A. **PURPOSE**
   The Cleveland County Board of Education (the “Board”) believes that students should progress to the next level of study only after they are proficient in their knowledge and application of the current curriculum level. To the extent reasonably possible, students should be given as much time or as little time as they need to be proficient at a particular level of study. Students will be promoted to the next level of study as described in this policy.

B. **STUDENT PROMOTION STANDARDS**
   The Superintendent shall develop (1) proposed promotion standards and (2) a process to be used in determining a student’s readiness to progress to the next level of study. The standards will be based, in part, upon proficiency in reading. The standards and process must provide multiple criteria for assessing a student’s readiness to progress to the next level of study, such as standardized test scores, formative and diagnostic assessments, grades, a portfolio or anthology of the student’s work, and, when appropriate, accepted standards for assessing developmental growth. The standards and process will incorporate all state law and State Board of Education policy requirements, including those for the assessment and promotion of third grade students as described in G.S. 115C-83.6 et seq. and State Board of Education Policies KNEC-002 and -003.

   Principals shall ensure that the promotion standards are used by teachers and school administrators in assessing each student’s readiness to progress to the next level of study. Principals have the authority to promote or retain students in accordance with state law and based upon the standards approved by the Board and any applicable standards set by the State Board of Education.

   To reduce the number of students who do not meet promotion standards, the Board directs school administrators and teachers to address the needs of students who are not making adequate academic progress as required by policy.

C. **Diploma Standards**
   To receive a North Carolina high school diploma, a student must complete the requirements set forth in policy.

D. **APPEALS OF PROMOTION DECISIONS**
   1. Appeal to the Superintendent
      Within five (5) workdays of receiving the principal’s written decision to promote or retain a student, the student’s parents may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may overturn the principal’s decision only upon a finding that the principal’s decision was arbitrary and capricious (i.e., without a rational basis) or was otherwise an abuse of discretion.

      The Superintendent must render a decision within 10 workdays of receiving the
appeal. The Superintendent may support the principal’s decision, remand it back to the principal for consideration of additional issues, or reverse the decision.

The Superintendent’s findings must be in writing and must be provided to the parents.

2. Appeal to the Board of Education
   The Superintendent’s decision to promote or retain a student may be appealed to the Board in accordance with the procedures set forth in the student and parent grievance policy.

E. READING CAMPS
   The Board will provide reading camp opportunities as required by law at no fee for students who have not yet demonstrated reading proficiency on a third grade level at the end of third grade and for first and second grade students whose demonstrated reading comprehension is below grade level. The Superintendent or designee shall encourage parents of eligible students to enroll their students in a reading camp.

F. PROMOTION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
   To the extent possible, students with disabilities must be held to the same promotion standards as all other students. However, for students who take alternative assessments in lieu of the end-of-grade (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) tests, promotion decisions must be based on criteria recommended by the IEP team.

   All intervention strategies and other opportunities, benefits, and resources that are made available to students without disabilities must be made available to those students with disabilities who are subject to the student promotion standards. Such opportunities must be in addition to the special education services provided to the student.

G. CREDIT BY DEMONSTRATED MASTERY
   Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the Superintendent shall provide opportunities for students in grades 9 through 12 to earn course credit by demonstrating mastery of course material without first completing the regular period of classroom instruction in the course. Students in grades 6 through 8 may earn credit by demonstrated mastery for high school courses offered in middle school. To earn credit by demonstrated mastery, students must demonstrate a deep understanding of the content standards and application of knowledge through a multi-phase assessment, in accordance with standards established by the State Board of Education and any additional standards established by the Superintendent.

H. CREDIT RECOVERY
   Students who fail or receive an incomplete on a high school course may retake parts of the course through credit recovery to earn credit for the course. Credit recovery delivers a subset of the blueprint of the original course in order to specifically address deficiencies in a student’s mastery of the course and target specific components of a course necessary for completion. A pre-assessment of the student’s understanding of the course material will be administered at the beginning of the course and the credit recovery will be tailored to
meet the needs of the individual student. The length of a credit recovery course is dictated by the skills and knowledge the student needs to recover and not a fixed length of seat time.

Any EOC exam associated with the credit recovery course will be administered no later than 30 days upon completion of the credit recovery course. The credit recovery due to any failure will be graded as pass or fail and will not impact the student’s grade point average. The original grade for the course will remain on the student’s transcript.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures addressing the implementation of credit recovery opportunities across the school system.

I. **Repeating a Previously Failed Course for Credit**

As provided in State Board of Education policy CCRE-001, high school students who fail a course for credit may repeat that course. To take advantage of this option, the student must repeat the entire course. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, when a student initially fails a high school course and successfully repeats the course for credit, the new course grade will replace the original failing grade for the course on the student’s transcript and in calculations of the student’s GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility. The Superintendent may develop procedures for students to indicate their intent to repeat a course for credit under this paragraph and may establish any other rules as necessary and consistent with State Board policy.

J. **Acceleration**

Some students may need less time to learn the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to challenge these students by expanding the curriculum, providing opportunities to explore subjects in greater detail or providing different types of educational experiences. To challenge a student sufficiently, the principal may reassign the student to a different class or level of study and/or may identify concurrent enrollment or other curriculum expansion options.

The principal, after consulting with the professional staff and the student’s parents, may determine that skipping a grade level is appropriate.

K. **Reporting Requirements**

1. **Superintendent’s Report to the Board**

At least on an annual basis, the Superintendent shall provide the Board with the following information for each school:

   a. aggregate student performance scores on state-mandated tests and any other standardized tests used by a school or the school system;

   b. the number and percentage of students retained and/or not meeting the standards for their grade level;

   c. the number and percentage of third grade students exempt from mandatory third grade retention by category of exemption as listed in state law; and
d. remedial or additional educational opportunities provided by the school system and the success of these efforts in helping students meet promotion standards.

2. Report to the North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction
Pursuant to statutory requirements and standards established by the Department of Public Instruction, all required information regarding student performance will be provided annually to the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction.

3. Publication on the School System Website
Information about the reading performance of first, second, and third grade students will be posted on the school system website in accordance with state law.

L. RESOURCES
Consistent with the objective of improving student performance, the Board will provide schools with maximum flexibility in the allocation of state funds. School personnel are expected to budget financial resources in a manner that will meet the standards established in this policy. The Board will consider requests to transfer funds from other funding allotment categories to intervention strategies as part of the school improvement plan submitted by school officials. All funds will be used in a fiscally sound manner in accordance with Fiscal Management Standards.

M. NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS
The Superintendent or designee shall provide information regarding promotion standards to all students and parents. In addition, if a kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade student (1) is demonstrating difficulty with reading development or (2) is not reading at grade level, the student’s teacher shall provide the student’s parents timely written notice advising that if the student is not demonstrating reading proficiency by the end of third grade, the student will be retained, unless exempt from mandatory retention for good cause. Parents are encouraged to help their children meet the promotion standards and will have opportunities to discuss the promotion standards and procedures with teachers and the principal. Information provided to parents should be in the parents’ native language when appropriate foreign language resources are readily available.

The teacher of a student who does not meet promotion standards must notify the student’s parents that the student has failed to meet the standards for progression to the next level of study and must provide the parents with information concerning retesting, intervention, review, and appeal opportunities. When a student is to be retained, the principal shall provide the student’s parents written notice of the retention and, if the student will be retained in accordance with G.S. 115C-83.7(a) for failure to demonstrate reading proficiency, (1) written notice of the reason the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption as provided in G.S. 115C-83.7(b) and (2) a description of proposed reading
interventions that will be provided to the student to remediate identified areas of reading deficiency. Teachers shall provide parents of students retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a) at least monthly written reports on student progress toward reading proficiency. The evaluation of a student’s progress will be based upon the student’s classroom work, observations, tests, assessments, and other relevant information.

N. **CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES**

As required by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and Board policy, school administrators have the authority to exercise flexibility in waiving course or program prerequisites or other preconditions for the placement of children of military families in courses or programs offered by the school system.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -45(c), -47, -81.5, -83.2, -83.3, -83.6, -83.7, -83.8, -83.9, -83.10, -83.11, -105.21, -174.11, -288(a), -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, KNEC-002, KNEC-003


Adopted: August 13, 2018

Replaced: Board policy 3600, Student Promotion and Accountability

Revised: April 8, 2019