

**RESCIND BOARD REPORT 02-0424-PO04
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION POLICY AND
ADOPT NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION POLICY**

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Chicago Board of Education Rescind Board Report 02-0424-PO04 "Elementary School Promotion Policy" and Adopt a New Elementary School Promotion Policy.

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the **Children First Education Plan**, the purpose of this policy is to provide the standards and guidelines for the promotion and retention of elementary school students. In providing these guidelines, the Chicago Board of Education demonstrates its commitment to several key objectives: (1) the promotion of high educational standards for its students; (2) ensuring that there is consistency in the educational opportunities provided to all students; (3) implementation of a plan of system-wide monitoring to verify that the quality of instruction and type of instructional materials provided to students are calculated to achieve student mastery of the skills and knowledge which are assessed in making promotion decisions; (4) early identification of at-risk students and the implementation of systematic academic intervention as the most effective method to help all children achieve success in school and avoid grade retention and (5) ensuring that the District's educational objectives are met in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

I. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION STANDARDS

Students in the third, sixth and eighth grades ("the benchmark grades") will be promoted to the next grade if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade levels as demonstrated by their performance on multiple measurements including the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills ("ITBS") and, as appropriate, the assessment of other factors described in Section 2 below.

A. Automatic Promotion to the Next Grade

Students in the benchmark grades whose scores are at or above the 35th National Percentile Ranking in reading on the ITBS, have passing classroom grades in reading and fewer than twenty (20) unexcused absences shall automatically be promoted in June to the next grade level.

B. Promotion for Students Not Automatically Promoted to the Next Grade

For all students at the benchmark grades who score below the cut-off scores set forth in Section A, the additional criteria described in this Section will be reviewed automatically by the Chief Education Officer or his/her designee as set forth in Section C below, in conjunction with the ITBS score, to determine promotion to the next grade level.

1. ITBS Reading Scores

Students in the benchmark grades with ITBS reading scores ranging from the 24th through the 34th National Percentile Ranking ("the acceptable range") may be promoted to the next grade if a consideration of academic performance, attendance and conduct indicate that students are sufficiently prepared to satisfactorily perform at the next grade level.

2. Academic Performance

Students in the benchmark grades with ITBS reading scores in the acceptable range may be promoted if they demonstrated the following academic performance:

- a. Classroom grades of "B" or better in reading for the academic year;
- b. passing reading unit test scores; and
- c. consistent completion of homework assignments during the academic year.

3. Attendance

Students in the benchmark grades with ITBS reading scores in the acceptable range may be promoted if their attendance during the academic year was at a rate of 90% or better.

4. Conduct

Students in the benchmark grades with ITBS reading scores in the acceptable range may be promoted if their conduct during the academic year was satisfactory, i.e. there was an absence of any significant disciplinary infractions.

C. Request for Review of Promotion Determinations

The District shall maintain a centralized process that is applied consistently throughout the District for determining whether any student should be promoted if their performance falls below the promotion criteria of achieving an ITBS score of at least 35th National Percentile Ranking in reading, having passing classroom grades in reading or having fewer than 20 days of unexcused absences.

Immediately after CPS receives the ITBS test results, appropriate CPS officials shall identify students who achieved a score of at least 35th National Percentile Ranking in reading, and students who scored in the 34th percentile or less in reading. The performance of all students scoring below the 35th National Percentile Ranking in reading *automatically* shall be reviewed through a centralized process using the criteria set forth in Section I (B) above. Those students who scored in the range of the 24th to 34th percentile in reading and who met **all** of the review criteria will be identified for promotion in June by the review process. Promotion decisions for students who (1) scored in the 24th to 34th percentile, but failed to meet all the review criteria (2) scored less than the 24th percentile in reading or (3) had twenty (20) or more unexcused absences shall be deferred until the end of mandatory summer school.

Within five (5) calendar days following the review process, parent(s)/guardian(s) of all students shall receive notification regarding the promotion of their children. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of students of students who cannot be promoted in June shall be informed that, in order to be promoted to the next grade in August, their children must: (1) attend and successfully complete summer school; (2) have a summer school attendance record of at least 90%; and (3) in the case of students whose ITBS score fell below the minimum for their grade level, achieve at least a 24th National Percentile Ranking in reading on the ITBS taken at the end of the summer school program. Parents/Guardians shall have five days following the receipt of the promotion notification to submit in writing to the Chief Education Officer for review of any additional information regarding the academic performance or attendance records of their children that would justify waiving the requirements set forth in this policy and promoting the students. The Chief Education Officer or his/her designee will provide an on-line system on which this information will be compiled.

D. Determining Promotion

In June of each year, the total academic performance of students in the benchmark grades will be reviewed and promotion decisions will be made. The following methodology will be used for determining grade placement and whether summer school attendance is required.

1. Students in the benchmark grades whose ITBS reading test scores are at or above the 35th National Percentile Ranking and who have passing classroom grades in reading shall be automatically promoted to the next grade without attending summer school.
2. Students whose ITBS reading test scores are in the acceptable range (24th to 34th National Percentile Ranking) and upon review meet all the academic performance, attendance and conduct criteria set forth in Section I B above shall be promoted to the next grade without attending summer school.
3. Students whose ITBS reading test scores are in the acceptable range and upon review fail to meet the academic performance, attendance and conduct criteria set forth in Section I B above will be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.
4. Students whose ITBS reading test scores fall below the acceptable range and upon review meet all the academic performance, attendance and conduct criteria set forth in Section I B above shall be promoted to the next grade only upon successful completion of summer school.
5. Students who scored below the 24th percentile on the ITBS reading test and fail to meet the academic performance, attendance and conduct criteria set forth in Section I B above shall be promoted to the next grade only upon:
 - a. successful completion of summer school; and
 - b. a score at or above the 24th percentile on the ITBS reading test.
6. Students who have a failing report card grade in reading or who have 20 or more unexcused absences shall be promoted to the next grade only upon successful completion of summer school.
7. To satisfactorily complete summer school, all students must receive a passing report card grade and have an attendance record of 90% or better.

Students who do not successfully complete summer school will be retained in the grade they were in the previous year if holding them back would constitute a first retention. However, if retaining a student would be a second retention, the student shall go to the next grade and receive intensive remedial academic support.

Students who are 15 years old or will be 15 years old before December 1st of the following school year and who do not successfully complete summer school will be assigned to a designated academic achievement academy. The curriculum of the academic achievement academies provides intensive skills development in reading in smaller classroom settings as well as other academic development support.

E. Additional Eighth-Grade Promotion Requirements

Eighth-grade students must pass the United States and State of Illinois Constitution tests in order to graduate. English Language Learner students ("ELLs") may take the constitution tests in English or it may be administered in their native language, as deemed appropriate in the judgment of the classroom teacher in consultation with other knowledgeable persons, including the parents.

F. Promotion of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, which includes ELLs with disabilities, are expected to master the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible with the use of supplementary aides and other services. The designated ITBS scores and other criteria used to determine promotion shall apply to students with disabilities unless the Individual Education Plan ("IEP") contains modifications to the designated ITBS score required and/or other educational criteria to be reviewed.

The Chief Specialized Services Officer shall develop a plan under which periodic reviews of student IEPs are conducted to ensure that promotion decisions for students with disabilities are made in conformance with their IEPs.

G. Promotion of English Language Learners

The District will evaluate test instruments and results of all ELLs to ensure that the test effectively measures the students' knowledge and skills in reading, in conjunction with English language proficiency and achievement assessments proposed by the state. Accommodations will be provided, as appropriate, to ELLs, as follows: ELLs will complete the curriculum in their native language and/or English in accordance with Office of Language and Cultural Education's ("OLCE") guidelines. All ELLs will complete the English as a Second Language ("ESL") curriculum and their general academic curriculum in their native language and/or English. The level of English proficiency for Program Years zero, one and two ELLs shall not be considered as a determining factor for promotion.

The performance of Program Years zero, one and two ELLs will be evaluated in their home language. ESL Program Years three, four and five ELLs will be evaluated on classroom performance in English. The students' ITBS score only will be used for instructional program decisions. All promotion decisions will be based upon the policies and procedures adopted in the OLCE's guidelines, entitled "The Framework for Success." All ELL students will be required to attend summer school based upon teacher recommendations in reading and ESL.

H. Incoming Students

Students who were previously enrolled in other school districts who enroll in the District in grades 4, 7, and 9 shall be evaluated for appropriate grade placement.

II. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

A. Beginning with the first week of the school year and prior to the end of the first grading period, principals will be required to notify parents in writing of the promotion policy of the District.

- B.** At the end of the fifth week, fifteenth week, twentieth week, twenty-fifth week and thirtieth week of the school year, principals shall notify parents in writing if their child is in danger of receiving a failing grade in reading or mathematics.
1. Student assistance shall be provided at the earliest point the child is identified as being at risk of obtaining a failing grade in either reading or mathematics.
 2. If the student receives a failing grade in reading or mathematics at the end of the twentieth week, notification must be sent to the student's parent or guardian by certified mail.
 3. If the parent or guardian does not attend a report card pick-up conference at the thirtieth week, notification must be sent to the parent by certified mail.
 4. In June, parents will be notified regarding whether their child will be promoted and whether summer school attendance is required.
- C.** If a student has accumulated 10 days of unexcused absences (including absence created by an out-of-school suspension), schools shall be required to notify the parent or guardian by certified mail that the student may be required to attend summer school. The same notification must be made, in writing, and via certified mail if the student reaches 15 days of unexcused absences. Final notification shall be given by certified mail if the student reaches 20 days of unexcused absences.

III. RETENTION

Upon adoption of this policy, students in grades K-8 can be retained in a grade for a second year **only one time during the following grade cycles: K-3, 4-6, and 7-8.** To identify academically at-risk students as early as possible so they can participate in systematic learning support programs which mitigate the need for grade retention, CPS shall implement an intervention program that stresses ongoing student assessment and intensive literacy programs beginning in kindergarten and running throughout the elementary school grades.

A. Grades K-3

Students assessed as being at-risk who are attending "targeted schools", i.e. those schools having the highest percentages/numbers of retentions in the third grade as determined by CPS, shall participate in an intensive reading improvement program that includes the early assessment and identification of at-risk students who will participate in an intensive reading intervention program that includes in-school, after school, and year-round components. School administrators shall monitor closely the academic performance of students retained in third grade during the retention year.

B. Grades 4-8

Students in these grades who are assessed as not meeting standards shall participate in an intensive reading support program that will include the implementation of individualized personal learning plans that target students' assessed learning deficiencies for remediation.

C. Academic Readiness Programs

Students in selected grades whose academic performance falls below established standards will be required to participate in Step Up – an academic readiness program – during the summer prior to their entry into the next grade.

Eighth graders who score between the 35th and 50th National Percentile Ranking on the ITBS reading test will be strongly encouraged to participate in the Step Up program during the summer prior to ninth grade enrollment.

D. Supplemental Year-Round Reading Programs for Previously Retained Fourth and Seventh Graders

Fourth and Seventh graders who have been retained in the third or sixth grades shall participate in supplemental year-round reading programs.

E. Summer Reading Enhancement Programs

Summertime reading is an important way for students to improve their reading skills while they are out of school. CPS is committed to promoting student reading during summer vacation and shall develop summer reading enhancement programs as part of its overall intensive elementary school reading intervention efforts.

IV. ASSESSMENT VALIDATION AND MAINTENANCE OF DATA

The District will, on a periodic basis, review use of the ITBS (or any other standardized assessment used), in part, as a factor in determining student mastery of reading and mathematics skills. The frequency of review will be determined based upon generally recognized educational and testing standards. The evaluation will include review of the construct validity of the ITBS or other assessment used, test development, revisions, and use implementation to ensure that testing measures are both accurate and appropriate for the knowledge bases measured and the student populations for which the measures are obtained.

In addition, the District will maintain all testing data by race and national origin of test-takers and shall annually review this data in regard to students who are promoted and retained pursuant to the requirements of the policy in order to ensure that there is no disparate impact based upon race or national origin created by operation of the policy. All such data shall be made available to any parent upon request.

V. SYSTEM-WIDE MONITORING OF INSTRUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

CPS affirms the critical importance of high-quality classroom instruction and use of appropriate instructional materials in fostering student academic achievement. In particular, because student promotion decisions will evaluate, in addition to ITBS scores, classroom grades and attendance, CPS will undertake the following steps to ensure that student achievement is maximized, that the utilization of the designated educational criteria is done in a manner that ensures consistency throughout the school system, and that there is a strong alignment between the tests and other assessment criteria, the curriculum and the classroom instruction.

All schools must ensure that instruction is conducted at the correlative grade level for each grade. To promote accountability with this mandate, the Chief Education Officer or his/her designee and the Area Instruction Offices will implement a system for monitoring classroom instruction that will include random unannounced classroom visits conducted to confirm that instruction at grade level is occurring and that the assignment of student grades for classroom work is consistent with CPS policy.

All elementary schools where aggregate student reading scores on the ITBS indicate that less than 50% of the school's students tested at or above national norms in reading may be required to use a standardized reading curriculum provided by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.

FINAL

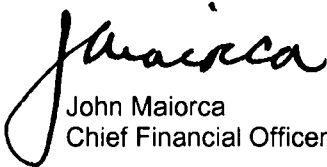
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