

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of the Deputy Superintendent
Office of the Associate Superintendent

Grade 8 Promotion/Retention Policy for 2008-09

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the current policy for Grade 8 Retention/Promotion?

On May 27, 2008, the Board revised the former policy for Grade 8 Retention/Promotion and adopted a new policy effective with the 2007-08 school year. The revised criteria for promotion/retention at 8th grade is as follows:

- Students, at the end of the school year, who have 2 or more Fs in any of the core subjects (English Language Arts, Mathematics, History, or Science) are *required* to attend summer school for targeted intervention. Students who do not attend summer school will be retained unless they are exempted by CST scores of Basic or above in ELA or Mathematics.
- At the end of summer school, *only* those students with Fs remaining in *both* ELA and mathematics, *and* who score Below Basic or Far Below Basic on the CSTs in English Language Arts and Mathematics will be retained.
- All other students will be promoted to 9th Grade with appropriate interventions and supports.

Note: Only second semester grades count toward the retention recommendation.

2. What is the difference between the revised policy and former policy?

The former promotion/retention policy was based solely on grades. Students with 2 or more Fs remaining in any of the four core subject areas at the end of summer school were recommended for retention. Now, the policy is based on multiple measures. Students are retained *only* if they have Fs in *both* ELA and Mathematics *as well as* 2008 CST scores of Below Basic or Far Below Basic in both ELA and Mathematics.

3. When and how will parents be notified of this change in policy?

A letter explaining the policy change is being mailed to students' homes on or before June 6th.

4. When will schools have access to the Grade 8 Retention/Promotion form?

The form was revised and made available to schools in April 2008.

5. What is Grade 9 Intervention?

Grade 9 Intervention is designed to provide extra supports to students as they earn high school credits and prepare to take the California High School Exit Examination. Interventions may differ by school as they have been developed by each high school to best support their students' individual needs. Common elements of Grade 9 Intervention include a focus on mathematics and English, enriched curriculum, lower class size, and additional counseling time.

6. What if a student has Fs in both ELA and Mathematics at the end of summer school, but scored Basic on the CST in ELA or Mathematics?

The student will not be retained but will be recommended for 9th grade intervention, as appropriate.

7. What if a student has two Fs in ELA and History at the end of the second semester of Grade 8, and either does not attend summer school, or attends summer school and does not make up two F's?

The student will be retained ONLY if the core subjects include ELA and Mathematics AND the student scored Below or Far Below Basic on the CST in both ELA and Mathematics.

8. What if a student has four F's in core subjects at the end of the second semester of Grade 8?

The student will attend summer school. If the student still has Fs in *both* ELA and Mathematics *and* if the student scores Below or Far Below Basic on the CST in *both* ELA and Mathematics, the student will be retained in 8th grade.

9. What is planned to support students who are retained in Grade 8?

The plan calls for retained students to be offered placement in a specialized, centralized, accelerated program for retained 8th graders.

10. If a non-district student is enrolling in a district high school and had two or more F's in ELA and Mathematics at the end of second semester of Grade 8, as well as CST scores of Below Basic or Far Below Basic, what will that student's placement be?

The student should be placed in Grade 9 Intervention, as appropriate.

11. Does the revised policy include Special Education students?

All students are subject to the tenants of the retention policy, but the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team will make the determination for students receiving special education services.

12. Does the revised policy include English learners who have been in the U.S. less than three years?

Grade 8 English learners with less than three years of schooling in the U.S. generally are not retained. They may be recommended for retention if, 1) they are not making adequate yearly progress in acquiring English, and 2) staff and parents meet and jointly decide it is in the best interest of the child.

13. What happens to students who have been retained previously?

According to the new district policy, students can be retained no more than twice in grades K-8.

14. How will summer school be structured (Location/Schedule)?

Summer school will be regionalized by middle schools and consist of instruction in the four content areas (English, mathematics, history and science). Professional development and support for teachers will be provided.

Traditional calendar: Summer school is scheduled for 19 days, from June 23 through July 18, 2008, and is expected to run four hours per day.

Year-round calendar: Summer school is scheduled for 19 days, from July 22 through August 15, 2008, and is expected to run four hours per day.

15. If a parent appeals second semester grades, will his/her child still be required to attend summer school? Can they also appeal summer school grades?

If grades are changed and the student is leaving Grade 8 with zero or one F, s/he will be promoted to Grade 9 without summer school. If grades are upheld, s/he will be required to attend summer school.

Parents also have the right to appeal summer school grades by submitting a Grade Change Request form to the District Summer School Office and following the instructions outlined in Administrative Procedure 4705.

It is important to note that parents who wish to appeal the retention recommendation may do so in accordance with Administrative Procedure 4705.

16. Will students be provided transportation to summer school?

As with other summer school programs, only students who receive transportation during the regular school year will be eligible for transportation during summer school.

17. Which CST scores will be used to make the final promotion/retention decision?

At the end of summer school, a tentative promotion/retention decision will be made based on 2006-2007 CST scores along with grades. The promotion/retention decision will be revised by August 22nd based on 2007-2008 CST scores, if necessary.