of third grade, the student will be retained, unless exempt from mandatory retention for good cause. Parents are encouraged to help their children meet the promotion standards and will have opportunities to discuss the promotion standards and procedures with teachers and the principal. Information provided to parents should be in the parents' native language when appropriate foreign language resources are readily available.

The teacher of a student who does not meet promotion standards must notify the student's parents that the student has failed to meet the standards for progression to the next level of study and must provide the parents with information concerning retesting, intervention, review, and appeal opportunities. When a student is to be retained, the principal shall provide the student's parents written notice of the retention and, if the student will be retained in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.7(a) for failure to demonstrate reading proficiency, (1) written notice of the reason the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption as provided in G.S. 115C-83.7(b) and (2) a description of proposed literacy interventions that will be provided to the student to remediate areas where the student has not demonstrated reading proficiency. Teachers shall provide parents of students retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a) at least monthly written reports on student progress toward reading proficiency. The evaluation of a student's progress will be based upon the student's classroom work, observations, tests, assessments, and other relevant information.

O. CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

As required by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5), G.S. 115C-407.12, and policy 4155, Assignment to Classes, school administrators have the authority to exercise flexibility in waiving course or program prerequisites or other preconditions for the placement of children of military families, as defined in policy 4050, Children of Military Families, in courses or programs offered by the school system.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -45(c), -47, -81.5, -83.2, -83.3, -83.6, -83.6A, -83.6B, -83.7, -83.7A, -83.8, -83.9, -83.10, -83.11, -83.31, -105.21, -174.11, -288(a), -407.5, -407.12; S.L. 2021-8; 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0510; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-001, GRAD-006, KNEC-002, KNEC-003

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Dual Enrollment (policy 3101), Students at Risk of Academic Failure (policy 3405), School Improvement Plan (policy 3430), Graduation Requirements (policy 3460), Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Assignment to Classes (policy 4155), Fiscal Management Standards (policy 8300)

Other Resources: *Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners* (N.C.

Department of Public Instruction), available at https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/testing-policy-and-operations/testing-students-identified-english-learners; Read to Achieve Implementation Guide, available at https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/early-learning-read-achieve/k-3-literacy

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