

Board Policy

Descriptor Code: IHE

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

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It shall be the policy of the Pickens County Board of Education to base its promotion and placement of students into a grade, class, or program on an assessment of the student's academic achievement and a determination of the educational setting in which the student is most likely to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

Promotion and placement criteria will include the following:

- The overall academic achievement of the student
- An action plan to follow when a student does not perform at his/her current grade level. This process will include written notification via mail of parents/guardians, provisions of an additional opportunity to take any criterion-referenced assessment required by state law or state board of education rule, or an alternative assessment instrument as specified in an Individualized Education Plan, or provisions for accelerated, differentiated or additional instruction in the applicable subject, and
- Procedures to appeal the decision of retention

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

(1) DEFINITIONS.

- (a) **Accelerated instruction** – challenging instructional activities that are intensely focused on student academic deficiencies in reading and/or mathematics. This accelerated instruction is designed to enable a student who has not achieved grade level, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, to meet grade-level standards in the shortest possible time.
- (b) **Additional instruction** – academic instruction beyond regularly scheduled academic classes that are designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Georgia Department of Education, to grade level performance. It may include more instructional time allocated during the school day, instruction before and after the school day, Saturday instruction, and/or summer/inter-session instruction.
- (c) **Differentiated instruction** – instructional strategies designed to meet individual student learning needs.
- (d) **Grade level** – standard of performance, as defined by the Georgia Department of Education, on a Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.
- (e) **Placement** – the assignment of a student to a specific grade level based on the determination that such placement will most likely provide the student with instruction and other services needed to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

(f) **Placement committee** – the committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet expectations on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. This committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student’s parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) in which the student did not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.

(g) **Promotion** – the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student’s achievement of established criteria in the current grade.

(h) **Remediation** – Additional assistance to address areas of academic need for the CRCT.

(i) **Retention** – the re-assignment of a student to the current grade level during the next school year.

(2) LOCAL PROMOTION STANDARDS AND CRITERIA.

Kindergarten Criteria for Promotion

Students in kindergarten must be recommended for promotion by the classroom teacher. The teacher’s recommendation must be based on the results of the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program (GKAP). The teacher’s recommendation should be based on documented data and might include additional sources such as class performance, subject area achievement, norm referenced test data, attendance, maturity, and other data that would assist in determining readiness for first grade.

Grades 1-5 Criteria for Promotion

1. Students must be recommended for promotion by the classroom teacher. The teacher’s recommendation should be based on documented data and should include sources such as classroom performance, subject area achievement norm referenced test results, attendance, maturity, and other information that would assist in determining student achievement.
2. Earn a yearly average of 70% or higher in Reading/Language Arts.
3. Earn a yearly average of 70% or higher in Math.
4. No third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not achieve grade level (meets expectations) on the CRCT in both reading and mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy. Beginning in the 2004-05 school year, no fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not achieve grade level (meets expectations) on the CRCT in reading and mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) Criteria for Promotion

To be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 6-8 must pass year-long language arts, reading, and math classes, and may not fail more than one other core academic class (e.g. science, social studies, or averaged final grade from each connections class). A student's final grade in each connection class (e.g. art, band, chorus, etc.) will be averaged to equate one core academic class.

Students who do not meet these promotion criteria will be required to successfully complete a summer school program of studies. If the student does not successfully complete the assigned summer school program, the decision to promote or retain the student will be made by a school placement committee.

A placement committee is composed of the principal or his/her designee, a parent or guardian of the student, and an academic subject area teacher. A decision to place the student in the next grade level must be a unanimous decision of the placement committee.

Eighth grade students are also required to pass the language arts, reading, and math portions of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) to be promoted to ninth grade. Eighth grade students who do not pass these tests will be required to successfully complete remediation and retake the previously failed portion(s) (i.e. reading and/or math) of the CRCT. Any eighth grade student who does not pass the required reading and math portions of the CRCT after two attempts will be referred to a placement committee to determine whether the student is promoted to the ninth grade or retained in the eighth.

Any student in grades 6-8 who is retained or does not meet the criteria for promotion to the next grade level, but is assigned to the next grade level by a placement committee will have an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) developed by a Student Support Team (SST) in place prior to the beginning of the next school year. The SST will include the principal or his/her designee, the student's parents/guardians, at least two of the student's previous teachers, and at least two of the student's teachers for the upcoming school year.

High School (Grades 9-12) Criteria for Promotion

Students are assigned to a grade level based on accrued units at the beginning of each school year. Summer school credits are included. Students may be moved to the next grade level after the first semester for grades 11 and 12 at the discretion of the principal.

For those 9th grade students who entered high school in the 2005-06 school year or later, promotion/placement shall be made on the following basis:

To be promoted to the tenth grade – 6 units to include one unit in English one unit in math, plus one unit of either science or social studies.

To be promoted to the eleventh grade – 13 units to include two units of English, plus two units of math, two units of science, and two social studies credits.

To be promoted to the twelfth grade – 20 units to include three units of English plus eight core academic units including math, science, or social studies credit.

High school students will follow local board policies IHF, IHF(2), IHF(3), IHF(4), IHF(5) and the State Board of Education Rule for High School Graduation Requirements.

Special Education

Students who have been identified as having a disability and who are being served in special education programs will be considered for promotion or retention based on the information contained in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). In making determinations, the IEP Committee will determine if the child has made progress according to his/her ability level and will consider such factors as age, size, and physical maturity.

(3) STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 1-8

- (a) Each school principal shall distribute student data from the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test to teachers prior to the beginning of each school year. Each teacher shall use data to focus instruction on identified student academic performance in grades 1-8.
- (b) Each school principal or designee shall establish a student support team for each student in grades 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 who does not achieve grade level on reading and/or mathematics sections of the criterion-referenced competency test. The student support team shall:
 1. Determine whether each student shall be retained or promoted based on a review of the overall academic achievement of the student as well as the student's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test performance;
 2. Develop an accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction plan for each student who does not achieve grade level on the reading and/or mathematics sections of the criterion-referenced competency test; and
 3. Develop a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
- (c) Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.
- (d) The school principal or designee shall annually notify parents or guardians that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program will be based on the academic achievement of the student on criterion-referenced assessments and other criteria established in this policy.

(4) STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 3, 5, AND 8.

- (a) Promotion of a student shall be determined as follows.

1. No third grade student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
 2. No fifth grade student shall be promoted to the sixth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
 3. No eighth grade student shall be promoted to the ninth grade if the student does not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in mathematics and meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends.
 4. Requirements in this section shall apply to students in the following grade levels:
 - i. The third grade beginning with the 2003-2004 school year.
 - ii. The fifth grade beginning with the 2004-2005 school year.
 - iii. The eighth grade beginning with the 2005-2006 school year.
 5. The school principal or designee may retain a student who performs satisfactorily on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established in this policy.
- (b) When a student does not perform at grade level in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test(s) specified in section (a) above, then the following shall occur:
1. Within ten calendar days, excluding weekends and holidays, of receipt of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test individual student scores, the school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student regarding the following:
 - i. The student's below-grade level performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests:
 - ii. The specific retest(s) to be given the student and testing date(s);
 - iii. The opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction based on the student's performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests; and
 - iv. The possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next school year.
 2. The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity; and

3. The student shall be retested with appropriate section(s) of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and this board.
- (c) When a student does not perform at grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in grades 3, 5, and 8, and also does not perform at grade level on a second opportunity to take the assessment, then the following shall occur:
1. The school principal or designee shall retain the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided for in this policy.
 2. The school principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher(s) regarding the decision to retain the student.
 - i. The notice shall describe the option of the parent or guardian or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student;
 - ii. The notice shall describe the composition and functions of the placement committee; it shall describe the option of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), or principal to invite individuals who can provide information or facilitate understanding of the issues to be discussed to attend the placement committee meeting; and
 - iii. The notice shall include the requirement that the decision to promote the student must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee comprised of the parent or guardian, teacher(s), and principal or designee.
 3. If the parent or guardian or teacher(s) appeals the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee shall establish a placement committee to consider the appeal.
 - i. The placement committee shall be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) of the subject(s) of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test or the alternative assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level.
 - ii. The principal or designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian and teacher(s) of the time and place for convening the placement committee.
 - iii. The placement committee shall review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test or the alternative assessment instrument and promotion standards and criteria established in this policy for the school that the student attends, and make a determination to promote or retain.
 - iv. The decision to promote must be the unanimous decision of the placement committee and must determine that if promoted and given

accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the school year.

- v. The placement committee shall prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year.
 - vi. The placement committee shall provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student.
4. A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed for each student who does not achieve grade level performance in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test(s) specified in section (a) above whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year.
 5. A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in reading and/or mathematics on the second administration day(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and this board. Placement or promotion of these students shall follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.
 6. A student's failure to take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and this board shall result in the student being retained. The option of the parent or guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student shall follow the procedure set forth in this rule.
 7. For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee.
 8. The decision of the placement committee may be appealed to the system director of instruction. The appeal shall be in writing. The director of instruction shall use the criteria set forth in Section 4(c)(3)(iii) of this policy in reviewing the decision of the placement committee. The director of instruction shall notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the principal in writing of his/her decision.

(5) STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 9 – 12

High school students will follow local board policy and the State Board of Education Rule for High School Graduation Requirements.