

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

I. PURPOSE

To establish the guidelines for promotion and retention of students and to outline assessment and intervention standards.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to students within Shelby County Schools.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Assessment

Regular assessment is important in order to guide the provision of academic services, enhance district and classroom instructional strategies, and measure student learning and students' progress toward meeting the district's academic achievement standards. Therefore, the district shall employ a comprehensive student assessment system to help ensure that students remain on course to meet the academic achievement standards of the district and on target to meet the grade level standards recognized by state and federal governments.

Promotion and Retention Decisions

Assessment of the student in the context of the total learning situation and its attendant circumstances should be used to determine what is best for the student. Factors to be considered in deciding what is best for the student should include:

1. current skill level;
2. the student's age;
3. achievement potential;

4. previous performance;
5. evaluative data;
6. chances for success with more difficult material when current skills are inadequate;
7. number of absences;
8. previous retention;
9. maturity level;
10. standardized test results; and
11. what benefits can be accomplished by retention.

Promotion

Promotion shall be based on skill mastery and shall be considered on the basis of what is best for the child in terms of school success.

Conditional Promotion and/or Assignment to Transitional Classes

If a student's ability to succeed at the next grade level is highly questionable, consideration shall be given to conditional promotion and/or assignment to transitional classes if such classes exist.

Retention

Retention is used to help students improve their knowledge base by providing an additional year of instruction to address inadequate skills mastery. Retention will be considered on an individual basis. Deficiencies in several of the factors to be considered in deciding what is best for the student that are listed above indicate that retention shall be considered. Retention, however, should not be used as a punitive measure or as a way to hold a student back because of parental wishes when a student's performance does not warrant it or when the school feels retention is inappropriate.

Special Consideration

Special consideration for promotion and/or retention shall be given to students with special academic, social, and emotional needs.

Third-Grade Promotion/Retention

A student in the third grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student has shown a basic understanding of curriculum and ability to perform the skills required in the subject of reading as demonstrated by the student's grades or standardized test results. However, such student may be promoted if the student participates in a Shelby County Board of Education approved research-based intervention prior to the beginning of the next school year. This provision shall not apply to students who have IEPs pursuant to 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

A collectively developed educational plan which suggests different strategies and materials should be considered for every student to be retained. The Superintendent (or designee) shall monitor the progress of the retained students.

Academic Interventions

It is expected that interventions will occur on an ongoing basis and that effective intervention strategies may result in a student's promotion. Therefore, instructional strategies, classroom grades, and intervention opportunities shall be monitored and reviewed by principals on a regular basis.

Required Interventions

Academic interventions shall be required for the following students:

- Students who are not making satisfactory progress toward academic benchmarks;
- Students who have not met promotional standards by the end of the school year/(retained students)
- Students who are one or more years behind grade level in a course or grade
- Students not performing at the level to meet the College Readiness Benchmarks, as defined by ACT

Student Evaluation and Intervention – Grades 3-8

A criterion-referenced test will be administered in subjects and grade levels in accordance with policy of the State Board of Education. Based on achievement data from the benchmark years 3, 5, and 8, there shall be a research-based intervention initiated by the local education agency for students scoring below proficient in reading, language, and mathematics on the criterion referenced portion of the state achievement test. The intervention shall occur during the year following the benchmark assessment data. Evidence of compliance with this requirement shall become a component of the school improvement plan.

English Language Learners (ELL)

ELL students shall meet the same standards as all students. However, in accordance with federal law, English language proficiency shall not be the sole factor in determining that a student has not met performance standards for promotion. Intervention strategies shall include, where appropriate, assistance in the development of English language proficiency.

Students with Disabilities

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities shall be governed by SCS student standards established for students without disabilities. Students with disabilities who meet the requirements established by the Tennessee Board of Education shall earn regular diplomas. All enrichment, interventions/remediation, opportunities, benefits and resources made available to students without disabilities shall be made available to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may be exempt from promotion/retention standards if an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student does not have the ability to successfully meet general curricular standards.

Students with disabilities are not subject to promotion/retention standards if, due to the nature and severity of their disability, they have an IEP allowing them to take an alternative form of state/city wide assessment.

Parent Concerns

Parents who disagree with the decision of the teacher(s) and principal regarding the promotion or retention of a student may appeal the decision to the Superintendent or his designee. The decision of the Superintendent or his designee shall be final.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

The Superintendent (or designee) is responsibility for administering this policy.

Legal References:

1. Tennessee State Board of Education Policy No. 3.300
2. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule § 0520-01-03
3. Tennessee State Board of Education Rule § 0520-01-03-.05