Mastery of Core Academic Content

A student is considered to have achieved mastery of a course's content and to be promoted from one level to the next level of learning when the student's average for work in the class reaches 85%. All evaluation for mastery takes into account the complete assessment of the student's performance, including the various descriptive categories on the evaluation forms. It should be kept in mind that achievement at a level below 85%, while not indicative of mastery, may still represent considerable growth in understanding, as well as indicating strong effort applied to studies. This is why narrative evaluation, in which the student's approach to learning in general is taken into account, along with personal improvement, is critical to effective and complete evaluation.

Grades

The grading scale to be used for reporting grades to parents and to other schools is as follows:

A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
F	below 60%

The grade assigned takes into account both the averages for various categories of quantitative assessment relevant to the individual course (e.g., tests, quizzes, homework, essays,) and the qualitative narrative assessment by the teacher.

Grade Level Promotion:

The sequential nature of curriculum and instruction at Sierra Preparatory Academy requires that a student have a grasp of the majority of a subject's content if that student is to experience academic success and satisfaction.

- In order for students to be promoted to the next grade level, they must demonstrate at least a basic understanding by earning a "D" or higher in every class. Students must pass all of their courses to be admitted to the next grade level.
- For students on a remediation plan, students must pass the summer school/study plan established by the headmaster and teacher to be promoted to the next grade.
- Because grammar and writing is such a demanding, essential aspect of the high school curriculum, Sierra Preparatory Academy does require that all 8th graders pass a comprehensive composition exam at the end of the 8th grade year in order to be promoted to the high school. This requirement is above and beyond the passing grade required from the 8th grade Literature and Composition course. Students will receive two chances to pass the exam prior to the end of the year. Students who do not pass the exam will be required to take a summer "Comp Camp" before being admitted to the high school.
- If a student fails two or more classes at the trimester (Humane Letters at the high school level counts as two classes) then he or she is not eligible for summer study/school and must repeat the entire year. Students are allowed to make-up one failing trimester grade per year through an appropriate offsite course approved by the Headmaster.
- Students in special education, if unable to meet regular academic requirements for promotion, must meet the requirements of an alternative curriculum derived from the regular curriculum, which will be developed by an IEP team on an individual basis. Every effort will be made to offer the same quality with alternatives that encourage full inclusion.
- ELL students will also be integrated within the common curriculum and will receive direct instruction support through ELL services.

Retention: If a student fails two or more classes at the end of a trimester (Humane Letters at the high school level counts as two classes) then he or she is not eligible for summer study/school and must repeat

the entire year. No decision for retention shall be made without parent involvement and student counseling. Students are allowed to make-up one failing trimester grade per year through an appropriate offsite course approved by the headmaster.

Remediation: Remediation is enhanced through the general structure of Sierra Prep Academy's classes and academic work:

- *Small Class Size:* With a maximum class size of 22 students, the Academy's instructional methodology maximizes opportunities for students to demonstrate their level of understanding of a subject through guided activity. The teacher can intervene to correct misimpressions or erroneous thinking before moving on.
- *Homework:* Regular assignment of homework gives another means by which students can individually test mastery of ideas before continuing to new material, and seek assistance with areas of difficulty.
- *Tutoring:*
    - Teachers will publish and maintain regular tutoring hours, with the average teacher making tutoring sessions available three times per week.
    - Following the successful practice of Tempe Preparatory Academy and Great Hearts Academies, tutoring rooms such as a "Math Lab" or "Writing Lab" will be assigned in which math and Language/Arts teachers are available to meet with any students requesting help, even if students in the teacher's own class are not in need of assistance that day.
    - A zero-hour class before school in the subject the student is failing
- *Summer School:* If a student receives an "F" for any trimester of a class despite opportunities for remediation offered throughout the year, s/he must complete an approved summer school program to make up the credit.
- *"Catch-up" summer school classes:* In addition to mandatory summer school for students who fail a course or courses during the year, Sierra Preparatory Academy will also provide "catch-up" summer school classes for new students or transfer students prior to the start of the year, such as Latin I and math remediation.
- *Study-Skills Workshop*: Sierra Preparatory Academy will offer an optional study-skills workshop to new students, as well as older students who wish to improve their skills in this regard on a Saturday early in the first trimester of school. This workshop has proven to be an extremely successful practice at Tempe Preparatory Academy and Great Hearts Academies schools in helping students succeed in the rigor of a liberal arts academic environment.