

Memorandum

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Samantha M. Fuhrey, Superintendent

Date: March 12, 2019

Re: Revision of Policy IHE – Promotion and Retention

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends Policy IHE be adopted as revised.

BACKGROUND:

The school district's Strategic Waiver plan allows flexibility in the promotion and retention policy.

The revision to Policy IHE updates the language to make it consistent with the district's Strategic Waiver Plan.

To provide and ensure quality education, the Board of Education affirms its position that students should be promoted or retained on the basis of academic achievement level and the mastery of basic skills.

PROMOTION STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

The promotion, placement, and retention of each student will be based on the standards and criteria outlined in this policy and in the regulations designed for its implementation. Students and parents/guardians should take full advantage of recommended instructional support, and participate in essential conferences and meetings, . ~~e.g., SST and Placement Committee meetings.~~

(1) Promotion

Elementary and middle school students will be promoted from grade to grade based on satisfactory grade-level performance on reading and/or mathematics sections of state mandated tests, local grades and assessments, and/or satisfactory attendance.

(2) Placement or Retention

When placement or retention is considered, a team of teachers appointed by the principal shall consider multiple sources of evidence, e.g., Response to Intervention (RTI) reports, student's success in extended learning opportunities, test data, attendance data, and recommend to the principal whether or not to retain, place, or promote the student. The principal will make the final decision unless otherwise prohibited by this policy.

(a) Students who score at or above grade-level on the Georgia Milestones Assessment and below grade-level on local grades/assessments are candidates for placement ~~or retention.~~

(b) Students who ~~do not achieve a Total Readiness score as determined by the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) or~~ do not perform satisfactorily on local assessments, portfolios, other checklists, and/or classroom work are considered candidates for placement or retention.

(c) Students **in third grade** who score below grade level on the reading section of the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts (ELA) assessment ~~for first, second, and third~~ are considered candidates for placement or retention.

Students **in fourth through eighth grades** who score below grade level on the reading section of the Georgia Milestones ELA assessment and/or below the Developing Learner achievement level in mathematics ~~for fourth through eighth~~ are considered candidates for placement or retention.

(d) When a student does not perform at grade and/or achievement level in grades three, five, or eight on the Georgia Milestones specified above, then timely written notification by the principal or designee concerning the student's level of performance, ~~opportunity for instruction, retesting~~ and the possibility for retention shall occur according to established procedures.

(e) When a student does not perform at grade and/or achievement level on the Georgia Milestones in grades three, five, and eight, ~~and also does not perform at grade and/or achievement level on a second opportunity to take the assessment, then~~ the school principal or designee shall **consider** retaining the student for the next school year except as otherwise provided for in this policy. The principal or designee shall notify in writing the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher(s) regarding the decision to retain the student. ~~Requirements for notification and an appeal shall be contained in the regulations:~~

(f) If the parent or guardian or teacher appeals the decision to retain the student, the appeal must be submitted to the school's principal. The principal will consider the appeal; review the requested information; and render a decision. The decision of the principal is final and is not subject to appeal to district office personnel or the Newton County Board of Education. Requirements for an appeal shall be contained in the regulations. (i) Retention of any student at any grade level should be the last option and where the flexibility exists, be based upon what is in the best interest of that student with consideration given to the student's individual needs/ abilities. The student's needs and abilities shall include: academic readiness for the next grade level; emotional and social maturity; age; parental support; knowledge of English; satisfactory attendance (no more than nine unexcused absences), and any history of retention.

(g) Students in grades one-six will be considered for placement when a student has previously been retained more than once, or has been retained once within the two most recent school years, or will reach the age of thirteen before the time school begins for that school year.

(h) Each student (grades one-nine) who is promoted (placed) or retained (grades kindergarten-eight) is required to have a plan that includes accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction to move the student toward performing grade level skills and

concepts by the end of the school year. Each school and teacher of the student the following year shall implement, evaluate, and modify, as needed the student's placement plan. Requirements for the plan's development and implementation shall be contained in the regulations.

(i) For students with disabilities receiving services, the Individualized Education Program Committee (IEP) shall serve as the placement committee.

TESTING

Students shall be tested in accordance with requirements specified in State Board Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs - Student Assessment.

(1) A student who is absent or **unwilling or** otherwise unable to take the Georgia Milestones assessment in ELA and/or mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) shall ~~take the Georgia Milestones assessment in ELA and/or mathematics on the second administration or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level.~~ **be a candidate for retention.** Placement, **retention,** or promotion of such students shall follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment. **Promotion, placement, and/or retention decisions may not be appealed beyond the school level.**

~~(2) A student's failure to take the Georgia Milestones assessment in grades three, five, and eight in ELA and/or mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) shall result in the student being retained. Promotion/Retention decisions may not be appealed beyond the school level.~~

NOTIFICATION

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. This notification is contained within each school's agenda handbook.

STUDENTS ENROLLING FROM IN-STATE or OUT-OF-STATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(1) Students enrolling in any grade for the first time from another public school shall be enrolled in the grade level that the student would have been enrolled in if the family had not moved.

(2) Students who would have been promoted to the next higher grade in their previously attended public school but do not meet state and/or Newton County school board policy will have a Placement Plan developed.

(3) Students who would have been retained in their previously attended public school will be retained and a placement plan developed.

STUDENTS ENROLLING FROM OTHER ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

(1) Students enrolling from another public school system within the state of Georgia but who did not take a Georgia Milestones assessment, or from an accredited private school, or from a non-accredited school (includes home schools), will be given a norm-referenced assessment from the grade level immediately preceding the one in which they are requesting enrollment.

(2) A student will be considered for enrollment in the requested grade level if the following conditions are met: (a) scores at or above the 50th percentile on a norm-referenced assessment in the area of reading in grades 1-3 and reading and mathematics in grades 4-8, or (b) scores that range from the 35th to the 49th percentile in reading in grades 1-3 and reading and mathematics in grades 4-8 suggesting that the student is on grade level but in need of extra instructional assistance, or (c) scores at or above minimum system-adopted grade-level expectancies for reading and mathematics.

(3) A student is a candidate for placement or retention if: (a) the student's scores on a norm-referenced test are below the 35th percentile in reading in grades 1-3 or reading and mathematics in grades 4-8 and/or (b) performance is below minimum system-adopted grade-level expectancies in reading and mathematics.

(4) A student will be considered for enrollment in the requested grade level if the following conditions are met: (a) scores at or above grade level on normed referenced or Georgia Milestones "like" assessment in ELA in grades 1-3 or ~~or~~ above in ELA-and math in grades 4-8.

(5) A student is a candidate for placement or retention if the student scores below grade level on a normed referenced or Georgia "like" test in ELA in grades 1-3 and or reading and math in grades 4-8.

* Placement means that a student has not met the requirements needed to be promoted to the next grade, but the local school committee has made the decision to place a student in the assigned grade.

Under this section of the policy, final grade level assignment decisions will be made by the district's Chief Academic Officer.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

In addition to the requirements stated above, for middle school students all or part of the following criteria shall be considered and evaluated for possible retention: (1) Failing two or more subjects (2) Marginal or low standardized test scores (3) Learning ability of student (4) Previous interventions (including RTI) (5) Previous retentions (6) Age and maturity of student (7) Absences more than nine A middle school student will be considered for placement in high school if the student will turn sixteen prior to the time school begins for that school year.

HIGH SCHOOL

Promotion and retention shall be based on the number of units accrued at the beginning of each school year. No student shall be retained for athletic purposes. Units of credit required for promotion are delineated in the Board approved Program Planning Guide for each high school.

Students placed in ninth grade who do not meet expectations on the math and/or ELA portions of the eighth grade Georgia Milestones assessment will be placed in remedial reading and/or mathematics classes in the ninth grade.

Every student shall be apprised, at least yearly, of his/her status toward meeting all graduation requirements.

High school students will not be granted credit when unexcused absences exceed five (5) days per class per semester. The student must be informed of the decision to deny credit because of excessive absences and provided an opportunity to appeal the decision. The school may set conditions for the appeal process; such as time limit for appeal; the requiring of documentation for the reasons for absences; and requirements of parents to participate in the appeal process.

REGULATIONS

The Superintendent or his designee shall develop regulations and/or procedures for the implementation of this policy.