5.10—Promotion/Retention/Acceleration of Pupils

Purpose

The purpose of the following procedures is to provide guidelines for teachers and principals to use in making decisions relating to promotion, retention, acceleration, and administrative placement of students.

PROCEDURES

Promotion/Retention: Regular Students

Elementary Grades

To be promoted to the next grade level, students enrolled in elementary grades will be expected to make acceptable progress in reaching the course objectives as outlined by the Arkansas Department of Education. Students not performing at grade level will participate in a remediation program during the school year or a summer school remediation program to be eligible for promotion to the next grade.

If a parent, teacher, or other staff member believes there is sufficient evidence to consider the retention of a pupil, that person will discuss the matter with the building principal. The possibility of student retention will be discussed with the parent no later than six weeks before the end of the school year. Each school will organize a retention and promotion committee to be comprised of at least an administrator, a counselor, and a teacher who will review the case of a student who has not made satisfactory progress in reaching the course objectives at his/her grade level. The committee will submit a recommendation to the principal. The decision will be based on a wide range of factors with the interests of the individual as the basic consideration. The principal is authorized to waive the above requirements for student promotion.

Middle School Grades

To be promoted to the next grade level, a student must satisfactorily complete the school’s regular program of studies and pass a minimum of 75% of four core classes (math, science, language arts, and social studies). The student must receive a passing grade (60% or above) in at least six of the eight core semester classes.

Students who do not make adequate grades to be promoted to the next grade level should enroll in a twenty-day summer-school program, at their expense, to make up their credit(s). To receive summer-school credit, a student must attend 90% of the classes and make a passing grade in the subject(s) taken. Failure to sign up for summer school, attend 90% of the time, and make a passing grade in the summer-school program will result in the student repeating the grade the following school year.

The possibility of student retention will be discussed with a parent/guardian no later than six weeks before the end of the school year. Each school will organize a retention and promotion committee to be comprised of at least an administrator, a counselor, and a teacher who will review the case of a student who has not passed the minimum number of semester classes required. The committee will make a recommendation to the principal. The decision will be based on a wide range of factors with the interests of the individual as the basic consideration. The principal is authorized to waive either or both of the above requirements for student promotion.

High School

Academically, the first year of a student’s high school career is grade nine. Promotion from grade eight to grade nine follows the middle grades format for promotion. See paragraph above.

A student’s classification in high school is determined by the number of accumulated high school credits the student has earned.
*9th grade (freshman) promotion from 8th grade
10th grade (sophomore) earned 5 credits
11th grade (junior) earned 10 credits
12th grade (senior) earned 15 credits

Graduation requirements earned 24 credits (see graduation policy 5.16)

Of the 5 credits required in each of the classification levels of freshmen, sophomore and junior years, 3 must be in the areas of English, math, science and social studies.

If a student fails any classes and does not meet the minimum requirements at each grade level, the student can make up a total of one lost credit per year during Summer School, at the student’s expense. Credits from failed courses can also be earned through the Credit Recovery program offered during the school day at Fayetteville High School. There is no cost for these courses, but enrollment is limited and must be approved through the student’s counselor.

Students who would like to take additional classes in order to gain extra credits or make up lost credits, can take a total of 1 ½ credits through Independent Study courses from an approved institution. The cost for these credits is at the student’s expense, must be taken outside school hours, and be approved through the student’s counselor.

Principals are authorized to waive the above requirements and recommend a ninth grader who, because of individual characteristics or situation, is more likely to be better served through another placement.

**Academic Improvement Plans and End of Course Requirements**

Students shall be tested in content areas as prescribed by state rules and regulations. Any student who does not achieve a passing score in any of the competency areas shall be evaluated by the student’s school principal, teachers, and counselors, who will jointly prepare an Academic Improvement Plan to assist the student in obtaining mastery of the area(s) in which the student is deficient. The plan shall be designed to assist the student in achieving grade level competence. A conference shall be held with each student’s parent(s) or guardian(s) to review and discuss that student’s plan. Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, students who do not score at a proficient level and do not participate in the remediation program will be retained.

All students must successfully pass all general End of Course assessments they are required to take unless exempted by the student’s individualized education program (IEP). To receive academic credit in a course requiring a student to take a general EOC assessment, the student must either receive a passing score on the initial assessment or successfully participate in the remediation program identified in his/her Individualized Academic Improvement Plan (AIP). A student is not eligible to graduate if he/she fails to receive academic credit in a course requiring a general EOC. Additionally the lack of credit could jeopardize the student’s grade promotion or classification.

Unless exempted by the student’s IEP, all students must successfully pass the Algebra I EOC assessment to receive academic credit for the course and be eligible to graduate from high school. This is a high stakes assessment and students failing to receive a passing score the first time they take the assessment must receive a passing score on a subsequent assessment or on an alternative assessment as provided by law.

Students from an Arkansas public school who have completed and received credit on an Algebra I EOC assessment prior to the 2009-2010 school year are not required to take the high stakes Algebra I EOC. Students not in grades 10, 11, or 12 in the 2009-10 school year who have taken Algebra I but not received proper academic credit on their transcript for the course are required to take the high stakes Algebra I test before they can receive academic credit for the course.

Students transferring into the district from an out-of-state public, private, or home school or an Arkansas private or home school who can demonstrate by an official transcript they have received academic credit for Algebra I are not
required to take the Algebra I high stakes end of course assessment. The District, however, has the right to assess the student’s education status to determine if the student possesses the requisite passing knowledge of Algebra I.

**Promotion and Retention: Special Education Students**

Individualized Education Program (IEP) team shall meet annually to review progress on goals and objectives as well as the general education course work as required by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Additionally, the IEP team must document conferences held to address failure prior to the student being given a failing grade. Attempts to prevent failure such as services and supports provided, as well as behavior modification, instructional modifications and accommodations utilized with the student must be documented. IEP services and supports, documentation of failure conferences and general education progress will be considered for all students with disabilities. When the decision to retain a student with a disability is considered, the IEP team members must consider the implementation of the IEP as well as the progress of the student.

**Acceleration:**

Acceleration is an effective and research-based intervention for the academic growth of students who are ready for an advanced or faster-paced curriculum. It allows for a student to move through traditional educational organizations more rapidly, based on assessed readiness, capability and motivation. Some students are best served by enrichment programs, some by acceleration and some by a mix of the two. Acceleration is not a replacement for gifted education services or programs.

Two broad categories of acceleration are content-based and grade-based with the primary difference whether the accelerative intervention shortens the number of years that a student spends in the K-12 system.

When a grade-based acceleration is under consideration, an evaluation of the needs and abilities of the student will be completed. If there is evidence that a move in grade placement is an appropriate educational decision and is recommended by the acceleration committee, an educational plan will be developed. The following guidelines for the acceleration process will be completed:

I) There are two avenues for the initiation of a grade-based acceleration. One is a parent-initiated referral and one is a school-initiated referral. At the time of a referral, a conference or phone conversation between the parent(s) and either the principal or Director of the Gifted /Talented Program should be held to explain and discuss the process.

   A) Parent-initiated referral
      1) A written request shall be made to the student’s school principal or the Director of the Gifted /Talented Program. Included in that request shall be:
         (a) The parent’s reason(s) for seeking the acceleration.
         (b) The parent’s commitment to support the change should the assessment indicate it appropriate.
      2) Whoever (A. 1.) receives the parent request will inform the other staff member of the request.
      3) The Director of the Gifted /Talented Program shall notify the appropriate assistant superintendent of the request.

   B) School-initiated referral
      1) School personnel initiating the referral (classroom teacher, gifted/talented program teacher, principal) will notify the Director of the Gifted/Talented Program before contacting parents.
      2) The Director of the Gifted/Talented Program and/or the principal will meet with the parents to present an explanation of why acceleration is being considered.
      3) If the parents consent for the process to proceed, written parent permission for assessment will be obtained.
      4) The Director of the Gifted/Talented Program shall notify the
appropriate assistant superintendent.

II) An initial assessment of the student’s academic achievement level will be completed using an off-level academic instrument with age norms. (e.g. - Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised). Scores in multiple content sub sections are expected in the top 5% range to indicate a need to proceed with the remainder of the assessment battery.

A) If the expected scores are reached, the student’s parents will complete the Parent Inventory and return to the Director of the Gifted/Talented Program.

1) The classroom teacher of the student will complete the following and return to the Director of the Gifted/Talented Program.

III) Additional tests/information will be completed to assess student level/indicators in the following areas:

A) Aptitude
B) Problem-solving ability
   1) Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students
C) Teacher sections of the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)
D) Developmental factors
E) Interpersonal factors
F) Motivation
G) Attitude and support
H) School/academic factors; Chronological Age Consideration form

IV) All assessment data, parent and teacher input will be compiled by the Director of the Gifted/Talented Program on the Student Assessment Data Sheet and/or on the IAS.

V) The Director of the Gifted/Talented Program will present the data results to the acceleration committee: school principal, classroom teacher and other school personnel, as appropriate. A decision on whether to recommend acceleration will result from this meeting. The decision relative to acceleration is one made by education professionals. If acceleration is recommended, the Director of the Gifted/Talented Program will prepare the Special Services Recommendation form and the Education Plan for Acceleration using the IAS and/or the assessment data collected.

VI) After the acceleration committee’s decision, a conference will be held to present the data results to the parents. In addition to the parents, persons in attendance at that conference may include the following:

A) Director of the Gifted/Talented Program (required)
B) Principal or assistant principal (required)
C) Receiving classroom teacher (recommended)
D) Assistant superintendent
E) Current classroom teacher
F) Counselor
G) Other school personnel as pertinent

VII) At the parent acceleration conference, if parents agree to the acceleration recommendation, their signed permission is obtained on the Education Plan for Acceleration and the Special Services Recommendation form. The classroom placement for an accelerated student will be made by the principal. If no space is available at the school site, the assistant superintendent will decide the transfer school, should the parents agree to a school site change. If they do not agree, then the student will remain at his/her home school to await a vacancy in the recommended grade or remain in the current grade.

VIII) If the parents concur with the recommended acceleration, parent and conference attendees’ signatures will be obtained on the Education Plan for Acceleration and the Special Services Recommendation forms.

IX) The student’s acceleration file with all data will be kept in the Gifted/Talented office acceleration file. A Notice of I.E.P. for Acceleration form will be placed in the student’s cumulative record file.

X) The student’s acceleration transition will be monitored by the Director of the Gifted/Talented Program.
Legal References

A.C.A. §6-15-402
A.C.A. §6-15-404
State Board of Education: Standards of Accreditation 12/04.3
Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Public School End-of-Course Assessments and Remediation 4.0 and 5.0

Revised: 7-21-87
Revised: 6-22-06
Revised 5-26-11
Revised 6-28-12