A.3.1 Mastery and Promotion

Mastery Level

Students at Scottsdale Country Day School must achieve an 80% or higher level of proficiency in order to demonstrate mastery of grade articulated Common Core and Arizona State Standards in reading, writing, science, and mathematics.

The assessment system and progress monitoring at the school provides immediate feedback and information to the students if a particular standard has been mastered through ongoing formative and summative assessments. Additionally, SCDS has established policies to ensure continuous communication by staff to students and parents, of student academic progress and mastery of standards.

Grade Level Promotion – Process

Scottsdale Country Day School will use the following process for grade level promotion:

1. No student will advance to the next grade level without having attained the mastery level of 80% for Common Core State Standards in ELA/Mathematics and Arizona State Standards in Science.
2. Students scoring below the mastery level in core academic content will be assigned to intervention and remediation.
3. Students who continue to struggle in mastering core academic content after remediation will be referred to special education evaluation.
4. Where a student fails to meet the criteria for grade level promotion as outlined, retention will be considered. The final retention decision will be made by the Principal regarding whether a student should be promoted to the next higher grade level or above, after careful consideration of all relevant factors.

Grade Level Promotion – Criteria

Scottsdale Country Day School defines the following criteria for grade level promotion:

- 80% mastery level of core content of the grade articulated Arizona State and Common Core Standards for grades KG-6th grade).
- *Meets* or *Exceeds* score on the reading and math sections of the state mandated testing AIMS (for grades 3-6).
- A passing score on each section of the Stanford 10 assessment (for grade 2).
- Above C Grade on the core content areas of the end of year *Report Card Evaluation:* A Letter grades (A-F) are determined from 80% formative/summative assessments, 10% homework completion, 5% participation, and 5% attendance/tardy rate.
- At least 95% attendance: Students should be present each day. However, students who are absent nine (5%) or more days or have excessive tardies or check outs (more than 7), will be at risk for retention as attendance at SCDS and full participation in academics is essential for students to succeed.

Intervention and Remediation

At Scottsdale Country Day School, we are committed to the success of every student. Dedicated teachers help students in their classrooms each day to master course content, which is set at 80%

or higher. As a school we support students and teachers with a school plan for intervention and remediation.

Intervention:
We define intervention as the measures we take to help students learn before the evaluations (i.e., report cards) are assigned. Some intervention strategies include:

Personal Plan of Instruction

A Personal Plan of Instruction (PPI) is a personalized program created with a well-defined set of objectives and goals to track an individual student's progress. This program of instruction is designed for students who are either struggling or require a more advanced academic program. Rigorous curricula may be presented individually or in a small group when assisting a student on a PPI,

Through the PPI, students meet with their teacher and develop long-term goals for academic success. Students then review their grades or goals, and make short-term goals to improve. This plan is communicated to the student's parents and consequences and rewards are set. Reviews continue until the long-term goals are accomplished.

Computer-assisted technology is used to provide extensive resources to these students "on demand" and supports student-paced success. Adapted from Keller's (1968) *Personalized System of Instruction* methodology, students take tests as soon as they think they have learned the material, and the tests are immediately graded with immediate feedback. If there is less than mastery, the students and teacher will review the material in which they are having trouble, and retake the test as often as necessary. This will also provide feedback to the student regarding if a particular standard has been mastered.

Individualized Plan
The PPI empowers students to track their own progress which initiates student ownership of learning goals. Through analysis and evaluation of data, administrators, teachers, parents, and students are able to devise an academic plan for each student to achieve learning gains. As a reference, baseline achievement levels are incorporated into each student's PPI as a starting point for determining future rates of academic progress.

Based on areas of mastery and deficiency, students' PPI's are then modified. Goals are set for each student, skill areas are identified, and student grouping based upon academic needs is adjusted. Each student's PPI will serve as the foundation from which to measure student outcomes. The outcomes will be congruent with AZ State Standards and the Common Core Standards are expected, at a minimum, to achieve mastery for each grade level and the goals and objectives specified in their Personalized Learning Plans.

The student's teacher will consider the following information when assessing the student's strengths and weaknesses:

- The student's academic performance prior to his/her enrollment
- The results of any achievement testing
- Examples of the student's work

- A written or oral statement from the student about what they like to learn and a parent statement about how their child learns best (e.g., in a quiet place, working in groups, etc.)
- Reports and observations from the student's teachers
- Information and suggestions from the student's parents

Projects, assignments, tests and any other information that indicate mastery of specific skills will be collected in the student's portfolio as evidence of progress made. A measure of each student's rate of academic gains will be determined at the end of the year via their individual portfolio and the comparison of AIMS learning gains.

Counseling Groups

Often events outside of school contribute to struggles within school. Throughout the school year, student help groups are formed. Weekly, students will have opportunities to participate in group activities designed to help them cope with events in their life. Students are pulled out of class, but the time is rotated so that students do not miss the same class period more than once.

Remediation:

Remediation is what we do to help students to learn the material even after the evaluation. Some remediation methods used at SCDS are:

- Individual tutoring before, during, or after school
- Conferencing with student and devising a remediation plan
- Conferencing with parent and devising a remediation plan
- Providing additional work/resources and presentation opportunities

Retention:

If there is any question or doubt as to whether a student should be recommended for promotion to the grade level above, the teacher should seek feedback from the student's parents and also the Principal of the school. The final decision will be made by the Principal regarding whether a student should be promoted to the next higher grade level or above. Teachers are trained to communicate effectively and at the first sign that a student exhibits signs of potential retention. The earlier this communication is made, the earlier remediation can begin.

Retention Philosophy

SCDS believes that in some student cases, grade retention is ineffective for improving achievement and ability. Jimerson (2001) supports this by highlighting studies indicate that student achievement and performance are no better after repeating a grade than for continuously promoted students. We recognize that grade repetition does not correct the original learning problem, and all possible avenues must be taken before retention is determined.

Identifying Retention Candidates

The following policies are intended to assist the staff of SCDS and parents in identifying those children who are most likely to benefit from retention and those who are not:

- If the student is failing to make normal progress, the parents will be notified early, so that the school and home may cooperate in helping him/her achieve greater success. This

communication is not to discuss retention, but to facilitate working as a team to help the student succeed and to know if a particular standard has been mastered.

- Students reading one or more years below grade level may be considered for retention based on local assessments and the AIMS, STANFORD 10, or DIBELS assessment. Students reading below grade level would be identified and provided remedial reading services throughout the school year.
- When considering promotion or retention, other factors should be considered. These factors include social maturity, emotional maturity, previous retentions, environmental factors, and physical maturity and development.
- Retention is never to be used as a punishment.
- Retention decisions will be guided in part by student's teacher and Principal.
- The Principal will make the final decision, with input from the student's teachers, Assistant Principal, and the student's parents.

Special Education

Students enrolled in special education must meet the course of study and promotion requirements outlined in their Individualized Educational Plan. Students placed in special education classes in 6th grade are eligible to receive the standard certificate of promotion without meeting state competency requirements, but reference to special education placement will be noted on the student's transcript.