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STUDENT PROMOTION AND RETENTION AND STUDENT PASS/FAILURE OF A COURSE

Introduction

The Board of Education, having determined that a need exists for a uniform policy governing the circumstances and considerations to be weighed in determining whether to promote a student to the next grade or retain the student in the same grade for an additional year, has established the following policy to govern this situation. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for teachers and administrators to follow in determining whether to promote or retain students in the School District, and to establish a uniform procedure to be followed in cases where retention is appropriate.

This policy also establishes an appeal procedure as required by Oklahoma law by which parents may challenge the decision to retain a student at his or her present grade level or to not pass a student in a course.

As used in this policy, "promote" or "promotion" means to place a student who has successfully completed the requirements of a particular grade level into the next higher grade level following the end of the school year, or before November 1 of the academic year if the student is being promoted at mid-year in accordance with the Reading Sufficiency Act, and to record on the student's permanent cumulative record that he or she has successfully completed his or her current grade level.

As used in this policy, "retain" or "retention" means a decision to decline to advance a student into the next higher grade level following the end of the school year and to indicate on the student's permanent cumulative record that he or she has not successfully completed the requirements of his or her current grade level.

As used in this policy, "not passed in a course" or similar wording, means the student is assigned a failing semester grade in a course of study which failing grade will be recorded on the student's permanent cumulative record.

Promotion/Retention and Failing Courses

Each school in this District will form a committee to review and make decisions regarding retention and promotion. The committee will be composed of a classroom teacher, a counselor when available, the principal and additional personnel who may be assigned by the principal or superintendent when appropriate. No committee will be formed regarding a failing grade in a course, but such failing grade shall be shown on the student's report card.

Supportive evidence must be presented to the student and parent regarding a retention decision. This evidence must be based on:

1. Testing which actually covers the subject matter presented to the student.

2. Assignments directly related to the subject matter being taught.
3. Consideration will also be given to the student's attendance record, although this matter will not bear the same weight as items 1 and 2.
4. Consideration will also be given to the student's level of maturity (physical, mental, emotional, and social), although this matter will not bear the same weight as items 1, 2 and 3 and cannot be the sole reason for a decision to retain or promote a student.

The student and the parent must be made aware of the possibility of the student's impending retention or failing grade in a course. Any student in danger of being retained or failing a course shall be notified prior to the end of the school year that the student's performance is insufficient, and the student's parents will be mailed a written notice. The school staff will make every effort to help the student improve the student's academic standing.

Promotion will be determined by successfully completed units of instruction to be established by the board of education, the superintendent and the relevant principal.

Retention based on the Reading Sufficiency Act

As provided for in the school district's Reading Sufficiency Testing Policy, reading sufficiency testing will be conducted in the school district to ensure that each student has attained the necessary reading skills upon completion of the third grade.

A student identified as having a reading deficiency, based on administered assessments, that is not remedied by the end of third grade, as demonstrated by scoring at the unsatisfactory level on the reading portion of the third-grade criterion-referenced test, shall be retained in the third grade. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

For students who do not meet the academic requirements for promotion, the school district may promote the student for good cause only. Good-cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

1. Limited English-proficient students who have had less than two (2) years of instruction in an English language learner program;
2. Students on an individualized education plan (IEP) which indicates that the student is to be assessed with alternate achievement standards through the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP);
3. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the State Board of Education;
4. Students who demonstrate, through a student portfolio, that the student is reading on grade level as evidenced by demonstration of mastery of the state standards beyond the retention level, and that the student is reading on grade level or higher;

5. Students on an IEP that reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade; or
6. Students who have received intensive remediation in reading for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade for a total of two (2) years.

A student who is promoted by meeting one of the good cause exemptions shall be provided intensive reading instruction during an altered instructional day that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies for that student. The school district shall assist schools and teachers to implement research based reading strategies for the promoted student shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers.

Requests for exemption from mandatory retention based on a good-cause exemption (1-6 above) require that a teacher submit documentation to the school principal indicating that the student meets one of the good-cause exemptions and promotion is appropriate. Documentation shall consist only of the alternative assessments results or student portfolio work and the IEP. The principal will review and discuss the documentation with the teacher. If the principal determines the student meets one of the good-cause exemptions and should be promoted based on the documentation provided, the principal shall make a written recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent shall also review the documentation and either accept or reject the recommendation of the principal in writing.

The school district will provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any student who is to be retained due to not meeting the reading proficiency required for promotion and the reasons the student is not eligible for a good-cause exemption. The notice shall contain a description of proposed interventions and intensive instructional supports that will be provided to the student to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

Mid-Year Promotion of Retained Third Graders

The School District implements the following policy for mid-year promotion of a third grade student retained due to a reading deficiency. Retained third grade students may only be promoted mid-year to fourth grade prior to November 1 of the academic year. To be eligible for mid-year promotion, the student must demonstrate that he or she:

1. is a successful and independent reader, reading at or above grade level; and
2. Progressed sufficiently to master appropriate fourth grade reading skills; and
3. is demonstrating a level of reading proficiency required to score above the unsatisfactory level on the third-grade statewide criterion-referenced test, or mastery of the Oklahoma State Standards as assessed by the reading portion of the grade 4 criterion referenced test; and

4. is showing progress sufficient to master appropriate fourth-grade level skills, as determined by the School District.

Tools that the School District may use, in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education, in reevaluating a retained third grade student may include subsequent alternative assessments or portfolio reviews.

A mid-year promotion shall only be made upon agreement of the parent or guardian of the student and the school principal. The academic progress plan for any retained third grade student who has been promoted mid-year to fourth grade must continue to be implemented for the entire academic year.

Appeal Process

After receiving a decision to retain a student or upon receipt of the student's report card showing a failing grade in a course, any parent may request reconsideration of a retention decision or a decision to not pass a student in a course by taking the following steps:

- First Level of Appeal: The parent may request review of the initial decision by letter to the building principal. If no request is received within five (5) days of the parent's receipt of written notification of the committee's initial decision to retain or in the case of failing a course, within five (5) days of the student or parent's receipt of the report card, the decision will be final and non-appealable.
- Second Level of Appeal: The parent may request review of the principal's decision by letter to the superintendent. If no request is received within five (5) days of the parent's receipt of the principal's written notification of his or her decision, the principal's decision will be final and non-appealable.
- Final Level of Appeal: The parent may request review of the superintendent's decision by letter to the superintendent or the Clerk of the Board of Education. If no request is received within five (5) days of the parent's receipt of the superintendent's written notification of his or her decision, the superintendent's decision will be final. The parent will be notified in writing of the date, time and place of the Board meeting at which the decision will be reviewed. The Board's decision will be final and non-appealable.

If a parent disagrees with the Board's decision, he or she may prepare a written statement stating the reason(s) for disagreement, which will be placed in and become a part of the student's permanent cumulative record.

Reference: 70 O.S. §1210.508C, OAC 210:15-27-3