

STUDENTS

DRAFT

1: PROGRESS REPORTS

Elementary (K-5)

Grading Policy for all students in Grades Kindergarten through Five

Academic Rubrics

The elementary grading system is based on a standards-based rubric that is closely aligned to the Connecticut State Standards and the NPS curriculum expectations. A standards-based curriculum defines a cumulative body of knowledge and set of competencies that is the basis for each grade level's educational goals; the standards express what all students at each grade level should know and be able to do.

This grading policy reflects the research found in the following sources.

Guskey, T. & Bailey, J., DEVELOPING GRADING AND REPORTING SYSTEMS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, Corwin Press, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA., 2001

Reeves, D., MAKING STANDARDS WORK, A L P Advanced Learning Press, Englewood, CO., 2001

Parents receive an Elementary Progress Report that uses this grading system at the end of each marking period. The marking periods for Kindergarten are March and June; the marking periods for Grades 1-5 are November, March and June. It is recommended that the grading system be reviewed with parents at the Open School meetings at the start of the school year.

Teachers will use the Academic and Effort Rubrics as the means of assessment of progress on the Elementary Progress Report.

The Academic Rubrics reflect the progress of a child at the time of assessment. Each marking period the teacher is required to assess the student through a combination of multiple measures. These include formative and summative assessments, review of student work and other such measures. Academic rubrics at the elementary level are not averaged (summative). Instead the rubrics are formative and reflect the progress at the time the child is assessed.

To be considered as meeting grade level expectations (On Grade Level) at the time of assessment, a child must achieve a rating of 4 in a preponderance of the content skills assessed during a marking period. This rating assesses the child as having demonstrated mastery in the skill measured on a consistent basis (90% of the time in either application or on demand test items). Every child should have the possibility of attaining a rating of

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

4 based on achievement and progress assessed by clearly defined standards and benchmarks.

Similarly a student who achieves a rating of 3 in a preponderance (90%) of the skills assessed is considered to be approaching grade level standards but below full proficiency. In Grades 3-5 if a student achieves a rating of 3 in a preponderance (90%) of skills in reading and is rated as below basic level on the CMT, then the teacher must develop an Individualized Student Plan (ISP); (also see 5123~PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS).

Students in all grades, Kindergarten through Grade Five, who achieve a rating of 2 or 1 in a preponderance (90%) of skills in reading, in addition to being rated as below basic in reading, must have an ISP developed by the teacher.

Each grade level is expected to work as a unit in uniformly implementing grade level standards according to District guidelines and in applying the academic rubrics using the District Academic Rubrics for each academic area.

Teachers are expected to clearly explain and model grade level work for the students. Teachers are also expected to be explicit in explaining to parents the academic progress of each child. This is done through an explanation of the multiple measures of assessments and a review of student work with the parents at scheduled conference times.

It is also expected that the classroom teacher will provide additional information about a child's progress on the Progress Report through written comments.

1. a Kindergarten Academic Rubrics: Kindergarten students will be assessed twice a year (in March and June) for academic progress. The following rubrics are used to determine a child's progress at the time of the assessment (March or June). The Academic rubrics will be applied in both the academic areas and the special areas of music, art and physical education.

- 4 = Demonstrates mastery consistently
(90% or more of the time independently and without teacher assistance)
- 3 = Demonstrates proficiency most of the time
(less than 90% of the time and with limited teacher assistance)
- 2 = Is progressing towards expectations
(requires ongoing teacher assistance)
- 1 = Needs additional time or experience
(requires substantial teacher assistance)
- N = Not assessed at this time
(Skill is not taught and/or assessed during this marking period.)

1. b. Kindergarten students who are substantially deficient in reading at the time of assessment (March or June) will have this need indicated by a check off box on the Progress Report. A Kindergarten student who is substantially deficient in reading will be

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

offered a summer reading program if this determination is made by the Kindergarten teacher and/or in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ This is a requirement under Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-265f and 10-265g.

1. c Grades 1-5 Academic Rubrics: Grades 1-5 students will be assessed three times a year (in November, March and June) for academic progress. The following rubrics are used to determine a child's progress at the time of the assessment (November, March or June). The Academic rubrics will be applied in both the academic areas and the special areas of music, art and physical education.

- 5 = Excels in this area (Grade1 rubric only)
- 5 = Exceeds grade level expectations Grades 2-5 rubric
(demonstrates full proficiency at all times without teacher assistance)
- 4 = Demonstrates mastery consistently
(90% or more of the time independently and without teacher assistance)
- 3 = Demonstrates proficiency most of the time
(less than 90% of the time and with limited teacher assistance)
- 2 = Is progressing towards expectations
(requires ongoing teacher assistance)
- 1 = Needs additional time or experience
(requires substantial teacher assistance)
- N = Not assessed at this time
(Skill is not taught and/or assessed during this marking period.)

1. d. Grades 1-5 students who are substantially deficient in reading and/or math will have these needs indicated by a check off box that states that at this time the child is below expectations for reading and/or for math. A student who is substantially below reading or math expectations must have an Individualized Student Plan (ISP) that specifically addresses the instructional needs of the child ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ This is a requirement under Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-265f and 10-265g.

1. e Grade 1-3 students who are assessed by June on the state examination (CMT) or other assessments, such as the D.R.A., as substantially deficient in reading must attend a summer program offered by the school district. Failure to attend the summer program will result in the retention of the student in the present grade (see PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS ~5123(A) ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ This is a requirement under Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-265f and 10-265g.

1. f Grade 4-5 students who are assessed by June on the state examination (CMT) or other assessments, such as the D.R.A., as substantially deficient in reading may be required to attend a summer program offered by the school district. Failure to attend summer program may result in the retention of the student in the present grade (see PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS ~5123(A).

1. g Grade K-5 students are expected to be regularly and continuously assessed and to be given the opportunity to make up homework.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

2: PROGRESS REPORTS

Elementary (K-5)

Grading Policy

Benchmarks and Assessments

Teachers will use the Academic Rubrics as the means of assessment of progress on the Elementary Progress Report.

The Academic Rubrics reflect the progress of a child at the time of assessment. Each marking period the teacher is required to assess the student through a combination of multiple measures. These include formative and summative assessments, review of student work and other such measures. Academic rubrics at the elementary level are not averaged (summative). Instead the rubrics are formative, reflecting the progress at the time the child is assessed.

Each grade level is expected to work as a unit in using district established grade level standards in applying the academic rubrics for each academic area.

The district in collaboration with elementary school staffs and instructional specialists will continue to develop district-wide benchmarks and formative assessments based on best practices research.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

3: PROGRESS REPORTS

Elementary (K-5)

Grading Policy

for a student who is an English Language Learner,
for a student and/or who has an Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan or
for a student who participates in the Academically Talented Program:

Academic Rubrics

Generally, students who are English Language Learners or who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans who are in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 5 are expected to be assessed by the same ACADEMIC RUBRICS for the grade to which the child is assigned (See section B. PROGRESS/RECORDS 1. Elementary (K-5), Grading Policy for all students in Grades Kindergarten through Five.).

Students who are English Language Learners and/or participate in the Academically Talented Program will receive a supplemental and/or modified Progress Report.

Students who have an IEP or 504 Plan that specifically addresses and includes an alternative grading system will receive a modified Progress Report that supersedes the Grading Policy of Elementary Progress Report. In this case, the teacher may replace the Progress Report with the designated reporting format.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

4: PROGRESS REPORTS

Elementary (K-5)

Grading Policy

Effort Rubrics

Effort is a significant contributing factor to academic success at all levels. In order to assess a child's effort in striving towards and achieving grade level expectations, teachers at the elementary level will regularly assess a child's efforts, both in relation to behavior and to work skills and habits. The Effort rubrics will be applied in both the academic areas and the special areas of music, art and physical education.

Each grade level is expected to work as a unit in uniformly implementing grade level standards and in applying the effort rubrics using the District Effort Rubrics for each academic area.

2. a. Kindergarten Effort Rubrics: Kindergarten students will be assessed twice a year in March and June for effort and social skills. The following rubrics are used to determine a child's progress at the time of the assessment (March or June).

O = Outstanding

(always meets behavioral and performance expectations without teacher assistance)

C = Consistent

(meets behavioral and performance expectations 90% of the time without teacher assistance)

S = Sometimes

(meets behavioral and performance expectations some of the time with teacher assistance)

R = Rarely

(meets behavioral and performance expectations with substantial teacher assistance)

2. b. Grades 1-5 Effort Rubrics: Grades 1-5 students will be assessed three times a year in November, March and June for effort and social skills. The following rubrics are used to determine a child's progress at the time of the assessment (November, March or June).

O = Outstanding

(always meets behavioral and performance expectations without teacher assistance)

C = Consistent

(meets behavioral and performance expectations 90% of the time without teacher assistance)

S = Sometimes

(meets behavioral and performance expectations some of the time with teacher assistance)

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

R = Rarely

(meets behavioral and performance expectations with substantial teacher assistance)

Grading and Reporting Policy:
Secondary Level

updated 2-9-07

Policy

The primary purpose of grading is to assess student achievement and provide feedback to students and parents. Measuring student progress is also essential to provide feedback to teachers in order to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program. Our philosophy of grading is based on the fact that students respond more positively to opportunities for success rather than to the threat of failure. Success is most likely to occur when parents, teachers, and students are all working together.

1. Grading policies must be explicit and distributed the first week of school (or semester). The policies should be reviewed with parents at Open House.
2. Grades should be based on multiple measures of assessment.
3. All students should have the possibility of earning high grades based on achievement judged against clearly defined standards.

Regulations

1. The following are the letter grades to be used on the report cards at the middle and high school levels to indicate the student’s academic performance. The unit weights are to be used at the high school level in determining the student’s Quality Point Ratio and class rank. Teachers who use a grading system based on percentages should use the following chart to convert percentages to letter grades for the report cards:

Letter Grade	Unit Weight	Percentage
A+	4.3	97-100
A	4.0	93-96
A-	3.7	90-92
B+	3.3	87-89
B	3.0	83-86
B-	2.7	80-82
C+	2.3	77-79
C	2.0	73-76
C-	1.7	70-72
D+	1.3	67-69
D	1.0	63-66
D-	0.7	60-62
F	0.0	50-59

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

- 1.1 In cases where percentages are averaged to determine final grades, the lowest possible percentage for a quarterly report card grade for averaging purposes is 50% with the exception of the fourth quarter in a full year course and the second quarter in a semester course (except in extenuating circumstances a teacher may choose to apply the 50% limitation in the last quarter also). Teachers may choose to average letter grades instead (see unit weights in the previous table), in which case this regulation does not apply. Also, this regulation does not affect the midterm or final exam grades.
 - 1.2 Advanced Placement (AP) courses carry an additional unit weight of 1.0. For a student to receive this additional weight for taking an AP course, the student must take the Advanced Placement examination for that course.
 - 1.3 At the high school level, for full-year courses, each of the midterm and final exams may not exceed 10% of the final grade. For half-year courses, the final exam may not exceed 20% of the final grade. More specific guidelines shall be established by district departments.
2. Teachers are expected to provide feedback (e.g. comments, suggestions for improvement, rubrics) on assignments and report cards, as appropriate.
 3. For English Language Learners (ELLs), teachers should modify assignments and assessments to allow students to participate fully in their courses.
 - 3.1 ELLs enrolled in ESL I (their first year of study in the U.S.) can be graded in one of three ways in their mainstream content-area subjects, as described in the chart below. If a content area teacher believes that a “pass/fail” or “audit” grade is most appropriate, the final determination must be made by a team consisting of the content area teacher, the student’s ESL/Bilingual teacher, and a building administrator. The student’s parents must be notified if the pass/fail or audit option is being used.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

Grading Options for English Language Learners in Mainstream Classes

Grading Option	Suitable for:	Grading Option Decided by:
Letter Grade	Students enrolled in ESL I who can participate enough in the course to earn a “C” or higher	Content-area teacher
Pass/Fail	Students enrolled in ESL I who cannot participate enough in the course to successfully complete all the requirements, but can complete enough to justify credit.	SRT
Audit	Students enrolled in ESL I who arrive during the fourth quarter who cannot participate enough in the course to justify credit.	SRT

4. For students requiring special education, it is expected that the instruction and/or curriculum will be modified or adapted to meet student needs, as indicated on the IEP. Student grades, however, must be judged to the same standard as all students unless otherwise specified in the IEP.

5. Daily homework assignments may count up to 15% of the total quarter grade. Each department will determine the percentage for that particular subject. Students need to realize that long-term projects are weighted separately from daily assignments and thus are not included in the 15% stipulated here, and that not completing homework can actually affect a student’s grade in many other ways, such as hampering the student’s ability to participate constructively in class and to perform well on tests and quizzes.

6. When long term projects are assigned, teachers must establish a procedure for periodic updates and should provide ongoing feedback.

7. At the middle school level, all students not achieving proficiency (at least a 75%) should be given the opportunity to retake a test (excluding quarterly and district assessments). Students are expected to take advantage of all extra support available at school and at home before retaking a test. When a retest is given, alternative forms of the test should be used.

8. At the high school level, if a teacher deems that a student made a reasonable effort to master the objectives of a particular unit but scored below a “C” for the unit test, the student should be provided another opportunity to demonstrate achievement worthy of a “C” for that particular unit.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

9. Each district department will develop a comprehensive grading policy consistent across the high schools under the supervision of the instructional specialist or, in the case of departments without an instructional specialist, the Director of Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. These policies should address such topics as the weighting of the various components comprising the quarter and final grades and the issue of retesting and make-up work. Variations may occur among subjects and/or grade levels. Each middle school department will develop a comprehensive grading policy consistent across the middle schools addressing similar issues.

Grading Policy – Rationale for Regulations

Overview: Traditionally, teachers have had considerable autonomy in determining the report card grades of their students. One problem with this is that the actual meaning of the letter grade a student receives in a particular subject is too much a factor of who the student has for a teacher. Furthermore, the letter grade is often less a measure of student achievement than it is of other factors such as student responsibility. It is certainly desirable to have a system of grading in which a “B” in a particular subject means roughly the same thing independent of the student’s school or classroom teacher.

Currently there is no official grading policy for Norwalk Public Schools, although there are references to grading in documents such as the Guide to Subject Offerings. In practice, most Norwalk teachers have used some form of numerical averaging of tests, quizzes, projects, and homework to arrive at a number that is then converted to a letter grade based on a scale in which 60 or better is “passing” and below 60 is “failing”. Quarter grades are averaged (sometimes using a 4.0 scale but usually using the numerical averages from each quarter) to determine the student’s final grade (in high school the midterm and final exams are factored in also). Most of the current writings from the leading educational theorists and researchers (e.g. Marzano, Tomlinson and McTighe) discourage the practice of using the arithmetic mean (numerical “average”) to calculate grades, yet teachers desire a system that has the appearance of objectivity and yields a grade that is easy to justify to students and parents. Our charge was not to revolutionize the grading system used by teachers but to make it more standard and more in line with best practices. Below we present a rationale for various regulations in this grading policy proposal.

1.1: Thus in regulation #1 we essentially outline two different methods that a teacher could use to determine a student’s final grade. Both involve a simple arithmetic mean calculation. One advantage of the use of unit weights to calculate the final grade is that this method does not overweight a single particular quarter grade. This is not true of the use of percentages to determine the final grade. In the latter method, if a student has a particularly poor quarter that quarter in effect carries more weight in determining a student’s final grade than do the other three quarters. The reason for this is that the ranges for grades of A, B, C, and D are each ten points while the range for a grade of F is

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

60 points. To illustrate, let's say that a student's numerical grades for the four quarters are 74, 20, 74, and 80 leading to grades of C, F, C, and B-. Using the method of unit weights, the final average would be $(2 + 0 + 2 + 2.7) \div 4 = 1.68$, which translates to a C-. Using numerical averaging with the arithmetic mean, the result is 62 or D-. The lack of performance in the second quarter overwhelmed the solid performance for the other three quarters, resulting in a grade that does not give the most accurate picture of the student's performance for the year. By converting any numerical grade below 50 to a 50, this "overweighting" effect is eliminated. In the above example the student's numerical average for the year would be 69.5, which could be either a D+ or a C- depending upon the teacher's best judgment of the student's overall performance. The bottom line is that under the system of straight numerical averaging a student has very little chance to bounce back from a bad quarter early in the year.

Originally in regulation #1 we had proposed that any quarter grade of below 50% be converted to a 50 for the purposes of determining the final grade. Many teachers made the compelling argument that a student who passes by more than the minimum the first 3 quarters (e.g. 65, 65, 65) could then do nothing in the fourth quarter and still pass (61 average) for the year by virtue of being "given" a 50 for the fourth quarter. Thus we made the adjustment to allow the teacher to average in a grade below 50 for the fourth quarter only. Alternatively, teachers may use the "unit weight" method instead for all students if they so choose.

1.2: The idea of requiring the taking of the Advanced Placement Examination to earn an additional weight of 1.0 came directly from the Advanced Placement teachers. From a district standpoint this ensures that teachers teach the AP syllabus as determined by the College Board and gives teachers valuable data on the strengths and weaknesses of their particular AP program. The district had budgeted for students with economic need to be able to take the appropriate AP examination.

3.1: The "A-F" grading system in the content areas is designed for students who are learning their content-area subjects through their native language. For students who are learning English, and at the same time, content-area subjects taught in English, an A-F grading system is often not appropriate, especially if students have been in the U.S. for less than a year. Although teachers may attempt to modify instruction and assignments for beginner ELLs, most of these students cannot perform at the same levels as their English-speaking peers on assignments and assessments. Therefore, it is unfair to students and teachers to impose on ELLs a grading system developed for native speakers of English. It is not unusual for beginner ELLs to receive "D's" and "F's" on their report cards simply because they are not yet proficient enough in English to understand assignments and perform at high levels on assessments.

In order to address this issue of fair and logical grades for ELLs, we have developed a grading system with three-options. In this way, content-area teachers, in consultation with ESL/Bilingual teachers and building administrators, can choose options that are suitable for beginner ELLs, based on students' individual needs and language development.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

5: Guidelines for determining quarter grades should be determined by subject area departments across the district. One general guideline the district is proposing deals with the maximum weighting of daily homework. Theoretically, if the letter grade is supposed to be purely a measure of student learning, homework should not be a factor in determining a student's quarter grade. Even Marzano concedes that teachers want to and should be allowed to factor homework into the quarter grade to a limited extent. However, many teachers place far too much weight on homework in determining quarter grades. Homework is a means to help students learn and to provide information to teachers to help them design instruction that meets students' needs. Its purpose is not to measure student achievement in any summative way. We decided to set a maximum limit of 15% for daily homework in determining quarter grades. Students need to realize that not completing homework can actually affect a student's grade in many other ways, such as hampering the student's ability to participate constructively in class and to perform well on tests and quizzes.

7: In a standards-based teaching environment, the emphasis switches from how teachers teach to what students actually learn and can demonstrate. As a result, it seems more appropriate for assessment to focus on getting students to a certain level of understanding (proficiency) rather than settling for what students know at a particular point in time (as determined by a teacher's instructional pace). Not all students can reach high levels of understanding at the same time and if teachers are not flexible with their time frame, they will end up with a significant number of students demonstrating less than proficient understanding of the concepts under study. This approach results in students moving on to the next topic area having mastered perhaps only 50% of the concepts taught. By demanding that students study and retake a test, the teacher is setting an expectation that a mediocre or superficial understanding of a topic is not acceptable. Students who put in extra time and effort on a topic should be able to reach proficiency and demonstrate a sufficient level of understanding that will greatly aid them as they work deeper in that subject.

With this in mind, teachers should set up a system where students have the opportunity to retake major teacher tests during a marking period in order to ensure a high level of understanding among all students in the class. Fairness dictates, however, that students who receive more than one chance to show what they have learned do not receive grades that are higher than those students who demonstrate proficiency on the first attempt. If we do not control for this consequence, we will create a system where failing the first attempt is more desirable for students than studying and mastering the material on the first try. Accordingly, students who retake a test because of the fact that they were below proficiency on the original test, should not receive a grade higher than the proficiency grade, normally 75%.

DRAFT

Helene Becker April 2007

Grading and Reporting
Elementary Level:
English Language Learners (ELLs)

To more accurately assess a student's developing proficiency in English, a separate Progress Report is being designed for ELLs at the **beginning stages of learning English**. This ELL Progress Report will:

- be used to report on the progress of ELLs whose assessments indicate that they are beginners (Level 1 only).
- replace the *Language Arts* section of the regular Progress Report (the *Language Arts* section of the regular Progress Report will be left blank).
- be attached to the regular Progress Report.
- be scored collaboratively by the mainstream and bilingual/ESOL teacher.

Written policy guidelines will be provided for mainstream teachers to score the remainder of the academic sections of the regular Progress Report for beginner ELLs and for scoring the regular Progress Report for ELLs above the Level 1 stage of proficiency.

Norwalk Public Schools Homework Policy

It is the belief of the Norwalk Public Schools that students will be provided with:

- meaningful opportunities to practice and transfer their learning.
- homework that is developmentally and instructionally appropriate.
- differentiated instruction and assignments for English language learners, as well as an honoring of the objectives of Individual Education Plans (IEP) and/or 504 Plans where appropriate.
- a model on how to do each homework assignment and the expected outcome for each assignment before the students leave the class. It should be clear and articulated, with a specific and significant goal.
- long term projects that are broken up across clearly identified phases and separate grades (Individual sections, i.e. planning, outlines, first draft, etc.)
- **Homework should never be assigned as a punishment nor should it be removed as a reward in order to avoid the negative perception of homework.**

In recent years, research has raised the question of the value and purpose of homework, particularly at the elementary level. (Cooper, 2006, Kohn 2006, Kralovec & Buell, 2000, Bennett & Kalish, 2006). This policy offers suggestions and recommendations for assigning homework. **This policy attempts to create district consistency while providing flexibility for instructional needs.**

When assigned, homework should be a three-way partnership among students, parents and teachers. Parents need to provide students with a time and place to carry out their assignments either at home or at a designated study-related facility. Teachers should ensure that the time students spend doing homework is beneficial to their learning and development.

The purpose of homework should be to:

- deepen understanding
- prepare for future learning
- extend class work
- practice skills
- reinforce new content learning

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

<i>Homework Is</i>	<i>Homework Is Not</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well designed practice • preparation for future classes • an extension of class work • an aid in increasing student knowledge • helpful in developing reasoning skills • one way to enhance the desire to learn through purposeful work • completed within a reasonable amount of time • differentiated to meet the needs of individualized students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • punishment • busy work • expected to be completed in class • practicing skills that are not understood (to avoid incorrect learning)

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

With the latest research in mind, we offer the following key points in designing homework:

- Homework, if given, should be based on individual student needs. It rarely makes sense to give the same assignment to all students (Kohn, 2006).
- There is no correlation between quality and quantity of homework. There should not be a predetermined daily number of minutes for homework (Kohn, 2006).
- Not all homework is the same. That is, homework can be assigned for different purposes. (Marzano, 2001)
- Students at lower grades should be given far less homework than students at higher grade levels (Marzano, 2001).
- Too much homework can be counter-productive for students at all levels (Cooper, 2006).

I. Time

The critical question is how much homework is the right amount of homework. Unfortunately, there is no clear answer (Marzano, 2001). In order to promote consistency in homework practices and time expectations at the elementary levels across the Norwalk Public School district, the following recommendations for homework are as follows:

1. *Grade K:* not to exceed 10 minutes daily
- Grade 1:* not to exceed 10 minutes daily
- Grade 2:* not to exceed 10 minutes daily

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

<i>Grade 3:</i>	not to exceed 15 minutes daily
<i>Grade 4:</i>	not to exceed 15 minutes daily
<i>Grade 5:</i>	not to exceed 15 minutes daily

In addition, the following average of **daily**, independent reading times are expected. Reading books is the best predictor of several measures of reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988).

<i>Grade K -2</i>	15 minutes
<i>Grade 3-5</i>	30 minutes

3. Homework should not be assigned on Fridays or during weekends and holidays. *However*, independent reading is always recommended as a daily expectation, including vacations, holidays and weekends.

4. Special Education: Homework assignments (**for students in special education programs**) should reflect the special needs of these children, in keeping with their IEP goals, and should be a part of their total school responsibility.

5. While guidelines are provided to establish expectations, the actual time required to complete assignments will vary with each student's study habits, academic skills, and selected course load.

II. Assessment of Homework

The completion and quality of homework are rated by the effort rubrics on the Elementary Progress Report. Formal homework is assessed at the end of each marking period. Homework assignments hold more meaning when they are shared among students the next day. Teachers should vary the approaches to providing feedback (Marzano, 2001). When homework is simply graded, it communicates to students that the real reason for doing the homework is evaluation, not learning the concepts. Teachers should make every effort to explain the purpose of homework and offer timely and appropriate feedback. Student achievement can vary based on the kind of feedback provided by the teacher (Walberg, 1999). Homework in which a teacher has embedded instructive comments has the greatest effect on learning.

In addition, the following guidelines for elementary school teachers, students and parents/guardians are suggested:

III. Guidelines for Teachers:

The teacher is expected to:

(Homework should never be assigned as a punishment. Conversely, being excused from homework should not be provided as a reward.)

1. clearly explain the purpose of any given assignment.
2. clearly give directions for the method of accomplishing the assignment.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

3. make sure students understand how they are being assessed (e.g. rubrics).
4. ensure availability of all necessary resources to carry out the assignment.
5. make it clear that deadlines are understood and followed.
6. acknowledge receipt of homework and provide feedback it in a timely fashion.
7. provide constructive feedback to the student and use student work to plan for future learning.
8. return homework in a timely manner.
9. review homework and/or provide students additional time and opportunity to complete assignments if they are absent or did not complete it.

B. Guidelines for Students: The student is expected to:

1. ask the teacher questions if in doubt about the purpose, requirements or directions of the assignment.
2. meet the deadlines for homework and projects by budgeting time realistically to complete homework.
3. speak with their teacher(s) or parents/guardians when the cumulative amount of homework on a given day may exceed reasonable limits.
4. be responsible for making up work missed when absent from the classroom.

C. Guidelines for Parents/Guardians: The parent/guardian is expected to:

1. understand and support the philosophy and guidelines of the Board of Education concerning homework.
2. provide students with a time and place to complete their assignments.
3. encourage integrity and never give so much help that the value of the homework will be destroyed; be supportive without doing the work for the child.
4. contact the teacher in the event of questions and concerns, particularly if their child is frustrated by the assignment or is taking an inordinate amount of time to complete it.
5. understand that jobs and other after school activities are not acceptable excuses for not completing a homework assignment.
6. ensure that students and/or parents pick up assignments missed when it appears (the) absence will be prolonged. A minimum of **48 hour notice** should be given the teacher to prepare assignments.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

I. Time

For students in sixth through eighth grades, time spent on homework should range generally between sixty and ninety minutes a school day for all subjects. For grades nine through twelve, a student might be assigned up to two hours per night (Cooper, 2006). **Amounts may vary from these guidelines depending upon a student's course load, schedule, and number of advanced courses.** (www.ed.gov)

II. Late Work Policies

Students are expected to turn work in on time. They will be given opportunity to make up homework.

- Each district wide department by level (middle and high school) will develop homework guidelines for their area and level under the supervision of the instructional specialist, or in the case of departments without an instructional specialist, the Director of Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.
- The department/grade(s) will be consistent with board policy and address the following questions under the supervision of the instructional specialist, or in the case of departments without an instructional specialist, the Director of Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction:

What is a reasonable make up work opportunity?

Timelines for late work

Weight of original homework

Weight of second homework

Grade distribution for homework

III. Major Projects

Major projects include research reports, book reports, major essays, and other assignments teachers designate as major projects. Time spent on these projects may exceed the maximum homework minutes per night. Students shall be provided with a timeline and rubrics or criteria that indicate how the project will be evaluated. In other words, assignments that require complex processes should be broken down into smaller bits, or skills, which should be taught with time allotted for student practice and adaptation (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Major projects should be monitored at reasonable intervals. Teachers must specify the weight of all major projects within the guidelines established within the grading and homework policies.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

IV. Assessment of Homework

Homework is part of a student's overall grade not to exceed 15% on a student's report card. Teachers should make every attempt to provide make up opportunities so as to avoid zeroes. Homework assignments hold more meaning when they are shared among students the next day. Teachers should make every effort to provide feedback on homework to students. When homework is simply graded, it communicates to students that the real reason for doing the homework is evaluation, not learning the concepts.

In addition, the following guidelines for teachers, students and parents are suggested.

A. Guidelines for Teachers: The teacher is expected to:

(Homework should never be assigned as a punishment. Conversely, being excused from homework should not be provided as a reward.)

1. provide feedback on homework in a timely fashion.
2. explain the purpose of any given assignment.
3. give clear directions and suggested methods for accomplishing the assignment.
4. insure availability of all necessary resources to carry out the assignment.
5. explain the way the assignment will be evaluated and how it will be weighted.
6. suggest a reasonable time allotment on a daily assignment.
7. give students appropriate time to complete all assignments.
8. communicate and enforce clear deadlines and penalties.
9. insist students submit their own work.
10. encourage students to pursue non-assigned, independent, leisure reading.
11. provide make up homework within 48 hours of a request.
12. avoid over-assigning of homework by attempting to coordinate assignments and tests with other departments to the extent that they can.
13. See handbook for information related to excused and unexcused absences.

2. Guidelines for Students: The student is expected to:

1. be responsible for obtaining and making up work when absent.
2. understand the purpose, the directions and the means of evaluation of the assignment. Be sure all assignments are clear; ask questions if necessary.
3. understand that content, structure and appearance of all written homework assignments are important elements in the grading process.
4. budget time realistically.
5. assume responsibility for obtaining the proper resources and materials.
6. pursue non-assigned, independent, leisure reading.
7. demonstrate integrity by not giving or receiving so much help that the value of the homework will be destroyed.
8. meet the deadlines and understand the consequences of late or missing work.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

9. understand that jobs and other after-school activities are not acceptable excuses for not carrying out a homework assignment.
 10. talk with teacher(s) when the total amount of homework on a given day exceeds reasonable limits.
 11. contact the teacher, counselor or administrator in the event of questions or concerns.
 12. keep with the philosophy that students attend school regularly and keep up with class work and homework. All students are required to submit such work by a time specified by the teacher.
 13. see the handbook for information related to excused and unexcused absences.
3. Guidelines for Parents/Guardians: The parent/guardian is expected to:
1. familiarize themselves with the **Board of Education** guidelines concerning homework.
 2. be supportive of the homework policy, as it is an integral part of the student's learning process.
 3. be sure that the student and/or parents themselves pick up assignments missed when the student is absent.
 4. provide students with a time and place to carry out their assignments
 5. contact the teacher, counselor or administrator in the event of questions or concerns.
 6. consult with teacher(s) when the cumulative amount of homework on a given day seems excessive.
 7. encourage their children to pursue non-assigned, independent, leisure reading or review, preview or improve their present assignments.
 8. ensure regular attendance of their children at school. (The district strongly discourages families from scheduling any trips other than during the normal school vacations. If unusual circumstances arise, contact the guidance counselor. Submit written request to a counselor within 48 hours to prepare assignments. All students are required to submit such work by a time specified by the teacher).
 9. See handbook for information related to excused and unexcused absences.

*Specific guidelines for attendance for loss of credit at the high school are spelled out in detail in the student handbook.

STUDENTS

Elementary (K-5)

PROMOTION/ RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Decisions regarding promotion, retention or change of grade placement including acceleration will be made on an individual student basis. This policy reflects the research found in the following listed and other sources.

Alexander, K., Entwistle, D., Dauber, S.,

A REASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF RETENTION IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADES

Meisels, Samuel J. & Liaw, Fong-Ruey. (1993).

FAILURE IN GRADE: DO RETAINED STUDENTS CATCH UP?

Robinson, Anne S.,

WHEN RETENTION IS RECOMMENDED, WHAT SHOULD PARENTS DO?

Setencich, Jill

THE IMPACT ON EARLY GRADE RETENTION ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM OF SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS.

The Central Office and Building administration and teaching staff of the school to which the student is assigned shall create a plan of instruction to provide an appropriate opportunity for each student to progress through elementary school in accordance with his/her own needs and abilities and in accordance with applicable statutory requirements and state department of education guidelines.

A determination of student deviation from normal annual academic progress will be based on evaluations by classroom teachers, administrators, special services personnel, reading specialists or other staff as appropriate, and discussions with parents/guardians.

The final decision as to promotion, retention or change of placement including acceleration resides with the principal after consultation with the staff.

In all cases of possible retention, parents/guardians must be informed of such a possibility in advance, but no later than the end of the second marking period (March).

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

1: EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN

Elementary (K-5) Kindergarten

The parent(s) of the child for whom early admission to Kindergarten is being sought will make the request in writing and forward the request to the Director of Elementary Education. This request should be made in writing by June 1 for a September admission and must include the reason(s) the parent wishes to be considered for early admission. In general, only children with birthdates between January 1 and February 15 will be considered for early admission to Kindergarten.

Each child must be considered on an individual basis. In addition to a student's academic achievement, other factors must be considered.

Among these are the following.

1. Children entering Kindergarten in September must be at least five years old **on or before January 1st** of the next year. Underage children may be admitted under the specific conditions outlined in the regulations and procedures as established in this policy.
2. Home and staff involvement in the decision is critically important.
3. The Student Response Team procedure must be followed.
4. The child's record of attendance and tardiness must be reviewed.
5. The child's levels of physical maturity, emotional maturity, social skills, current language capability and intellectual capacity, pertinent achievement /other test/assessment data where appropriate as well as the chronological age and the prior educational experience/records of the child are all factors that have bearing on the decision to accelerate a child into Kindergarten or another grade.

The following uniform regulations and procedures will be followed concerning the early admission of a student into Kindergarten:

- a. The Director of Elementary Education will inform the home school of the request with a copy to the Principal.
- b. The Principal will contact the parent.
- c. The Principal will follow the Assessment Protocols for Early Admission to Kindergarten in making a decision about each child.
- d. Prior to the school-based assessment of the child, the school will arrange a Student Response Team conference that must include the parent(s)/guardians(s), parent advocate if requested, a Kindergarten teacher and the pre-school teacher if requested, and the Principal. The purpose of

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

the conference is to discuss the efficacy of the request through the review of pertinent data (See description of data above.).

- e. The home school will arrange to assess the child using system approved assessment instruments within a reasonable period of time but no more than six weeks and/or before the end of the term prior to the first term of admission. The school will obtain written permission of the parents for the administration of these assessments (See ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS FOR EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN.).
- f. The assessment must include a speech and language assessment and other assessments (e.g., math, reading) as determined by the Principal in consultation with staff. The speech/language pathologist will provide the Principal and parents with a copy of the results of the speech and language assessment; a copy of any other assessment will also be made available to the Principal and the parents.
- g. Where possible, every effort should be made to observe a child in the classroom setting. It is recommended that the child be observed, if at all possible, by a teacher. A report of the observation is recommended as part of the SRT decision making process.
- h. The Principal or designee will review the curriculum goals of Kindergarten with the parents while the child is being evaluated. The parents may also be requested to complete a social and academic history.
- i. If the SRT recommends early admission and the Principal concurs, a copy of the decision will be sent to the Director of Elementary Education.
- j. Once the SRT recommends early admission and the Principal concurs, the student is enrolled in a Kindergarten class immediately.
- k. In the event that the child has met all of the qualifications above, the child must be admitted to the home school district school even when enrollment in Kindergarten exceeds contractual limits.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

2: EARLY ADMISSION TO FIRST GRADE/ACCELERATION

Elementary (K-5) First Grade

Children entering First Grade in September must be at least six years old on or before January 1st of the next year. Exceptions to this policy for First Grade may be made in specific circumstances and subject to the conditions as established in this policy. The following exceptions to regulation regarding age for entering First Grade are made:

- a. Children, underage for the First Grade and transferring from another community, who have already started the year in First Grade, will be placed in First Grade.
- b. Children, underage for First Grade in public school and who in the previous year have been sent to and completed a year in private or public Kindergarten will be enrolled in First Grade. The home school will conduct an SRT meeting to develop an appropriate instructional program for the student.
- c. Kindergarten attendance is mandatory in Connecticut under Connecticut Statute 10-184. No underage child will be admitted to First Grade who has not had Kindergarten experience except as may occur in regulation (a) above.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-15c: Discrimination in public schools prohibited

School attendance by five year olds

10-184: Duty of Parents

10-185: Penalty

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

2a: ACCELERATION TO ANOTHER GRADE

Elementary (K-5)

The parent(s) of the child for whom acceleration is being sought will make the request in writing and forward the request to the Director of Elementary Education. This request should be made in writing by June 1 for a September placement and must include the reason(s) the parent wishes to be considered in the decision to accelerate a child to another grade. Acceleration is limited to one grade above the student's upcoming grade placement.

The following uniform regulations and procedures will be followed concerning acceleration to another grade:

- l. The Director of Elementary Education will inform the home school of the request with a copy to the Principal.
- m. The Principal will contact the parent.
- n. Prior to the school-based assessment of the child, the school will arrange a Student Response Team conference that must include the parent(s)/guardians(s), parent advocate if requested, and a teacher from the grade to which acceleration is sought, and the Principal. The purpose of the conference is to discuss the efficacy of the request through the review of pertinent data (See description of data above.).
- o. The home school will arrange to assess the child using system approved assessment instruments within a reasonable period of time but no more than six weeks and/or before the end of the term prior to the first term of admission. The school will obtain written permission of the parents for the administration of these assessments.
- p. The assessment may include a speech and language assessment and other assessments (e.g., math, reading) as determined by the Principal in consultation with staff. The speech/language pathologist will provide the Principal and parents with a copy of the results of the speech and language assessment; a copy of any other assessment will also be made available to the Principal and the parents.
- q. Where possible, every effort should be made to observe a child in the classroom setting. It is recommended that the child be observed, if at all possible, by a teacher from the grade to which acceleration is sought. A report of the observation is recommended as part of the SRT decision making process.
- r. The Principal or designee will review the curriculum goals of the grade to which acceleration is sought with the parents while the child is being evaluated. The parents may also be requested to provide additional social and academic information.
- s. If the SRT recommends acceleration and the Principal concurs, a copy of the decision will be sent to the Director of Elementary Education.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

- t. Once the SRT recommends acceleration and the Principal concurs, the student is to be enrolled in that grade for a start at the beginning of the school year.
- u. In the event that the child has met all of the qualifications above, the child must be admitted to the grade to which acceleration is sought even when enrollment in that grade exceeds contractual limits.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

3: PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Elementary (K-5)

Decisions regarding retention and promotion requirements are based on legislative requirements that took effect on July 1, 2006 ⁽¹⁾.

a. Each child must be considered on an individual basis. In addition to a student's academic achievement, other factors must be considered.

b. Home and staff involvement in the decision to promote or retain is critically important. The Student Response Team procedure should be followed if retention is under consideration.

c. The child's record of attendance and tardiness must be reviewed. However, a child may not be retained solely on the basis of attendance and/or tardiness. The impact of absences and/or tardiness must be viewed in relation to academic expectations for the next grade.

d. The child's levels of physical maturity, emotional maturity, social skills, current language capability and intellectual capacity, pertinent achievement /other test/assessment data where appropriate as well as the chronological age of the child, participation and performance in remedial instruction and previous retention are all factors that should be considered in promotion/retention decisions.

e. The home school must evaluate students in Grades K-3 in January and May using the Developmental Reading Assessment (D.R.A.). For each student who is determined to be substantially deficient in reading on the D.R.A. based on the January or May assessment, the school must notify the student's parent or guardian of the D.R.A results (see also the Elementary Progress Report) and must develop Individualized Student Plan (ISP) in reading that is shared with the parent and reviewed/revised regularly by the SRT. The ISP shall include additional instruction, within available appropriations, such as tutoring, an after-school program, school vacation, weekend program or summer program ⁽¹⁾.

f. Each evaluation or statewide examination will be discussed with the parents by the appropriate teacher and the teacher will give the parent or guardian recommendations for strategies that can be used at home ⁽¹⁾.

g. Retention shall not occur unless all available instructional interventions, especially remedial instruction, have been exhausted. The principal must require the student to participate in a program of remedial services that is designed to assist the student in remedying such deficiencies. If the child is retained, the program developed for the retained child must be substantively different from the previous year ⁽¹⁾.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

h. Promotion of students with ISPs in Grades K-3 shall be based on progress in achieving the goals of the ISP or demonstrated reading proficiency and shall be documented by the principal. If a decision is made to promote a student who is substantially deficient in reading, the Principal shall provide written justification for such a promotion to the Superintendent of Schools or designee ⁽¹⁾.

i. Promotion of students in Grades 1-3, inclusive, who are determined to be substantially below proficiency in reading based on the May administration of the D.R.A., is based on the mandatory requirement to attend summer school. The Superintendent or designee may exempt a student from such requirement, upon the recommendation of the Principal, based on the student's documented progress with the remedial instruction. Documentation will include the student's Individual Student Plan (ISP) ⁽¹⁾.

j. If a student does not receive such an exemption and has been offered the opportunity to attend summer school and fails to attend, the student must not be promoted to the next grade. The School District shall collect from each school the number of students who are substantially below proficiency in reading and are promoted from Grades 1-3 to the next grade and provide such information to the Connecticut State department of Education who will prepare and publish a report with this information annually ⁽¹⁾.

k. An Individual Student Plan (ISP) that incorporates the competencies required for early reading success and effective reading instruction shall be maintained for a student who is substantially below proficiency until the student achieves a satisfactory level of reading proficiency, as determined by a reading evaluation or statewide examination. In addition to preparing an ISP for grades K-3, inclusive, the school must develop and implement ISPs for students in grades 3-5 who scored at below basic on the Grades 3-5 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) unless the Principal determines that such additional instruction is not necessary based on the recommendation of the teacher.

l. The district may require summer school attendance for Grades 4-5 for students who fail to make progress with the additional instruction provided in the ISPs. Should there be such a requirement, the Superintendent of Schools or designee may exempt a student from such requirement, upon the recommendation of the Principal, based on the student's documented progress with the remedial instruction program. Documentation will include the student's Individual Student Plan (ISP).

m. The district must offer a summer reading program to children enrolled in Kindergarten who are determined by their teachers to need additional reading and reading readiness instruction ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ This is a requirement under Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-265f and 10-265g.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

n. Retention in a grade is only indicated where specialized learning programs, supportive services and other interventions such as summer school are judged by the Principal to be inappropriate to support the student at the next grade level or where retention is judged to be in the best educational interest of the child. The exception to this is in (j) above. If the child is retained, the program developed for the retained child must be substantively different from the previous year.

The final decision as to retention resides with the principal when the educational interventions program has been completed, and after communication with the parents (and child if appropriate) and after consultation with the staff who have worked with the child. A copy of the decision will be sent to the Director of Elementary education.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

4: RETENTION REGULATIONS

Elementary (K-5)

The following uniform regulations and procedures will be followed concerning the retention of a student: The school must consider and follow the requirements under Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-265f and 10-265g regarding mandatory retention of substantially below reading proficiency students in grades Kindergarten through Three.

1. The home school of the child for whom the possibility of retention is sought will make the request known in writing to the parent of the child, preferably by the end of January, but no later than the March Parent-Teacher conference.
2. Prior to the school-based decision to consider retention for a child, the school will arrange an SRT conference that will include the parent(s)/guardians(s), parent advocate if requested, teacher(s) involved, and the principal. The purpose of the conference is to discuss rationale for the consideration of possible retention through the review of pertinent data (ISP progress, anecdotes, Progress Reports, formative and summative assessments, etc.)
3. The parent must be informed at the conference about the interventions the school has been using to address the educational needs of the child as developed in the ISP.
4. At the end of the second marking period (March), the principal will reconvene the original members of the initial conference to review the child's progress as it impacts the decision to retain or not. Should the possibility of retention be sustained, all present will be notified in writing of the change of placement; a copy of the change of placement will also be sent to the Director of Elementary Education. The school may opt to have a SRT later than the end of the second marking period but before the end of the school year.
5. The final decision as to retention resides with the principal when the educational interventions program has been completed, and after communication with the parents (and child if appropriate) and after consultation with the staff who have worked with the child. The decision must be made no later than June 1st.
6. If a child is retained, a copy of the decision will be sent to the Director of Elementary Education.

Legal reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-221 Boards of Education to prescribe rules
(Subsection b – re: promotion/retention policy)
10-265f
10-265g

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

5: CHANGE OF GRADE PLACEMENT

Elementary (K-5):

STUDENTS NEW TO NORWALK PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Generally, students new to the school are placed with their age appropriate peers based on the review of academic records and the successful completion of the previous grades. Change to a lower grade as a placement decision must be rarely invoked. If the change of placement is to a lower grade, the student is limited to placement of one grade below the age appropriate grade of the child.

In the event that a student enters school with no previous educational experience, the school, using the SRT process (See RETENTION REGULATIONS.), will determine the most appropriate grade placement for the child while considering the factors listed below. It is recommended that a student with no previous educational experience be placed with age appropriate peers and be provided with supplemental instructional and other supports.

In the event that a student enters school with little or interrupted previous educational experience, the school, using the SRT process, will determine the most appropriate grade placement for the child while considering the factors listed below. It is recommended that a student with little or interrupted previous educational experience be placed with age appropriate peers and be provided with supplemental instructional and other supports.

In the event that a student enters school from a home schooling experience, the school, using the SRT process, will determine the most appropriate grade placement for the child while considering the factors listed below. It is recommended that a student with home schooling experience be placed with age appropriate peers and be provided with supplemental instructional and other supports.

In the event that a student enters school with no, little, interrupted or home schooling educational experience and the student is age appropriate for middle school or high school, then the student will be placed in the middle or high school designated for the residence of the student.

While students will be placed by educational needs, if a student turns 12 years old by January 1 of the school year the student enters the Norwalk Public Schools, the student will be considered age appropriate for Middle School. Similarly, while students will be placed by educational needs, if a student turns 15 years old by January 1 of the school year the student enters the Norwalk Public Schools, the student will be considered age appropriate for High School. The

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

middle or high school will use appropriate processes to determine the placement and educational program of the student.

6: CHANGE OF GRADE PLACEMENT REGULATIONS

Placements of students are made either at the beginning of the school year or at the entry date of the student and are not changed during the current school year.

Home and staff involvement in the decision to change the placement of a child to a lower grade is critically important.

Each student must be considered on an individual basis. In addition to a student's academic achievement, other factors must be considered.

Among these are the following.

1. The Student Response Team procedure should be followed if change of grade placement is under consideration.
2. The student's record of attendance and timeliness must be reviewed. However a child should not be subject to change the placement to a lower grade solely on the basis of attendance and/or tardiness. The impact of absences and/or tardiness must be viewed in relation to academic expectations for the next grade.
3. The student's levels of physical maturity, emotional maturity, social skills, current language capability and intellectual capacity, pertinent achievement /other test/assessment data where appropriate as well as the chronological age of the child, prior school experience and records, participation and performance in remedial instruction, the lack of educational opportunity in another country and previous retention are all factors that have bearing on the decision to the change of grade placement of each child.
4. Change of placement to a lower grade is only indicated where specialized learning programs and supportive services are judged by the school to be inappropriate to support the student at the next grade level or where change of grade placement is judged to be in the best educational interest of the child. If the change of placement is to a lower grade, the student is limited to placement of one grade below the age appropriate grade of the child.

The following uniform procedures will be followed in making the decision to change the placement of a child to a lower grade of a student:

- a. Parents will be notified in writing of the school's consideration of a change in grade placement.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

- b. The change of grade placement will occur at the beginning of the school year or at the date of entry and will not be changed during the current school year.
- c. Prior to the school-based assessment of the child, the school will arrange a SRT conference that will include the parent(s)/guardians(s), parent advocate if requested, teacher(s) involved, and the principal. The purpose of the conference is to discuss the rationale for the change the placement of a child to a lower grade through the review of pertinent data (pre-school documentation, anecdotes, etc.)
- d. The home school will arrange to assess the child using system approved assessment instruments within a reasonable period of time.
- e. Where possible, every effort should be made to observe a child in the classroom setting. It is recommended that the child be observed by a teacher and an administrator on different occasions. Reports of these observations become part of the SRT decisions making process.
- f. If the decision for a change of placement to a lower grade is made, a copy of the decision will be sent to the Director of Elementary Education.

Students

5123 (a)

Promotion/Retention

It is the belief that all students in Norwalk Public Schools can learn. This belief recognizes the need to provide students with instruction appropriate to their academic, emotional, social, and physical level of development. It is expected that students, given positive motivation and appropriate instruction, will succeed. The philosophical basis for promotion and retention acknowledges the differences among the students and the need to accommodate those differences. The promotion or retention of students in the Norwalk Public Schools shall be determined on the basis of a child's best interest. However, research from the past century fails to demonstrate the effectiveness of grade retention for improving either academic achievement or socio-emotional adjustment (Jimerson, 2001). Parental or custodial understanding and support in matters of promotion and retention are crucial to the success of a student's assignment. All parent requests for retention will be referred to the Retention Review Team for review.

Students who have demonstrated satisfactory performance at an appropriate level relative to their grade placement, and as measured by criteria including district and state assessments, benchmarks, and grade level report cards, will be promoted to the next grade level. Students who do not meet these criteria will be supported through a range of programming options and services to develop their educational potential.

All retention decisions will be based on an expectation that retention will enable the student to gain the skills and knowledge required for promotion the following year; however, all criteria must be considered by the Retention Review Team before a recommendation can be made. The final decision for retention resides with the principal after the review of all data presented.

High school promotion is guided by credits earned and the graduation requirements.

Student placement from another district

- Students who transfer from another district will be entered in the same grade that the student was assigned to according to the records from the sending school.
- In the event that a student enters school with little or no, or interrupted schooling or has been home schooled, and is age appropriate for middle school or high school, the student will be placed in the middle school or high school based on residence. The student's levels of physical maturity, emotional maturity, social skills, current language capability, intellectual capacity, pertinent achievement and other test/assessment data, participation and performance in remedial instruction, previous grade level, lack of educational opportunities in another

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

country and previous retentions are all factors that will be considered in placement decisions.

- If a student turns 12 years old by January 1 of the school year the student enters the Norwalk Public Schools, the student will be placed in the middle school. If a student turns 15 years old by January 1 of the school year the student enters the Norwalk Public Schools, the student will be placed at the High School. Based on factors described above, students cannot be placed more than one grade level below their chronological age.
- The final decision for the grade placement of a child will rest with the building principal.

Promotion/Retention

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Each child must be considered for retention on an individual basis. All students who fail a course in a core academic area will be referred to the Retention Review Team to determine final grade placement. The following guidelines will apply for retention.

1. Students who fail one of four core academic subjects (Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) will be promoted to the next grade level. Students are encouraged, but not required, to attend summer school.
2. Students who fail two of four core academic subjects (Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) will be retained unless they attend and pass one summer school class as recommended by the Retention Review Team and/or Principal.
3. Students who fail three of four core subjects during the school year will be retained. This retention will be reviewed, on a case by case basis, by the Retention Review Team in consultation with the Principal. An individual plan may be developed that includes the right to attend and pass two summer school classes. The Principal has final authority to determine the course of action based on the student's best interest.
4. An alternative educational placement for summer school may be discussed with the Retention Review Team and/or Principal for extreme circumstances. All alternative placements must be approved by the Director of Secondary Education.

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

Summer School Program

1. Students will be graded on a pass/fail system
2. The student's final grade on the report card will not be changed. A notation will be generated from the Summer School program on the final report card indicating whether a student passed or failed the summer school class.

Promotion/Retention Review Process

End of First Quarter

1. Guidance counselors will review the progress of all students and create a list of students with failing grades and/or excessive absences.
2. Guidance counselors will initiate meetings with school staff, parents, and student to develop an action plan as needed to prevent student failure and/or improve attendance.

End of Second Quarter

1. Guidance counselors will review the progress of all students and create lists of students with failing grades and/or excessive absences.
2. Guidance counselors will meet with the team to review a list of students for possible retention

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

3. Guidance counselors meet with and inform the administration of those students to be considered for possible retention
4. Guidance counselors will initiate meetings with school staff, parents, and student to develop an action plan to prevent student failure and/or improve attendance. An action plan will be created to ensure student success. Guidance counselors will send the recommendations from the meeting to parents/guardians informing them of the possibility of their child being retained.
5. School administration will forward a preliminary list of those students to be considered for possible retention to the Director of Secondary Education.

End of Third Quarter

1. Guidance counselors will review the progress of all students and create list of students with failing grades and/or excessive absences.
2. Guidance counselors and administration will meet with parents/guardians and student to inform them of the possible retention. An action plan will be created (or revised) to ensure student success.
3. Guidance counselors and/or administrator will meet with teams to review action plan.

End of Fourth Quarter

1. Guidance counselors will review the progress of all students and create a list of retentions.
2. The Retention Review Team will convene to review the possibility of retaining any student.

The final decision for promotion or retention resides with the building principal.

Retention Review Team

Each school will convene a Retention Review Team to determine appropriate programming options for all students who have failed a core academic subject (Language

PROPOSED POLICY REVISIONS

Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). The Retention Review Team will make a recommendation to the principal as to promotion or retention of a student.

Grades 6 – 8 Retention Review Team Membership:

Building administrator, Director of Secondary Education, classroom teachers, guidance counselor, school psychologist/social worker

In grades 6 through 8, students who have not demonstrated satisfactory performance at an appropriate level relative to their grade placement will be reviewed by the team. Among the factors the team will take into consideration are grade level report cards, poor performance on district and/or state assessments, inability to master curriculum benchmarks, and parent requests.

In addition, the following criteria will be considered by the Retention Review Team as to the possibility of retaining any student.

1. Chronological age
2. Academic achievement
3. Work and study habits
4. Physical development
5. Social maturity
6. Emotional maturity
7. Attitude toward school
8. Attendance record
9. Prior retentions
10. Home Language

After reviewing all factors, the representatives from the Retention Review Team will meet with parents and the student to discuss their findings. Following this meeting, a recommendation will be made to the principal as to the plan created for promotion. The final decision for promotion or retention resides with the building principal.

Appeals Process

If the parents/guardians do not agree with the Principal's decision, they may indicate their disagreement in writing to the Director of Secondary Education for review. The Director of Secondary Education will respond to the parent no later than two weeks after the written appeal is received.

Revised: 3/26/07