Wisconsin Dells, School District of

THIRD GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION: AT-RISK STUDENTS

po5411 **ADOPTED** June 23, 2025 **REVISED** July 27, 2026

5411 - **THIRD GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION: AT-RISK STUDENTS**

Introduction

This policy governs the promotion of students from 3rd grade to 4th grade in accordance with 118.33, Wis. Stats. The policy applies to all students being considered for promotion from 3rd to 4th grade, effective on September 1, 2027.

The District intends to make promotion decisions based on a thorough and equitable process that considers individual student needs in reading. For any student who has not completed their personal reading plan by the end of 3rd grade, a team will determine whether retention or promotion to 4th grade, with intensive instructional support, progress monitoring, and supports to remediate the identified areas of deficiency, is in the student's best interest. The determination process will consider relevant factors such as reading proficiency, social and emotional development, and available supports.

Definitions

"Personal Reading Plan" means a reading plan provided for five (5) year-old-kindergarten to third grade students that are identified as at risk based on a universal screening assessment or diagnostic assessment, in accordance with 118.016(5), Wis. Stats.

"Limited English-Proficient Student" means a student whose ability to use the English language is limited because of the use of a non-English language in the student's family or the student's daily, non-school surroundings, and who has difficulty in performing ordinary classwork in English as a result of such limited English proficiency.

"Completed" means a student who has "completed" their personal reading plan if the student's parent(s)and the District agree that the student has met the goals outlined in the personal reading plan and the student scores at grade-level in reading on a summative assessment.

Promotion of Third Grade Students with Personal Reading Plans

For any student who has not completed their personal reading plan by the end of the student's third grade year, the District will engage in a process to determine whether to promote that student to fourth grade. The District will not promote a student from third grade to fourth grade who has not completed their personal reading plan by the end of third grade unless the District, in consultation with the student's parent(s), believes promotion is not in the best interest of the student.

In reaching the decision to promote or retain the student, the District will carefully consider all relevant factors, including but not limited to:

A. Whether a team of interested individuals, including the parent(s) of the student and school representatives(School representatives may include but are not limited to the teacher of record, Learning Support Teacher (if providing reading support and conducting progress monitoring), special education teacher, district reading specialist, other student service professional with knowledge of the social and emotional implications of grade retention, and principal) who have knowledge of the reading instruction, supports, and interventions provided to the student, believe retention is in the best interest of the student;

B. All relevant and available data (universal screening data, diagnostic assessment data, progress monitoring data, classroom data, observations, etc.) demonstrating the student's response or progress to reading instruction and intervention, and data demonstrating the student's progress towards meeting personal reading plan goals. The district/school will not deny any student advancement to 4th grade based solely on the student's performance in reading on the 3rd grade state summative assessment or the universal reading screener;

C. Whether or which alternatives to retention can help support the student to achieve reading proficiency;

D. Those factor(s) or conditions considered elsewhere in District policy or administrative guidelines pertaining to student promotion and retention; (See Policy 5410: Promotion, Placement and Retention)

E. The potential long-term adverse risks and/or benefits of retention. Representatives from the school/district will communicate long-term risks of retention to the student's parents/caregivers;

F. Any other factor(s) relevant in deciding whether to retain or promote a student.

Based on the comprehensive evaluation of factors above, the District will make one of the following determinations:

A. Promotion: Promotion to fourth grade with applicable supports and services is more appropriate than retention in third grade.

B. Promotion: The student's non-completion of their personal reading plan was not primarily due to the student's lack of reading proficiency.

C. Promotion: The District recommends retention with applicable supports and services, but the student's parent(s) do not agree with the District's recommendation.

D. Retention: The District determined that, in consultation with the student's parent(s), retention with applicable supports and services is more appropriate than promotion to fourth grade. Student's parents or caregiver must provide written consent to retain.

Promoting Students with Incomplete Personal Reading Plans

If the District promotes a third-grade student who has not completed their personal reading plan by the end of third grade, the District shall conduct all of the following post-promotion requirements:

A. In the following and subsequent school year(s), provide intensive instructional services, progress monitoring, and supports to remediate the identified areas of deficiency until the student scores at grade level in reading on a summative assessment;

B. Notify the student's parent(s), in writing, that the student did not complete their personal reading plan, including a description of the instructional services and supports that will be provided to the student to remediate the identified areas of deficiency; and

C. Provide the student with intensive summer reading program each summer until the student scores at grade-level in reading on a summative assessment.

Exceptions to Post-Promotion Requirements

The following are good cause exceptions. Any student who meets one (1) or more of the following good cause exceptions may be exempt from the promotion policy, the intensive summer reading program, and/or the intensive reading intervention requirements:

A. The student is identified as a Limited-English Proficient student as per the definition included in this policy;

B. The student has an individualized education plan (IEP) that indicates that neither taking the universal reading screener nor the State summative assessment in reading is appropriate for the student;

C. The student scores as meets expectations in reading on the alternative Statewide standardized summative assessment;

D. The student has an IEP or Section 504 plan under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that indicates that the student has received intensive intervention in reading for more than two (2) years if the student continues to demonstrate a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in 5K, grades one (1), two (2), or three (3);

E. The student has received intensive reading interventions for two (2) or more school years, continues to demonstrate a deficiency in reading, and was previously retained in 5K, grades one (1), two (2), or three(3) for a total of two (2) years.

Mid-Year Enrollment/Transfers

Any student who enrolls as a third-grade student after trimester 2 or late in the school term without any accompanying record of a personal reading plan shall be promoted to fourth grade under the criteria that the student did not have a personal reading plan in effect at the end of third grade.

If a student transfers into a school enrolled as a fourth-grade student and the provided records indicate the student may have met requirements to be retained in third grade (e.g., incomplete personal reading plan), the District shall provide all supports and services that the student would have otherwise received as a post-promotion requirement, including intensive instructional services, progress monitoring and supports to remediate the identified areas of deficiency, parent notification, and an intensive summer reading program each summer until the student scores at grade-level in reading on a summative assessment.

Parental Notification

No later than fifteen (15) days after the reading readiness assessment is scored, the Board shall provide the results of the reading readiness assessment, in writing, containing at least all of the following information to the student's parent in the parent's native language:

A. the student's score on the reading readiness assessment;

B. the student's score in each early literacy skill category assessed by the assessment;

C. the student's percentile rank score on the reading readiness assessment, if available;

D. the definition of "at-risk" and the score on the reading readiness assessment that would indicate the student is at-risk;

E. a plain language description of the literacy skills the reading readiness assessment is designed to measure.

If the diagnostic assessment indicates that a student is at-risk, the Board shall include information about how to make a special education referral under 115.777, Wis. Stats., with the diagnostic assessment results provided.

If the Board is required to assess a student's early literacy skills using a diagnostic assessment, the Board shall provide all of the following, in writing, to the student's parent:

A. a description of the common indicators and characteristics of dyslexia;

B. information about appropriate interventions and accommodations for students with characteristics of dyslexia.

The Board shall post its early literacy remediation plan (including the parent notification policy) on the School District website.

If a student is identified as at risk based on a universal or diagnostic assessment, the Board shall:

A. provide a copy of the student's personal reading plan to the student's parent and obtain a copy of the personal reading plan signed by the student's parent (acknowledgement rather than consent);

B. after ten (10) weeks of providing the student with the interventions in the student's personal reading plan, notify the student's parent of the student's progress, as determined under the student's personal reading plan.

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Legal
118.016(4)(5), Wis. Stats.
118.33(5m)(a), Wis. Stats.