Education Plan
A3.1 Mastery and Promotion

Mastery of Core Content:

Core-content, standards-based mastery is demonstrated by a level of proficiency of 80% or higher. The 80% benchmark could take the form of a "B-" or better grade on classroom tests, assignments, and report card grades. It can also be shown by a score of 80% or higher on standards-aligned diagnostic tests (issued at least quarterly) and/or through a passing or higher score on AIMS. School staff will closely monitor students' academic achievement through AIMS results and classroom performance so that students who enter the school with below-passing test scores or who do not demonstrate sufficient mastery of the standards-based content in English, math, social studies, and science can be placed in tutoring and/or given other remediation plans, such as additional assignments, building of study skills, an attendance plan, etc., as deemed necessary and appropriate. Through interventions and ongoing assessments, every effort will be made to help students improve their academic standing. Furthermore, our extended school year that includes mandatory summer school has proven highly effective in our Oakland, California, schools, as it provides students with more time and opportunity to improve academically. The daily minimum of 90 minutes of instruction in math and 90 minutes of instruction in English also helps struggling students to catch up.

Though core-content mastery, as shown through a level of proficiency of 80% or higher, is the goal, it does not mean that every student failing to reach that benchmark in every metric in every core content class will be retained. For example, a student who maintains a C average in math will not be retained if, for example, he passes the math AIMS exam and/or if his teacher believes, through assessment, observation, and long-term monitoring, that the student possesses the sufficient math skills to succeed at the next grade level.

Process and Criteria for Grade-Level Promotion:

The following policy on promotion has been established by the AIM Schools Governance Board. The Board acknowledges that students come to AIM Schools with varied educational backgrounds and academic skill sets, and the Board recognizes the importance of providing all pupils adequate time to master the skills required for student success.

Students at Tucson AIM Middle School must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade level:

1. Receive a yearly average grade of C or higher in math and English
2. Have no more than 10 absences during the school year
3. Complete required summer school programs
4. Demonstrate an overall compliance with school policies regarding student behavior (i.e. arrive at school in dress code, act appropriately in the classroom by following teacher directions, turn in homework, etc.). Students who are defiant and/or breaking school rules on a regular basis throughout the school year will not be promoted, for example.

5. Demonstrate through class work, homework, classroom assessments, AIMS results, and quarterly diagnostic exams, which measure a student's proficiency with respect to grade-level, statewide standards, an academic readiness to succeed at the next grade level.

When a student is identified as not meeting one of the criteria listed above, the student will not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student's regular classroom teacher determines that retention is not the appropriate intervention for the student's academic or behavioral deficiencies. This determination shall specify in writing the reasons that retention is not appropriate for the student and shall include recommendations for interventions. The Director will discuss the teacher's decision, but in the case of a disagreement, the final authority to promote or retain will rest with the classroom teacher.

If the teacher's recommendation to promote is contingent on the student's academic performance in summer school, the student's academic standing shall be reassessed at the end of summer school, and the decision to retain or promote the student shall be reevaluated at that time.

Promotion decisions are of utmost importance and will be made with careful deliberation. The school will inform families of potential retention, in writing, as early as students are identified as not meeting promotion requirements so that appropriate corrective steps may be taken. Written notification of potential retention will be provided to families through progress reports and report cards. Progress reports are issued every 3 weeks to students receiving a C- or lower in any subject. Teachers are to inform the Director as soon as they believe a student is in danger of being retained so that the student can be placed in tutoring or provided with other necessary interventions as deemed appropriate. Through progress reports, phone calls, and/or meetings with families, teachers will keep families apprised of student progress (or lack thereof) toward grade-level promotion. Final notification of retention decisions will be included in final report cards. If, however, after final report cards are issued, a student fails to attend mandatory summer school without prior approval from the Director, he/she will not be promoted to the next grade level.

In the case of students receiving special education services, special education staff will be included in the promotion/retention decision to ensure compliance with applicable legal requirements. Special education students will be subject to the same promotion criteria as other students unless their IEP specifies otherwise. Special education students must meet the course of study requirements identified in their IEP, which may differ from the above-stated criteria, in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Parents or guardians who disagree with the school's decision regarding retention or promotion may follow the school's Local Complaint Procedures to appeal.