

# Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual

**Title:** ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTION

**Section:** 605.2

**Board Report:** 07-0926-PO1

**Date Adopted:** September 26, 2007

## Policy:

### THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RECOMMENDS:

That the Board amend Board Report 06-1025-PO2 Elementary School Promotion Policy.

### PURPOSE:

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 Board demonstrates its commitment to several key objectives: (1) promoting high educational standards for its students; (2) ensuring that there is consistency in the educational opportunities provided to all students; (3) implementing 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.

### POLICY TEXT:

#### I. Definitions

Unexcused absences: Shall be as defined in the Board's Absenteeism and Truancy Policy, Board Report 06-0222-PO2, as amended.

District-wide assessment (DWA): The district-wide assessment will be either the norm-referenced component of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) (using the highest score from the last two annual assessments) or other norm-referenced assessment administered by the district or the summer assessment.

District-wide writing assessment (DWVA): The district-wide writing assessment is administered by the district to eighth grade students who are also required to take the ISAT. The DWVA will evaluate a student's written communication skills and proficiency using centrally-developed writing prompts which represent one of the two ISAT eighth grade writing types (persuasive or narrative). The DWVA will be aligned to the Illinois Writing Framework and will assess a student's mastery of Illinois State Goal 3.

Satisfactory completion of the Office of Language and Cultural Education (OLCE) summer program: Shall mean a student who: (1) has a OLCE summer program attendance record of no more than three (3) unexcused absences; and (2) has received a passing grade on the OLCE summer program report card.

Satisfactory completion of summer school: Shall mean a student, who: (1) has a summer school attendance record of no more than three (3) unexcused absences; and (2) has received a passing grade on the summer report card in both reading and mathematics.

Satisfactory completion of the summer writing workshops: Shall mean a student who: (1) has a workshop attendance record of no more than three (3) unexcused absences; and (2) has received a passing grade for the summer writing workshops.

Benchmark Grades: Grades third, sixth and eighth are considered benchmark grades.

Personal learning plan: A plan developed by the school for a retained student that may include, as appropriate, in-school, after-school, year-round components and other interventions developed with the principal, counselor, teacher and parent(s) that target the student's assessed learning deficiencies.

## **II. Elementary School Promotion Standards For Students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades**

Students in the benchmark grades will be promoted to the next grade if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate to their grade levels as demonstrated on multiple measurements by their academic performance, attendance, DWA scores and DWWA scores as described below.

### **A. Achievement Level 1 (Within Range)**

Students in the benchmark grades have Achievement Level 1 status when their DWA reading and mathematics scores are both at or above the 24<sup>th</sup> National Percentile Ranking.

Students in the benchmark grades with Achievement Level 1 DWA scores will be reviewed to see if they also meet the following criteria:

#### Academic Performance

1. Final report card grade in reading "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year.
2. Final report card grade in mathematics "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in mathematics and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year.

#### Attendance

3. No more than nine (9) unexcused absences.

#### Writing (applicable to eighth grade students only, effective with the 2008-2009 school year)

4. Final report card grade in writing "C" or better for the academic year or passing score on the DWWA

Those students who meet all Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above shall automatically be promoted to the next grade level.

Those students who fail to meet all Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.

In addition, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, eighth grade students who fail to satisfy the Writing criteria must also satisfactorily complete the summer writing workshops in order to be promoted to the next grade.

### **B. Achievement Level 2 (Below Range)**

Students in the benchmark grades have Achievement Level 2 status: (a) when their DWA reading and mathematics scores are both below the 24<sup>th</sup> National Percentile Ranking, or (b) when one of their DWA scores (either reading or mathematics) is below the 24<sup>th</sup> National Percentile Ranking, or (c) when they have no DWA scores in either reading or mathematics, except for those students who are not required to take the ISAT.

Students in the benchmark grades with Achievement Level 2 DWA scores will be reviewed to see if they also meet the following criteria:

#### Academic Performance

1. Final report card grade in reading "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year.
2. Final report card grade in mathematics "C" or better for the academic year. A report card grade of "C" shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in mathematics and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year.

### Attendance

3. No more than nine (9) unexcused absences.

### Writing (applicable only to eighth grade students, effective with the 2008-2009 school year)

4. Final report card grade in writing "C" or better for the academic year or passing score on the DWWA.

All students in the benchmark grades with Achievement Level 2 DWA scores will be required to attend summer school. The following additional requirements for promotion apply based on whether the student satisfied the Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above:

- a. Those students who meet all Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school.
- b. Those students who fail to meet all Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above will be promoted to the next grade only upon (a) satisfactory completion of summer school, and (b) scoring at or above the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile on the mandatory end of summer school assessment in the subject(s) where the students' DWA score is below the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile.

In addition, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, eighth grade students who fail to satisfy the Writing criteria must also satisfactorily complete the summer writing workshops in order to be promoted to the next grade.

### **C. Review of Promotion Status**

1. Automatic Review of Academic Performance, Attendance, and Writing

The performance of all benchmark grade students shall be *automatically* reviewed through a centralized process. The District shall maintain a centralized process that is applied consistently throughout the District for determining whether any benchmark grade student should be promoted. Immediately after the District receives the DWA test results, appropriate District officials shall identify the Achievement Level status of all benchmark grade students. If a student's DWA results are incomplete or inaccessible through no fault of the student, the Office of Elementary Areas and Schools shall make a promotion determination using the best available data consistent with the standards described in this Policy.

2. Parent Notification

During the last week of school following the automatic review process, parent(s)/guardian(s) of all benchmark grade students shall receive notification regarding the promotion of their child(ren). The parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who cannot be promoted in June shall be informed by mail and by notice provided to the student that, in order to be promoted to the next grade in August, their child(ren) must: (1) attend and successfully complete summer school/program and/or the summer writing workshops; (2) have a summer school/program and/or summer writing workshops attendance record of no more than three (3) unexcused absences; (3) receive passing summer school grades in reading and mathematics and/or, as applicable, passing grade in writing or passing grade in the OLCE summer program; and (4) in the case of students who are required to take the summer assessment in one or more subjects, score at or above the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile in the required test(s).

3. Parent Appeal

For students in benchmark grades, at the end of summer school, parents/guardians will receive a promotion determination notice identifying whether their child satisfies all the requirements for promotion. Parents/guardians shall have five calendar days following the receipt of the promotion determination notice to submit in writing to the Chief Education Officer or designee an appeal to review their children's academic performance or attendance records. As part of the appeal the parent/guardian may provide any additional information regarding their child that would justify waiving the requirements set forth in this policy and promoting the students to the next grade. For students in non-benchmark grades, parents/guardians may appeal a promotion determination pursuant to procedures established by the Office of Elementary Areas and Schools.

#### **D. Additional Elementary Promotion Requirements**

All elementary students must pass the United States and State of Illinois Constitution tests in order to graduate and continue on to high school. English Language Learners (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. Achievement academies will offer Constitution tests for students who have not successfully completed this requirement.

#### **E. Promotion of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities (including English Language Learners with a disability) receiving special education and related services under an Individual Education Program (IEP) are expected to meet the same promotion criteria as their non-disabled peers. For standardized testing, students with disabilities must be provided the accommodations/modifications outlined on their IEP. The designated DWA scores and other criteria used to determine promotion as described in this policy shall apply to students with disabilities unless the IEP modifies the promotion criteria in whole or in part. Promotion decisions that are based on standardized test scores can only be made if the student was afforded the accommodations/modifications that are delineated on the student's IEP.

IEPs are reviewed annually. The Office of Specialized Services mandates that during these annual reviews of IEPs that promotion decisions for students with disabilities are made in conformance with their IEPs and that the IEP contain full and complete information concerning the promotion criteria.

Students receiving accommodations/modifications pursuant to a Section 504 plan may not have the promotion criteria described herein modified. For standardized testing, students on a 504 plan must be provided the accommodations/modifications outlined on their 504 plan. Promotion decisions that are based on standardized test scores can only be made if the student was afforded the accommodations/modifications as indicated on the 504 plan.

#### **F. Promotion of English Language Learners (“ELL”)**

Since the ISAT is not administered to most ELL students, the modified promotion requirements noted in this section will apply to ELL students. When the ISAT is administered to ELL students it shall not be considered for purposes of promotion. All ELL students will complete the English as a Second Language (“ESL”) curriculum and their general academic curriculum in their native language and/or English.

ELL students in the benchmark grades may be promoted to the next grade if they possess the knowledge and skills appropriate for their grade level as demonstrated by the following:

1. **Academic Performance:** The student has a final report card grade of “C” or better in reading and mathematics for the academic year. A report card grade of “C” shall, at a minimum, reflect satisfactory unit test scores in reading and mathematics and consistent completion of homework assignments during the year.
2. **Attendance:** The student’s attendance record during the academic year has no more than nine (9) unexcused absences.

ELL students in the benchmark grades in Bilingual Program Year 6 or above who fail to meet the Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of summer school, which will include English as a Second Language supports.

ELL students in the benchmark grades in Bilingual Program Years 0-5 who fail to meet the Academic Performance and Attendance criteria noted above shall be promoted to the next grade only upon satisfactory completion of the OLCE summer program.

In those instances when the DWWA is administered to eighth grade ELL students it shall not be considered for promotion purposes.

The academic performance of ELL students in Bilingual Program Years zero through five will be evaluated in the language of instruction. The academic performance of ELLs in Bilingual Program Years six and beyond will be evaluated in English.

An ELL may not be retained based on their English Language Proficiency level regardless of Bilingual Program Year. The Office of Language and Cultural Education shall identify language support offerings to assist ELL students during the school year and, where possible, during the summer. The parent of an ELL student may appeal a retention determination in accordance with the procedures set out in Section II.C.3 of this policy.

### **G. Incoming Students**

Students who were previously enrolled in private schools or other school districts who enroll in the Chicago Public Schools in any grade may be evaluated for appropriate grade placement. Further, schools shall follow the Office of Specialized Services' bulletin on students with disabilities transferring from other school districts.

## **III. RETENTION**

Students in grades 1-8 can be retained in a grade for a second year **only one time during the following grade cycles: 1-3, 4-6 and 7-8**. Students in the benchmark grades who are required to attend summer school and/or summer writing workshops who do not satisfactorily complete summer school and/or summer writing workshops 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, upon completion of summer school and/or summer writing workshops, be promoted to the next grade, or, for eighth graders and other qualifying students, to an achievement academy, as described below.

Schools may retain students at non-benchmark grades based on the guidelines issued by the Office of Elementary Areas and Schools. A parent or guardian may appeal a school's decision to retain a student at a benchmark or non-benchmark grade in accordance with the appeal procedures set out in Section II.C.3. of this policy. Kindergarten students may not be retained.

### **A. Personal Learning Plan**

The school shall develop a personal learning plan for each retained student that may include, as appropriate, in-school, after-school, year-round components and other interventions developed with the principal, counselor, teacher and parent(s) that target the student's assessed learning deficiencies. Each retained student shall participate in a personal learning plan.

### **B. Achievement Academy Placement**

Students who do not meet the promotion requirements described herein will continue at their elementary school except for those students who qualify for placement at an Achievement Academy or other appropriate placement as determined by the Office of Elementary Areas and Schools. Achievement Academy placements shall be based on a student's age, record of prior grade retention(s) and a determination as to appropriateness of placement. The students described below shall be assigned to an Achievement Academy when the placement is deemed appropriate by the Office of Elementary Areas and Schools:

1. Students who are 15 years old or will be 15 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the following school year; and/or
2. Students who have been previously retained in the 7-8 grade cycle.

The curriculum of the Achievement Academies provides intensive skill development in reading and mathematics in smaller classroom settings as well as other academic development support.

#### **IV. Parental Notifications During the School Year for All Elementary Grades**

**A.** All principals, teachers, students and parents will be notified in writing of the promotion policy of the District by the first report card pick-up day for parents who pick-up the report card, and by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> week for parents who do not pick-up the report card.

**B.** Principals shall notify parents in writing on a quarterly basis if their child is in danger of receiving a failing grade in reading, mathematics or 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing. Such quarterly notices shall be in addition to the regular progress reports issued for students in all grades.

1. Student assistance may be provided at the earliest point the child is identified as being at risk of obtaining a failing grade in either reading, mathematics or 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing.

2. If the student receives a failing grade in reading, mathematics or 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing and the parent or guardian does not attend a report card pick-up conference at the end of the first or third reporting period, notification must be sent to the parent by mail. Notification shall include the likelihood of the student attending summer school or summer writing workshops or being retained for continued lack of academic achievement.

3. Students in the benchmark grades whose parents have not received a failing notice in accordance with this section IV.B due to satisfactory grades may otherwise be eligible for summer school and possible retention based on their DWA scores or other promotion criteria identified in this policy.

**C.** If a student has accumulated five (5) days of unexcused absences, schools shall notify the parent or guardian by regular mail that the student may be retained and may be required to attend summer school due to lack of attendance.

#### **V. Assessment Validation and Maintenance of Data**

ISAT is an assessment developed by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in coordination with its nationally recognized test development partners. The District annually administers the ISAT to Chicago Public Schools students in accordance with State mandates. The District relies on ISBE's evaluation of the test development, revisions, and construct validity of the ISAT 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 the event the District develops its own assessment, the District will, on a periodic basis, perform similar evaluations on such assessment.

The District will maintain all testing data by race and ethnicity 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 ethnicity created by operation of the policy. All such data shall be made available to a parent upon request.

#### **VI. 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 district wide assessment 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.

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**Amends/Rescinds:**

Amends 06-1025-PO2

**Cross References:**

05-1026-PO1; 04-0324-PO3; 02-0424-PO04; 01-0822-PO3; 00-0823-PO3;  
99-0825-PO4; 98-0923-PO2; 97-0827-PO6; 96-0828-PO4; 96-0327-PO1;  
94-0323-PO1; 88-0622-PO4; 85-0925-ED5; 81-114-7; 77-212-12

**Legal References:**