A.3.1 MASTERY AND PROMOTION

Level of Proficiency

Hirsch Academy: CFA will differentiate between "proficiency" and "mastery" to encourage our students to do their daily best and to demonstrate that we hold high expectations for success for all students.

Students having 75% proficiency or greater display a solid understanding of all content taught and skills learned, with ***reasonable*** *accuracy* and *without major misunderstanding*. At Hirsch Academy: CFA 75% proficiency or greater demonstrates the student is *Meeting* the Arizona State Academic Standards. A *proficiency* grade point average (GPA) of 75% or greater across the core content areas is required for K-8th grade students to be *promoted* on to the next grade level.

Examples taken from the Arizona Legislative website for ARS 15-701 and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) website June 24, 2012, note the following criteria for 3rd Grade promotion beginning in 2013-14, and demonstrate expectations for proficiency:

> From the ADE website:
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> "It remains critically important that all of Arizona's young students are reading **proficiently** by the end of third grade. Academic success in the ensuing grades demands it."
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> From ARS 15-701 with regard to reading "competency" at the end of 3rd Grade:
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> "A requirement that a pupil not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona instrument to measure standards test, or a successor test, that demonstrates that the pupil's reading ***falls far below*** the third grade level.

This example suggests that if the standards passing rate designations are "Falls Far Below, Approaching, Meets and Exceeds", then Approaching the standard in Reading at the end of 3rd Grade is proficient, and the student may be promoted to the next grade level.

At Hirsch Academy: CFA the standards are taught, assessed and formally accounted for in quarterly Standards-Based Progress Reports. In our school, proficiency differs from mastery in that a student *grade* of 80%, as noted in sample lessons for Hirsch Academy: CFA, demonstrates *mastery, for a* ***high*** *level of accuracy.* An 80% or higher grade demonstrates to us that the student is performing at a level *Exceeding* the Arizona State Standard.

One might ask the question, "How much of what we learn over a lifetime do we truly 'master'?" At the same time we would not encourage our students to settle for "that's good enough for now" but rather would encourage them to work towards "mastery" and to exceed the standard in a continuous cycle of improvement just as those who become "expert" in their field or craft, do. It is our intent to open as many doors as possible in the future for our students at Hirsch Academy:

CFA by offering them the opportunity and support to stretch and reach for their personal best, beginning in the early years.

Criteria for Grade Level Promotion

Grade level promotion will be data-driven. Purposeful and meaningfully assessed standards-based *grades of 75%* or better will indicate *proficiency*. Because the curriculum of Core Knowledge and of Singapore math spiral, for example, and because remediation will be available in several formats as students progress, a student may pass into the next grade with an overall progress report GPA at the *proficiency* level even if one or more subject areas are below proficiency in the 69-74% range. To be promoted when not all core subject area grade averages are 75%, the student must demonstrate a trend towards academic improvement and have exhibited a strong effort through such as things as consistently turning in his/her homework, availing him/herself of tutoring or remediation opportunities, and demonstrating an effort to improve. The exception is when a student is reading more than a year below grade level. Failure to progress in this skill will be met with significant interventions from the school and will be grounds for not promoting a student to the next grade level.

When considering grade level retention, a team consisting of a teacher, parent, and the School Director will consider the student's progress report grades, student scores on school benchmark and state assessment tests (reviewed in Summer before the start in August), and other indicators as the team feels appropriate. In general, there will not be social promotions at Hirsch Academy: CFA.

Process for Grade Level Promotion

Within the framework of instructionally focused accountability, ongoing assessment and progress monitoring will take place in all grade levels at Hirsch Academy: CFA. Student achievement data for the core subjects will be reviewed monthly in grade level team meetings and reported out to the School Director at least quarterly. Teachers will be asked in mid-January to identify any students who may be at risk for grade level retention. The teacher will meet with the School Director by mid-February to review formative and summative assessment data and other factors as noted above. It may be determined that the teacher will complete a Light's Retention Scale, or other such screening, to further identify a student's potential for success if retained an additional year at the same grade level. The teacher, parent, administrator and any other relevant service providers would meet to review all data and a staff recommendation would be made for promotion or retention. Otherwise, if a student has demonstrated an average proficiency grade of 75% across all core subjects, and benchmark or standardized test data also demonstrate *proficiency for having Met or Exceeded the standards,* the student will be placed in the next grade level.

Remediation Plan

To properly prepare Hirsch Academy: CFA students for their future success, the school offers a content rich curriculum and varied delivery methods to engage all students. It offers a variety of remediation opportunities such as, but not limited to:

- Whole Group re-teaching – Teachers assess overall class comprehension and re-teach, in a different format, concepts for which the majority of the class of students does not have mastery.
- Small Group and Individual in-class remediation – Teachers offer additional guidance to struggling students (those averaging below 75% on scored work) during small group and individual assignments.
- Individual out-of-class remediation – Teachers help parents provide at home assistance for struggling students. This work will take many forms depending on student need and parent capacity. It could be:
    - Additional or alternative homework
    - Teaching a parent to assist a student with memorization.
    - A workshop to help parents learn to organize a study space or to understand concepts being taught.
- Individual out-of-class but in-school remediation
    - Hirsch Academy: CFA will assign a trained employee or volunteer to conduct support sessions during student lunch times.
    - Teachers will make themselves available for at least two half-hour sessions of tutoring (before or after school or during lunch) each week.
    - An on- staff identified, or contracted, Reading Specialist will provide additional assistance to students who qualify for Tier 3 service. Progress monitoring data will be reviewed with grade level teachers and administration every 4-6 weeks.
- Students falling behind or below grade level in reading, language or math will be closely tracked and remediation will be implemented by the classroom teacher. An improvement plan will be developed for 100% of students not reading on grade level. Teachers will work with parents and administration to develop and implement a plan for improving the reading level.

Differentiated instructional strategies will be used for all students, either low performing or high performing, to address their individual academic needs. Differentiation strategies can be used for remediation and enrichment and Hirsch Academy: CFA teachers will receive professional development as needed to ensure such strategies are used effectively.

Additionally, Hirsch Academy: CFA will provide special education and 504 services as appropriate. *(See Section A.3 Program of Instruction, pg 8.)* The school will contract out for reading specialist and special education services until fiscally able to support such services on staff. *(See Section B.3.2 Contracted Services, pg 2.)*

Source

Examples of "proficiency" (competency) compared to "mastery":

http://www.virginia.edu/classics/proficiency.html

http://english.stackexchange.com/questions/59612/difference-between-mastery-proficiency-and-familiarity

http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/2011/09/21/third-grade-retention-letter/

http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/15/00701.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS