

INST7.3 - Academic Achievement: Retention and Promotion

I - Instruction

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Competency Requirements for Promotion of Students from Third Grade

The District shall identify students at risk of reading below grade level in kindergarten and grades one (1), two (2), and three (3). The District will provide specific annual written notifications to parents or guardians of students in kindergarten, first (1st), second (2nd), and third (3rd) grades that a student who scores below the proficiency level on the reading portion of the statewide assessment may not be promoted from the third (3rd) grade. If a student is determined to be substantially deficient in reading before the end of grade three (3), the District shall notify the parent or guardian in writing within three (3) weeks, which shall include:

A. A description of the student's specific needs. B. A summary of current reading services provided. C. Information on available supplemental instructional services and evidence-based interventions, with a choice for parents to select the most appropriate intervention strategy in consultation with the student's teacher. D. Strategies for parents to assist the student in attaining reading proficiency. E. The frequency of updates to parents on the student's reading progress. F. A statement indicating the student will not be promoted if they do not demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the statewide reading assessment unless exempted. G. District policies regarding midyear promotion.

Competency Requirements for Promotion from Third Grade

A. A student will not be promoted from the third (3rd) grade if they fail to demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the statewide reading assessment, unless they qualify for an exemption as determined by the Governing Board. B. The Governing Board may promote a third-grade student who does not meet the reading proficiency requirement if the student:

1. Is an English learner or limited English proficient student with fewer than two (2) years of instruction.
2. Is undergoing a special education referral or evaluation, has a diagnosed reading impairment (such as dyslexia), or has a disability per section 15-761, and the IEP team and parent agree that promotion is appropriate.
3. Demonstrates sufficient reading skills through alternative assessments or meets progress standards approved by the State Board of Education.
4. Receives evidence-based interventions and demonstrates sufficient progress for midyear promotion.

C. A pupil may not be retained if the statewide assessment results are unavailable by the end of the school year. In such cases, the student will receive interventions as described in the policy.

Intervention and Remedial Strategies

The Governing Board shall offer more than one (1) intervention and remedial strategy, allowing parents, teachers, and the principal to choose the most appropriate strategy. These strategies may include: A. Evidence-based reading instruction by a highly rated teacher. B. Summer school reading instruction. C. Intensive reading instruction during the next academic year, before, during, or after school. D. Small group or teacher-led instruction, including computer-based or online reading instruction. E. Annual reporting to the Department of Education regarding pupils subject to retention, promotions, and interventions.

Retention Procedures

At the end of the first grading period, teachers will submit a list of struggling students to the principal, and parents will be notified during the earliest parent conference. The teacher and parent will work together to assist the student in improving their performance. Retention may be considered after review by the principal and staff, with parental involvement in the final decision. Recommendations for retention will be made by the teacher, with consultation from the principal and staff.

Appeal Process

Parents may appeal a teacher's decision to promote, retain, pass, or fail a student by requesting a Governing Board review. The burden of proof lies with the parent or student to demonstrate that the student has met or has not met the required standards.

Regular Education

Promotion in grades one (1) through eight (8) will be based on the District's standards for basic subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Additional factors such as test scores, teacher recommendations, and other relevant data will be considered. Retention may occur at any grade level, but the primary focus will be on the early grades.

Special Education

Students receiving special education services will be promoted based on their individualized education program (IEP) and alternative curricula. Special education students must meet the standards in their IEP to be promoted, with modifications as needed.

Honor Rolls

An honor roll system will be implemented for students in grades four (4) through eight (8) to encourage academic excellence. The criteria for inclusion will be set by the Superintendent and may be subject to Board approval.

Move On When Reading

The District is committed to ensuring reading proficiency for students in kindergarten through third grade, incorporating the requirements of A.R.S. §15-701, A.R.S. §15-704, and A.R.S. §15-211 to provide effective, evidence-based reading instruction and interventions.