

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS**

### **(Promotion or Retention of Elementary Students; High School Course Pass or Fail)**

#### **Regular Education**

The District's promotion policy is based on the premise that students should possess minimal competencies at each instructional level in order to be promoted. It is generally held that to be successful in school a student must be minimally competent in the basic skills of reading, language, and math. Therefore, the District places emphasis on the basic skills competencies, especially in the primary grades.

In making promotion/retention decisions, consideration should also be given to developmental factors affecting learning and classroom success. Nonpromotion (retention) should not be the first recourse for a student having difficulty meeting the criteria for promotion.

Criteria have been developed to provide each student with a maximum opportunity to succeed in school. Promotion is based on students achieving competency in skills necessary for success at each succeeding level. The District may conduct a ceremony to honor students who have been promoted from the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grade.

Beginning in school year 2013-2014, the promotion of a student from grade three (3) shall be conditioned on the satisfaction of the applicable competency requirements prescribed by A.R.S. 15-701 and depicted in Administrative Regulation IKE-RB.

For a variety of reasons, some students may require more than the allotted time to develop their educational potential. Alternative instructional methods and materials may be required. For one who may be retained, an individual success plan will be developed to focus on the areas of deficiencies while maintaining other skill competencies. At such time as deficient competencies have been mastered, the student's grade-level placement may be reconsidered. Retention should not be a repetition of a grade without modifications in the instructional program. If retention is to occur, it should occur in the earliest possible years and generally no more than once during the elementary school experience. A student who has been retained once and continues to have difficulty meeting standards should be considered for evaluation and remediation.

Parents, students, and school personnel shall be made fully aware of the promotion standards. Arizona Revised Statute 15-521 states that every teacher shall make the decision for promotion or retention of students. A parent or legal guardian who opposes the decision of the teacher(s) may appeal through the prescribed appeal process.

## **Special Education**

Promotion/retention decisions, when applied to students enrolled in special education, shall be on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the individualized education program and in accordance with A.A.C. R7-2-301 and R7-2-401.

Students who do not meet regular promotion requirements must meet the course of study and promotion requirements for special education under the guidance of A.A.C. R7-2-401. The programs for such students may need adaptations.

Any student unable to meet regular academic requirements for promotion must meet the requirements of an alternative curriculum derived from the regular curriculum, which will be developed by a multidisciplinary team on an individual basis. Students placed in special education will complete the course of study as prescribed in their individual education programs. Course work will be presented at a level commensurate with the student's ability. The student's permanent file shall identify the courses completed through special education; however, the student will receive the standard certificate of promotion.

*Adopted:* November 18, 2014

LEGAL REF.: A.R.S. 15-203  
15-341  
15-342  
15-521  
15-701  
15-701.01  
15-715  
A.A.C. R7-2-301 and R7-2-401  
A.G.O. 184 - 016

CROSS REF.: IHA - Basic Instructional Program  
IKF - Graduation Requirements

**PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS****Competency Requirements for Promotion of Students  
from Third Grade for School Year 2012-2013**

The District shall:

- provide for universal screening of pupils in preschool programs, kindergarten programs and grades one (1) through three (3) that is designed to identify students who have reading deficiencies in accordance with A.R.S. 15-704.
- provide an annual written notification to parents or guardians of students in kindergarten programs and first (1st), second (2nd) and third (3rd) grades that a student who obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test, or a successor test, that demonstrates the student is reading far below the third (3rd) grade level or the equivalent as established by the Board will not be promoted from the third (3rd) grade.

If the student is determined to be substantially deficient in reading before the end of grade three (3), the District shall provide to the student's parent/guardian a separate written notification of that deficiency that includes the following information:

- A description of the current reading services provided to the student;
- A description of the available supplemental instructional services and supporting programs that are designed to remediate reading deficiencies;
- Parental/guardian strategies to assist the student to attain reading proficiency; and
- A description of the District policies on midyear promotion to a higher grade.

**Competency Requirements for Promotion of Students from Third Grade**

A third (3<sup>rd</sup>) grade student shall not be promoted if he/she obtains a score on the reading portion of the AIMS test, or a successor test, that demonstrates the student's reading skills fall far below the third (3rd) grade level or the equivalent as established by the Board.

A student may not be retained if data regarding the student's performance on the AIMS test, or a successor test, is not available before the start of the following academic year. A student who is not retained due to the unavailability of test data must receive

intervention and remedial strategies as in the section below if the third grade assessment\_data subsequently demonstrates that the student's reading ability falls far below the third grade level or the equivalent.

### **Good Cause Exceptions**

Upon a finding of a good cause exception to the competency requirements stated above, the Governing Board may promote a student from the third (3rd) grade. The following are good cause exceptions:

- The student has a disability as defined in A.R.S. 15-761, and did not take the AIMS test or a successor test;
- The student has a disability as defined in A.R.S. 15-761, has taken the AIMS test, or a successor test, and has previously been retained in a grade;
- The student is English language learner or a limited English proficient student as defined in A.R.S. 15-751 and has had fewer than two (2) years of English language instruction; and/or
- The student has demonstrated reading proficiency on an alternate assessment approved by the State Board of Education (SBE).

### **Process for Consideration of Good Cause Exception**

A parent/guardian may appeal for a good cause exception to the Governing Board by utilizing form IKE-EE. Whether the Governing Board should hear the appeal will be recommended by a hearing officer pursuant to Regulation IKE-RE. At a minimum, the written request must include documentation showing that promotion of the student is appropriate based on the student's academic record, including:

- Academic progress reports.
- Student's Individualized Education Program (if applicable).
- Letters from the student's teacher(s) and the principal of the school recommending the pupil be promoted from the third (3rd) grade.

An acceptance or rejection of the exemption request will be provided within thirty (30) days after receipt of the parent/guardian's request.

### **Intervention and remedial strategies**

For students who are not promoted from the (3rd) grade, the Governing Board shall offer at least one (1) of the intervention and remedial strategies developed by the State Board of Education (SBE). The student's parent/guardian, the student's teacher(s) and

his/her principal may choose the most appropriate strategy(ies) for that student, which will include:

- A requirement that the student be assigned to a different teacher for reading instruction;
- Summer school reading instruction;
- Intensive reading instruction in the next academic year that occurs before, during, or after the regular school day, or any combination of before, during and after the regular school day; and/or
- Online reading instruction.