

Standards of Learning Tests and Graduation Requirements:
Promotion/Retention Guidelines for Grades 6-12

Westmoreland County Public Schools shall attempt to provide each student with a grade /subject level placement which ensures the best possible opportunity for educational growth. In order to achieve such optimal placements, the decision-making principles and guidelines shall apply to the following placement options:

- Promotion
- Promotion with intervention
- Acceleration
- Retention

Grades 6-8

1. Placement decisions should be based on a body of evidence in which the student demonstrates his/her academic achievement and proficiency. The practice of “social promotion” without regard to standards of student achievement is not a sound basis for a decision regarding student placement.
2. A decision regarding student promotion, acceleration, or retention should be made based primarily on the long-range welfare of the student. Such decisions represent more than a simple placement decision and must take into consideration all of the circumstances surrounding the student in the school setting.
3. Individualized plans containing promotion standards, intervention strategies and grade level placement WILL be required for the following students:
 - Students who, based on a body of evidence, are not proficient or above in any core content area at the end of grade six through eight.
 - Students identified as needing extra support as they transition from middle school to high school. These students would enter 6th grade and 9th grade with an individualized program of study designed to maximize their benefit from courses offered at the middle and high school.
 - Students identified in English as a Second Language (ELL). **
 - Students with disabilities who are eligible for special education or related services pursuant to an Individual Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan.***

**ELL language plan documents may serve as the individualized plan for identified ELL students.

***IEP and 504 documents may serve as the individualized plan unless a student’s needs are outside of their identified special education needs or identified disability.

Grades 6-12

1. Swift, strong and preventative intervention steps should begin as early in a student's career as possible. Intervention programs for students will be developed with the following guidelines in mind:
 - Interventions other than summer school and after school programs will primarily be left to data driven decisions at the school level. Cluster and/or district-wide interventions may be developed as needed, but also should be based on current disaggregated student achievement data.
 - Interventions for individual students will be based on student needs as identified by a body of evidence and teacher judgment. (see below)
 - Interventions will be based on a core curriculum of high standards combined with opportunities for students to recover from failure. **Retention should be a last resort.**
 - Interventions will be primarily school-based and shall include but not be limited to smaller organizational structures (i.e. small groups or smaller academies within a school).
 - Interventions will disrupt a student's regular academic program as little as possible.
 - Intervention programs will include supports for teachers such as relevant data driven professional development.
 - Intervention programs will include personalized attention from adults.

2. If strong home/school cooperation and commitment are to be developed and maintained, it is necessary that continuous communication with parents/guardians regarding student progress and placement must take place throughout the school year. Methods of communication may include, but not be limited to:
 - Teacher /counselor conferences
 - Report cards/mid-terms
 - Telephone calls
 - Progress reports
 - Mailing of assessment data
 - Report card
 - E-mail/web pages
 - Home visits

3. Minimum Body of Evidence for grades 6 – 12 may include:

- VA Assessment Program
- Individual reading inventories
- District classroom assessments
- Anecdotal classroom evidence
- Report cards
- Attendance

Promotion Guidelines: Grades 6 – 8

- ‰ Students must demonstrate a proficient level of knowledge and skills in three of the four core academic areas. Two of the three must be English and math.
- ‰ Students must score at least a 400 on the English, mathematics, history and science (8th grade only) SOL tests or be successfully remediated during the summer or after school.

Promotion Guidelines: Grades 9 - 12

- ‰ Students are placed in grades based on the number of credits they have earned. If a student does not earn enough credits to advance to the next grade he/she must repeat only the classes necessary for graduation.
- ‰ The following is the number of required units to advance toward graduation
 - Grade 10 – 05 Credits
 - Grade 11 – 10 Credits and two verified credits
 - Grade 12 – 15 Credits and four verified credits
 - Students must pass English Course at each grade level to advance to the next grade level. (Grade level could be adjusted depending upon course load and summer school).
- ‰ Graduation Diplomas are based on credits earned. Please see policy IKF-R which outlines the different types of high school diplomas.

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