

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

The Superintendent and staff of the Jackson Public School District recognize the need to ensure that the behavioral and academic needs of every student are met through an instructional model that is designed to address student learning with classroom instruction and opportunities for intervention.

### **SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL WHICH CONSISTS OF THREE (3) TIERS OF INSTRUCTION:**

The Jackson Public School District adheres to the Mississippi Department of Education’s three tier policy on intervention for students experiencing academic and/or behavioral problems as follows:

Tier I: Quality classroom instruction based on the Mississippi Curriculum Framework

Tier II: Focused supplemental instruction

Tier III: Intensive interventions specifically designed to meet the needs of individual students

Teachers should monitor student progress through multiple assessment strategies, identifying students in need of assistance as soon as they begin to fall behind, and modify instruction to assure that every student gains essential skills. If a student fails to maintain to demonstrate mastery of the state core curriculum (a grade below 60), the student will be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST). If supplemental support strategies in Tier I and Tier II are unsuccessful, students must be referred to the school Teacher Support Team (TST).

### Teacher Support Teams

Each school must have a Teacher Support Team (TST) implemented in accordance with the process developed by the MDE. The chairperson of the TST shall be the school principal as the schools instructional leader or the principal’s designee. The designee may not be an individual whose primary responsibility is special education. The Teacher Support Team (TST) which operates under the jurisdiction of the school principal is the problem-solving unit responsible for interventions developed at Tier III. Interventions must be:

- A. research-based
- B. designed to address the student’s specific deficit areas
- C. implemented as designed by the TST
- D. supported by data regarding effectiveness of interventions

Any student suspected of having a disability or experiencing significant academic and/or behavioral difficulties should be referred to the school’s TST for review. If a student’s parents request an evaluation for their child, that student should be referred to the TST. The TST procedures should be followed whether a teacher or a parent makes the referral. The student’s information will be reviewed by the school TST for the purpose of designing effective interventions and making appropriate recommendations for the student. Written documentation of the request made, the information reviewed, and the decisions/recommendations of the TST must be kept on file at the school.

The Jackson Public School District adheres to the Mississippi Department of Education guidelines regarding certain mandatory referrals to TST. Failure to make adequate progress following Tier I and Tier II, students will be referred to the TST if any of the following events occur:

- A. Students in kindergarten grades 1-3 who have failed one (1) grade;
- B. Students in grades 4-12 who have failed two (2) grades;
- C. Students who failed either preceding two (2) grades and have been suspended or expelled for more than 20 days in the current school year; or
- D. Students scoring at the Minimal level on any part of the Grade 3 or Grade 7 Mississippi statewide accountability system,
- E. A student is promoted from grade 3 to 4 under a good cause exemption of the Literacy Based Promotion Act.

Referrals to the TST must be made within the first twenty (20) days of a school year if the student meets any of the criteria A-E stated above.

### Intensive Reading Instruction

In accordance with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act of 2013, each student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading at any time, as demonstrated through;

- performance on reading screener approved or developed by MDE, or
- through locally determined assessments and teacher observations conducted in Kindergarten and grades 1 through 3, or
- through statewide end-of-year assessments or approved alternate yearly assessments in grade 3 must be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency.

### Progress Monitoring

Teachers should use progress monitoring information to:

- A. determine if students are making adequate progress,
- B. identify students as soon as they begin to fall behind, and
- C. modify instruction early enough to ensure each student gains essential skills.

Monitoring of student is ongoing process that may be measured through informal classroom assessment, benchmark assessment instruments and large-scale assessments. After a referral is made, the TST must develop and begin implementation of an intervention(s) within two weeks. No later than eight weeks after implementation of the intervention(s) the TST must conduct a documented review of the intervention(s) to determine success of the intervention(s). No later than 16 weeks after implementation of the intervention(s) a second review must be conducted to determine whether the intervention(s) is successful. If the intervention is determined to be unsuccessful, then the student will be referred for a comprehensive assessment.

### Required Screening

All students in Kindergarten and grades 1 through 3 shall be administered a state-approved screener within the first 30 days of school and repeated at mid-year and at the end of the school year to identify any deficiencies in reading. In addition to failure to make adequate progress following Tier I and Tier II, students will be referred to the TST of interventions. A dyslexia screener must be administered to all students during the spring of their kindergarten year and the fall of their first grade year. The screening must include the following components:

- Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness;
- Sound symbol recognition;
- Alphabet knowledge;
- Decoding skills;
- Encoding skills; and
- Rapid naming, quickly naming objects, pictures, colors, symbols (letters or digits) aloud.

Each school will complete documentation as required by MDE for all students in Tier II or Tier III. All Tier II and Tier III documentation must accompany the student's cumulative folder upon promotion or transfer to a new school.

## **SECTION II: GRADES K-5**

### **A. Kindergarten**

It is the goal of the kindergarten program to provide all students with the school readiness skills they need to be successful in the first grade. A student may be retained in kindergarten for an additional year if the district deems that placement of the student in the first grade would not be the most appropriate educational placement. Students in kindergarten must master state core objectives in reading, language arts and mathematics.

#### **1. Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals**

The kindergarten program shall reflect an understanding of child development principles. These principles shall be embodied in the curriculum design and general learning environment. The instructional delivery is to be organized around learning centers where opportunities are provided for children to acquire skills and concepts that include problem-solving, decision-making, questioning, evaluating, and discovering.

#### **2. The goals for kindergarten are outlined below:**

- a. Develop a positive self concept
- b. Achieve intellectual growth.
- c. Enlarge student's world of people, experiences, ideas, and things.
- d. Increase competences and skills in reading, writing, listening, thinking, and speaking.
- e. Increase skills involved in physical coordinator.
- f. Increase competence in dealing with emotional feelings and social situations.
- g. Increase competence in self-direction and independence.
- h. Develop natural curiosity

#### **3. Learning Principals**

Effective educational planning for young children takes into account knowledge of human growth and development. The learning principles that guide this planning include the following:

- A. Children learn as total persons (emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually).
- B. Children go through similar stages of development, but at individual rates.
- C. Children learn through their senses (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and smelling).
- D. Children learn through active involvement (exploring, playing manipulating and problem-solving)

E. Children learn through attitudes as well as through content; therefore, attention should be given to methods, emotional climate, environment, and teacher-child interaction. f. Children learn through play; therefore, sensitivity to the value of play is required, for it is through play that children create their own meaning and learning schemes. Play is the work of the child.

B. Grade 1

Students must master the State Core Curriculum and the district objectives in reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies with a grade average of 60 in each subject.

C. Grade 2

Students must master the State Core Curriculum, which will be embedded in the term and semester test, and the district objectives in reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies with a grade average of 60 in each subject.

D. Grade 3

Students must master the State Core Curriculum and the district objectives in reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies with a grade average of 60 in each subject.

**Literacy Based Promotion**

In compliance with the “Literacy Based Promotion Act,” it is the intent of Jackson Public School District to improve the reading skills of kindergarten through third grade students so that every student completing the third grade is able to read at or above grade level. Each kindergarten- third grade student’s progression is determined, in part, using the student’s proficiency reading in the areas of phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension.

**Intensive Reading Instruction and Intervention**

Each student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading at any time, as demonstrated through performance on a reading screener approved or developed by the State Department of Education, statewide end-of -the year exam, or approved alternate assessment in Grade 3, shall be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency. The universal reading screener or locally determined reading assessment may be given in the first 30 days of the school year and repeated at mid- year and at the end of school year to determine student progression in reading in Kindergarten-Third Grade. If it is determined that the student continues to have a reading deficiency, the student shall be provided with continued intensive reading instruction and intervention by the district until the reading deficiency is remedied.

**Parent Notification of Reading Deficiency**

Immediately upon the determination of a reading deficiency, and subsequently with each quarterly progress report until the deficiency is remediated, the parent or legal guardian of a kindergarten-third grade student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading shall be notified in writing by the student’s teacher of the following:

1. That the student has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading;
2. A description of the services that the school district currently is providing to the student;

3. A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency which the school district plans to provide the student;
4. That if the student’s reading deficiency is not remediated before the end of the student’s third grade year, the student will not be promoted to fourth grade unless a good cause exemption specified below is met;
5. Strategies for parents and guardians to use in helping the student to succeed in reading proficiency.

**Social Promotion Prohibited**

In compliance with the “Literacy-Based Promotion Act,” social promotion is prohibited in the Jackson Public School District. A student may not be assigned a grade level based solely on the student’s age or any other factors that constitute social promotion.

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, if a student’s reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of the student’s third grade year, as demonstrated by the student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the state accountability assessment or on an approved alternative standardized assessment for third grade, the student shall not be promoted to fourth grade.

**Good Cause Promotion**

A student who does not meet the academic requirements for promotion to the fourth grade may be promoted by the school district only for good cause. Good cause exemptions for promotion are limited to the following students:

- A. Limited English proficient student who has less than two years of instruction in an English Language Learner program
- B. Student with a disability whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law
- C. Student with a disability who participates in the state annual accountability assessment and who has an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation for two years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading or was previously retained in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade.
- D. Student who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
- E. Student who received intensive intervention in reading for two or more years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and who previously was retained in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade for a total of two years and has not met exceptional education criteria.

**Good Cause Request**

A request for good cause exemptions for a third grade student from the academic requirements established for promotion to fourth grade shall be made consistent with the following:

1. Documentation shall be submitted from the student’s teacher to the school principal which indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student’s record.

The documentation shall consist of the good cause exemption being requested and shall clearly prove that the student is covered by one of the good cause exemptions listed above.

2. The principal shall review and discuss the recommendations with the teacher and parents and decide as to whether or not the student should be promoted based on requirements set forth by law. If the principal determines that the student should be promoted, based on the documentation provided, the principal shall make the recommendation in writing to the school district superintendent, who, in writing, may accept or reject the principal's recommendation.

The parents of any student promoted may choose that the student be retained for one (1) year, even if the principal and district superintendent determine otherwise.

### **Parent Notification of Third Grade Retention**

Written notification shall be provided the parent or legal guardian of any third-grade student who is retained that the student has not met the proficiency level required for promotion and the reasons the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption. The notification shall include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.

This notification shall be provided to the parent or legal guardian in writing, in a format adopted by the Mississippi Board of Education in addition to report cards given by the teacher.

Parents and legal guardians of the third-grade students shall be provided with a "Read at Home" plan outlined in a parental contract, including participation in regular parent-guided home reading.

### **Retained Third Graders**

Third graders who are retained who fail to pass the third-grade summative assessment and do not qualify for a good cause exemption must provide:

- Intensive instructional services
- Progress monitoring
- Ninety minutes of research-based reading instruction in the five components of reading

In the event that a student passes the Mississippi Assessment Program (MAP) in reading or the third grade MKAS, but fails a content-area subject (reading, language arts, math, science and/or social studies), he or she may attend summer school for promotion in that content-area. If a student fails more than one subject, he or she will not be eligible to attend summer school and must repeat the third grade.

### **Interventions for Students with Good Cause Exemptions**

A student who is promoted to fourth grade with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention informed by specialized diagnostic information and delivered through specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student so promoted.

### **Intensive Acceleration Classes**

The Jackson Public School District may provide, where applicable, an intensive acceleration class for certain students' purposes:

- For any student retained in Grade 3 who was previously retained in Kindergarten or Grades 1 through 3;
- To increase a student’s reading level at least two (2) grade levels in one (1) school year;
- Should provide instruction and intervention for the majority of the student contact each day;
- Incorporates opportunities to master the Grade 4 state standards in other core academic areas.

E. Grade 4

Students must master the State Core Curriculum and the district objectives reading, language arts, and mathematics, science/health and social studies with a grade average of 60 in each subject. Students must also have an overall average of 60 in all academic subjects (reading, language arts, mathematics, science/health, and social studies).

F. Grade 5

Students must master the State Core Curriculum and the district objectives reading, language arts, mathematics, science/health and social studies with a grade average of 60 in each subject. Students must also have an overall average of 60 in all academic subjects (reading, language arts, mathematics, science/health, and social studies).

At the elementary level a semester test grade will be computed as a part of the term test average in the same manner that a term test is computed as a part of the term test average.

**SECTION III: MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES 6, 7, AND 8**

To be promoted from grade 6 to grade 7 to grade 8, a student must meet the minimum standards as listed.

Minimum Standards

1. Students shall pass each of the following major courses with a grade of 60 or above:
  - a. Language Arts
  - b. Mathematics
  - c. Science
  - d. Social Studies
2. Students who do not meet minimum skill mastery requirements will:
  - a. Be retained at appropriate grade level when failure occurs, or
  - b. Attend a tuition summer school program and if minimum performance standards are met, promotion will be granted. However, summer school attendance does not assure promotion to the next grade. Only students failing a maximum of two (2) courses, including algebra and pre-algebra, with at least a grade of fifty (50) in each course can be expected to successfully complete the course objectives during the six-weeks summer session to be promoted to the next grade. Students with three (3) or more Fs cannot attend summer school for promotion.
  - c. Any student who fails Algebra I and no more than one (1) other course is required to do the following in order to be promoted to the 9th grade:
    - i. Take and pass, in summer school, the course, other than Algebra I, that was failed; and one of the following:

1. Attend a summer remediation course in Algebra I; - Enroll in Algebra I during the following school year; or
  2. Enroll in and pass Algebra I before completing high school.
4. Grades six through eight will each be tested using a district-wide test at intervals as follows: 1st Nine Weeks, 1st Semester, 3rd Nine Weeks, and 2nd Semester.

**SECTION IV: HIGH SCHOOL – GRADES 9, 10, 11, AND 12**

- A. Promotion in grades nine through 12 shall be based upon each pupil’s accumulation of earned course units (Carnegie units). The Core Curriculum, which includes state and district objectives, requires a final grade of 60 in each subject before Carnegie units will be awarded.

Please see Policy IGB/JBQ for a detailed explanation of JPS’s graduation requirements.

- B. An exceptional education student who is a candidate for a standard high school diploma shall follow the same criteria for mastery and promotion as for other students. Appropriate modifications and accommodations as defined by the IEP will be followed.
- C. An exceptional education student who cannot meet basic skills as set forth in the district curriculum, but does successfully complete the individual educational plans (IEPs), may be moved to the next level. A certificate will be granted upon completion of the program. The decision regarding participation in this program will be made by the student’s individual educational program team, which must contain a school counselor.
- D. An exceptional education student may also partake in an occupational course of study aimed at obtaining an occupational diploma in accordance with the criteria set forth in the district curriculum.
- E. An exceptional education student also has the option of obtaining a general education equivalency certificate (GED).
- F. A student must meet all requirements for graduation by or before age 21 in order to receive a diploma or certificate. Failure to do so will result in termination at which time a student will be allowed to enroll in an alternative program with the focus on the GED preparation.

SOURCE: Jackson Public School District; Mississippi School Boards Association and Mississippi State Department of Education, Jackson, Mississippi

LEGAL REF.: Miss. Code Ann. §37-16-11 Miss. Code Ann. §37-16-15 Miss. Code Ann. § 37-177-1

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