

Shelby County Schools

Promotion, Retention, & Acceleration Guidelines *for* Administrators & Teachers



Department of Instruction

May 2011

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Rationale

Promotion, retention, and acceleration guidelines are designed to establish a procedure for providing an appropriate academic intervention and/or enhancement program for each student. It is the professional responsibility of every teacher to recognize and assist struggling students at each academic level. The teaching professional is trained to understand and apply the three tier model for Response to Intervention. The Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration Framework provides an overview of professional responsibilities for classroom teachers, local school and district level administrators. In each case, an in depth examination of student needs should be conducted by all professionals.

Background

The Shelby County Board of Education believes that the primary goal of the education system is to educate and equip all students with the necessary skills to be productive members of society. Students develop physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially at individual rates. It may take more or less than thirteen years to meet the standards to complete their academic programs.

The Board also believes that it is the obligation and responsibility of each educator to empower students to reach their full academic potential.

Elementary Schools



Standards of Promotion/Retention Elementary School

Standards of Promotion/Retention

- I. Report card grades must justify the promotion or retention of the student. If modifications in the grading scale are utilized, the parent should receive written notification and explanation early in the year. It is recommended that they sign an acknowledgement form.
- II. Parents will be kept informed of the students' progress and/or lack of it. Parents will be informed of deficiencies at mid-year; of the consideration of retention by the third reporting period; and of the notice of retention several weeks prior to the end of the school year. Included in this section are three sample letters. The school may reproduce them as needed.
- III. In determining promotion, the following factors will be considered:
 - A. For Kindergarten – 1st Grade:
 1. *Readiness:* A child's readiness for learning will be considered.
 2. *Attendance:* Students are expected to be in attendance daily. More than the maximum days absent stated in the Code of Conduct for the year may result in retention. Any extenuating circumstances will be determined and documented by the principal.
 - B. For 2nd – 5th Grades:
 1. *Subjects to be passed:* Students being considered for promotion must pass three of the five subjects of reading, language, mathematics, science and social studies; at least two of the three must be in the basic skills subjects of reading, language and mathematics.
 2. *Knowledge of basic skills:* Students will show satisfactory progress in the basic skills of reading, language and mathematics. Evidence of such progress will include passing grades on teacher-made tests, unit tests and level test appropriate to the subject and grade.
 3. *Attendance:* Students are expected to be in attendance daily. More than the maximum days absent stated in the Code of Conduct for the year may result in retention. Any extenuating circumstances will be determined and documented by the principal.
- IV. Careful attention will be given to the number of times a student is retained in elementary school. Early intervention is most productive and is, therefore, strongly recommended. A total of two retentions in elementary school should be considered a maximum, and no student will have consecutive retentions within the same grade. The Elementary Coordinator must be consulted before making a recommendation to retain a child a second time in elementary school.

- V. After thorough evaluation by all the educators involved and by the principal, a student in Grades K – 5 not meeting identified performance minimums may be placed in the grade deemed most appropriate.
- VI. The following procedure will be followed when recommending possible retention.

Procedure for the Recommendation to Retain a Student

As soon as the teacher determines a child demonstrates at-risk behaviors, the following process must be followed; **all steps require written documentation.** Timelines may need to be adjusted for exceptions, such as transfers. By the end of the first nine weeks, the at-risk indicators and developmental history should be completed.

- I. The teacher confers with the parent/guardian of the child to inform them about concerns (i.e., academic, emotional, social, behavior, etc.).
 - A. Together, they develop intervention plans for both home and school (*see “Tiered Instruction and Intervention” supplement*).
 - B. The teacher describes the process that follows.
 - 1. The teacher finds several adults at the school who will serve as advocates for the identified child.
 - 2. The teacher completes the At-Risk Indicators Data Sources Checklist and keeps on file.
- II. The teacher informs the guidance counselor about the identified student concerns: The guidance counselor contacts the parent/guardian and completes a developmental history. Results are shared with the teacher(s) and principal.
- III. One month later: The parent and teacher confer and evaluate the child’s progress. If progress is not substantial, go to building intervention team as an intermediate step or PST.
- IV. For those students who went to the intermediate step and are not successful, they should go to PST.
- V. Monitor PST.
 - A. If progress is being made, continue action plans/interventions.
 - B. If progress is not being made, revise interventions and continue to follow the RtI model and return to the PST team. Regularly discuss student concerns during collaborative meetings (*i.e., Professional Learning Communities, Data Meetings, Grade Level Meetings, etc.*)
- VI. In early December, if there is even a remote possibility that a recommendation for retention may be made at the end of the school year:

- A. The teacher schedules a conference with the principal to review student work samples, assessment and test results and to discuss concerns. The principal will also review the teacher's written documentation of parent meetings, interventions, etc.
 - 1. If, during this conference, there is mutual agreement that a Semester Deficiency Report should be sent to the parents/guardians, the principal will provide the report for the teacher.
 - 2. A parent-teacher conference, informing the parent of continuing concerns and the possibility of retention, should be held before the Semester Deficiency Report is sent home. Discuss possible revisions to both home and school action plans.
 - 3. A Semester Deficiency Report is sent home with the semester report card.
 - 4. After parents sign the Semester Deficiency Report, it will be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
 - 5. Continue with intervention or PST plans; revise as needed.

VII. Notice of Possible Retention: Third Nine-Weeks

- A. The teacher informs the guidance counselor that a Light's Retention Scale must be completed about the child. Once the scale is completed, the parent, teacher and guidance counselor meet to review results.
- B. The teacher schedules a conference with the principal to discuss the child's progress or continuing concerns.
- C. As a result of that conference, if there is mutual agreement that the recommendation for retention is still a possibility, the teacher will confer with the parents/guardians to inform them about continuing concerns and to expect the Notice of Possible Retention.
- D. The principal provides the teacher with the Notice of Possible Retention.
- E. A Notice of Possible Retention is sent home with the third nine-week report card.
- F. A copy will be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
- G. Continue with intervention/PST plans; revise as needed.

VIII. Recommendation for Retention:

- A. May 1: The principal attends PST or promotion/retention advisory committee meetings for any students who may be retained.
- B. As a result of that meeting, if there is mutual agreement that the recommendation for retention is still appropriate, the teacher will:
 - 1. Schedule a conference with the parent/guardian to inform them that the recommendation to retain will be made.
 - 2. Prior to the end of school, the principal mails a letter of retention.

IX. If a Child Is Retained in Grades K - 5:

- A. The principal solicits input from key stakeholders about the best placement for the child.

- B. A priority should be made to place retained students with effective teachers. Before the first day of school, the previous PST plan will be reviewed collaboratively by the child’s previous teacher and new teacher for immediate implementation with any needed revisions made. The student will be put on the log at the first meeting.
 - C. The principal will stay in contact with the teachers of retained students, reviewing data as needed. If, after the first 4 weeks of school, the child demonstrates at-risk behaviors, the teacher will refer the child to building intervention team or PST team.
- X. Transitioning retained students and PST students between schools: Through vertical meetings involving representatives from each school, concerns about retained and PST students will be shared. PST plans and/or recommended instructional/behavioral strategies will be communicated.

Special Education Students

Special education students with significant cognitive disabilities will follow retention recommendations as outlined in the Special Education Promotion/Retention Guidelines. Students with disabilities working in the regular education curriculum, with or without inclusion support, who are or will be working toward a general education diploma, will be evaluated for retention through the IEP process. This decision must be finalized in an IEP meeting.

Academic Acceleration at the Elementary School Level

The Shelby County School System recognizes that:

- I. Acceleration options may need to be considered to meet the learning needs of some (advanced) students.
- II. Appropriate use of acceleration opportunities supports compliance with requirements in Alabama Administrative Code 290-8-9-.12.

Acceleration options include, but are not limited to, differentiation, subject acceleration and grade acceleration. The process of considering a student for acceleration options will follow the procedures for referral, evaluation, and implementation outlined in the Alabama SDE “Help Document – for Considering Student Acceleration” (and found in the system’s Gifted Education LEA Plan).

At-Risk Indicators

Student

Name: _____

Data Source Checklist,
K-3

School: _____

Year: _____

Element: ***Student Demographics & Achievement***

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS	INDICATORS
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excessive absences in a grade span (specifically K-3)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excessive absences due to illness</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excessive tardiness/check-in or out</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer/Stability	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Transfer in/out during K-3 from another district</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Transfer in/out after grade 2 from another</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excessive transfer within same district</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Retention	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Retention in Kindergarten</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Retention in Grade 1-3</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Performance	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>DIBELS results</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Running Records</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Common formative assessment results</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other school improvement assessment results</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pattern of referrals to counselor for emotional support</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pattern of disruptive behavior in the classroom environment</i>

Anecdotal Notes:

Shelby County Schools Elementary Promotion/Retention Checklist

**All steps must be documented.*

I.	PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Home-school intervention plans established.</i> ◦ <i>Identify several advocates at the school for each at-risk student.</i> ◦ <i>Complete the At-Risk Indicators Data sources list.</i>
II.	Guidance Counselor completes a developmental history with the parent/guardian before the end of the first nine weeks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Revise home and school intervention plans.</i>
III.	One month follow-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Continue interventions that are working or...</i> ◦ <i>Go to the Building Intervention Team or PST.</i>
IV.	Monitor plans.
V.	Early December: If there is even a remote possibility that a retention recommendation will be made at the end of the year, follow these procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Teacher and principal confer to discuss concerns.</i> ◦ <i>Parent and teacher confer to discuss concerns.</i> ◦ <i>Teacher sends the Semester Deficiency Report home with the semester report card.</i>
VI.	Third Nine Weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>The teacher completes the Light's Retention Scale. The guidance counselor scores it and shares results with the teacher and parent.</i> ◦ <i>Teacher and principal confer to discuss concerns.</i> ◦ <i>Parent and teacher confer to discuss concerns.</i> ◦ <i>Teacher sends the Notice of Possible Retention with the third nine-weeks report card.</i>
VII.	May: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Principal attends PST or Building Intervention Team meetings for any child still considered for retention; the issue of retention is discussed.</i> ◦ <i>If parent is not in attendance at PST or Building Intervention Team, a parent-teacher conference is scheduled.</i> ◦ <i>Last week of May: Principal mails letters recommending retention and files copy in cum folder.</i>
VIII.	If a child is retained in grades K– 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Before the first day of school, instructional intervention plans will be collaboratively developed by the child's previous and current teachers.</i> ◦ <i>Sixth week of school: Principal confers with teachers of retained students and decides if the child should go to PST.</i>

3 Tier Model for Elementary School Response to Intervention

Tier 1: (All Students)

1. Core classroom instruction for all students with an IQ of 55 or higher
2. Assessments including screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring/benchmark, outcomes
3. Differentiated instruction
4. Ongoing analysis of student performance
5. Most students will demonstrate proficiency with effective Tier I instruction.

If there is a lack of adequate mastery then...



Tier 2: (Maximum of 10-15% of students)

1. Supplemental targeted instruction in addition to Tier 1 instruction addressing the specific needs of students based on assessment data
2. Occurs outside of the Tier I block
3. Evaluation of success of interventions (progress monitoring)
(The duration of this additional instruction varies based on assessment and progress monitoring data, and should be provided by the classroom teacher.)

If there is continued concern then...



Tier 3: (Maximum of 2-5% of students)

1. Intensive, targeted intervention for the most at-risk students who have not responded adequately to Tier 2 instruction
(This is a small percentage of students with severe reading or math difficulties.)
2. This intervention is extended over a longer period of time.
3. Evaluation of success of interventions (progress monitoring)
4. Tier 3 intervention does not replace Tier 2 intervention.
5. Tier 3 intervention programs must be prescribed by PST.

Framework Guide for Promotion/Retention/Acceleration

CLASSROOM PROCESS	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES
What should be done by the classroom teacher before a student is recommended for retention and/or acceleration	Accountability for assessing quality teaching and implementing proper intervention strategies before recommending retention/acceleration	Suggestions, statements and/or procedures that should be followed before recommending a student for retention and/or acceleration
Build a historical profile of each student using past and present academic history.	Appoint an advisory committee at the local school level to review at-risk and/or exceptional students' profile in early January.	Review conditions under which students should/should not be retained and/or accelerated.
<p><u>Should be included in student profile:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous years' grades • Scores on standardized assessment tests • Class work scores • Scores on common formative assessments • Intervention strategies attempted and documentation of results • Results of summative assessments • Documentation of parent conferences • BBSST intervention plan and progress monitoring documentation • Have learning problems been determined and appropriate accommodations made • Homework grades are a factor in determining student failure • Attendance record • Discipline referrals • Light's Retention Scale (<i>optional</i>) • Motivation Profile (<i>optional</i>) • Behavior Profile (<i>optional</i>) • Have compared student data with the norm for that age/grade level • Student has been assigned to an at risk team member to follow and assess progress 	<p><u>Things to look for in profile:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan of intervention/acceleration – <i>previous year</i> • Plan of intervention/acceleration – <i>present year</i> • Plan of intervention/acceleration – <i>next year</i> • Review teacher quality and differentiated strategies used to meet the needs of the student • Recommendation for an intensive summer program is in place (either enrichment or remediation) • Grades • Standardized test scores • Adjust 9th grade schedules to provide study skills in a 9 week rotation. • Verify student attendance records • Administrators must collaborate with sending principals to set a listing of at risk students' scoring 2 or less on the ARMT • Identify at risk based on standardized scores • Monitor students at risk • Offer alternative coursework for students • Use diagnostic test and previous data to determine skill level of students • Standards based testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local school advisory board reviews each student recommended for retention/acceleration • A plan noting recommended strategies are in place to meet special needs of students • Student must meet or exceed minimum performance standards set by Shelby County and the State Course of Study • Must demonstrate proficiency levels in reading and math • Consider student historical profile and local school professionals' documentation and recommendation

Subject Area Grade Requirements for Promotion

Subject Areas	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
Reading	S or P	S or P
Language	S or P	S or P
Math	60% or better	60% or better
Science	S or P	60% or better
Social Studies	S or P	60% or better

The score in the box for each subject area reflects what is considered as a passing score. The student must pass 3 of the 5 subjects of Reading, Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies; at least two of the three must be in basic skills of Reading, Language, and Mathematics.

	Subject Areas	4th Grade	5th Grade
Language	Reading	S or P	S or P
	Process Writing	S or P	S or P
	Grammar	60% or better	60% or better
	Word Study	60% or better	60% or better
	Math	60% or better	60% or better
	Science	60% or better	60% or better
	Social Studies	60% or better	60% or better

The score in the box for each subject area reflects what is considered as a passing score. Language includes: Process Writing, Grammar and Word Study. A student would need to pass 2 of these 3 areas to be considered as having passed Language.

The student must pass 3 of the 5 subjects of Reading, Language (Process Writing, Grammar, and Word Study), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies; at least 2 or the 3 must be in basic skills of Reading, Language, and Mathematics.



SEMESTER DEFICIENCY REPORT

Student:

Teacher:

Grade:

Date:

School Name:

It is important to notify you that your child has not been working up to the level required of a student in this grade. You have received the report card grades, classwork, and tests that have been sent home. Notable improvement needs to be made in the remaining weeks in order for this student to be promoted to the next grade.

PLEASE NOTE THE ITEMS CHECKED BELOW:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please call the office to schedule a conference with your child's teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Homework assignments late, poor or incomplete |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Classwork late, poor or incomplete |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic tardiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior hinders work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient class preparation | <input type="checkbox"/> Uncooperative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Ability is greater than performance |

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Parent-Teacher conference
2. Provide supervised homework time free of interruption
3. Provide notebook for student to record assignments daily
4. Other:

Parent Signature: _____
(Please sign and return to the homeroom teacher)

TEACHER:

1. Send home in 2nd report card (end of semester)
2. File copy in permanent record

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

Board Members

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REPORTE SEMESTRAL de DEFICIENCIA

Estudiante _____

Maestro _____

Grado _____ Fecha _____ Escuela _____ Select One
 a _____

Es importante el notificarle que su hijo(a) no ha estado realizando el trabajo de acuerdo al nivel que se requiere de los estudiantes de este grado. Usted ha recibido las calificaciones, trabajo realizado en clase y los exámenes que se han enviado a casa. Para que sea posible promover al estudiante al siguiente grado, deberá realizar un progreso notable durante el resto del ciclo escolar.

FAVOR DE NOTAR LOS PUNTOS MARCADOS A CONTINUACIÓN:

_____ Favor de llamar a la oficina para concertar una junta con el maestro de su hijo	_____ Entrega las tareas tarde, de baja calidad o incompletas
_____ Asistencia deficiente	_____ Entrega el trabajo de clase tarde, de baja calidad o incompleto
_____ Llegadas tarde constantes	_____ Su comportamiento afecta el trabajo en clase
_____ Preparación insuficiente para la clase	_____ No coopera
_____ Preparación insuficiente para los exámenes	_____ Otro _____
_____ Participación limitada en clase	_____
_____ Su habilidad es mayor que su desempeño	_____

RECOMENDACIONES:

1. Junta del padre y maestro
2. Asigne un horario para las tareas supervisado y sin interrupciones
3. Provea un cuaderno para que el alumno anote sus tareas diariamente
4. Otro

Firma del padre: _____
 (Favor de firmar y regresar al maestro)

- TEACHER:**
1. Send home in 2nd report card (end of semester)
 2. File copy in permanent record

Randy Fuller
 Superintendent

Board Members

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- NOTICE OF POSSIBLE RETENTION -

Student:

Teacher:

School Phone: 682-

Grade: *Choose Grade*

Date:

School Name: *Select School*

Your child has not made the necessary progress required of a student at this grade level. You have received report card grades, classwork and test that indicate serious consideration or retention is necessary.

Please feel free to contact the school office for an appointment to discuss this matter.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

TEACHER: *1. Send home in 3rd report card*
2. File copy in permanent record

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

Board Members

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Aviso de Posible Reprobación

Estudiante:	_____	Fecha:	_____
Maestro(a):	_____	Teléfono Escolar:	_____
		682-	_____
Grado:	_____	Nombre de la Escuela:	Select One

Su hijo(a) no ha tenido el progreso esperado de un estudiante al nivel de su grado. Usted ha recibido reportes de calificaciones, asignaturas, y exámenes que indican considerar seriamente la necesidad de reprobalo(a).

Favor comuníquese con la escuela para hacer una cita y analizar esta situación.

- TEACHER:
1. Send home in 3rd report card – Envíe con el 3er. reporte de calificaciones
 2. File copy in permanent record – Archive la copia en el expediente del alumno

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

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Date:

To the Parents/Guardians of _____
Name of Student

We have enjoyed working and learning with your kindergarten child this year. It is such a privilege to watch children learn and grow.

Due to the fact that children develop at different rates, not every child concludes his or her kindergarten experience fully prepared to meet the challenges of first grade. Another year in kindergarten would provide more time with developmental experiences that would strengthen his/her learning foundation and contribute to a more independent, successful first grade experience.

I know that your child's teacher has already discussed the possibility of repeating kindergarten with you. This is a decision that we neither take nor make lightly. You have been included in conferences with your child's teacher. Serious consideration has been given to your child's progress both developmentally and academically.

After careful evaluation, it is our decision that your child should be retained in kindergarten for another year. Please sign this notification letter and return to your child's teacher. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

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Fecha:
(Date)

A los Padres o Tutores Legales de _____
Nombre del Alumno (Name of Student)

Hemos disfrutado trabajar y aprender con su hijo/a de kínder este año. Es un gran privilegio ver a los niños aprender y crecer.

Debido al hecho de que los niños se desarrollan a ritmos diferentes, no todos los niños llegan al final de su experiencia preescolar completamente preparados para afrontar los retos de primer grado. Otro año en kínder daría más tiempo para experiencias de desarrollo que refuercen sus bases de aprendizaje y contribuyan a una experiencia, en el primer grado, más independiente y exitosa.

Es de mi conocimiento que el profesor(a) de su hijo/a ya ha analizado con usted la posibilidad de repetición del año en kínder. Esta decisión no la hemos tomado ni la hicimos a la ligera. Se ha considerado seriamente el progreso de desarrollo y académico de su hijo/a.

Después de una cuidadosa evaluación, es nuestra decisión que su hijo debe de permanecer en kínder por un año más. Por favor firme esta carta de notificación y devuélvala al profesor(a) de su hijo. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, por favor, comuníquese conmigo

Atentamente,

Firma del Padre o Tutor Legal
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

Fecha
(Date)

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

Board Members

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May 12, 2011

Dear _____:

The academic evaluation of all students at our school has been completed for this school year.

You have been notified of the academic difficulty your child has experienced this year. After careful evaluation, it is our decision that _____ should be retained in the current grade for another year.

Sincerely,

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

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Estimados _____,

La evaluación académica de todos los estudiantes de nuestra escuela en este ciclo escolar se ha finalizado.

Les hemos informado de los problemas académicos que su hijo ha experimentado este año. Después de haber considerado los factores detalladamente, hemos decidido que _____ debe cursar el mismo grado nuevamente.

Cordialmente,

Maestro/a

Director/a

Fecha

Escuela

1. Enviar a casa antes de finalizar el ciclo escolar
2. Archivar copia en el archive estudiantil

Randy Fuller
Superintendent

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Middle Schools



Standards of Promotion/Retention Middle School

Promotion and Retention for Middle School Students

In order to be promoted to the next grade, middle school students must earn a final passing grade of 60 or better in the following core subjects: English, Literature, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Students with a grade of 69-60 will be placed into an appropriate intervention at the start of the next school year.

Summer school courses will be completed through the A+ Standards Recovery program.

Shelby County Schools Standards Recovery Program Purpose:

The purpose of the Shelby County Middle School Standards Recovery Program (SCMSRP) is to increase the number of students who are successful academically while addressing ways to provide intervention services to those students who have failing grades. It is designed for students who have been unsuccessful in mastering content or skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion. It allows middle school students, who meet a certain criteria, the opportunity to regain academic credit by focusing on deficiencies rather than having to repeat the entire course. In this way, the Standards Recovery Program provides an alternative to failure, and is a more efficient method of getting students back on track academically.

A+ Anywhere Learning

The A+ AnyWhere Learning system curriculum is aligned with national and state standards allowing educators to meet accountability requirements and personalize a course of study to meet individual student needs. The *A+ AnyWhere Learning* system courseware incorporates a standards-based and self-paced approach to learning and is a scientific research-based learning instructional program. The content addresses reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social sciences and is focused on essential skills using proven teaching methods, human voice, and engaging graphic support. The emphasis is on clear, focused instruction with extensive, frequent feedback containing review and re-teaching when necessary. The presentation is always concise and direct with carefully planned sequences of lessons to assure mastery of content. These design principles are based on scientific research and are the basis for the instructional program.

Stipulation

If a student fails no more than two (2) core subjects, he/she may attend summer school. Upon successful completion of the summer school program, he/she will be promoted to the next grade. If a student does not attend summer school and/or is unsuccessful, the student will repeat the grade.

If a student does not successfully complete promotion requirements for the current grade and the above stipulation, and has followed appropriate committee guidelines (see below), the student will repeat the grade in which he or she is currently placed.

Special Education Students

Special education students with significant cognitive disabilities will follow retention recommendations as outlined in the Special Education Promotion/Retention Guidelines. Students with disabilities working in the regular education curriculum, with or without inclusion support, who are or will be working toward a general education diploma, will be evaluated for retention through the IEP process. This decision must be finalized in an IEP meeting.

English Language Learners

- I. Written documentation justifying failing grades at each grading period, including student work samples, must be presented to the ELL committee for review and maintained in the student's ELL portfolio. The classroom teacher must have a verbal discussion with parents in a conference or by phone, and appropriate documentation must be on file.
- II. Classroom accommodations are determined by the ELL committee. Each teacher will receive a copy of the accommodations that are appropriate for each student. As a student gains English proficiency, the ELL committee will make changes to the accommodations.

Students Retained in Previous Grades Prior to Middle School

If a student has failed one or more grades prior to entering middle school:

- I. A program of intervention will be developed immediately based on academic information acquired from the previous school.
- II. The student will automatically be referred to an Instructional Intervention Team (IIT).
- III. The student will participate in the appropriate interventions (designated by each school).
- IV. Student academic performance will be monitored on a consistent basis.

Note: *If a student fails two or more times at the elementary level, a mandatory student support meeting (IIT), including parent/guardian, elementary and middle school administrators, teachers, and other school officials, must take place prior to the student entering 6th grade, in order to identify a plan of action for the student.*

Students Turning 16 Years of Age During Middle School

If a student will turn 16 years of age anytime during their middle school years, a mandatory student support (IIT) meeting, including parent/guardian, middle and high school administrators, teachers, and other school officials, must take place prior to the school year or at time of enrollment to identify a plan of action for the student.

Academic Acceleration at the Middle School Level

The Shelby County School System recognizes that:

- I. Acceleration options may need to be considered to meet the learning needs of some (advanced) students.
- II. Appropriate use of acceleration opportunities supports compliance with requirements in Alabama Administrative Code 290-8-9-12.

Acceleration options include, but are not limited to, differentiation, subject acceleration, and grade acceleration. The process of considering a student for acceleration options will follow the procedures for referral, evaluation, and implementation outlined in the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) “Help Document – for Considering Student Acceleration” (and found in the system’s Gifted Education LEA Plan).

High Schools



Standards of Promotion/Retention High School 9-12

Grade Level Promotion and Retention for High School Students

The Board of Education shall require pupil promotion and retention in grades 9-12 to be based upon the accrual of Carnegie units (academic credits) during an academic year. Students earn academic credits by mastering standards and receiving a passing grade in core academic and elective courses.

A minimum of 24 course credits are required for graduation (see Graduation Requirements). Therefore, students must earn six academic credits (four from the core areas and at least two additional credits) to progress to the next grade level. Students must also pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam to be eligible for a high school diploma.

Students who do not receive passing grades will be evaluated for participation of Credit Recovery or will be required to repeat the course the following academic year.

Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Students failing all or any portion of the AHSGE will receive tutoring for the competencies not mastered through the High Hopes program. Tutoring may be offered before, during, or after the school day, and on the Saturdays prior to the administering of the ASHGE. Academics First is also a tutoring program offered for any student participating in any extra-curricular activity. Funds for this program are provided through the Student Services Department.

Credit Recovery

The purpose of the Shelby County Credit Recovery Program is to increase the number of students who graduate from high school in four years time and to reduce the number of students who drop out of school. It is designed for students who have been unsuccessful in mastering content or skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion. It allows high school students, who meet certain criteria, the opportunity to regain lost credit by focusing on deficiencies rather than having to repeat the entire course. In this way, the Credit Recovery Program provides an alternative, more efficient method for students to get back on track and resume a successful high school career.

Credit Recovery will be made available to students during the academic year and summer. To qualify for Credit Recovery, students must have a minimum semester average of 40. Availability of teachers and space will dictate the use of these classes at each of our high schools.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Consistent with requirements of the Alabama State Board of Education, the Shelby County Board of Education recognizes and will award the following types of diplomas and certificates based on the requirements as set out herein.

- Advanced Academic Endorsement – Must pass five sections of graduation exam, take Algebra II with trigonometry and two foreign language credits.*
- Advanced Academic Endorsement With Distinction (Students taking four or more AP classes)
- Advanced Academic Endorsement With Honors (Students taking three AP classes)
- Advanced Academic Endorsement With Merit (Students taking two AP classes)
- Standard Alabama High School Diploma – Must pass five sections of the graduation exam and coursework.
- Career Technical Endorsement – Must pass five sections of the graduation exam, coursework, and pass three career tech courses.
- Advanced Career Technical Endorsement – Must pass five sections of the graduation exam and all coursework, including courses in the advanced academic endorsement except for foreign language. Must also pass three career tech courses.
- Credit-Based Endorsement – Must pass three out of five sections of the graduation exam, including reading and math and complete coursework.
- Alabama Occupational Diploma – Students not required to pass graduation exam; only available to students in special education.

**State Superintendent of Education recommends that the Alabama State Board of Education approve FIRST CHOICE (the Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement) for all Alabama students with exit options available to students upon parental/legal guardian request or IEP committee recommendations, effective with the ninth grade class of 2009-2010 (graduating class of 2012-2013) – Approved by State Board of Education on May 8, 2008.*

Students who transfer to a Shelby County high school from another school system must meet the Alabama graduation requirements to receive a diploma from the State of Alabama. Students transferring from another state for their senior year who cannot meet Alabama's graduation requirements because of time restraints may earn a diploma from the school previously attended, if so permitted by that school.

Shelby County Schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is the only accreditation organization recognized by the Alabama State Board of Education. Transfer credits from other schools will be accepted from other regionally accredited associations without further validation. However, the procedures for awarding credit to students coming to a Shelby County high school from a non-accredited school or home school will follow the *Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-*

02(7)(j) 290-3-02(7)(1) Shelby County (Approved 9/25/84), Revised 7/17/97, 9/28/99, 2/19/02, 12/19/02, 2/16/06, 5/20/08 Page 1 of 5.

**This paragraph is an amended portion of the document and is in the process of being recommended for board policy.*

Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement
 Minimum Credits – 24 Carnegie Units

English*	4 Credits	1 English 9 1 English 10 1 English 11 1 English 12
Social Studies*	4 Credits	1 World History 1 U.S. History to 1877 1 U.S. History from 1877 ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics
Mathematics*	4 Credits	1 Algebra I 1 Geometry 1 Algebra II with Trigonometry 1 Math Elective (<i>see math section/options from curriculum guide</i>)
Science*	4 Credits	1 Biology 1 Physical Science 1 Chemistry or Physics 1 Elective (<i>see science section/ options from curriculum guide</i>)
Physical Education**		1 Credit
Foreign Language		2 Credits in the Same Language
Health Education		½ Credit
Fine Arts		½ Credit
Computer Applications***		½ Credit
Electives		3½ Credits
Total Credits		24 Credits
Assessment		Must pass all parts of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Students may earn a career/technical endorsement upon the completion of a sequenced program of courses.

**Course selection must be at general level or above. Neither embedded credit nor applied academic course credit will satisfy the core curriculum requirements for a diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement. Students are encouraged to take the most demanding classes offered.*

***Students must receive one full year of the LIFE Physical Education curriculum. Waivers are offered through one year of JROTC and 2 years of marching band. Students are granted credit when they pass the end of course test for the LIFE Physical Education course administered by a certified physical education teacher.*

****May be waived if computer literacy, keyboarding skills, and introductory applications are verified through testing at the middle or high school. The designated one-half credit would then be added to the electives making a total of six (6) electives.*

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Requirements for High School Diplomas

Enhanced Above State Standards

Students who have demonstrated pursuit of advanced levels of work, enhanced above state standards, will be awarded:

- Alabama High School Diploma/Advanced Academic Endorsement with Distinction*Must take 4 or more AP courses*
- Alabama High School Diploma/Advanced Academic Endorsement with Honors*Must take at least 3 AP courses*
- Alabama High School Diploma/Advanced Academic Endorsement with Merit*Must take at least 2 AP courses*

Standard Alabama High School Diploma
Minimum credits - 24 Carnegie Units

English*	4 Credits	1 English 9 1 English 10 1 English 11 1 English 12
Social Studies*	4 Credits	1 World History 1 U.S. History to 1877 1 U.S. History from 1877 ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics
Mathematics*	4 Credits	1 Algebra I (<i>or equivalent-Algebra A/ Algebra B</i>) 1 Geometry (<i>or equivalent-Geometry A/Geometry B</i>) 2 Additional Math Courses (<i>see math section of curriculum guide</i>)
Science*	4 Credits	1 Biology 1 Physical Science 1 Chemistry or Physics 2 Science Electives (<i>see science section of curriculum guide</i>)
Physical Education**		1 Credit
Fine Arts		½ Credit
Health Education		½ Credit
Computer Applications***		½ Credit
Electives		5½ Credits
Total Credits		24 Credits
Assessment		Must pass all parts of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam

Students may earn a career/technical endorsement upon the completion of a sequenced program of courses.

**Courses listed above are for minimum requirements. Students have the option to pursue higher-level courses.*

***Students must receive one full year of the LIFE Physical Education curriculum. Waivers are offered through one year of JROTC and 2 years of marching band. Students are granted credit when they pass the end of course test for the LIFE Physical Education course administered by a certified physical education teacher.*

****Course may be waived if computer literacy, keyboarding skills, and introductory applications are verified by qualified staff at the middle or high school. The designated one-half credit would then be added to the electives making a total of six (6) electives.*

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Alabama High School Diploma with Credit Based Endorsement
Minimum Credits – 24 Carnegie Units

English*	4 Credits	1 English 9 1 English 10 1 English 11 1 English 12
Social Studies*	4 Credits	1 World History 1 U.S. History to 1877 1 U.S. History from 1877 ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics
Mathematics*	4 Credits	1 Algebra 1 (or equivalent-Algebra A/ Algebra B) 1 Geometry (or equivalent-Geometry A/Geometry B) 2 Additional Math Classes (see math section of curriculum guide)
Science*	4 Credits	1 Biology 1 Physical Science 2 Science Electives (see science section of curriculum guide)
Physical Education**		1 Credit
Fine Arts		½ Credit
Health		½ Credit
Computer Applications***		½ Credit
Career Tech Education		1 Credit – Waived for 2008 School Year
Electives		4½ Credits
Total Credits		24 Credits
Assessment		Must pass reading and math portion of the AHSGE plus one more part.#

**Students must receive one full year of the LIFE Physical Education curriculum. Waivers are offered through one year of JROTC and 2 years of marching band. Students are granted credit when they pass the end of course test for the LIFE Physical Education course administered by a certified physical education teacher.*

***May be part of the two credits for Career/Technical Education. The designated one credit for Cooperative Education will then be added to the electives making a total of four electives. This includes 30 hours of community based work experience or 15 hours of verified employed experience and 270 hours of paid work experience.*

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Alabama Occupational Diploma Minimum Credits - 24 Carnegie Units

English	4 Credits to include the equivalent of:	LS I: English LS II: English LS III: English LS IV: English
Social Studies	4 Credits to include the equivalent of:	LS I: World History LS II: U.S. History to 1877 LS III: U.S. History from 1877 LS IV: Economics (½ Credit) LS V: U.S. Government (½ Credit)
Mathematics	4 Credits to include the equivalent of:	Essential Mathematics I Essential Mathematics II Algebraic Explorations I Algebraic Explorations II
Science	4 Credits to include the equivalent of:	LS I: Physical Science (required) LS II: Biology (required) <u>Two of the following based on IEP recommendations:</u> LS III: Earth and Space Science LS IV: Environmental Science LS: Genetics LS: Human Anatomy and Physiology
Physical Education*		1 Credit
Fine Arts		½ Credit
Health Education		½ Credit
Career/Technical Education		2 Credits
Cooperative Career/Technical Education**		1 Credit
Career/Technical Coordinated Studies		1 Credit
Electives		2 Credits
Total Credits		24 Credits
Assessment		Must take AHSGE (<i>Students who complete all parts of the AOD diploma requirements and pass all parts of the AHSGE with the exception of the sub-test in the area of their disability are eligible for the Standard Diploma</i>)

**Students must receive one full year of the LIFE Physical Education curriculum. Waivers are offered through one year of JROTC and 2 years of marching band. Students are granted credit when they pass the end of course test for the LIFE Physical Education course administered by a certified physical education teacher.*

***May be part of the two credits for Career/Technical Education. The designated one credit for Cooperative Education will then be added to the electives making a total of four electives. This Includes 30 hours of community based work experience or 15 hours of verified employed experience and 270 hours of paid work experience.*

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Shelby County Schools High School Graduation Requirements

Graduation Certificate and Certificate of Attendance

Graduation ceremonies in Shelby County are a privilege and not a right. This privilege will be extended to senior students who meet all of the specifications listed below. Those students not meeting specified guidelines will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.

- I. Each special education student who successfully completes his/her individualized education program will be awarded a Graduation Certificate and allowed to participate in graduation activities.
- II. A regular education student who accumulates the required number of Carnegie Units for graduation, but does not pass all parts of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam or the GED, will be awarded a Certificate of Attendance, and will be allowed to participate in graduation activities.
- III. Only students meeting requirements stipulated above will be allowed to participate in any part of the graduation ceremonies. Students completing the graduation requirements by attending summer school may attend the graduation ceremony the following spring.

Special Education



Promotion/Retention Guidelines for Special Education Students

Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are working toward a certificate rather than a high school diploma may continue enrollment in school until the age of 21 (through the year of their 21st birthday). Because these students may be in the system for up to an additional three years, considerations for retention should be considered. In the lower grades, more opportunities for socialization and friendships are available; however, in the upper grades, skills focusing on school to work transitions are taught. The decision for a student to be retained is an IEP team decision, with the exception of Kindergarten.

Considerations such as size of student, maturity level, and preferences of parents and other members of the team are important. The general recommendation is to retain a student with significant cognitive disabilities for one year in the elementary grades and one year in the intermediate grades (for example, Kindergarten and 4th grade). Then, the student would have one to two additional years for work experiences during high school.

Students with Disabilities being served in the General Education Setting

Students with disabilities working in the regular education curriculum, with or without inclusion support, who are or will be working toward a general education diploma, will be evaluated for retention through the IEP process. The decision for a student to be retained is an IEP team decision. This decision must be finalized in an IEP meeting. The Special Education Program Area Specialist must be notified at the beginning of the process.

- I. The case manager should monitor the students' performance in all classes. If a student is not being successful in a class, the case manager should meet with teachers to review the IEP accommodations/modifications and collect data to determine if the accommodations/modifications are being implemented.
- II. If a student continues to be unsuccessful in a class, an IEP meeting should be held to review the data/services and to determine if the accommodations/modifications are appropriate.

An IEP meeting must be held if a student fails a subject for a semester to determine if the curriculum, goals, benchmarks, and/or services are appropriate.

Acceleration Procedures



ACCELERATION PROCEDURES

General Guidelines: Referral for Subject or Grade Acceleration

- I. Any student enrolled in the district may be referred for consideration for acceleration by a general education teacher, administrator, gifted specialist, guidance counselor, or parent/guardian.
- II. The district will follow the written procedures outlined below for any student referred beginning with Level I, which includes differentiation at the current grade level. If at all possible, a student will be subject accelerated (Level II) for a grading period before grade acceleration (Level III) is considered (in most instances subject acceleration coupled with differentiation will be successful in meeting the academic needs of high-end learners). The committee may proceed directly to Level III if the curriculum and instruction has already been differentiated or the committee simply feels that they have enough documentation to consider grade acceleration.
- III. Principals must ensure that all staff members are aware of the procedures including referral, evaluation, and acceleration options.
- IV. The process of considering acceleration options will take place in a timely and logical fashion. For instance, if subject or grade acceleration is going to be implemented, the best time for the student to make this move is either at the start of school or the beginning of the second semester. Consequently, the process of gathering the necessary information and subsequent committee meetings will be conducted with these dates in mind.
- V. The referral process for subject/grade acceleration will begin at the school site.
- VI. The principal or special education/gifted coordinator will establish a committee to determine the most appropriate learning environment for the student.
- VII. The committee will include a gifted specialist, the current general education teacher, and at least one other individual. Other appropriate possibilities would be the student's parent(s), a counselor, a school and/or central office administrator, a psychometrist, or another teacher in the building who has a proven track record of working with high-ability students. If the school administrator is not on the committee, he/she should be kept informed of the committee's recommendations.

Level I: Differentiation Procedures

- I. The committee will be charged with conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the student's educational needs.
- II. The committee will consider the areas of concern (math, reading, etc.) utilizing pre-existing information such as:
 - A. Achievement test results.
 - B. Grades.
 - C. Work samples/products.
 - D. Aptitude.
- III. Based on an analysis of the data collected, the committee will provide the general education teacher with differentiation options/strategies (both individual and grouping strategies) to modify the curriculum and instruction in the present grade placement.
- IV. If the differentiation strategies are successful in meeting the student's academic needs, the student will remain in his/her present placement. The committee (including a teacher from the next grade level) will reconvene at the end of the year to develop a differentiation plan for the upcoming school year. The principal will consider the differentiation needs and ensure that the student is assigned to an appropriate teacher. This teacher will be knowledgeable of gifted learners, trained in differentiation, and demonstrate a willingness to address the needs of diverse learners. (Appropriate professional development will be provided if needed.)
- V. The committee will waive steps 3 and 4 if the student's curriculum and instruction has already been differentiated or the committee simply feels that they have enough documentation to consider subject acceleration.

Level II: Subject Acceleration Procedures

- I. If the differentiation strategies are implemented (for a reasonable time such as a grading period) and the student's academic needs are still not being met, the committee will reconvene to consider if subject acceleration is appropriate. The possible receiving teacher (in the next grade level) should be added to the committee at this time.
- II. Parent permission will be documented on a referral form if one has not already been completed. After parent permission has been obtained any additional individual assessments (particularly subject specific) will be conducted if needed. If the student has never been referred for gifted services, a gifted referral will also be initiated.
- III. If after considering all collected data and information the committee decides that subject acceleration is appropriate, a consideration of the student's desire for

accelerated placement will be considered and parents will be notified and permission obtained. If the student or his/her parents are not in favor of the decision, the student will not be subject accelerated.

- IV. The committee will reconvene after a grading period to determine if the student's academic needs are being met. If the student's academic needs are being met, the plan will remain in place until the end of the year when the committee will reconvene to develop a plan for the next school year. The principal will consider the differentiation needs and ensure that the student is assigned to an appropriate teacher. This teacher will be knowledgeable of gifted learners, trained in differentiation, and demonstrate a willingness to address the needs of diverse learners. (Appropriate professional development will be provided if needed.)

Level III: Grade Acceleration Procedures

- I. If the committee determines that subject acceleration has not adequately met the student's academic needs and grade acceleration should be considered, the committee will invite a central office staff member (special education coordinator, gifted supervisor, psychometrist, Director of Instruction, etc.) to participate. This individual will ensure that the appropriate steps have been followed.
- II. Students being considered for whole grade acceleration will be evaluated using an acceleration assessment process (such as the Iowa Acceleration Scales) approved by the Alabama State Department of Education. The acceleration process should include a review of:
 - A. All previously collected information listed above (aptitude and achievement test scores, grades, and work samples/products).
 - B. Birth date.
 - C. Physical description.
 - D. Social/emotional maturity.
 - E. Documentation of previous attempts to meet academic needs through differentiated curriculum and instruction and subject acceleration.
 - F. Input from the student, parents, general education teacher and gifted specialist.
- III. The committee will submit a written decision to the principal who will determine how the parent/guardian will be notified (unless the parent/guardian was a member of the committee). If the committee cannot reach a consensus recommendation, a decision will be determined by a majority vote. The ***Acceleration Determination and Approval Form*** will be completed.
- IV. If the committee determines not to grade accelerate the student, the parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to review the information considered. If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the decision to the local Superintendent, it should be in writing and within thirty days of the decision. The Superintendent will review the decision and notify the parent of his/her determination within 30 days of receiving the appeal.

- V. If the committee determines that the student will be grade accelerated, a written plan will be shared with the parent/guardian. This plan will include the decision, strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting, and parent/guardian permission to implement. This plan will become part of the student's permanent record. If the parent or student is not in favor of the committee's recommendation, this will be noted on the ***Acceleration Determination and Approval Form*** and the student will not be grade accelerated.
- VI. The committee will establish an appropriate transition period for the accelerated placement. At any time before or during the transition period, a parent/guardian of the student may request in writing that the student be withdrawn from the accelerated placement without repercussions. If during the transition period, school personnel decide that the accelerated placement is inappropriate, the committee will be reconvened. The parent/guardian will be included, and a consensus will be obtained before changing the placement.
- VII. At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement will become permanent, and the student's records will be revised to reflect the new placement. A committee consisting of at least a gifted specialist, general educator, counselor, and school administrator will continue to meet regularly (at least annually) to review the student's progress and social/emotional adjustment.
- VIII. At an appropriate time, the committee should meet to discuss and plan for any effects a proposed acceleration may have on the student's social-emotional development and academic progression /programming throughout his/her school career. This will include input from the Gifted/Talented Specialist and/or other appropriate representatives from the next level (i.e. Middle School or High School).

General Information

- I. The acceleration procedures outlined in this document have been developed and recommended by the Alabama State Department of Education for use in school systems across the state.
- II. The ***Referral Form for Considering Acceleration*** does not have to be completed unless subject or grade acceleration is being considered. Committees can review pre-existing information to offer differentiation strategies without obtaining parent permission, and general education teachers can implement differentiation strategies without parent permission.
- III. A pre-existing team of school personnel such as the Gifted Referral and Screening Team (GRST) can be used to form the committee as long as a gifted specialist and the current general education teacher are included. If the committee decides that subject/grade acceleration should be considered, a

general education teacher in the grade level above the student's present placement must be included.

- IV. The person requesting the referral should be very specific in providing a reason for the request. Avoid statements that are too general and difficult to support with evidence. (Ex. The student should be moved ahead because he never has homework and is bored in class.)
- V. A suggested list of appropriate individual achievement tests for considering subject and grade acceleration:
 - A. Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Scale
 - B. Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
 - C. Stanford Diagnostic Math Test
- VI. A suggested list of appropriate individual aptitude assessments for considering subject and grade acceleration:
 - A. Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children: Fourth Edition
 - B. Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale: Fifth Edition
 - C. Differential Ability Scales
 - D. Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales
- VII. Iowa Acceleration Scale is published by Gifted Psychology Press, Inc.
- VIII. The *Acceleration Determination and Approval Form* should be completed once the committee has made the determination.
- IX. Example transition strategies:
 - A. Teacher will notify gifted specialist/counselor of any signs of stress.
 - B. A classmate will be assigned to the student to assist in learning new procedures, etc.
 - C. The receiving teacher will conduct individual conferences with the student periodically until she is sure that the student is comfortable with the new environment and procedures.

Differentiation Strategies

Differentiation strategies that the Acceleration/GRST Committee could suggest before recommending subject or grade acceleration are:

- I. Cluster Grouping
- II. Flexible Skills Grouping
- III. Individualized Programs in Math/Reading such as Accelerated Math
- IV. Tiered Centers
- V. Tiered Assignments
- VI. Compacting

- VII. Learning Contracts
- VIII. Literature/Socratic Circles
- IX. Independent Study Projects
- X. Honors/Advanced Classes
- XI. Advanced Placement Classes
- XII. Distance Learning
- XIII. Dual Enrollment Programs

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acceleration Options

- I. **Subject Acceleration** – Students remain in their normal grade placement for part of the school day, but are assigned to a higher grade level classroom for particular subjects. This practice helps provide access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more areas. For instance: A first grade student who is reading well above grade level goes to a second grade class for reading instruction.
- II. **Whole Grade Acceleration** – Students with exceptional abilities are moved ahead of normal grade placement. For instance, a student who has completed first grade is placed in a third grade classroom full time at the beginning of the next school year. In this case he will have skipped second grade.

Grouping Strategies That Facilitate Differentiation and Do Not Require a Special Process

- I. **Clustering-** Cluster grouping is an administrative procedure in which gifted students are assigned together in groups of 5-8 in one general education classroom instead of being distributed across all classrooms. Every classroom at the grade level remains heterogeneously grouped (having a low, middle, and high group) since the next highest ability students are divided between the rest of the classes. Cluster grouping simply reduces the number of levels in a classroom. Many systems actually cluster according to the strengths of the students. For instance, the highest ability math students are clustered together with the strongest math/science teacher while the highest ability language arts students may be clustered together with another teacher. Cluster teachers should be provided training in differentiation for high-end learners. Research suggests that cluster grouping combined with differentiation will:
 - A. Raise standardized test scores for all student groups.
 - B. Appropriately challenge high-end learners.

- C. Reduce the strain on teachers who are trying to meet the needs of a diverse student population.
- II. **Flexible Skills Grouping** – Flexible skills grouping is an administrative procedure in which students are regularly assessed and grouped for instruction according to demonstrated performance of skills. Students are allowed to progress at a rate more appropriate for their ability level. Research suggests that flexible skills grouping results in substantial achievement gains for all readiness groups.

Differentiation Strategies – (Can be implemented without a special process)

- I. **Tiered Centers** – Learning centers or stations, which allow the student to work at their readiness level and produce a product commensurate with their ability.
- II. **Tiered Assignments** – Assignments are given to students based on their ability/readiness levels. All tiers are based on the same standard, but are differentiated according to content, process, or product.
- III. **Compacting** – Students demonstrate mastery over content through a “pre-test” and are compacted out of the normal lessons to pursue topics more in-depth.
- IV. **Learning Contract**- Student enters into an agreement with a teacher to move through required content at his/her own pace (which is at an accelerated rate). Contracts can also be used to guide students through an independent study.
- V. **Literature/Socratic Circles** – Students read and discuss text of their choosing (within parameters set by a teacher). Students are not assigned traditional literature circle roles. Analysis and discussion of the text at a conceptual level are the primary goals.
- VI. **Independent Study Projects** – Students study topics in their interest areas with guidance from a general education teacher or gifted specialist.

Acceleration Options for Middle and High School

- I. **Honors/Advanced Classes** - Academic classes taught at a faster pace, and that focus on developing critical thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills.
- II. **Advanced Placement Classes (AP)** – An academic program of college level courses, which focus on developing critical thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills. Students have the option of taking the College Board AP Exam, which may earn them college credit and/or advanced standing in college based on their scores on the AP Exam.

- III. **Distance Learning** – This strategy involves transmitting instructional classes via interactive video conferencing (IVC) equipment or via an on-line e-course. Distance Learning provides an opportunity for students to enroll in courses not offered on their home campuses.
- IV. **Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit** – Students take college courses while still enrolled in high school. If the school system has an agreement with a local post-secondary school, the students can earn both high school and college credit. Student follows system and college procedures to enroll.
- V. **Dual Enrollment** – Students take college courses while still in high school, but the student earns only college credit and not high school credit. Student follows system and college procedures to enroll.

Framework Guide



Framework Guide for Promotion/Retention/Acceleration

CLASSROOM PROCESS	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES
What should be done by the classroom teacher before a student is recommended for retention and/or acceleration.	Accountability for assessing quality teaching and implementing proper intervention strategies before recommending retention/acceleration.	Suggestions, statements and/or procedures that should be followed before recommending a student for retention and/or acceleration.
Build a historical profile of each student using past and present academic history.	Appoint an advisory committee at the local school level to review at-risk and/or exceptional students' profile in early January.	Review conditions under which students should/should not be retained and/or accelerated.
<p><u>Should be included in student profile:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous years' grades. • Scores on standardized assessment tests. • Class work scores. • Scores on common assessments. • Intervention strategies attempted and documentation of results. • Results of summative assessments. • Documentation of parent conferences. • PST intervention plan and progress monitoring documentation. • Have learning problems been determined and appropriate accommodations made. • Attendance record. • Discipline referrals. • Light's Retention Scale (<i>optional</i>). • Motivation Profile (<i>optional</i>). • Behavior Profile (<i>optional</i>). • Have compared student data with the norm for that age/grade level. • Student has been assigned to an at risk team member to follow and assess progress. 	<p><u>Things to look for in profile:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan of intervention/acceleration—previous year. • Plan of intervention/acceleration—present year. • Plan of intervention/acceleration—next year. • Review teacher quality and differentiated strategies used to meet the needs of the student. • Recommendation for an intensive summer program is in place (either enrichment or remediation). <i>Middle/High</i> • Grades. • Standardized test scores. • Adjust 9th grade schedules to provide study skills in a 9 week rotation. • Verify student attendance records. • Administrators must collaborate with sending principals to set a listing of at risk students' scoring 2 or less on the ARMT. • Identify at risk based on standardized scores. • Monitor students at risk. • Offer alternative coursework for students. • Use diagnostic test and previous data to determine skill level of students. • Standards based testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local school advisory board reviews each student recommended for retention/acceleration. • A plan noting recommended strategies are in place to meet special needs of students. • The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction will appoint a System wide advisory committee to review all students recommended for retention/acceleration in January. • Student must meet or exceed minimum performance standards set by Shelby County and the State Course of Study. • Student has been assigned to an at risk team member to follow and assess progress. • Consider student historical profile and local school professionals' documentation and recommendation.

Resources



Additional Resources That Will Provide Student Information

House, Samm N. (Ed.), (2002). Behavior intervention manual. Columbia, MO: Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc.

Selig, W. George, Arroyo, Alan A., Lloyd-Zannini, Louis P., Jordan, Hope. (2006). Handbook of individualized strategies for building resiliency in at-risk students. Los Angeles, CA: Western Psychological Services.

Selig, W. George, Arroyo, Alan A. (2006). Handbook of individualized strategies for classroom discipline. Los Angeles, CA: Western Psychological Services.

H. Wayne Light. (2006). Light's retention scale. Novato, CA: Academic Therapy Publications.

Western Psychological Services has many resources on their website.

www.wpspublish.com