A. 3.1 Mastery and Promotion

Mastery of Standards

Mastery of a content area will be determined by achieving 80% proficiency on standards based assessments. An 80% proficiency score for standards will be determined by performance on formative and summative assessments during and following each instructional unit. Also, three times a year each grade will administer a formative Acuity assessment in order to evaluate each scholar's progress toward mastery of the standards. Results from each assessment will be broken down by mastery of each standard and tracked individually for students. An internal requirement for all scholars is to demonstrate mastery of at least 80% of all grade level standards for each subject area of Reading, Math, Writing and Science.

Promotion and Retention Criteria

Promotion and retention at Desert Star Academy will be based on the performance and achievement of each individual scholar across all subjects. No scholar will be promoted to the next grade level without an achieving an average of a 70% or higher grade for reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. For each subject, a scholar's performance will be evaluated by the classroom teacher based on scores from formative and summative assessments, formal and informal assessments, class activities and projects. The classroom teacher will evaluate each scholar's individual grades at the minimum of twice a grading quarter, the midterm and final grading period.

The criterion for promotion is as follows:

- Each scholar must achieve a 70% or higher overall in each subject area listed above in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The overall grade will be based on a weighted average 80% from scores on the Common Core Standard assessments and 20% from classwork and projects.
- Each scholar must achieve a minimum score of 80% on all individual Common Core summative and formative assessments to be promoted to the next grade. The teacher will reteach and assess each scholar until an 80% mastery level is achieved.
- A scholar will not be promoted unless all content area meets the above requirements or a special meeting with the school director, teacher and parent is held to decide otherwise.

The criterion for retention is as follows:

- Each scholar will be retained when one or more of the above content areas fall below a 70% for one or more quarterly grading periods.
- Each scholar will be retained if all individual Common Core summative and formative assessments are not passed with an 80% or higher within a quarterly grading period.

- A scholar must pass each Common Core Standard assessment within the quarterly grading period before moving on to the next standard without an intervention plan and supports.

The process for promoting scholars

- The process begins with the classroom teacher evaluating the individual scholar scores from the Common Core Standard assessments and the combined overall grade of assessment scores, classwork, homework and group projects. If the scores on the individual Common Core assessments meet or exceed 80% AND the combined overall average of all score meet or exceed 70% the scholar is considered to be meeting the achievement standards and will be promoted.
- The decision for promoting the scholars to the next grade will be by the recommendation of the classroom teacher with final approval from the school director.

The process for retaining scholars or retaining is as follows:

- The process will begin with the classroom teacher assessing and calculating individual scholar scores in all content areas, math, reading, writing, science and social studies at a minimum of twice during a grading period.
- If at any time during the grading period a scholar's grade average falls below a 70% a mandatory parent – teacher conference will take place to address concern's and below standard achievements.
- If the scholar does not meet the passing standard of 80% on all Common Core assessments within the quarterly grading period the retention process as outline below will take place.
- During the initial parent / teacher meeting and all future meetings, an improvement plan will be created and agreed upon by the teacher and parent. The improvement plan will include additional mandatory tutoring, homework activities and additional assessments. Desert Star Academy, Inc. believes it is the responsibility of the school, scholar and family to provide support for the overall success of the scholar. The school director will be informed of the meeting results by receiving a copy of the improvement plan.
- If the scholar's performance improves and the grades meet the standards no further action will be required.
- IF the scholar's achievements do not improve in four weeks and meet the minimum standards a second parent meeting will take place. The school director will be present at the second meeting. A new improvement plan will be made and progress will be monitored.
- Upon the completion of two cycles of improvement plans with no improvements an official letter notifying the parents of the scholar being "at risk" for retention will be sent home to the parents via US Mail.
- Another parent meeting will be held with a new improvement plan and weekly monitoring by the teacher.

- If after three meetings and improvement plans have been implemented and monitored with below standard achievements the scholar will be officially recommended by the classroom teacher for retention. Recommendation will be given to the school director.
- An official retention meeting will take place between the teacher, parent and school director. The scholar will then be retained unless a mutual agreement between the teacher parent and school director determine it is in the best interest of the scholar to move on to the next grade.

Timeline for retention

- Midterm and quarterly progress / evaluation reports are sent home, parent meeting scheduled and improvement plans implemented
- Mid-January official "at-risk" of retention letters are mailed home via US Mail
- Mid-March, following 3rd quarter report card, an official plan to retain letter is sent home
- May of the current school year an official letter of retention is sent home with the date and time of the official retention meeting.
- End of year report card will report official scholar retention.

Desert Star Academy believes that all scholars are capable of learning given the instruction meets their learning style and modalities. The Academy is committed to each scholar and family by providing necessary tools and supports needed to make the required progress.

Special Education and English Language Learner Students

Promotion of students with IEP's or identified as English Language Learners will be determined by the IEP team or the school staff in relation to the ELL scholars on the basis of the scholar's progress toward the IEP and ELL goals. Promotion requirement for Special Education and ELL students are as follows:

- All students with an IEP must meet 70% or more of standard aligned IEP goals. If a scholar does not meet this criterion, he or she will be considered for retention; however, the ultimate decision regarding promotion or retention will fall upon the IEP team at the annual IEP team meeting after going through due process for the given student.
- ELL students shall be promoted to the next grade at the end of the academic year as long as they can demonstrate significant progress on their individual language learning goals and improve their scores on the annual AZELLA assessment.
- If adequate progress is not made toward the learning goals, a parent meeting will be held with the teacher, School Director and parent to implement new strategies and programs to ensure the scholar is on track to meet the required promotion criteria. Once the new strategies are in place and implemented for four weeks a follow-up parent meeting will be scheduled with the team to discuss further options available to the student and family.

Criteria for Promotion for Special Needs Scholars:

- The criteria for promotion of a special needs scholar will remain the same as for the regular education scholars.
- Each scholar must achieve a 70% or higher overall in each subject area listed above in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The overall grade will be based on a weighted average 80% from scores on the Common Core Standard assessments and 20% from classwork and projects.
- Each scholar must achieve a minimum score of 80% on all individual Common Core summative and formative assessments to be promoted to the next grade. The teacher will reteach and assess each scholar until an 80% mastery level is achieved.
- A scholar will not be promoted unless all content area meets the above requirements or a special meeting with the school director, teacher and parent is held to decide otherwise
- The special needs scholars will meet the above criteria with modifications and accommodations to the curriculum as stated in their IEP.
- In "exceptional" cases where the special needs scholar is not able to read, write or function in a traditional classroom environment the IEP team will meet prior to the start of the school year and decided the criteria for promotion based on the needs of the scholar. The school director will be present at the IEP team meeting to sign off on decisions made and to ensure the needs of the scholar is being meet. The exact percentage needed for promotion will vary from scholar to scholar based on the severity of the disability, therefore the percentages and requirements will be established by the IEP team and school director.

Process for Promoting Special Needs Scholars

- The process for promoting special needs scholars will begin with the IEP team meeting.
- The severity of the disability, the needs and capabilities of the scholars will be discussed by the IEP team. Any scholar with a "Specific Learning Disability" label will meet the requirements and the process of the general population scholars.
- For the scholars with more severe disabilities that are not able to function in the traditional classroom the process will begin with the IEP team meeting at the end of the school meeting where promotion is discussed.
- It will be the decision of the IEP team to establish the criteria as stated above.
- Once the criteria is established, the scholar the process for promotion will be the same as for the regular education scholar.
- Progress will be monitored and documented. If the scholar is failing to meet the requirements a parent meeting will be held to create an action plan
- The next step will be to hold an IEP team meeting to implement an action plan
- If the progress meetings and goals are continually not met the IEP team will convene and with the school director decide to or not to promote the scholar. The decision of the IEP team and school director will be final.

Criteria and Process for Progress of ELL scholars:

- The criteria and process for ELL scholars will be the same as for regular education scholars.
- Modification and accommodations will be adhered to as directed by the ELL goals and objectives documented in each scholar's learning plan.
- Each scholar will have supports in and out of the classroom as directed by the learning plan for a period of two years or until the scholar scores proficient on the annual assessment.
- The process for promotion and retention will be the same standards as for regular education scholars.