

**STUDENT PROMOTION AND RETENTION AND
STUDENT PASS/FAIL OF A COURSE**

Introduction

This policy establishes guidelines for teachers and administrators related to student promotion and retention. It also establishes an appeal procedure for parents who wish to challenge a retention or promotion decision.

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 Act Testing and Procedures 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. To determine the promotion and retention of a third-grade student pursuant to the Reading Sufficiency Act, the State Board of Education shall use only the reading comprehension and vocabulary scores portion of the statewide third-grade assessment and shall not use the other language arts scores portions of the test. No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

Any first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade student who demonstrates proficiency in reading at the third-grade level through a screening instrument for the acquisition of reading skills approved by the State Board of Education shall not be subject to retention. Upon demonstrating the proficiency through the screening, the district shall provide notification to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the student that the student has satisfied the requirements of the Reading Sufficiency Act and will not be subject to retention.

If a third-grade student is identified at any point of the academic year as having a significant reading deficiency, which shall be defined as not meeting grade-level targets on a screening instrument for the acquisition of reading skills approved by the State Board of Education, the school district shall immediately begin a student reading portfolio and shall provide notice to the parent of the student's reading deficiency as described in the school district's Reading Sufficiency Act Testing and Procedures Policy.

If a student has not yet demonstrated proficiency in reading at the third-grade level prior to the completion of third grade and still has a significant reading deficiency, as identified based on assessments for the acquisition of reading skills approved by the State Board of Education, has not accumulated evidence of third-grade proficiency through a student portfolio, or is not subject to a good cause exemption, then the student shall not be eligible for automatic promotion to fourth grade.

A student not eligible for automatic promotion and who does not meet the criteria established by the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability on the reading portion of the third-grade statewide assessment may be evaluated for "probationary promotion" by the Student Reading Proficiency Team. The Student Reading Proficiency Team shall be composed of:

1. the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the student,
2. the teacher assigned to the student who had responsibility for reading instruction in that academic year,
3. a teacher in reading who teaches in the subsequent grade level, and
4. a certified reading specialist, if one is available.

The student shall be promoted to the fourth grade if the team members unanimously recommend "probationary promotion" to the school principal and the school district superintendent and the principal and superintendent approve the recommendation that promotion is the best option for the student. If a student is allowed a "probationary promotion", the team shall continue to review the reading performance of the student and repeat the requirements of this paragraph each academic year until the student demonstrates grade-level reading proficiency, as identified through a screening instrument which meets the acquisition of reading skills criteria approved by the State Board of Education, for the corresponding grade level in which the student is enrolled or transitions to a locally designed remediation plan after the fifth grade which shall have the goal of ensuring that the student is on track to be college and career ready.

Students who do not meet grade-level targets on the reading portion of the statewide third-grade assessment, who are not subject to a good cause exemption, and who do not qualify for promotion or "probationary promotion," shall be retained in the third grade and provided intensive instructional services and supports.

The school district shall annually report the number of probationary promotions to the State Department of Education

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

1. English language learners who have had less than two (2) years of instruction in an English language learner program;
2. Students with disabilities whose individualized education plan (IEP), consistent with state law, 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;
5. Students with disabilities who participate in the statewide assessment and who have an IEP that reflects that the student has received intensive remediation in

reading and has made adequate progress in reading pursuant to the student's individualized education program;

6. Students who have received intensive remediation in reading through a program of reading instruction for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in prekindergarten for academic reasons, kindergarten, first, second, or third grade; and
7. Students who have experienced medical emergencies during the district's testing window and have been approved for this exemption through the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

A student who is otherwise promoted pursuant to this policy, or by meeting one of the good cause exemptions, shall be provided intensive reading instruction that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies for that student until the student meets grade-level targets in reading. 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 to exempt students from retention based on a good-cause exemption (1-7 above) require that a teacher submit documentation consisting only of the alternative assessment results or student portfolio work and the IEP, as applicable, to the school principal indicating that the student meets one of the good-cause exemptions and promotion is appropriate. The principal will review and discuss the documentation with the teacher and, if applicable, the other members of the Student Reading Proficiency Team. 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 retained student due to a reading deficiency. Retained students may only be promoted mid-year prior to November 1 of the academic year. To be eligible for mid-year promotion, the student must demonstrate by reasonable expectation that he or she:

1. is a successful and independent reader, reading at or above grade level;
2. has progressed sufficiently to master appropriate fourth grade reading skills; and
3. has met any additional requirements, such as satisfactory achievement in other curriculum areas, as determined by the policies of the district.

Standards that provide a reasonable expectation that a student has met the above requirements include demonstration of a level of proficiency required to meet grade-level criteria as established by the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA) on the third-grade assessment and mastery of reading skills, consistent with the month of promotion to fourth grade, as presented in the scope and sequence of the district's core reading program. Evidence of demonstrated mastery shall be shown by the following:

1. Successful completion of portfolio elements that meet state criteria, as outlined in O.A.C. 210: 15-27-3(d); or
2. Satisfactory performance on a subsequent alternative standardized assessment, pursuant to O.A.C. 210: 15-27-3(e).

To promote a student mid-year using a student portfolio there must be evidence of the student demonstrating a level of proficiency required to meet criteria on the Oklahoma state standards as assessed by the reading comprehension and vocabulary portions of the third-grade assessment, and mastery of the Oklahoma Academic Standards as assessed by the reading foundations/processes and vocabulary portions of the fourth-grade assessment, as specified in O.A.C. 210: 15-27-3(b). In addition, the portfolio must also meet the requirements listed in O.A.C. 210: 15-27-3(d).

To promote a student mid-year using an alternative standardized assessment there must be evidence that the student scored at or above grade level on the reading portion of an alternative standardized reading assessment listed in O.A.C. 210: 15-27-2(b)(3)(A), as demonstrated by standard scores or percentiles consistent with the month of promotion to the fourth grade. Alternative assessments administered for the purpose of determining a student's eligibility for mid-year promotion must also comply with any additional requirements such as those mandated by O.A.C. 210: 15-27-2(b)(3) and the district's policy for mid-year promotion, provided that alternative assessments administered for this purpose may be administered until November 1 of the school year.

A mid-year promotion shall only occur upon agreement of the parent or legal guardian of the student, and the school principal. Such decision should be made in consultation with the student's third and fourth grade teachers.

The Individualized Program of Reading Instruction for any retained third grade student who has been promoted mid-year to fourth grade shall be re-evaluated and modified as appropriate to support success in fourth grade, and shall 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 steps outlined below:

Parents who disagree with the district's decision to promote a student to the next grade may also appeal the decision upon receipt of the student's report card by taking the steps outlined below.

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 nonappealable.

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 nonappealable.

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 nonappealable.

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. Prior to retaining a student at the parent's request, the student's parent will be required to sign an acknowledgment form accepting responsibility for any adverse consequences of retaining a student against district recommendations.

Reference: OKLA. STAT. tit. 70, § 1210.508C, O.A.C. 210:15-27-3