

# **Almond-Bancroft School District**

## **4th Grade Promotion Policy**

Effective September 1, 2027

School Board adoption: June 18, 2025

### **Section 1: Promotion Policy**

The Almond-Bancroft School District adopts this 4th grade promotion policy as of June 18, 2025 to take effect September 1, 2027.

For any student who has not exited their personal reading plan by the end of the student's 3rd grade year, the district/school will engage in a process to determine whether to promote that student to the 4th grade. This process will carefully consider all relevant factors that contributed to the student not completing their personal reading plan and alternatives to retention that can help support the student to achieve reading proficiency. This process will be described in the school handbook. Additional details about the determination process are found in Section 2 of this policy. Good cause exceptions and post promotion mandates are found in Section 3 of this policy.

### **Section 2: Process for Making Promotion Determinations**

For any student who has not exited their personal reading plan by the end of the student's 3rd grade year, the district/school will engage in a process to determine whether to promote that student to the 4th grade. This process will carefully consider all relevant factors that contributed to the student not completing their personal reading plan and alternatives to retention that can help support the student to achieve reading proficiency. This process will be described in the school handbook and include, at a minimum, the following elements.

- A team of individuals will engage in the determination process, which shall include but is not limited to the student's parent(s) as defined by Wis. Stat. §.115.76(12) and school/district representatives who have knowledge of the reading instruction and interventions provided to the student, as well as how the student responded to both instruction and interventions. School representatives may include, but are not limited to: the teacher of record, the principal, the district/school reading specialist, a staff member who has provided additional reading support and conducted progress monitoring, and a student services professional with knowledge of the social and emotional implications of grade retention;
- Representatives from the school/district will consider all available data demonstrating the student's response to reading instruction and intervention, and data demonstrating the student's progress towards meeting personal reading plan goals. This data may include, but is not limited to, the most recent and previous universal reading screener data, diagnostic reading assessment data, progress monitoring data, classroom data, and observations and data related to the student's social, emotional, and behavioral functioning;
- Representatives from the school/district will determine whether the student is eligible for a good cause exception and communicate that to the parent or guardian;

- If the student has an individualized education program (IEP) in an area of reading or is an English learner with a language acquisition plan, the school/district representatives will review the student's progress towards those goals and communicate that to the parent or guardian;
- Representatives from the school/district will communicate long-term risks of retention to the student's parent or guardian. Such risks may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Students who are retained are more likely to have adverse outcomes, including dropping out of school and obtaining lower paying jobs in the future (Cockx, B., Picchio, M., & Baert, S. 2018; Hughes, J.N., West, S.G., Kim, H., & Bauer, S.S. 2018);
  - Students who are retained are more likely to experience emotional distress (Buckmaster et. al. 2024; Carlton & Winsler 1999; Demanet & Van Houtte 2016; Goos et al. 2013b; Carlton, M. P., & Winsler, A. 1999; Jimerson & Ferguson 2007; Lavrijsen & Nicaise 2017; Martin 2009; Martin 2011);
  - Students who are retained are more likely to have lower socioeconomic status and more likely to be eligible for government assistance (Goos, M., Pipa, J., & Peixoto, F. 2021);
  - Students who are retained are at higher risk for future criminal behavior (Eren, O., Lovenheim, M., & Mocan, H. 2022); and
  - Students who are retained do not achieve increased academic achievement and make less progress compared to other students (Silbergliitt, B., Appleton, J., & Burns, M., & Jimerson, S. 2006);
- Representatives from the school/district will consider alternatives to retention available to the student in the district/school and communicate these alternatives to the student's parent or guardian;
- The district/school will not deny any student advancement to 4th grade based solely on the student's performance in reading on the 3rd grade state summative assessment or the universal reading screener;
- The district/school will not deny any English learner advancement to 4th grade solely based on level of language proficiency (Wis. Admin. Code §13.09(1)(b));
- The team may conclude that promotion (with applicable services/supports) is in the best interest of a student even if the team also concludes, based on clear documentation, that the student was unable to complete their personal reading plan primarily due to the student's lack of reading proficiency;
- After reviewing all data and considerations named above, representatives from the school/district will make a recommendation of promotion or retention to the student's parent or guardian; and
- If the representatives from the school/district recommend retention, those representatives will identify and communicate the following to the student's parent or guardian:
  - Supports that will be provided to the student that will mitigate the harm that is likely to occur as a result of retention, including social stigmatization, loss of friendships, damaged self-esteem, and other mental health impacts; and

- The additional academic services and supports that will be provided to the student as they repeat 3rd grade to ensure they reach grade level proficiency by the time they finish 3rd grade the second time.

Based on the holistic evaluation described above, the entire team will make one of the following choices.

1. Promotion to 4th grade (with applicable services/supports) is more appropriate than retention in 3rd grade and the student is promoted.
2. The student's noncompletion of the student's personal reading plan was not primarily due to the student's lack of reading proficiency and the student is promoted.
3. The parents or guardians and school/district representatives agree that retention (with applicable services/supports) is more appropriate than promotion to 4th grade and the student's parent or guardian gives written consent to retention.
4. The school/district representatives recommend retention but the student's parent or guardian does not consent to retention. Regardless of any other facts, circumstances, or analysis, the student is promoted to 4th grade.

Any student who enrolls as a 3rd grade student late in the school term without any accompanying record of a personal reading plan (i.e., after the final annual administration of the universal screening assessment and, potentially, also after the 3rd grade Forward Exam) shall be promoted to 4th grade under the criteria that the student did not have a personal reading plan in effect at the end of 3rd grade.

If a student transfers into a school enrolled as a 4th grade student and the provided records indicate the student may have met requirements to be retained in 3rd grade, the school district will provide adequate and necessary supports, including but not necessarily limited to the intensive instructional services, supports, progress monitoring, and parent notification referenced under Wis. Stat. §118.33(5m)(a).

### **Section 3: Post Promotion Mandates and Exceptions**

Per Wis. Stat. §118.33(5m)(a), any student promoted to 4th grade after the determination process will be provided with all of the following.

1. Intensive instructional services, progress monitoring, and supports to remediate the identified areas of deficiency;
2. Notification to the student's parent or guardian, in writing, that the student pupil did not complete the personal reading plan that includes a description of the intensive instructional services and supports that will be provided to the student pupil to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency;
3. An intensive summer reading program each summer until the student scores at grade-level in reading on a summative assessment.

The following are good cause exceptions. Any student who meets one or more of the following good exceptions may be exempt from the promotion policy, the intensive summer reading program, and/or the intensive reading intervention requirements.

1. The student is identified as a “Limited-English proficient pupil” as that term is defined under Wis. Stat. §115.955(7);
2. The student has an individualized education plan (IEP) that indicates that neither taking the universal reading screener nor the state summative assessment in reading is appropriate for the pupil;
3. The student scores as proficient in reading on the alternative statewide standardized summative assessment (i.e. Dynamic Learning Maps);
4. The student has an IEP or a plan to provide accommodations or services under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that indicates that the student has received intensive intervention in reading for more than 2 years if the student continues to demonstrate a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in 5K, grades 1, 2, or 3; or
5. The student has received intensive intervention in reading for 2 or more school years, continues to demonstrate a deficiency in reading, and was previously retained in 5K, grades 1, 2, or 3 for a total of 2 years.

Regardless of these good cause exceptions, school districts and independent charter schools are responsible for providing instruction that meets all state and federal requirements, including, but not limited to Wis. Stat. §121.02(1)(L)4 for school districts and Wis. Stat. §§118.01(2)(c)7 and 8 for school districts and independent charter schools, often known together as Act 31.

If promoted to 4th grade and if a “good cause” exception applies to the student under Wis. Stat. §118.33(5m)(b), then the school district/school will provide adequate and necessary supports, including but not necessarily limited to the intensive instructional services, supports, progress monitoring, and parent notification referenced under Wis. Stat. §118.33(5m)(a).

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