

## **PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS**

It is the School Committee's intent to provide sequential instructional programming that provides equitable opportunity for students to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to meet the content standards of the system at each grade level. The School Committee recognizes that at every grade level, there are differences among students in their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development, and that individual students may be more proficient in some content areas than in others. Students may also differ in their progress toward achieving the cross-curricular skills identified in the Sanford Graduation Standards.

While most students will advance from one grade to another at the end of the academic year, some students may benefit from retention or acceleration. Decisions concerning promotion, retention, or acceleration of a student should be consistent with the best educational interest of that student and supported by research-based evidence.

**[NOTE: School Committee members should be aware that certification of students as having met the Sanford Graduation Standards at a particular grade level or grade span is a concept that is related to but different from grade placement. Students may meet some standards and not others but still advance to the next grade level based on other considerations.]**

### **A. Criteria**

The following criteria will be used in making decisions concerning promotion, retention and acceleration. Although all listed criteria may be considered in the decision-making process, because of the relationship between a student's achievement of the Sanford Graduation Standards and his/her future success in school, more consideration shall be given to the criterion articulated in number one below than to any other factors.

1. Achievement of the Sanford Graduation Standards as demonstrated through classroom assessments, common assessments, standardized tests, portfolios, performances, exhibitions, projects and other elements of the school unit's local assessment system;
2. Participation and success in remedial programs, tutoring, summer school, and/or other opportunities for success;
3. Potential benefit from repetition of a grade or learning experiences;

4. Potential for success if accelerated;
5. Attendance;
6. Social and emotional maturity;
7. Health;
8. Age in relation to grade placement;
9. Program options;
10. Student attitude; and
11. Parental concerns.

**B. Retention**

Parents should be notified as early as possible in the event that retention is being considered. Parents will be informed of the remediation options available to students such as tutoring, online/Internet-based resources, after-school programs, and summer school. Whenever possible, decisions concerning retention should include results from the Light's Retention Scale and be made through a conference involving parents, the student's teacher, the building principal, and, as appropriate, the guidance counselor, other professional staff, and/or consultants. Advancement to the next grade may be made conditional on successful remediation or demonstrated proficiency within a specified period of time.

**Retention Procedure:**

- 1) A written recommendation for retention is made to the building principal by a classroom teacher, a parent/guardian, the school counselor, or the student. After the written recommendation is received by the building principal, the parents, classroom teacher(s), guidance counselor, and superintendent's office will be notified.
- 2) Upon receiving the recommendation, the building administrator will begin the process by completing a Light's Retention Scale and may collect the following data:

- Teacher and guidance counselor interviews to address:
  - social and emotional readiness
  - lack of evidence of proficiency in grade level or subject area standards
- Student interview
- Classroom observation
- NWEA scores
- Testing data including formative assessments, summative assessments, state assessments, and cognitive assessments
- Attendance

3) If the results of the Light's Retention Scale and additional collected data support retention, a child study team meeting consisting of the student (depending on his/her age), parent(s), teacher(s), guidance, and/or administration will be held to review the data. After reviewing the data, the child study team will decide if retention is recommended.

### **Appeal Process**

The principal shall be responsible for making the final decision regarding retention within ten (10) school days if at all possible. A parent who is dissatisfied with the principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

### **C. Acceleration**

Acceleration occurs when students demonstrates a deep understanding and advanced skills in traditional curriculum offerings. Many researchers consider acceleration to be "appropriate educational planning. It means matching the level and complexity of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student." It is intended to facilitate learning for students by promoting advances in their skills and understanding.

#### **Acceleration Options:**

- Grade-based acceleration
- Early entrance into high school or college
- Early graduation
- Subject-matter acceleration

#### **Acceleration Procedure:**

1) A referral for acceleration is made by a classroom teacher, the Gifted and Talented teacher, a parent/guardian, the school counselor, an administrator, or the student. After the referral is initiated, the parents, classroom teacher, gifted and talented teacher, guidance counselor, building administrator, and superintendent's office will be notified.

2) Upon receiving the referral, the GT teacher will begin the initial screening process by administering the most recent Iowa Scale of Acceleration, and collecting the following data:

- Teacher and guidance counselor interviews to address:
  - social and emotional readiness
  - evidence of proficiency in grade level or subject area standards
- Student interview
- Classroom observation
- NWEA scores (consistently in the 97th percentile and above is highly recommended)
- Testing data including formative assessments, summative assessments, state assessments, and cognitive assessments

3) If the results of the Iowa Acceleration Scale and the additional collected data support acceleration, a child study team consisting of the student (depending on his/her age), parent(s), teacher(s), the GT teacher, guidance, and/or administration will convene to review the data.

4) After reviewing the data and conducting a needs assessment, the child study team will decide if acceleration is recommended and a written recommendation will be provided to the building principal. If a decision is made to accelerate the student, the timing of the acceleration will be considered. A written acceleration plan will be completed by the child study team to assist the child with both the academic and the social/emotional transition. The plan will also address transportation needs, and participation in extracurricular activities, including sports. The Principal will monitor the plan and a copy will be placed in the student's file. At the high school level, class rank, accelerated standing, and credit for courses will be determined in the same manner that it is determined for all students in that grade.

A six week transition period is recommended. The guidance counselor, GT teacher and the teacher will monitor the student to ascertain the effectiveness of the acceleration. At the conclusion of a successful transition period, the student will continue in the accelerated option. If the transition period is deemed unsuccessful, the student will return to the original placement.

5) The student's school records will be updated to reflect the acceleration.

**Appeal Process:**

Parents have the right to appeal a decision made by the acceleration team within ten days. The superintendent will review the data and team recommendations and make the final decision

**D. High School Grade Level Assignment**

For students starting high school prior to the 2014-2015 school year, grade level assignment will be based on the number of credits earned prior to the beginning of the school year.

Beginning with the class of 2021, demonstrated proficiency in the Sanford graduation standards and successful completion of all other requirements specified in the Board's policy IKF (Graduation Requirements), will be required for a high school diploma.

**E. Transfer Students**

For students who transfer into the school system from another state or educational program not required to meet the content standards of the system of Sanford graduation standards, the principal will determine the value of the student's prior educational experience for the purpose of grade placement or the fulfillment of credits.

**Policy Evaluation:**

The Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Students Policy and Procedures will be monitored by the Assistant Superintendent and revised as needed.

Legal Reference: Ch. 127 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Cross Reference: IK – Student Achievement  
IKA – Grading/Academic Assessment  
IKAB – Report Cards/Progress Reports  
IKF – Graduation Requirements  
ILA – Student Assessment/Local Assessment System  
Lights Retention Scale  
Iowa Acceleration Scale

Adopted: May 15, 2017

