

## PROMOTION POLICY

*This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.*

Boston Public Schools students are the leaders, scholars, entrepreneurs, advocates, and innovators of tomorrow. BPS will ensure that 100% of those students are ready for college, career, and life. We will ensure that every graduate:

- is a proficient reader, communicator, problem-solver, and critical thinker;
- demonstrates the habits of mind and work required for success in school and the world of work;
- knows how to acquire knowledge, connect it to familiar concepts and prior knowledge, and apply it, using sophisticated technologies;
- has mastered key skills and understands important concepts from English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, History and Social Science, at least one World Language, the Arts, Health, and Physical Education;
- has applied these concepts in real-life contexts; and
- has made a valued contribution to the school and community.

These expectations frame the teaching, learning, and assessment process. They are critical to lifelong learning and essential to gaining students' commitment to the learning process.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Every teacher, administrator, parent, and adult involved in the lives of our students share in the responsibility to ensure that all students meet these expectations.

### **The Boston Public Schools:**

Schools, and the adults who work in them, are accountable for ensuring every student learns in an environment that is safe, welcoming, and sustaining; receives quality instruction that is responsive to their strengths and needs; and receives timely information about their progress.

### **Families and Students:**

Families are responsible for ensuring their children come to school each day, on time, ready to learn. Every student is also responsible for coming to school and class prepared and on time, working hard, and contributing to the school environment in a positive, responsible manner.

## **THE BPS PROMOTION POLICY**

This promotion policy has been developed in alignment with the BPS Opportunity and Achievement Gap Policy which states in its preamble: "Every child, in every classroom, in every school of the Boston Public School system has the same opportunity to achieve the greatness within them as anybody else. Every child has the same unfettered access to every conceivable tool to unlock the greatness within them." The BPS Promotion Policy outlines the expectations for school teams that ensure that students have access to every conceivable tool that will support them to meet grade-level learning expectations before considering the possibility of retention.

BPS school teams and individual educators must provide all students with access to high-quality, differentiated, and relevant tier 1 instruction that is aligned with grade-level standards and implemented through high-quality materials. School teams and individual educators must monitor student progress towards grade-level expectations through formal and informal data collection and make ongoing adjustments to instruction to respond to evidence of student learning. School teams and individual educators must ensure that all students have access to tiered supports that provide appropriate scaffolds and instruction so that students are able to develop grade-level knowledge and skills.

In cases where it is determined that a student may not, with all available supports provided, develop the necessary grade-level knowledge and skills by the end of the school year, a school team, including the student, family, teachers, and the school

leader, will collectively make decisions regarding student promotion. If the team is unable to come to a decision or any member would like to dispute a decision, the Chief of Teaching and Learning may be brought in to support the decision-making process. Principals and heads of school have the final authority for all promotion decisions. School teams must make decisions based on the following principles:

- ensure promotions are earned and based on academic achievement
- diminish grade retentions to the greatest extent possible
- ensure students will enter classrooms with the skill and knowledge necessary to do grade-level work or have the necessary supports to accelerate learning
- ensure students are prepared to demonstrate proficiency on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessments
- establish a process that supports students and demands hard work from them
- recognize that students learn at different rates and call for organizational structures that respond to students' differences
- define those inputs and outcomes for which teachers, administrators, parents, and students are accountable.

## **PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL GRADES**

Students must fulfill several requirements to be promoted to the next grade. All students must earn passing grades in core academic courses and maintain good attendance. Schools may establish promotion requirements that exceed those listed. The School Site Council must approve these additional requirements. High school students must pass courses that align to the BPS Graduation Policy ([CAO-07](#)) in order to earn the credits necessary to graduate.

## **ENGLISH LEARNERS**

Students in programs for English learners must meet promotion and graduation requirements. However, EL students may not be retained in grade if the only reason for not passing the required tests is a lack of language knowledge.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities are expected to meet promotion and graduation requirements. A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan will describe the conditions under which the student will take standardized tests for each subject scheduled for assessment or if the student requires an alternate assessment. Alternate assessments are intended for a minimal number of students with significant disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations.

A student's 504 plan will describe what, if any, testing accommodation will be needed.

## **REQUIRED PROCESS**

Principals and heads of school are responsible for effectively implementing the following process:

1. Parents must be notified by the end of September of the name and phone number of the school staff member (in addition to their child's teachers) they should call about concerns related to their child's academic progress. Parents should also be informed that if they ever have a concern about their child's academic progress, they should notify the appropriate teacher and principal/head of school (or the designated administrative liaison to parents).
2. If by mid-October, a teacher considers a student at-risk of not meeting the subject or grade-level standards, the teacher will notify the parent immediately, in writing, and refer the student to the appropriate administrator, guidance counselor, or student support services personnel.
3. When a student has been identified as at-risk of not meeting subject or grade-level standards, the principal/head of school, teacher(s), and other designated staff will work with parents and the student to resolve any problems. They may consider a variety of options, including:

- tiered academic or social emotional supports
- examining and altering current instructional strategies or materials
- tutoring (during or after school)
- a change in schedule
- a change in teacher
- referral to other support, social service, or health-related services
- problem-solving with other students or individuals who may have an impact on the students' achievement.

4. If by the close of the first marking term, the problem persists and the student remains at-risk for retention, additional options will be considered, including:

- referral to the school's Student Success Team (SST)
- referral to safety net or alternative programs for more intensive services
- access to additional instructional time (during the day, extended day, or summer school)
- referral to special education, where necessary and appropriate, to determine evidence of a disability (pre-referral documentation must provide evidence that other interventions have been attempted).

Parents will be engaged in consideration of additional intervention strategies and will be informed, in writing, of any decisions that result. Parents may request a referral for special education services in any case. The final determination of appropriate services will rest with the appropriate (IEP or Section 504) team.

5. Only when all other interventions have been unsuccessful and the student has not made sufficient academic progress during the course of a school year will the student be considered for retention. All potential retentions will be reviewed by a Promotion Review Team, including the principal/head of school (or designee), a guidance counselor or student support team member, at least one of the student's teachers, and the child's parent.
6. The review team will include the liaison teacher for any student with an IEP, and a bilingual teacher, counselor, or administrator for any student enrolled in a transitional bilingual program.
7. By the end of January, formal, written notices must be sent to parents of students who remain at risk of being retained. The Promotion Review Team will meet in February and again before the end of the year to review and make decisions on students who are at risk of being retained. Principals and heads of school have the final authority for all promotion decisions.



8. During the period from February through June, schools must maintain written, bimonthly contact with parents who were sent formal, written notices to apprise them of their child's progress. Copies of these notifications must be kept on file.
9. Any student who is retained, or remains at-risk even though they were promoted, will be provided with additional support, including tutoring during the subsequent school year.

## **HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

The success of many students receiving transition support depends on the engagement of their parent(s) in their education. Schools implement a variety of strategies to help parents become successful partners in their children's development. These efforts are coordinated by the school's guidance and other support staff.

## **CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Schools will collaborate with community agencies, community schools, and higher education institutions to support students' overall literacy and math development, increase volunteer involvement in schools, and diminish the many health, social, and emotional problems that undermine success in school. These efforts are supported by the school's guidance and other support staff.

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