A.3.1 Mastery and Promotion

Pieceful Solutions Charter School will primarily target students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Based on research of the enrollment trends at other charter schools, as well as uses personal experience of the founders in establishing and successfully operating the private school. Based on that Pieceful Solutions expects to enroll the following three groups of students:

- The majority of students, who would enroll in the school will be diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and will be on Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Pieceful Solutions expects to have a small number of students, who will have diagnoses other than ASD, and will also have Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Pieceful Solutions does not rule out the possibility of enrolling a very small number of regular education students, whose parents would chose the benefits of a highly individualized educational model. Those students would still have an individualized program of instruction in the form of a Personal Education Plan (PEP).

Level of proficiency that students must obtain to demonstrate mastery of academic core content

Children enrolled at Pieceful Solutions will be working on their own individualized IEP or PEP goals, aligned with either the Arizona Academic Standards or the Alternative State Standards. A goal will be written with the purpose of providing intensive and rigorous instruction in the core subject area until the student can perform on the goal skill with 80% accuracy.

Criteria for promotion from one level to the next

The IEP or PEP goals will be written for a one-year period of time. They will also contain the specific criteria for achieving these goals. Students will work on their IEP or PEP goals throughout all school activities. Teachers and support personnel will be responsible for collecting data throughout the day and creating data sheets. Data from the data sheets will be graphed at the end of each week and reviewed weekly by the teacher and biweekly by the Assistant Director.

In general, the following criteria will be applied when promoting a student from one level to the next:

- Teaching Phase: If a student performs the goal with 80% accuracy, he/she would be considered to have mastered the goal.
- Generalization Phase: Once a student has mastered a particular goal, it will go through a generalization stage to make sure that it can be generalized across three different settings, three novel individuals (e.g. teachers, aides, parents) and a variety of novel materials. Criteria for mastery on a generalization check will be the same as the teaching phase.
- Maintenance Phase:
  - Weekly Maintenance: Once a skill has been generalized it will go into weekly maintenance. Data will be collected once a week until criteria for mastery has been met for three consecutive weeks.
  - Monthly Maintenance: Once weekly maintenance of the goal has been achieved, the goal will go into monthly maintenance. Data will be collected once a month until criteria for mastery has been met for three consecutive months.
  - If at any time during the maintenance process a skill drops below 50% accuracy, it will be reviewed and the team will determine if it needs to go back into the teaching program. This process will take place for all academic goals outlined in students' IEPs and PEPs.

- Remediation Phase: If a student per forms below 50% accuracy on a particular goal for three consecutive days and there is no upward trend in the rate of goal acquisition, the teaching program will be modified to include different teaching methods and strategies, such as breaking the goal into additional smaller tasks, shaping, prompting, errorless learning strategies or other methods identified, to ensure the student's success in mastering the goal. When necessary, the MET team, responsible for writing and reviewing of the goals, may revise and/or rewrite the goal, if the MET team feels that a change in the student's plan is necessary.

Grade level promotion/retention

Students at Pieceful Solutions Charter School will be expected to meet the goals prescribed in their IEPs and PEPs to be promoted to the next grade level. The IEP or PEP goals will be written for a one-year period of time.

- **Higher -Functioning Students:** These students diagnosed with autism have the intellectual ability to perform at or above grade level, but often these students are performing multiple years below grade level because they have not been able to access the regular education curriculum through traditional teaching strategies, or their IEPs have been poorly implemented. Pieceful Solutions Charter School will empower these students by offering intensive, highly individualized instructional programs that will eliminate the achievement gap and help them produce work that is at or above grade level. Pieceful Solutions Charter School will have rigorous academic goals for these students. They will be given intensive supports to achieve mastery in all content areas – defined as 80% or above in summative assessments in the core subject areas. The goal for these students will be to diminish their autism symptoms and help them acquire the social and functional skills necessary to achieve academically in a mainstream, general education environment.

- **Lower-Functioning Students:** There are other students with autism who have significant intellectual disabilities and are considered "lower-functioning" on the autism spectrum. Pieceful Solutions Charter School will also have ambitious, rigorous goals for these students and will empower them to achieve their full potential through intensive, individualized instructional programs. The goal for those students will be to ensure that at a minimum, students on the lower end of the autism spectrum make at least one academic year of growth in one academic year and don't lose any previously learned skills. One year of growth would be considered a significant success for those students, given the fact that often, students who are significantly impaired by their autism can make less than two months of progress in one academic year or may even regress in their skills during an academic year due to ineffective teaching strategies, as noted in research. By delivering a curriculum using evidence-based, individualized programs, students with autism who have significant intellectual disabilities can have the best chance at accessing the Arizona Academic Standards and making progress toward meaningful grade level promotions.

Process and for Grade Level Promotions:
Pieceful Solutions Charter Schools will make grade-level promotion decisions based on:
(1) Students' performance on their IEPs /PEPs goals as measured by the prescribed assessments for the particular goals in the IEPs /PEPs plans, and
(2) Results of cumulative summative assessments in each academic content area.

Data will be gathered daily, graphed and analyzed weekly by the teachers and reviewed by the Assistant Director at least biweekly. Parents will be notified weekly of the student's progress toward promotion in each content area. Students not making progress toward promotion will be identified early on and targeted remediation plans will be developed to help student attain mastery and achieve promotion.

Criteria for Grade Level Promotion:
In each content area, students in grades K-5 must either:

a) Perform to Mastery (80% or above) on summative assessments measuring performance on the Arizona Academic Standards and have a passing score on AIMS (subsequently PARCC) (for students in 3rd-5th grade).
b) Perform to Proficiency (70%-79%) on summative assessments measuring performance on the Arizona Academic Standards and have a passing score on the AIMS test (subsequently PARCC) (for students in 3rd-5th grade). These students must be willing to do special projects, participate in prescribed remediation so that they achieve mastery by the next grading period. Must also have 88% attendance.
c) IEP students: Grow at least one grade level in core content areas as measured by the same initial assessment taken at the beginning of the school year and maintain an average of 70% or higher on summative assessments prescribed to measure performance on each IEP goal in the core content areas.

Remediation
Extensive data collection and analysis will be embedded in every student's individualized program, which will allow for immediate identification of students not making adequate progress toward grade level promotion. Pieceful Solutions Charter School will use all possible resources to accelerate student learning including but not limited to, additional instructional time, modifying teaching methods and strategies, modifying IEP/PEP goals to ensure prerequisite skills are taught, conducting parent-teacher conferences, team meetings with senior teaching staff to identify remediation additional remediation strategies.

Retention
Because autistic students often have "scattered skills," meaning they excel in one area while having major deficiencies in others, it is common for students to achieve mastery in one content area but need remediation or even retention in another. If the above requirements are not met in a single content area, students can be retained in that content area during the next academic year until meeting the requirement for that subject. Students not meeting promotion requirements in a single content area may be promoted to the next grade level with a remediation plan in the specific content area. If students fail to demonstrate proficiency in two or more of the five curricular areas (Reading, Writing, Math, Science and Social Studies) they may be retained in their present grade. Full retention will occur only after a MET team meeting including Teacher, Assistant Dierctor, parents and any other pertinent special education service providers (Speech Pathologist/Occupational Therapist) has taken place to determine extent to which student has fallen short of proficiency and mastery in IEP/PEP goals and an explicit remediation plan has been written. The goal will be to accelerate student learning so they meet the criteria necessary to be promoted to the next grade level within one year.