

**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 Buncombe County Board of Education believes that all students can learn and are expected to demonstrate grade level proficiency, based on the requirements as stated in the North Carolina Standards. The Board of Education holds high expectations for students, staff, parents, and the community, and believes accountability must be shared. *Students at risk of not meeting promotion standards may be required to participate in a remediation program. Retention decisions affecting students at risk of not meeting local and state promotion standards in grades K-8 will be reviewed by a committee of teachers. Committee recommendations will be forwarded to the principal. The principal will make the final promotion/retention decision. Procedures governing promotion/retention decisions are outlined in the Buncombe County Schools Accountability Standards Notebook, in the section entitled "Considerations for Promotion/Retention Decisions."*

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 use personal education plans as required in policy 3405, Students at Risk of Academic Failure, to address the needs of students who are not making adequate academic progress.

**C. DIPLOMA STANDARDS**

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

In order to be promoted to:

- 10th grade: A student must earn six (6) credits
- 11th grade: A student must earn thirteen (13) credits
- 12th grade: A student must earn twenty (20) credits

The credits of students who transfer to the Buncombe County Schools and students who attend alternative schools within the system will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the principal, in accordance with Board of Education Policy and Administrative Regulation 3460R.

**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. 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.

#### **F. PROMOTION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

1. All students of Limited English Proficiency shall participate in the state-wide testing program for elementary, middle, and high school levels.
2. High School Graduation Requirements. Limited English Proficient students shall meet the same graduation standards as all students for high school graduation.
3. School districts shall provide focused intervention for these students until they have met statewide promotion standards and high school graduation requirements (up to age 21). This intervention shall involve extended, supplemental instructional opportunities which include assistance in the development of English language proficiency. These students shall have personalized education plans with the following components:
  - a) diagnostic evaluation
  - b) intervention strategies
  - c) monitoring strategies
4. English Language Proficiency cannot be the factor that determines promotion/retention decisions.

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**G. CREDIT BY DEMONSTRATED MASTERY**

Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the superintendent shall provide opportunities for students in grades 9 through 12 to earn course Credit by Demonstrating Mastery (CDM) of course material without first completing the regular period of classroom instruction in the course. Students in grades 7 through 8 may earn credit by demonstrated mastery for high school courses offered in middle school. To earn Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM), 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. Courses earned by CDM shall be recorded as a Pass/Fail on the transcript.

**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 materials will be administered and the credit recovery content 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 of the student needs to recover and not a fixed length of seat time. The course may be delivered online or by a Buncombe County Schools' teacher.

Any End-of-Course, NC Final Exam or Career Technical State Assessment associated with the credit recover course will not be administered upon completion of the credit recovery course since only subsets of the course objectives were taught. 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.

To be eligible for a credit recovery course, the following conditions must be met:

- i. Student must have completed the entire course and have an "F" on the student's transcript for the final course grade.
- ii. Student should take the associated End-of-Course, NC Final Exam, or CTE Post Assessment. Students that have not taken the associated exam must repeat the course for credit or participate in a course recovery program supported by content area teachers.

**I. GRADE SUPPRESSION**

Grade Suppression is the technical process that removes a high school course grade from display on the transcript and the GPA/class rank calculations after a course has been repeated for credit.

Grade Suppression for High School Courses

Students who initially fail a high school course and repeat the same course for credit, upon completion of the repeated course, the new course grade shall replace the previous grade for the course. The student can only earn credit towards graduation once for the course. The course must be taken at an equivalent level or lower. For example, if a student fails English I Honors, he/she can take English I Honors or standard level English I. If the student does take the course at a lower level, the course will not receive the additional honors weight.

Students repeating a course for credit shall receive a grade and take the associated end of course assessment, such as End-of-Course (EOC), NC Final, CTE Assessment or teacher made exam. A student who has already scored a level 3, 4, or 5 on the EOC may elect either to retake the EOC or use the previous passing EOC score as 25% of the final grade. If the student retakes the EOC, the higher of the two scores will be used to calculate the final grade.

To suppress a grade, the course must be repeated after the course has been failed. For example, if a student takes a course that can be taken multiple times, the grade from a previously passed course will not suppress a current grade.

#### Grade Suppression for College Level Courses

Students are permitted to repeat the same college course for credit when they have failed the college course or failed to meet college criteria to advance to the next level. The college grade shall be suppressed on the high school transcript. Students will only earn credit toward graduation once for the course.

Students who drop a college course after the first ten (10) days of the high school semester receives a failing grade for the course on the high school transcript, even if the student withdraws from the course within the college's withdrawal window. The grade can be suppressed if the student repeats the same course and receives a passing grade.

### **J. 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.

### **K. 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 third grade students will be posted on the school system website in accordance with state law.

#### **L. 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.

#### **M. 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; (2) is not reading at grade level; or (3) has a personal education plan under G.S. 115C-105.41, 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 reading interventions that will be provided to the student to remediate identified areas of reading deficiency. 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.

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**N. CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES**

As required by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) 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 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, -83.7, -83.8, -83.9, -83.10, -83.11, -105.21, -174.11, -288(a), -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, 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 Limited English Proficient*, (N.C. Department of Public Instruction), available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/accountability/policyoperations/lep/testinglep1314.pdf>; *North Carolina Read to Achieve: A Guide to Implementing House Bill 950/S.L. 2012-143 Section 7A* (N.C. Department of Public Instruction), available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/k-3literacy/resources/guidebook.pdf>

Replaces Board Policy 620

**History of Policy 620**

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