

STUDENT PROMOTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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The goal of the Orange County Schools is to develop academically proficient students. The progress of students will be monitored at each grade level. Standards for proficiency are outlined below.

ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS: GRADES K-2

Students must demonstrate mastery at grade level or above in reading, writing, and mathematics. Grade level proficiency in these essential skills will be measured in a variety of ways including:

1. The North Carolina Grade Assessment in Reading;
2. The North Carolina Grade Assessment in Mathematics

ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS: GRADES 3-8

Students must perform at grade level or above and be able to succeed at the next grade level. Grade level proficiency in the essential skills will be measured based on the criteria outlined by the North Carolina standardized assessment instruments. Students are deemed proficient who earn:

Elementary Promotion Standards

1. A. test score of Level 3 or above on the NC End-of-Grade Reading Test and
B. test score of Level 3 or above on the NC End-of-Grade Mathematics Test.
2. To be considered for promotion to the next grade level, students in grades 3, 4 and 5 should score at least a Level 3 on state end-of-grade tests in both reading and mathematics, and meet local promotion standards (grades and attendance). Students who do not meet the promotion standards will be given remediation and retested. The school system shall develop Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for students who are not proficient in reading and/or math.
3. Students in grade 4 should also demonstrate adequate progress on the grade 4 writing assessment as measured against state rubrics. Writing assessment strategies and a portfolio will be developed for use in the 5th grade for those students who did not pass the 4th grade writing assessment. Writing progress, as evidenced by the PEP documentation and writing portfolio documents should support whether the student should be recommended for promotion along with EOG information.
4. Any student that does not score at least a level 3 on the state required EOGs will still be required to take a retest. The higher of the two scores will be used.

Middle School Promotion Standards

1. To be considered for promotion to the next grade level, students in grades 6, 7 and 8 should score at least a Level 3 on state end-of-grade tests in both reading and mathematics, and meet local promotion standards (grades and attendance). Students who do not meet the promotion standards will be provided remediation and retested.
2. Local school systems shall develop PEP's for those students who score a level 1 or 2 on the EOG's.
3. Students in grade 7 should also demonstrate adequate progress on the writing assessment as measured against state rubrics. Writing assessment strategies and a portfolio will be developed for 8th grade students who did not pass the 7th grade writing assessment. Writing progress, as evidenced by the PEP documentation and writing portfolio documents should support whether the student should be recommended for promotion along with EOG information.

4. Any student that does not score at least a level 3 on the state required EOGs/EOCs will still be required to take a retest. The higher of the two scores will be used.

REVIEW PROCEDURES: K-8

1. Students in grades 3-8 who score below Level 3 on the state end-of-grade reading and mathematics tests shall be provided intervention in the area(s) of deficiency. Following remediation, students shall be given a second test within a reasonable time from the receipt of test results, but no later than three weeks after the parents receive the test results. If a student has achieved at Level 3 or better in both reading and mathematics and other requirements for promotion are also met, the student shall be promoted. If the student does not score at Level 3 on the second test in the area(s) of deficiency, the student will be considered for retention.

Principals have the authority to promote and to retain students in accordance with state law and based upon the standards set by the board and the State Board of Education. Promotion and accountability standards for students in the Orange County Schools consist of the following:

- North Carolina high school graduation requirements.
- Local promotion standards and course requirements adopted by the board.
- Attendance requirements as set forth in board policy.

Local Promotion Standards

In grades K-8, recommendation for retention should be based on consideration of the following factors:

- (1) classroom performance of the student in relationship to his/her academic ability and/or exceptionality;
- (2) chronological age and physical size;
- (3) attendance;
- (4) performance on state and local tests; and
- (5) potential success at the next grade level.

In K-1, particular consideration should be given to language development and variations in ability and achievement.

High school students in the Orange County Schools shall be promoted from grade to grade by attaining credits that are earned through successful completion of high school courses. While promotion in high school is determined by course credits earned, in order to stay on track for graduation students must take the courses required by the State Board of Education in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study and meet the requirements of Policy 3460, Graduation Requirements. Middle and high school counselors and administrators will ensure that students are advised regarding the necessary coursework and course progression for graduation.

2. High School Promotion Standards:

- To be promoted from grade 9 to grade 10: a minimum of six (6) credits.
- To be promoted from grade 10 to grade 11: a minimum of twelve (12) credits.
- To be promoted from grade 11 to grade 12: a minimum of twenty (20) credits.

Students not meeting promotion requirements may be referred to a school placement committee as outlined in the "Waiver of Promotion Standards" section, below. Any request for a mid-year promotion will also be referred to a school placement committee for a recommendation. School placement committees review information about each student and make a recommendation to the principal whether a waiver of promotion standards or mid-year promotion is appropriate. The principal holds final authority regarding promotion or retention. The principal's decision on promotion or retention can be appealed according to the Student and Parent Grievance Policy.

Any student that does not score at least a level 3 on the state required EOCs will still be required to take a retest. The higher of the two scores will be used.

INTERVENTIONS: K-8

1. Students not meeting student promotion standards will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The plan may be developed at any time during the school year based on student performance. A plan must be developed at the end of the school year for any student who is retained.
2. Every Personal Education Plan will include:
 - a. diagnostic evaluation
 - b. specific *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* objectives with intervention strategies
 - c. monitoring strategies
3. Students who do not meet the student promotion standards shall be provided focused intervention that will involve extended instructional opportunities which are different, supplemental, and specifically designed to improve the student's performance to grade level proficiency.
4. During the first 9 weeks of school, students not demonstrating grade level performance in reading and mathematics will be referred to a school committee (classroom teachers, school administrators, and a school counselor) to develop a PEP. Parents and the student may provide input into the PEP.
5. At the midpoint of each grading period, parents/guardians will receive an interim report of students performing below grade level.
6. By midpoint of the 3rd marking period the school will mail a letter to the parents/guardians of any student in danger of not meeting promotion standards.

PROMOTION STANDARDS: GRADE 12 GRADUATION

To receive a high school diploma in Orange County, students will meet the following requirements:

1. Completion of locally-required units of credit with content areas specified by the state. High school courses taken in grades 6-8 shall use high school course codes and shall be aligned to the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Grades 9-12*. (Policy ID Number: HSP-M-001)
2. Passing grades as reflected on the student's report card. Performance on the NC End-of-Course tests and all final exams will constitute 25% of the final year grade.

*Minimum of Level 3 on the NC End-of-Course exams is required because any student that does not score at least a level 3 on the state required EOCs will still be required to take a retest. The higher of the two scores will be used.

REVIEW PROCEDURES: GRADES 9-12

1. Parents of students in grades 9-12 will receive Interim Reports at the mid-point of each grading period as notification of possible course failure.
2. School personnel, including the principal, and/or his/her designee will develop a PEP for improvement for all students at risk of failure.

INTERVENTIONS: GRADES 9-12

Students not demonstrating proficiency on the NC end-of-course tests, and not meeting local graduation requirements, will have a PEP for improvement with various options such as: after-school tutoring, assignment to reading and/or math remediation classes, retesting, Saturday tutorials, and course repetition.

WAIVER OF STUDENT PROMOTION STANDARDS

Waiver Requests

School personnel may determine the need for a waiver review of any child at risk or failure of not being promoted. Teachers shall provide documentation of the student's performance during a review process. Documentation must include: student work samples; other test data; information supplied by parents; for students with disabilities, information that is included in the PEP; and other information that verifies that a student is at grade level or, for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, is making adequate progress to meet grade level requirements.

When making promotion or retention decisions, the principal shall consider and provide findings on the following issues:

1. Whether the student has previously been retained and, if so, how many times;
2. Whether the student is performing at grade level.
3. If working below grade level, whether the student could reasonably be expected to be able to "catch up" to grade level and/or be successful at the next grade level in spite of the deficiencies;
4. Why school personnel believes their recommendation to promote or not to promote is in the best interest of the student;
5. If promotion is recommended, what additional or special instruction or resources would be necessary to provide the student with a reasonable opportunity for success in the next grade level.

School personnel shall make a recommendation to the principal about whether the student should be promoted to the next grade, based upon documentation provided by the student's teacher(s). The principal shall review the recommendation and decide whether to promote or retain the student. The principal may promote the student if he/she determines that the student can reasonably be expected to be successful at the next grade level and/or that promotion is in the best interest of the student. The principal shall notify the student's parent(s) of his/her decision.

Appeals

1. To the Superintendent – Within 5 working days of receiving the principal's written decision, the student's parent(s) may appeal 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 rational basis) or otherwise an abuse of discretion.

The Superintendent must render a decision within 10 working days 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 shall be in writing and shall be provided to the parent(s).

2. To the Board of Education – Within 5 working days of receiving the Superintendent’s decision, the parents may appeal to the Board of Education. The Board will review the appeal at its earliest convenience, but no later than 30 days following receipt of the appeal request. The Board will overturn a retention decision only upon finding that the decision was arbitrary and capricious or otherwise an abuse of administrative discretion. The Board will provide the parents with a written decision.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities will be held to the same standards as all other students to the most extent possible. All intervention and other opportunities, benefits and resources that are made available to students without disabilities shall be made available to students with disabilities who participate in student promotion standards. Such opportunities will be in addition to the special education services provided to the student.

STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

1. Students of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) shall meet the same standards as all students. However, in accordance with federal law, English language proficiency cannot be the factor that determines whether a student has not met performance standards. Therefore, should an LEP student be presented to the principal, an instructional portfolio containing documentation of the student’s English language proficiency and progress in all academic areas shall be submitted for promotion consideration. The principal will determine whether the documentation supports the student’s advancement to the next level. He or she shall examine the student’s instructional portfolio to determine if:
 - a. the student’s level of language proficiency is having an impact on the student’s ability to perform at grade level on the required test or alternative assessment.
 - b. documentation indicates that the student is making adequate progress in all academic areas to be promoted to the next level.
2. Limited English proficient students shall meet the same standards as other students for high school graduation.
3. The school district shall provide focused intervention for LEP students until they have met promotion standards and high school graduation requirements (up to age 21). This intervention shall involve extended, supplemental instructional opportunities included in the PEP with the following components:
 - Diagnostic evaluation
 - Specific North Carolina Standard Course of Study objectives with intervention strategies
 - Monitoring strategies

ACCELERATION

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

The principal, after consulting with the professional staff and parents, may determine that skipping a grade level is appropriate. If permitted by State law or State Board policy, credit toward high school graduation may be awarded for a student’s advancing or placing out of a high school course. The superintendent shall provide any additional criteria necessary to make the determination as to whether credit may be awarded.

FINAL DECISION REGARDING PROMOTION AND RETENTION

The final decision to promote or retain a student remains the legal responsibility of the principal. In order to be promoted to the next grade, students must pass all local and state promotion standards, including classroom performance, and attendance. Principals must also consider the following when making the decision to promote or retain:

- Teacher recommendation
- Whether the student has been previously retained.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -45(c), -47, -81, -105.21, -174.11, -288(a); 16 N.C.A.C. 6D.0501 through .0507 and 6E.0202; State Board of Education Policy No. HSP-N-000 through -008; N.C. High School Athletics Association Handbook; Guidelines for Testing Students with Limited English Proficiency (Department of Public Instruction)

Cross References: Student and Parent Grievance Procedures (policy 1740), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Dual Enrollment (policy 3426), Graduation Requirements (policy 3460), Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations (policy 3620), Fiscal Management Standards (policy 8300)