

The Catamount School Policy

ASSESSMENT, PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

I. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

a. GOALS OF THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Catamount School (TCS) believes that assessment of student skills and abilities is essential to the provision of an appropriate educational program. The goal of student assessment is to use the results to effect change and improve instructional programs for students so that high school graduates have the skills and knowledge necessary to function as productive members of society and to pursue educational and employment opportunities. In addition, assessment results are used to assist teachers in evaluating student progress, for planning instruction, and improving instructional delivery. Further, assessment results are used in conducting research and in reporting current achievement results regarding individuals, curriculum areas, various student groups, and the school as a whole, so that the district is accountable to the public for results.

b. SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Student assessment includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Assessments given by individual teachers as part of regular classroom activities;
2. Assessments that address student skills on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and that help teachers plan instruction;
3. State-mandated assessments given to all students on a regular basis as delineated by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's published testing calendar(s); and
4. Special diagnostic assessments given by psychologists, student services specialists, counselors and other specialists as student needs dictate.

c. USE AND DISSEMINATION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

1. Results of assessments are to be shared with students and/or parents.
2. Scores on standardized assessments are not to be the sole determinant of whether a student is to be promoted or retained.
3. Any written material containing the identifiable scores of individual students on assessments mandated by the state is not a public record. Such information shall be made public only as may be otherwise permitted by law.
4. Individual student assessment results constitute confidential information. Only certain TCS employees are to have access to individual assessment results. The principal or their designee shall determine which employees have a need to know individual assessment results.

II. REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

a. REPORT CARDS

A report card that provides information to parents about a student's academic progress, quality of

conduct, and attendance will be generated for each student at the end of each nine-week marking period in accordance with the adopted and approved school calendar. Report cards should be distributed to students in a manner that will facilitate communication with parents/guardians. However, a principal may withhold a student's report card in certain limited circumstances that are approved by the Chancellor of Western Carolina University or their designee. In such circumstances, the report card shall be held in the student's permanent record. Parents/guardians shall have access to their child's record in a manner that is consistent with state and federal law.

b. PROGRESS REPORTS

Interim reports that notify parents of their child's academic progress to date on unit and/or activity tests, daily written/oral work, projects and/or outside assignments, classroom behavior, and excessive absences will be issued to parents/guardians at the mid-point of each grading period. Grading periods are set forth on the school calendar adopted by the Board of Education for each school year.

III. PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

a. PROMOTION STANDARDS

As the instructional leader of The Catamount School (TCS), the principal has the authority to assign each student to a grade level. Thus, the principal is responsible for making the decision to promote a student to the next grade level, retain a student at the same grade level, or accelerate a student beyond the next grade level. This decision should be based on the classroom teachers' and the principal's judgement of what best serves the educational welfare of the student. It is the expectation that the principal will confer with parents/guardians in the decision-making process regarding retention or acceleration. In North Carolina, middle school students should earn passing grades and demonstrate proficiency in reading and math to be promoted. At TCS, teachers utilize standards-based grading in which students receive a 1- 4 (e.g., emerging, progressing, meets, or exceeds) on each of the standards covered during the nine-week period. NC law mandates that the final decision for promotion lies with the principal.

The principal shall organize available resources to implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that uses data-driven problem-solving and research-based instructional practices for all students. The principal shall establish processes and standards for addressing concerns about student performance and for documenting student responses to research-based instruction and interventions within the MTSS. Parents/guardians are to be notified when a student is brought to the MTSS Tier 2 Team for intervention consideration and given the opportunity to provide input. When a child is identified as needing Tier 3 support, parents shall also be invited to participate in meetings concerning their child.

b. TESTING REQUIREMENTS

i. End of Grade (EOG)

Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades will take the State-mandated EOG tests in reading and math and 8th grade science. These tests assess a student's mastery of the subject content. A score of I or II indicates a student's skills are below grade level. A score of III, IV, or V indicates that a student is performing at grade level or above.

ii. End of Course (EOC)

Students taking high school courses with State-mandated EOC tests must take the test. These tests assess a student's mastery of course content. Students must earn a Level III, IV or a V in order to earn credit.

c. HIGH SCHOOL COURSES IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

The State Board of Education recently changed its policy to increase rigor by offering more options for middle school students to take select high school courses while still in middle school and receive credit. Some of the advantages of taking these courses before reaching high school include the opportunity to earn high school credits toward graduation, the ability to have more time to take Advanced Placement courses, opportunities to take online courses through the NC Virtual Public School or other approved online providers, and the opportunity to take dual enrollment in courses at a local college or university and graduate early.

If an online high school level course is recommended, students and their parents should read and discuss the DPS eLearning Handbook prior to enrolling. DPS recommends that middle school students who take high school courses meet the following standards:

1. Have demonstrated mastery in all academic subjects
2. Have demonstrated ability to manage complex assignments independently
3. Have strong personal motivation to excel academically
4. Have academic goals that require taking high school courses early

At TCS, all 8th graders take high-school level Earth and Environmental Science. Students also have the opportunity to take high-school level Math I if they meet the DPS mathematics placement criteria.

Legal References: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g); Article 10A of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes; N.C.G.S. §115C-81.5, -105.41, -288.

Adopted: 2/20/24