A.3.1 Mastery and Promotion

SySTEM Phoenix will use a mastery-based grading system based on Dr. Robert Marzano's model of standards-based grading. Rather than averaging grades, as done in the traditional grading system, students will be assessed based on their mastery of each individual Learning Goal within a subject. All course grades will be based on mastery of the Essential Learning Goals, which will be developed prior to the beginning of a course by drawing from a variety of rigorous standards, including ACT, Common Core, and Next Generation Science Standards as detailed in section A.3 Program of Instruction. Standards will be evaluated on endurance, readiness, and leverage of the skill to determine which will be considered Essential Learning Goals. After Learning Goals are determined, teachers will base all units of instruction on mastering the Learning Goals. Students will be promoted to the next grade level when they have mastered at least 80% of the Essential Learning Goals within each core subject block (English Language Arts/Social Studies, Math/Science, and STEM in Action). Student mastery of Learning Goals will be tracked using an assessment tracking (learning management system) software such as "Test Whiz", "Kickboard", or "Mastery Connect" to ensure students, staff, and parents have easy access to monitoring student mastery of each Learning Goal.

A. Criteria for Grade Level Promotion

Students at SySTEM Phoenix will ultimately demonstrate mastery through summative assessments measuring their understanding of each Learning Goal. In all core classes, at the beginning of each unit, students will be provided a list of all Learning Goals they are expected to master within the unit and, together with the teacher, will develop specific behavioral Success Criteria that demonstrate students have mastered those Learning Goals. For example:

> ***Expectation:*** Reading for Meaning - Extend understanding of texts, including complex and challenging texts, by making rich and increasingly insightful connections between the ideas in them and personal knowledge, experience, and insights to other texts and the world around them.
>
> ***Learning Goal:*** *Students will understand how to use what they know and their experience with different texts and the world to help them understand what they read.*
>
> ***Success Criteria:***
>
> 1) I can explain how a text relates to my own background.
> 2) I can explain similarities and differences between a text and prior texts read.
> 3) I can explain the meaning of a text.
> 4) I can explain how a text is connected to real-world issues.

Students will be evaluated on their ability to complete each Success Criteria to determine how well they have mastered a specific Learning Goal. Students and teachers will use these Success Criteria throughout a unit to evaluate each student's individual progress towards mastery of each Learning Goal. Prior to each summative assessment, students will participate in a variety of formative assessments, including presentations, projects, constructed response, rich tasks, short-answer, and multiple-choice tests and quizzes to demonstrate their progress towards meeting each Success Criteria and mastering each Learning

Goal. Teachers will use these assessments to modify and adjust instruction to ensure student mastery of all Learning Goals by the end of each unit.

All assessments include questions at different levels of Bloom's taxonomy to provide clear data on how deeply a student understands a Learning Goal. Student mastery of Learning Goals will be based on Marzano's 4-Point Scale, and students will receive a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4 on each Learning Goal as detailed in the table below.

Table A.3.1.1 Structure of Marzano's 4-Point Scale

Score	Description
4	In addition to Level 3, in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught.
3	No major errors or omissions regarding any of the information and/or processes (simple or complex) explicitly taught.
2	No major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes but major errors or omissions regarding the more complex ideas and processes.
1	With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes.

Students will require a score of at least a "Level 3"on each Learning Goal in order to have "mastered" the standard. If a student receives a 2 or 1 on a summative assessment of a Learning Goal, the student will receive multiple additional learning opportunities through either Tier 1, 2, or 3 interventions to develop and demonstrate mastery of the Learning Goal. The multi-tiered interventions described in the table below will be provided both during and outside of the regular school day.

Table A.3.1.2 Tiered Instruction and Intervention in a Response-to-Intervention Model[1]

Tier	Level of Response
1	Core Instruction: *All students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet their needs, and are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support.*
2	Group Interventions: *Students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress.*

[1] National Center for Learning Disabilities. Tiered Instruction/Intervention. *RTI Action Network.* Retrieved from: http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction

3	Intensive Interventions: *At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems.*

In order for a student to be promoted to the next grade level, at least 80% of all Learning Goals within a course must be mastered at Level 3 or above. Students who have not met this criteria will be carefully considered for retention after analysis of their specific needs and learning gaps. However, we anticipate retention will be rare, as all students will participate in multiple learning opportunities to master Learning Goals throughout each course, including required interventions within and after the school day.

Additionally, if a student has mastered at least 80% of all Learning Goals within a course at Level 3 or above but *not* mastered one or more specific Learning Goal(s) past Level 1, the student will be given a grade of "Incomplete" in that specific subject. The specific learning goals not mastered in the previous year will be incorporated into the student's learning plan the following school year until they are mastered.

B. Process for Grade Level Promotion and Retention

To ensure all stakeholders are regularly aware of student progress and any risk of possible retention, teachers, students, and parents will track student mastery throughout the year using an online learning management system. Parents will attend quarterly Academic Parent Teacher Team data meetings, at which time they will be provided with detailed data on their student's academic achievement and have the opportunity to discuss ways to help their student advance towards mastering Learning Goals. All parents will also attend an individual Parent/Teacher conference in December to discuss their student's achievement and any possible risk of retention. Additionally, if, at any time within the school year a student has a Level 1 on 5 or more Learning Goals, a retention meeting will be held with parents, teachers, and school administration to determine if retention is necessary and in the best interests of the student. Though a student would not be retained for one course or subject, SySTEM Phoenix's commitment to *all standards for all students* will require any Learning Goal measured at a Level 1 proficiency to continue to be addressed and assessed throughout the following school year until mastery has been demonstrated. Ultimately, a team of individuals, including the parent, school administration, and classroom teachers determine decisions regarding retention.

SySTEM Phoenix will operate a comprehensive Response to Intervention program to ensure students are provided with multiple opportunities to master Learning Goals within the English Language Arts/Social Studies and Math/Science integrated blocks through research-based Tier 1 core instruction. Additionally, the Acceleration Block provides a dedicated hour each school day to accelerating student learning by providing targeted individual tutoring to students not mastering Learning Goals and enrichment opportunities to advance the knowledge of students who have already mastered Learning Goals. Teachers will use weekly common planning time to identify students in need of individual tutoring during this daily block and create Acceleration schedules for the following week to ensure students have access to each teacher from which they need additional tutoring.