Education Plan

A.3.1 Mastery and Promotion

Criteria for promotion from one level to the next
Level of proficiency that students must obtain to demonstrate mastery of academic core content

Students at John Hancock Academy will demonstrate their mastery of standards based core academic content when they achieve a level of proficiency of 80% or higher. A Proficiency benchmark grade level of 80% is considered a grade of "C" on the school score scale. The school's goal is to have students maintain a minimum score of 80% on all classroom assignments, assessments, quizzes, classroom tests and report cards. The same benchmark may be achieved with a score of 80% or higher on standards-aligned diagnostic tests (issued quarterly) or a passing or higher score on the AIMS (PARCC in the future).

The Gaddie Educational Model defines mastery as a student's measurable understanding and command of subject matter in a tested format. Information must be mastered before students move on to new material. DIBELS and Galileo technology will be used to continually monitor the student's academic progress throughout the school- year through AIMS and classroom performance.

Mastery-Based Instruction is a pivotal instructional methodology, which has proven through research and evidence in helping every student to master core academic content. The Gaddie Educational Model, which the founder of John Hancock Academy perfected while providing K-12 academic instruction for approximately 20,000 students of the course of the last 30 years incorporates that instructional methodology.

Students who enroll in John Hancock Academy with below passing test scores or do not demonstrate sufficient mastery of the standards based content in core academic subjects will be placed in tutoring, and/or given other remediation such as building of study skills, attendance plan, additional assignments as required within reason. John Hancock Academy is committed to help improve the academic progress of all of its students through constant intervention and assessment and allocation of available resources. The school's policy of 90 minutes of instruction per day in core academics helps struggling students catch up and excel. Additionally, the spiraling of the curriculum within the Gaddie model allows that students maintain mastery throughout their school career.

Grade level promotion/retention

Grades:

In the Gaddie Educational Model, grades given in core classes are percentages, which reflect actual achievement in the core classes based on class work, homework, assessments and participation. Music, Computer, PE and Art give letter grades only. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A = 94% to 100%
B = 87% to 93.5%
C = 80% to 86.5%
D = 73% to 79.5%
F = 0% to 72.5%

Grade Level Promotion:

Students at John Hancock Academy must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade level:

1. All students achieve an average yearly grade of "C" (80%) or higher core academic subjects;
2. All students must have no more than 10 absences during the school year;
3. All students must demonstrate an overall compliance with all school rules, policies, and procedures, including but not limited to completing all class work , arrive at school promptly, and in dress code, act appropriately everywhere on campus, follow teacher's directions, turn in homework, etc.).
4. All students must demonstrate through their classroom assessments, AIMS results, and quarterly diagnostic exams, which measures student's grade-level proficiency that they have satisfactorily met all the statewide standards requirements to progress to the next higher grade level.
5. In the cases of students receiving special education services, special education staff will be included in the grade level promotion process to insure compliance with all local, state and federal 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 study requirements identified in their IEP , which may differ from the school's criteria stated above as outlined in their IEPs.

Retention:

The Gaddie Educational Philosophy does not support the concept of retaining students because the founder believes all students can learn. This belief was formed over the course of over 30 years of classroom educational experience of the founder, which has supplied numerous evidence of the long-term detrimental effects of retaining students.

The Gaddie instructional delivery methodology has been developed with the quality and resources to support the curriculum delivery process and to ensure the academic success of each and every child - no child is left behind and allowed to "fail" - the system allows for a wide range of educational needs of children to be successfully addressed and met. Additionally, the Gaddie Educational Model includes a comprehensive interventions system that is imbedded in the instruction and well developed remediation plan and methodology for students, who continue to struggle with academic material.

If a child does not receive at least 80 % mastery level, then the child is re-taught and the test is given again. This process can go on for three times until mastery is reached. Under this system, no child is allowed to “fail.” Teachers will re-teach a concept until each student masters it, and tutoring will be made available in pullout groups to any struggling students.

In addition to ongoing teacher evaluations in the classroom, the Gaddie Educational Model incorporates a comprehensive assessment and progress monitoring system, which includes benchmarking and diagnostic tools to identify gaps and guide instruction in the classroom to meet the individual need of each and avery child.

- WRAT will be used as a diagnostic tool for reading, spelling and math in the mid-term to new teachers and to the lowest ability group for each grade in order to identify students who may be falling behind.
- DIBELS®[1] will be used to assess reading skills (Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Accuracy and Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension) on an individual basis and will be administered to grades K-3 three times during the school year – at the beginning, in the middle, and toward the end of the school year.

[1] DIBELS®: Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds.). (2002). Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (6th ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement. Available: http://dibels.uoregon.edu/

- The DIBELS® measures of reading skills will be used for instructional decision-making (i.e., to identify students who need additional instructional support and monitoring response to intervention).
- Galileo K-12 Online[2], a research-based online standards-based instructional improvement system, will be used to monitor the second through sixth grade students' mastery of the Arizona State Standards, including Common Core Standards. Teachers will use the assessment results to identify specific performance objectives that each student struggles with in order to tailor remediation to individual student need. When assessment results indicate a need for remediation, a diagnosis will be made of the knowledge and the skills that the child lacks.
- The Gaddie Educational Model also incorporates Response to Intervention to identify a student's frustration level and assign tutoring. The teacher will communicate with the parents regarding the academic status of their child.

The Gaddie Educational Model includes teacher's aides (full-time for K-1 grades and part-time for 2-6 grades), whose function is for concept reinforcement and remedial "pull-out" resource when student performance is falling below mastery.

In addition, the needs of students who do not perform at grade level assessments and/or state mandated assessments (AIMS), despite the ongoing remediation available in the school, would be addressed as follows:

- Determine whether the student is doing his/her job in terms of attendance, attention in the classroom, and completion of class work and homework; and
- Determine whether the teacher is doing his/her job of teaching and consistently requiring a given level of student performance, or needs additional classroom support.

If one or both parties are not doing the required work, then appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the work is done. If these steps do not solve the problem, or if both parties are performing the required work, then an effort is made to:

- Isolate those factors that may be ameliorated in the school environment from those which may not; and
- Develop, in concert with the parents and teacher and any other necessary professional educators, an individual learning plan to address factors or materials that the school may correct or supply

Children who have special needs will be identified, evaluated and have IEPs developed and implemented. The Gaddie Educational Model has systems in place to respond to the special needs of identified children, complete their IEPs, so that they can return to regular education class.

While very strong on that belief, the founder recognizes the need to form a policy on retention. In her over 30 years of experience as an educator, the founder has observed rare instances (less than 5 students of over 20,000 educated), where a retention decision had to be made, despite all intervention, remediation and academic support efforts. In such cases, the school teachers will be authorized by the School Governing Board to make exception recommendations when appropriate. John Hancock Academy will distribute progress reports to parents every 3 weeks of students who receive 79% or less on their scores. The school teachers will notify the administration as soon as possible when they believe a student is in danger of falling behind. Parents will be constantly informed of their child's progress as remediation/intervention and other support is implemented.

[2] Galileo K-12 Online from Assessment Technology Incorporated. Available: http://ati-online.com/

Retention will be considered, only in instances where there is a strong likelihood that the student will benefit academically, socially, and emotionally. In most circumstances emphasis will be placed on the implementation of an intervention plan to prevent retention. Additional factors will be analyzed when considering a student for retention. No one factor by itself is sufficient reason for retention:

- **Factors of the instructional situation:** effects of instructional interventions and remediation activities; effective on-going communication plan with parents; time requirements/flexibility for learning; time requirements/flexibility for learning; opportunities for additional learning; results of accommodations and/or modifications; use of alternative assessments.
- **Factors related to the child:** individual learning style/preferences; perceived/documented ability; age/grade of siblings; previous retention; history of learning disabilities of other special learning needs; student & parent attitude about possible retention; motivation for learning; history of delinquency/pre-delinquent behaviors; knowledge of English language and rate of acquisition; transience; emotional problems; experiential background; health history; immature behavior/personality characteristics.