

# VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## ELEMENTARY LEVEL (GRADES K-6)

### PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS AND GRADING SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Approved by the 13<sup>th</sup> - Elected Board of Education  
May 14, 1998

Amended by the 14<sup>th</sup> - Elected Board of Education  
January 23, 2003

Amended by the 15<sup>th</sup> - Elected Board of Education  
September 6, 2008

# **Virgin Islands Board of Education**

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS AND GRADING SYSTEM FOR GRADES K-6**

### **Pertinent Law and Information**

Virgin Islands Code Title 17 Section 21, authorizes the Virgin Islands Board of Education to prescribe general regulations and orders and in general to do anything necessary for the proper establishment, maintenance and operation of the public schools of the Virgin Islands.

Virgin Islands Code Title 3 Section 912, states that each regulation adopted, to be effective, must be within the scope of authority conferred and in accordance with standards prescribed by other provisions of law. Title 17, Section 21, confers the authority and jurisdiction on the Virgin Islands Board of Education to prescribe these rules and regulations as hereby set forth.

In compliance with Virgin Islands Code Title 3 Section 933, an original and two duplicates of these regulations are filed with the Lieutenant Governor for publication in the Virgin Islands Rules and Regulations.

The promotional policies of the Public Schools of the Virgin Islands were developed on the premise that students shall be engaged in instruction for the minimum of 180 days as mandated in the Virgin Islands Code Title 17, Section 61. A school calendar reflective of a minimum of 180 days of instruction is mandatory for promotion of students from one grade to the other.

The promotional policies of the Public Schools of the Virgin Islands are based as closely as possible on the philosophy of education of the Virgin Islands Department of Education. Since the philosophy of the education is democratic, the promotional policies must serve democratic purposes.

### **1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In considering the question of promotion and retention, the following guiding principles shall be considered (in each individual case) to determine which will be best for the child, for the group of which he/she is a member, and for the community in which he/she lives.

1.1 Early childhood education is beneficial to boosting cognitive skills and school readiness for kindergarten students, and is essential to narrowing disparities in achievement. The Department of Education is encouraged to expand the kindergarten programs to include K-1 and K-2 classes at all elementary schools where possible.

- 1.2 Each child shall be placed in the group where he/she can do the best work and receive the most social, emotional, physical and cognitive benefits.
- 1.3 Each child progresses at a different rate according to ability.
- 1.4 The promotion or retention of each child is unique . Grades shall not be the only criteria for promotion. Such factors as the child's age, English language proficiency, social development, physical maturity, cognitive ability, work habits and emotional behavior shall be considered in determining promotion.
- 1.5 Each child has possibilities for growth and development. He/she must experience success. Encouragement from an understanding teacher can be a great incentive for him/her to achieve the fullest potential.
- 1.6 Teachers are responsible for the progress of the students. The greatest responsibility of the teacher is to the individual child and his/her needs. Therefore, teachers must provide instruction which incorporates a child's learning styles and which includes interdisciplinary teaching of the concepts in the Virgin Islands' curriculum guides and curriculum supplements.
- 1.7 Parents are also responsible for the progress of their children and are encouraged to attend conferences, contact teachers, and/or request information about their children's academic and social development.
- 1.8 When a child is promoted, the new teacher shall accept the child as he/she is. The teacher shall determine the child's present level of academic and social development and work with the child to stimulate his/her growth.
- 1.9 After all factors of the child's development are considered, and it is determined that it would be unwise for a child to be promoted to the next grade, the child and his/her family should be prepared in such a way that no feeling of shame or punishment is felt. All concerned should be helped to realize that, for well-established reasons, the child may be a happier and more efficient worker if he/she spends a longer time in reaching certain academic standards while developing a solid foundation, especially in the early years.
- 1.10 Promotion or retention shall not be based on a child's race, sex, or national origin or shall not be based on the student's lack of English proficiency.

## **2.0 PROMOTIONAL POLICIES**

### **2.1 PROMOTION FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SIXTH GRADE**

- 2.1.1 When a student is not performing and progressing at a pace established for promotion, intervention should occur as early as possible – but no later than – the end of the second marking period. If the student's low performance begins after the second marking period, intervention should begin immediately.
- 2.1.2 If retention is allowed as a policy, it should occur as early as possible in the k through 6<sup>th</sup> school years;
- 2.1.3 A child cannot be retained more than once in grades 1<sup>st</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup>. This provision does not apply to kindergarten;
- 2.1.4 Each school should be allowed to establish a range of intervention strategies available to assist students in achieving success;
- 2.1.5 The intervention strategies each school selects should be identified in the school handbook. Additional intervention strategies can be utilized during the school year provided that parents are notified in writing.
- 2.1.5 Parents must be immediately notified when their child does not demonstrate the success required to be promoted;
- 2.1.6 Parents must be informed of the intervention strategy(ies) that will be utilized to assist their child in achieving success;
- 2.1.7 Before a student is retained, the child study team must meet with the parents or guardians and they must agree in writing that all the requirements leading to retention were met. Parents must be involved when a decision is made to retain a student;
- 2.1.8 Teachers must document the intervention strategies utilized to assist students.
- 2.1.9 The use of the Transitional Classroom program is not mandatory, but is recommended as a preferred intervention strategy as outlined in Section 2.2.
- 2.1.10 Whenever possible, the use of a single-gender classroom is recommended as an intervention strategy.

## **2.1 PROMOTION FROM PRIMARY DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASS**

Whenever transitional classrooms are utilized as an intervention strategy, the following guidelines must be followed.

- 2.1.11 A child, who has made significant progress and can adequately function at grade, shall be placed in the regular developmentally appropriate grade level classroom provided that he/she is not returned to the grade level from which he/she was previously removed. A child who has completed 70% of the early childhood checklist of skills, successfully completed the Competency Readiness Exam with a minimum score of 70% in the five basic subject areas (reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies) and can function in a regular classroom, shall be promoted to the fourth grade.

## **2.2 PROMOTION FROM FOURTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADE**

Promotion from grade to grade shall be based on completion of at least 70% of the skills checklist for each grade level and a minimum score of 70% on the competency readiness exam for each grade level.

## **2.3 PROMOTION FROM SIXTH GRADE TO JUNIOR HIGH**

Promotion from sixth grade shall be based on the completion of at least 70% of the skills checklist for sixth grade in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health and computer science, and a minimum score of 70% on the exit Examination which covers reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies and Spanish.

## **2.4 PROMOTION FROM AN INTERMEDIATE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASS TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.**

Promotion from an intermediate developmentally appropriate class to junior high school shall be based on the same criteria as promotion from the sixth grade to junior high school.

# **3 RETENTION AND ACCELERATION**

- 3.1 A child shall be retained for one year only from grades 1 to 6 except in cases of prolonged unexcused absences. A retaineer who, during his second year does not show progress by the end of the first marking period shall be administered an assessment battery and appropriate placement determined. The child shall be placed in a developmentally appropriate transitional class setting on the intermediate level if he/she does not require placement under Special Education.

3.2 Should it be necessary to retain or accelerate a child in a grade, the final decision shall be made by the Basic Child Study Team and the parent shall be consulted as part of the decision making process. The team shall determine whether retention or promotion is in the best interest of the child. The following procedure shall be followed:

- a. The teacher advises the principal in writing by the middle of the second marking period of the possible retention of the child.
- b. The principal arranges a conference with the Basic Child Study Team and parent(s) to discuss the child's work.
- c. Parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be notified in the child's home language of the possible retention of the student by the end of the second marking period.
- d. A child who has been identified as a possible retainee shall be provided with a comprehensive assistance plan which includes a minimum of three (3) days of after school assistance by the teacher. All efforts to assist each possible retainee shall be documented, reviewed and approved by the principal at the beginning of the third marking period. However, if there is noticeable improvement or lack thereof in the child's performance, the parent or guardian (s) shall be informed of the committee's decision to promote or retain the child by the middle of the fourth marking period.
- e. The checklist of skills for the grade level, the cumulative writing folder, anecdotal records; examples of the child's work, pictures, diagrams, and projects completed by the child shall be available to the parent/guardian when discussing the final decision.
- f. A child who excels above grade level in all subject areas shall be accelerated upon the recommendation of the teacher, guidance counselor, supervisors and principal. A complete assessment battery that measures all aspects of development shall be administered for proper placement within the elementary system. The principal shall arrange for a Basic Child Study Team conference with the parent (s) or guardian(s) to discuss the child's proposed placement.
- g. Provisions shall be made for children who are performing above grade level through such programs as the School Wide Enrichment Model, individual tutoring, talent pool, research projects, curriculum compacting and advancing to higher-grade level (s).

### 3.3 TRANSITION TO REGULAR CLASSES FROM CLASSES OFFERED UNDER SPECIAL EDUCATION

A challenged or disabled child shall be assigned to a special education program according to indications of how he/she can best achieve success in learning.

Whenever possible, a challenged child shall be grouped with and/or participate with non-challenged children in activities that are part of the child's educational program. This grouping and/or participation will be programmed so as to allow the child to spend as much of the school day as is feasible for the child within the regular classroom. This does not apply, for example, to the trainable mentally retarded, certain educable mentally retarded, severely emotionally disturbed or any other challenged child established by medical, psychological, social (adaptive behavior) and other educational data as not being able to function outside of a self-contained classroom.

3.3.1 A challenged or exceptional child shall be returned to an appropriate regular class on a trial and/or part-time basis, if, after evaluation, it is the opinion of the Basic Child Study Team that the child can function adequately with support from the special education teacher to meet the grade level requirements. The trial period shall be six to eight weeks.

3.3.2 Promotion of special education elementary students within special classes is based primarily on the chronological age.

3.3.3 A child in a special education class at the end of the sixth grade (or 12 to 13 years of age) will be reevaluated by the Basic Child Study Team. If it is decided that the child must remain in a special class, he/she will proceed to a secondary level special education class and be enrolled in a prevocational core-study- type program after he/she is evaluated.

If the Child Study Team formulates that the child is able to reenter a regular class or special core class on a trial and/or part time basis, the student will go into that seventh grade class and continue to receive support from the seventh grade special education teacher.

A checklist of skills mastered for the elementary program shall be presented for certification by the Insular Superintendent and the Division of Special Education indicating that a challenged child has completed the offerings of the elementary special education programs. The child's program then becomes the responsibility of the secondary school (seventh to twelfth). Transition from the elementary to the secondary level shall be determined by many factors, including years in school, social and vocational development, chronological age, mental age, need for social, vocational and varied instructional opportunities of the secondary school and achievement in keeping with the child's abilities and needs.

No LEP student should be placed in special education without a specific referral from the CIP committee as required in the PIALEP policy manual.

#### 3.4 DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASSES

A child shall be admitted to a developmentally appropriate class if he/she is failing and results indicate, after appropriate testing, that his/her cognitive ability is below average and serious perceptual problems exist.

No LEP student should be placed in these classes without specific referral from the CIP committee as required in the PIALEP policy manual. Testing must be in accordance with the policy manual and tests should be normed for children from other languages and cultural backgrounds.

#### 4 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Every teacher shall keep a student folder documenting the progress and skills of each student. Classroom teachers shall utilize a variety of assessment tools and shall use an appropriate code to indicate the type of assessment approach being utilized. Teachers shall use a checklist of skills and/or concepts mastered during the school year. The student's folder shall be turned over to the next teacher who shall use the information to plan a successful learning program for each student. Teachers shall conduct a **QUARTERLY REPORT** of a student's progress, including skills mastered and not mastered. Parents shall be provided with a copy of the student's progress report at the end of the year
- 4.2 Every teacher shall keep a portfolio for each student to be used as an assessment instrument to document students' academic progress and growth in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. A student portfolio shall include scoring rubrics and sample of the student's work. The portfolio shall be utilized to engage students in quality work and to reveal information about students which cannot be gleaned on standardized tests. The portfolio will also provide students with direct information that they can use in a functional way in advancing their growth and development.
- 4.3 An English Language Learner (ELL) student shall be taught with the same standards as their English-speaking peers. ELL students shall receive grades consistent with this policy.
- 4.4 Additional Courses – Physical Education, including Cultural Dance, Art, Music, shall be graded as:

A-Outstanding  
B-Good  
C-Satisfactory  
F- Unsatisfactory

- 4.5 In recording grades the following grading system shall be used:

LETTER	NUMERICAL VALUE
A+	98-100 (98 TO 100% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
A	94-97 (94 TO 97% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
A-	90-93 (90 TO 93% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)



B+	87-89 (87 TO 89% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
B	84-86 (84 TO 86% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
B-	80-83 (80 TO 83% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
C+	77-79 (77 TO 83% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
C	74-76 (74 TO 76% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
C-	73-70 (73 TO 70% of Checklist of Skills Mastered)
FAILURE	BELOW 70

January 23, 2003

Noreen Michael, PhD  
Commissioner  
Department of Education  
44-46 Kongens Gade  
St. Thomas, V.I. 00802

Dear Commissioner Michael:

The Virgin Islands Board of Education approved the following changes to the Promotion and Retention Policy for Grade K to 6:

Section 4.3

On recording grades the following grading system shall be used for all courses. The numerical value shall be utilized for recording and reporting grades.

Numerical Value	Letter Grade	Percent
98-100	A+	98-100
94-97	A	94-97
90-93	A-	90-93
87-89	B+	87-89
84-86	B	84-86

St. Croix Board Members	Board Officers	St. Thomas/St. John
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Mr. Terrance D. Joseph	<b><u>Dr. Jorge "Tito" Galiber</u></b>	Mr. Gerald E. Hodge, Sr
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	<b><u>Mr. Gerald E. Hodge, SR.</u></b>	
	<b><u>Mrs. Evadney V.T. Hodge, Executive Director</u></b>	

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80-83	B-	80-83
77-79	C+	77-79
74-76	C	74-76
70-73	C-	70-73
69 and below	F	up to 69

There have been complaints regarding the large range for failure. Kindly submit a recommendation for the Board's consideration by February 28, 2003.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely

Jorge "Tito" Galiber  
Chairman

The amended and edited policy – K-6 Promotion and Retention of Students and Grading System Requirements – is attested to and approved for distribution by the 15<sup>th</sup>-Elected Virgin Islands Board of Education on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2008.



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Debra Smith Watlington, Chairperson, 15<sup>th</sup>-Elected Virgin Islands Board of Education



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Oswin Sewer, Secretary, 15<sup>th</sup>-Elected Virgin Islands Board of Education