

Shelby County Board of Education

5013

Issued Date: 08/26/10

Revised: 04/30/19; 06/25/13; 07/27/11

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

I. PURPOSE

To establish the guidelines for promotion and retention of students and to outline assessment and intervention standards.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to students within Shelby County Schools.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

The promotion and retention policy of the Shelby County Schools shall comply with the Promotion and Retention policy (#3.300) of the Tennessee State Board of Education.

Assessment

Regular assessment is important in order to guide the provision of academic services, enhance district and classroom instructional strategies, and measure student learning and students' progress toward meeting the district's academic achievement standards. Therefore, the district shall employ a comprehensive student assessment system to help ensure that students remain on course to meet the academic achievement standards of the district and on target to meet the grade level standards recognized by state and federal governments.

Promotion and Retention Decisions

Promotion and retention decisions shall consider what is best for the student and should include consideration of the following: 1. ability to perform at the expectations of the current grade-level standards; 2. the student's age; 3. overall academic achievement level/potential; 4. previous performance; 5. evaluative data; 6. chances for success with more difficult material if promoted to the next grade or when current skills are inadequate; 7. number of absences/attendance record; 8. previous retention; 9. social and emotional maturity level; 10. The results of local assessments, screening, or monitoring tools and, if applicable, state assessments and standardized tests; and 11. what benefits can be accomplished by retention.

Pursuant to the Tennessee State Board of Education Promotion and Retention policy (#3.300) schools shall identify students considered for retention by February 1, but may identify students for retention after the February 1 in limited situations as outlined in the Administrative Rules and Regulations to this policy.

Additionally, schools (e.g., principal or designee) shall notify the parents/guardians of a K-3 student within 15 calendar days of the student's determination as not meeting the expectations of the grade-level standards in reading as determined through a student's overall performance or a state or local assessment.

Third-Grade Promotion/Retention (TCA 49-6-3115)

A student in the third grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student has shown a basic understanding of curriculum and ability to perform the skills required in the subject of reading as demonstrated by the student's grades or standardized test results. However, such student may be promoted if the student participates in a Shelby County Board of Education approved research-based intervention prior to the beginning of the next school year. This provision shall not apply to students who have IEPs pursuant to 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

Academic Interventions

It is expected that interventions will occur on an ongoing basis and that effective intervention strategies may result in a student's promotion. Therefore, instructional strategies, classroom grades, and intervention opportunities shall be monitored and reviewed by principals on a regular basis.

English Learners (EL)

English Learners shall meet the same standards as all students. However, in accordance with federal law, English language proficiency shall not be the sole factor in determining that a student has not met performance standards for promotion. A student's Individualized Learning Plan (IEP) shall be considered in determining promotion/retention decisions for English Learners.

Intervention strategies shall include, where appropriate, assistance in the development of English language proficiency.

Students with Disabilities

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities shall be governed by SCS student standards established for students without disabilities. Students with disabilities who meet the requirements established by the Tennessee Board of Education shall earn regular diplomas. All enrichment, interventions/remediation, opportunities, benefits and resources made available to students without disabilities shall be made available to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may be exempt from promotion/retention standards if an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student does not have the ability to successfully meet general curricular standards.

Students with disabilities are not subject to promotion/retention standards if, due to the nature and severity of their disability, they have an IEP allowing them to take an alternative form of state/city wide assessment.

Parent Concerns

Parents who disagree with the decision of the teacher(s) and/or final decision of the principal regarding the promotion or retention of a student may appeal the decision to the Superintendent (or designee). The decision of the Superintendent (or designee) shall be final.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for administering this policy.
2. The Office of the Chief Academic Officer is responsible for answering questions regarding this policy.

Legal References:

1. Tennessee State Board of Education Policy No. 3.300
2. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule § 0520-01-03
3. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule § 0520-01-03-.05

Cross References:

- 1.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Administrative Rules and Regulations

Revised Date: 04/30/19

PROMOTION STANDARDS

1. Kindergarten – Promotion should be based on satisfactory performance, as identified by the Office of the Chief Academic Officer, considering the subjects of Language Arts and Mathematics. The decision not to promote a kindergarten student should be justified with appropriate documentation.
2. Grades 1 - 5 – Promotion should be based on attainment of a grade of 70 or above in both Language Arts and Mathematics for all students in grades 1-5.

Grade 2 – Additional Promotion Standards (effective beginning 2020-2021 school year):

Success Criteria – In addition to the general promotion standards required for all students in grades 1-5, to be promoted to the third grade, students in grade 2 must also meet prescribed [*Success Criteria \(linked\)](#).

Required Second Grade Retention – Any student who does not meet the Success Criteria will be retained in second grade. The student will be required to participate in interventions with a specified program of work during the summer prior to third grade (i.e., the district’s official regular summer school program).

Monitoring and Intervention for Students Retained in Second Grade – Students retained in second grade due to failure of meeting the Success Criteria must be closely monitored by the school and provided with structured intensive interventions (e.g., RTI, before/after school interventions, etc.) as outlined by the Office of the Chief Academic Officer. If a student meets the remaining Success Criteria within 45 days of the start of school, the student may be promoted to the third grade.

3. Grades 6 - 8 – Promotion should be based on attainment of a grade of 70 or above in 1) both Language Arts and Mathematics and 2) either Science or Social Studies.
4. Grades 9 - 12 – Grade classification in grades 9-12 is based on credit attainment in accordance with applicable District policy. (See policy [6032 Grade Classification for High School Students](#))

* When appropriate, good cause exemptions may apply (e.g., extenuating circumstances, individual SPED/EL considerations)

PROMOTION AND RETENTION CATEGORIES

The District may offer the following options and promotion/retention categories:

1. Promotion – Advancement to the next grade level or course level. Promotion shall be based on skill mastery.
2. Conditional Promotion – Promotion with the requirement that the student must reach and/or maintain certain benchmarks/standards or participate in prescriptive interventions at the grade level into which he or she is promoted. This may be an option if a student's ability to succeed at the next grade level is highly questionable.
3. Differentiated Instruction – An instructional program that is different from the previous year and is tailored to the student's learning style as identified through diagnostic testing and other appropriate assessments or strategies.
4. Special Consideration – Special consideration for promotion and/or retention shall be given to students with special academic, social, and emotional needs.
5. Retention – Repeating a course or subject to provide an additional opportunity for academic progress and mastery of the subject or course content. Retention is used to help students improve their knowledge base by providing additional instruction to address inadequate skills mastery. Retention should not be used as a punitive measure or as a way to hold a student back because of parental wishes when a student's performance does not warrant it or when the school feels retention is inappropriate. The following shall apply regarding retention of students:
 - a. Identification – Schools shall identify students who demonstrate difficulty in achieving the requirements for promotion to the next grade level and therefore may be considered for retention by February 1. However, a student may be identified for retention after February 1 in limited situations such as:
 - i. The student enrolls or transfers to the district after February 1
 - ii. The student has pending make-up work that results in a failing grade
 - iii. The student's grade determination/reconsideration is pending or on hold due to an investigation, due process proceeding, or administrative process
 - iv. The Superintendent (or designee) has identified other compelling reasons for retention. These reasons must be justified and supported by written documentation.
 - b. Parent notification – Parents shall be notified of their child's academic progress in accordance with District's grading policies (see policy 5014 Grading System: Grades K-5 and policy 5015 Grading System: Grades 6-12). By the midpoint of the course or school year, but not later than 15 days of the February 1st identification date, schools shall provide parents with official written notification that their child may be retained. The notice should be signed and returned to the school by the parent and kept on file at the school. To help the student avoid retention, each school shall develop an individualized promotion plan pursuant to the Tennessee State Board of Education Promotion and Retention policy (#3.300). The promotion plan shall be provided to the parent who shall be offered an opportunity for a parent-teacher conference to discuss the plan. If a student has not demonstrated sufficient academic progress on his or her promotion plan by the end of the school year:
 - i. The student shall be enrolled in a summer reading or learning program, if such a program is available. If a student is enrolled in a summer program, then a decision for retention shall be made after completion of a summer program; provided, a decision for retention shall be made and communicated to the student's parent or guardian at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the start of the next school year; or

- ii. If a summer reading or learning program is not available, then a decision for retention shall be made and communicated to the student's parent or guardian at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the start of the next school year.
- c. Tracking and monitoring – The progress of each retained student must be tracked and monitored regularly by the school and the District (e.g., the Office of the Chief Academic Officer). An individualized academic remediation plan which suggests different strategies/enhancements and materials should be developed pursuant to the State Board Promotion and Retention policy prior to the start of the next school year and implemented for every student to be retained. The plan shall be provided to parents/guardians within 10 calendar days of development.
- d. Over-age-for grade considerations – A student shall not be retained more than one (1) time in any given grade level. Students with multiple retentions or who are or will be over-age-for grade during the next school year shall be evaluated by a promotion/retention committee at the school to recommend to the principal options for the student, as applicable, such as promotion, conditional promotion, differentiated instruction, special consideration, virtual school/online options, night school, adult school, equivalency diploma, project graduation, success school/academic alternative school (a non-disciplinary, non-remand alternative school option), second chance center (modeled after the newcomers' center). Additionally, the Office of the Chief Academic Officer shall provide guidance to schools on academic options for such students. A prescriptive and tailored plan of remediation shall be implemented for each student.
- e. Reporting – The Superintendent shall keep an annual report of each student who is retained. Additionally, the teacher and school principal (designee) shall identify and provide to the Office of the Chief Academic Officer the names of each student with multiple retentions or who is or will be over-age-for grade during the next school year.

REQUIRED ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS

Academic interventions shall be required for the following students:

- Students who are not making satisfactory progress toward academic benchmarks;
- Students who have not met promotional standards by the end of the school year/ (retained students)
- Students who are one or more years behind grade level in a course or grade
- Students not performing at the level to meet the College Readiness Benchmarks, as defined by ACT
- Students required to received intervention based on state or federal law, regulations, guidelines/guidance, and/or policies or district policies