**SCHOLAR PROGRESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY** *Policy Code:* **3420**

1. **Purpose**

The board believes that scholars 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, scholars should be given as much time or as little time as they need to be proficient at a particular level of study. Scholars will be promoted to the next level of study as described in this policy.

1. **Scholar Promotion Standards**

The executive director shall develop (1) proposed scholar progress standards and (2) a process to be used in determining a scholar’s readiness to progress to the next level of study and shall submit the standards and process to the board for approval. The standards and process must provide multiple criteria for assessing a scholar’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 scholar’s work, and, when appropriate, accepted standards for assessing developmental growth.

The executive director shall ensure that the scholar progress standards are used by teachers and school administrators in assessing each scholar’s readiness to progress to the next level of study. The principal has the authority to promote or retain scholars based upon the standards approved by the board and any applicable standards set by the State Board of Education.

1. **Diploma Standards**

To receive a North Carolina high school diploma, a scholar must complete the requirements set forth in policy 3460, Graduation Requirements as well as the additional requirement found in Graduation Requirements (policy 3460).

1. **Appeals of Promotion Decisions**

1. Appeal to the Executive Director

Within five workdays of receiving the principal’s written decision to promote or retain a student, the student’s parents may appeal the decision to the executive director.  The executive director 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.4

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

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

2. Appeal to the Board of Education

The executive director’s decision to promote or retain a student may be appealed to the board in accordance with the procedures set forth in subsection E.5 of policy 1740/4010, Scholar and Parent Grievance Procedure.

1. **Promotion Standards for Scholars with Disabilities**

To the extent possible, scholars with disabilities must be held to the same promotion standards as all other scholars. However, for scholars 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 scholars without disabilities must be made available to those scholars with disabilities who are subject to the scholar promotion standards. Such opportunities must be in addition to the special education services provided to the scholar.

1. **Credit by Demonstrated Mastery**

The principal shall provide opportunities for scholars to earn course credit by demonstrating mastery of course material without first completing the regular period of classroom instruction in the course. To earn credit by demonstrated mastery, scholars 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 principal.

1. **Credit Recovery**

Scholars who fail 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 scholar’s mastery of the course and target specific components of a course necessary for completion. A pre-assessment of the scholar’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 scholar. The length of a credit recovery course is dictated by the skills and knowledge the scholar 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 will be graded as pass or fail and will not impact the scholar’s grade point average. The original grade for the course will remain on the scholar’s transcript.

The executive director shall develop procedures addressing the implementation of credit recovery opportunities across the school.

1. **Repeating a Course for Credit**
2. Repeating a Previously Failed Course

High school scholars who fail a course for credit may repeat that course. To take advantage of this option, the scholar must repeat the entire course. When a scholar initially fails a course and successfully repeats the course for credit, the new course grade will replace the original failing grade for the course on the scholar’s transcript and in calculations of the scholar’s GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility. The principal may develop procedures for scholars to indicate their intent to repeat a course for credit under this paragraph and may establish any other rules as necessary.

1. Repeating a Course for which Credit was Earned (Grade Replacement)

The board recognizes that scholars may need to repeat a course for which they have earned credit in order to increase their understanding of the course content, to improve skill mastery, or to meet postsecondary goals. Scholars may repeat a course for which they have previously earned credit, subject to the following preconditions and any other reasonable rules established by the principal:

1. the scholar must have earned a letter grade of C or lower in the course on the first attempt;
2. the scholar must make a written request to repeat the course;
3. the principal or designee must approve the request;
4. there must be space available after seats have been assigned to scholars who are taking the course for the first time or repeating a previously failed course;
5. the course to be repeated must be a duplicate of the original class and must be taken during the regular school day at this school or through the North Carolina Virtual Public School;
6. upon completion of the repeated course, the new course grade will replace the scholar’s original grade on the scholar’s transcript and in calculations of the scholar’s GPA, class rank, and honor roll eligibility, regardless of whether the later grade is higher or lower than the scholar’s original mark;
7. credit towards graduation for the same course will be given only once;
8. a course may be repeated only one time; and
9. scholars may repeat a maximum of four previously passed courses during their high school careers.

The executive director shall require notice to scholars and parents of these preconditions and of any other relevant information deemed advisable by the executive director.

1. **Acceleration**

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

1. **Reporting Requirements**
2. Executive Director’s Report to the Board

At least on an annual basis, the principal shall provide the board with the following information:

1. aggregate scholar performance scores on state-mandated tests and any other standardized tests used by a school;
2. the number and percentage of scholars retained and/or not meeting the standards for their grade level; and
3. remedial or additional educational opportunities provided by the school and the success of these efforts in helping scholars meet promotion standards.
4. 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 scholar performance will be provided annually to the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction.

1. **Resources**

Consistent with the objective of improving scholar performance, the board will provide the school 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. All funds will be used in a fiscally sound manner in accordance with policy 8300, Fiscal Management Standards.

1. **Notification to Parents**

The principal or designee shall provide information regarding promotion standards to all scholars and parents. 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 scholar who does not meet promotion standards must notify the scholar’s parents that the scholar 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 scholar is to be retained, the final report shall provide the scholar’s parents written notice of the retention

1. **Children of Military Families**

As required by policy 4155, Assignment to Classes, 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.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-174.11, -238.66; State Board of Education Policy CCRE-001

Cross References: Scholar and Parent Grievance Procedure (policy 1740/4010), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Graduation Requirements (policy 3460), Extracurricular Activities and Scholar Organizations (policy 3620), Children of Military Families (policy 4050), Assignment to Classes (policy 4155), Fiscal Management Standards (policy 8300)

Other Resources: *Guidelines for Testing Scholars Identified as English Learners* (N.C. Department of Public Instruction), available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/accountability/policyoperations/lep/testinglep1314.pdf>; *North Carolina Read to Achieve: A Guide to Implementing House Bill 950/S.L. 2012-143 Section 7A* (N.C. Department of Public Instruction), available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/k-3literacy/resources/guidebook.pdf>

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