A.3.1 Mastery and Promotion

This applicant will serve any grade 8 or lower.

Kindergarten to Eighth Grade

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade will be promoted to the next grade level based on their academic achievement as shown by grade level summative assessments that determine academic achievement.

A. Criteria for Grade Level Promotion

Student readiness to move on to the next grade level will be determined using a number of academic assessments, including teacher created summative assessments, benchmark results and end of the year standardized tests. Decisions to promote will be based on the data that is collected, but all students will be expected to score at least 85% or above on the final summative benchmark assessment of the year as well as performing at an average 85% or above on all related coursework respectively in the subjects of math, reading or writing. The final decision to promote or retain will be made by the classroom teacher and can be appealed to the Board.

Students who fail to show mastery of the required content in the core subjects – reading, writing and math – will be identified for intervention by the second full week of the school year. Interventions will be monitored, and students who aren't making requisite progress will be considered for retention beginning in January. Parents will be notified if their child is falling below the expected performance levels in these subjects, and a plan of action or intervention will be put into place. Achievement for these students will be monitored closely until they are caught up or a decision for retention is made.

Grade 3

To comply with the Arizona Move on When Reading program, third grade general education students who do not pass the required State assessment in reading, will be required to repeat third grade. Parents will be notified of this provision at the beginning of the school year, and information will be included in the Parent/Student handbook.

The specific language states: a student will "not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil obtains a score on the reading portion of the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards" or any successor test that demonstrates that the pupil's reading falls far below the third grade level. Special Education students who have previously been retained and English Language Learners who have received less than two years of English Instruction are exempt. Intervention services will be provided to any student who needs them."

B. Process for Grade Level Promotion and Retention

Frequent and Regular Communication

Teachers will maintain regular contact with parents relating to their child's academic progress throughout the school year. In addition to mid-quarter and quarterly progress reports for academic content and social/essential skills areas, teachers will ensure that parents are regularly informed about their child's academic standing and progress by sending home updated information about each child's progress on quarterly benchmarks, RAPS 360 assessments and other formative and summative assessments given throughout the year. Teachers will maintain a data folder for each student that contains up-to-date information about benchmark results, Raps 360 assessments, current reading level and any identified skill gaps in reading and math. Data folders will be available to parents at any time so they can see how their child is progressing.

Teachers will hold at least one pre-scheduled parent-teacher conference with each student and their parent(s) no later than the end of the first quarter. Additional parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled as needed.

Communication between teacher and parents can be made at any time and is encouraged through a variety of means including face to face conversations, phone calls, and email. Through regular communication, teachers will ensure that parents are regularly informed about their child's academic standing and progress at all times.

Retention Process

When a student is identified through benchmark testing and/or RAPS 360 and DRA testing as falling far below or approaching the standards, the student's parent will be notified and the student will be identified as needing specific interventions through the RTI program to eliminate gaps in learning.

If, despite these interventions, a student is performing below the specified level of 85% mastery in reading or math as of January 15th, the student's teacher will consult with the instructional leader (principal) and then send home a notice requesting a meeting with the parent and indicating to the parents that their student is at risk for retention. The letter will identify the areas the student is struggling in and their current areas of deficiency. At the meeting, which should occur before the end of January, the teacher and parent(s) will discuss the student's progress using student data on file and write a plan of action that indicates steps the student can take to increase his or her achievement to the mastery level in the deficient areas. The parents will be informed that retention is a possibility if the student does not achieve mastery by July 1.

For planning purposes, parents will also be informed that it is highly recommended that their child participate in Tucson Country Day School's Summer Prep or Intensive Phonics summer program or a similar program at another school.

A follow up meeting will be held during the first two weeks of March at which time current data will be reviewed with the parent and the student's level of achievement will be discussed. If the student is still not at mastery level, the action plan will be updated and step-by-step instructions will be put in place for assisting the student to reach mastery level. Follow up meetings will occur every four weeks to review progress, and progress monitoring will occur at school a minimum of every ten days.

If mastery is not achieved by May 15th, the parents will be asked to enroll their child in an approved summer prep program as discussed at the January meeting.

If the student attains mastery as demonstrated through school-approved benchmark or other assessment tools prior to July 1, the student will be promoted to the next grade level. If the student does not achieve mastery by July 1, the student will be retained in the current grade, pending a final recommendation by the child's teacher.

With regard to the third grade and in order to comply with the Arizona Move on When Reading program, third grade general education students who do not pass the required State assessment will be required to repeat third grade. Parents will be notified of this provision at the beginning of the year, and this information will be included in the Parent/Student handbook. If a child is retained due to Move on When Reading requirements, the parent will be given a detailed written description of the reading intervention services that were provided to their child. Additionally, parents will be provided with a list of and description of intervention and remedial strategies that have been used successfully to help students with reading deficiencies. Parental strategies to assist students in attaining reading proficiency will also be provided.