

**(1) DEFINITIONS**

(a) Accelerated instruction - challenging instructional activities that are intensely focused on student academic deficiencies in reading and/or mathematics. This accelerated instruction is designed to enable a student who has not achieved grade level, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, to meet grade-level standards in the shortest possible time.

(b) Additional instruction - academic instruction, provided outside of regularly scheduled academic classes, which is designed to bring students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, to grade level performance. It may include more instructional time allocated during the school day, instruction before and after the school day, and/or summer/instruction.

(c) Differentiated instruction - instructional strategies designed to meet individual student learning needs.

(d) Grade level - standard of performance, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, on a Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.

(e) Placement - the assignment of a student to a specific grade level based on the determination that such placement will most likely provide the student with instruction and other services needed to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement.

(f) Placement committee - the committee established by the local school principal or designee to make placement decisions concerning a student who does not meet expectations on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. This committee will be comprised of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher(s) in the content area(s) in which the student did not achieve grade level on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.

(g) Promotion - the assignment of a student to a higher grade level based on the student's achievement of established criteria in the current grade.

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(h) Retention - the re-assignment of a student to the current grade level during the next school year.

(i) Unit- the credit a student earns for successful completion of a course, also referred to as academic credit, unit of credit, or student credit hours.

**(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES K-12**

(a) The Columbia County Board of Education (CCBOE) in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-282 through 20-2-285, bases the placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program on an assessment of the academic achievement of the student and a determination of the educational setting in which the student is most likely to receive instruction and other services needed in order to succeed and progress to the next higher level of academic achievement. CCBOE specifies how the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) administered in all grades 1-8, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-281, will be weighted or otherwise utilized by the school principal or designee in determining:

1. The overall academic achievement of students;
2. An appropriate plan of accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction for students who do not achieve grade level; and
3. Placement (with specific recommendations), promotion, or retention of a student.

(b) Students will be tested in accordance with requirements specified in Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs - Student Assessment.

(c) CCBOE will annually notify parents or guardians of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 that placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program will be based on the academic achievement of the student on CRCT and criteria established by CCBOE.

(d) In order for students in the Columbia County School System (CCSS) to be promoted, the following criteria must be met:

1. Kindergarten:  
Teachers use a variety of sources of information in making placement and instructional decisions about students.

2. **Grade 1:**  
By the end of the 4th quarter, must meet or exceed 5 of the first 6 Reading/Language Arts Standards AND 10 of the 14 Math Standards as identified on the first grade report card.
3. **Grade 2:**  
Must maintain overall passing grades in Language Arts. A letter will be sent to parents of students not meeting grade level standards in Reading on the Georgia CRCT. This letter will be attached to the student's test results and will outline instructional strategies available for the following year and include a copy of the CCBOE criteria for promotion, placement, and retention.
4. **Grade 3:**  
Must pass three of the four core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Science/Health, and Social Studies and meet grade level standards in Reading on the Georgia CRCT.
5. **Grade 4:**  
Must pass three of the four core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Science/Health, and Social Studies. A letter will be sent to parents of students not meeting grade level standards in Reading and/or Math on the Georgia CRCT. This letter will be attached to the student's test results and will outline instructional strategies available for the following year and include a copy of the CCBOE criteria for promotion, placement, and retention.
6. **Grade 5:**  
Must pass three of the four core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Science/Health, and Social Studies, and meet grade level standards in Reading and Math on the CRCT.

7. Grades 6 and 7:

Must pass five of six courses. At least three of the four core courses of Math, Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts, must be passed. Core subject areas in which the content is divided into separate classes will be counted as only one course for promotion/retention purposes. Students failing Math or Language Arts must be provided remediation during the following year. A minimum of three career connections must be passed for one course, and a minimum of six career connections must be passed for two courses. Career connections courses are considered to be nine weeks in length.

A letter will be sent to parents of students not meeting grade level standards in Reading and/or Math on the CRCT. This letter will be attached to the student's test results and will outline instructional strategies available for the following year and include a copy of the CCBOE criteria for promotion, placement, and retention.

8. Grade 8:

Must pass five of six courses. At least three of these courses must be from the core subject areas of Math, Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts. Core subject areas in which the content is divided into separate classes will be counted as only one final course for promotion/retention purposes. Students who fail Language Arts or Math for three consecutive years in grades 6 - 8 must attend summer school after grade 8 and successfully complete the failed course before being promoted to grade 9. A minimum of three career connections must be passed for one course, and a minimum of six career connections must be passed for two courses. Career connections courses are considered to be nine weeks in length. Students must also meet grade level standards in Reading and Math on the CRCT.

9. Grade 9:

Students must earn a minimum of five units to be promoted to grade 10.

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10. Grade 10:  
Students must earn a minimum of 10 units to be promoted to grade 11. This requirement will increase to 11 units for students entering grade 9 during the 2008-2009 school year and beyond.
11. Grade 11:  
Students must earn a minimum of 16 units to be promoted to grade 12. This requirement will increase to 17 units for students entering grade 9 during the 2008-2009 school year and beyond.
12. Grade 12:
  - a) Students must earn a minimum of 22 units. This requirement will increase to 23 units for students entering grade 9 during the 2008-2009 school year and beyond.
  - b) Students must pass all 5 areas of the Georgia High School Graduation Test.
  - c) The units earned must meet the required State and CCBOE coursework necessary for graduation.
  - d) Students with disabilities meeting State and CCBOE graduation requirements will earn a high school diploma. Students with disabilities working toward a Special Education Diploma must master Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives as measured by mastery criteria. Students with disabilities who have reached the 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday or have transitioned to an employment/education/training setting will receive a Special Education Diploma.

**(3) REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADES 3, 5, & 8:**

- (a) A student who performs satisfactorily on the CRCT but who does not meet promotion standards and criteria established by the CCBOE in Procedure IHE may be retained.
- (b) As specified in Section 2 above, when a student does not meet grade-level standards on the CRCT in grade 3, 5, or 8, the principal or designee will notify the parents/guardians by first-class mail.

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- (c) The student will be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction in the applicable subject(s) prior to the retesting opportunity; and
- (d) The student will be retested on appropriate section(s) of the CRCT or an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and the CCBOE.
- (e) When a student does not meet grade-level standards on the CRCT in grades 3, 5, or 8, and also does not meet grade-level standards on a second opportunity to take the assessment, the principal/designee will notify the parent/guardian of the student's retention by first-class mail.
- (f) The parent, guardian, or teacher has the right to appeal the decision to retain the student. If a request is made to appeal the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee will establish a placement committee to consider the appeal as outlined in Procedure IHE.
- (g) A plan for accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction must be developed for each student who does not meet grade-level standards in grades 3, 5, or 8 on the CRCT specified in section a) above, whether the student is retained, placed, or promoted for the subsequent year.
- (h) A student who is absent or otherwise unable to take the CRCT in Reading and/or Mathematics on the first administration or its designated make-up day(s) will take the CRCT in Reading and/or Mathematics on the second administration day(s) or on an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and the CCBOE. Placement or promotion of these students will follow the same procedures as students who do not achieve grade level on the first administration of the assessment.

A student's failure to take the CRCT in grades 3, 5, or 8 in Reading and/or Mathematics on any of the designated testing date(s) or on an alternative assessment instrument that is appropriate for the

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student's grade level as provided for by the State Board of Education and the CCBOE will result in the student being retained. The option of the parent, guardian or teacher(s) to appeal the decision to retain the student will follow the procedure set forth in this policy.

- (i) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee will serve as the placement committee.
- (j) The decision of the placement committee may be appealed to the Superintendent or designee.

**CCBOE ADDITIONAL CRITERIA:**

1. Students who are retained or placed will be provided with an alternative instruction plan with strategies and/or additional services which specifically address the skill deficits that resulted in the retention/placement. These plans, strategies, and services will be documented through the Pyramid of Student Achievement process.
2. The local school principal who is considering the placement of a student who passes the CRCT in grades 5 and 8 but does not meet local promotion requirements, must request consideration of the system placement committee. The local school must provide evidence of instructional and/or behavioral intervention strategies based on the Pyramid of Student Achievement process for students who do not meet promotion requirements. The system placement committee will determine the student's placement for the upcoming school year.
3. The local school principal of an elementary or middle student who fails to meet promotion requirements for a second time at a grade-level set may request consideration for placement to the next grade level through the system placement committee. The local school will provide evidence of instructional and/or behavioral intervention strategies based on the Pyramid of Student Achievement process for students who do not meet promotion requirements. The system placement committee will determine the student's placement for the upcoming school year.
4. The retention of a student who has met promotion standards as determined by the CCSS is rare and strongly discouraged. Parent/guardians who disagree with the school's promotion decision must file a written appeal

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with the local school principal. The appeal will be forwarded by the principal to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning.

5. If there is an exception to the above stated criteria, then written justification must be presented to the system placement committee. The justification will be based on professional consultation and input.
6. The retention of students for athletic purposes will be prohibited in the CCSS. Schools desiring to retain a student in grades 6, 7, or 8, even though promotion criteria were met, must do so in accordance with the system's promotion policy. In addition, the request must be accompanied by the opinions of two professional sources from outside the school, supportive of the reasons for retention. Final approval will be made by a committee composed of: (a) two teachers who have taught the child excluding athletic coaches, (b) the principal, and (c) the Superintendent.

PROCEDURE: Yes

CROSS-REFERENCED: CCBOE IHF (6)

ADOPTED: 9/11/90

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Columbia County Board of Education