

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

# **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 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 is a member, and for the community in which he lives.

1.1 Each child shall be placed in the group where he/she can do the best work and receive the most benefit- socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

## Promotional Policies 1.1 Continued

- 1.2 Each child progresses at a different rate according to ability.
- 1.3 The question of the promotion or retention of each child is a unique problem. Grades shall not be the only criteria for promotion. Such factors as the child's age, English language fluency, social development, physical maturity, cognitive ability, work habits and emotional behavior shall be considered in determining promotion.
- 1.4 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 to the fullest potential.
- 1.5 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 interdisciplinary teaching of the concepts in the Virgin Islands curriculum guides and curriculum supplements.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 When a child is promoted, the new teacher shall accept the child as he/she is. The teacher shall find out all the facts to determine the child's present level of development. The teacher shall work with the child at that level and stimulate his/her growth to higher levels.
- 1.8 For students in grades 4 through 6, if, 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 grade standards.
- 1.9 Promotion or retention shall not be based on a child's race, sex, or national origin or because he/she comes from a home that uses or speaks another language other than English.

## Promotional Policies Continued

### 2.0 PROMOTIONAL POLICIES

#### 2.1 PROMOTION FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE

Early childhood education classrooms-kindergarten through third grade shall follow the developmentally appropriate design including hands on learning centers developed to enhance independent learning skills. Failure shall be non-existent in these classrooms. Each child must experience daily success even though individual children may require an additional variety of innovative teaching techniques and strategies to address their unique learning styles.

A child, who is unable to achieve success by the end of the second marking period shall have a meeting of the basic child team to discuss his/her progress. The team shall include the school administrator(s), classroom teachers, guidance counselor, parent and a special subject teacher. A complete program shall be developed for the child, which includes: a) identifying his/ her learning style, b) listing strengths and weaknesses in all academic areas, c) multiple assessments, and d) enrichment and after school assistance.

A child who cannot successfully complete the required skills for each grade level by the end of each school year, in spite of documented extra efforts of the teacher, shall be placed in a developmentally appropriate primary transitional class setting. The emphasis and focus of this class will be specialized instruction in a small setting (class size shall not exceed 16). If a student shows considerable progress during the year, he/she shall be returned to the regular class placement.

A checklist of skills (developed from the content and performance standards) mastered for each grade level shall be completed and maintained for each child. This checklist shall be turned over to the next teacher, who in turn will plan a developmental program to address and correct deficiencies and build on strengths. The checklists shall be completed based upon:

1. anecdotal records of the child's activities
2. a cumulative writing folder with a minimum of 10 samples of varied writings of stories, recipes, poems, paragraphs, lab experiments, letters, journal entries etc.)
3. pictures, diagrams etc. of the child's work

4. projects completed by the child
5. other assessment

#### Promotional Policies Continued

Demonstration of skill mastery may be unique to each child and shall not be results of tests completed at the same date and time for each child.

Except in the case of children who must be placed in the primary transitional class, each student must complete at least 70 % of the checklist of skills for each grade level to be promoted. By the end of the third grade, each child shall complete at least 70 % of the early childhood checklist of skills, which include all skills from kindergarten to third grade covering reading, mathematics, language arts, science and social studies.

A child who has completed 70% of the early childhood checklist of skills and successfully completed the Competency Readiness Exam with a minimum of 70% in the basic areas - reading, language arts and mathematics, science and social studies shall be promoted to the fourth grade.

#### 2.2 PROMOTION FROM PRIMARY DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASS

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.

#### 2.3 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 sixth grade in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, and computer, and a minimum score of 70% on the competency readiness exam for each grade level.

#### 2.4 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, and a minimum score of 70% on the Exit

Examination which covers reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies and Spanish.

#### Promotional Policies Continued

##### 2.5 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.

NOTE: Limited English Proficiency modifications as specified in the (PIALEP) policy manual Procedures for Identification, Assessment and placement of LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students shall apply. In the case of the LEP students, any test administered should be in the home language of the student, and interpretations should take into consideration cultural factors that influence the student's responses.

#### 3.0 RETENTION AND ACCELERATION

3.1 A child shall be retained for one year only from grades 4 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. They shall determine whether retention or promotion is in the best interest of the child. The following procedure shall be followed:

1. The teacher advises the principal in writing by the middle of the second marking period of the possible retention of the child.
2. The principal arranges a conference with the Basic Child Study Team and parent to discuss the child's work.
3. Parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be notified in the home language of the child's possible retention by the end of the second marking period.
4. A child who has been identified as a possible retaineer 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 retainees 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. The

#### Promotional Policies Continued

checklist of skills for the grade level, 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.

5. 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 their child's proposed placement.

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 handicapped 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 handicapped child shall be grouped with and/or participate with non-handicapped 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 trainable mentally retarded, certain educable mentally retarded, severely emotionally disturbed or any other handicapped child established by medical, psychological, social (adaptive behavior) and other educational data as not being able to function outside of a self contained classroom.

3.31 A handicapped 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 teacher to meet the grade level requirements. The trial period shall be six to eight weeks.

#### Promotional Policies Continued

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

3.33 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, after evaluation, it is decided that the child must remain in a special class, he will proceed to a secondary level special education class and be enrolled in a prevocational core-study type program.

If, in the opinion of the Child Study Team, the child is able to reenter a regular class or special core class on a trial and/or part time basis, the child 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 handicapped 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 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 TRASITIONAL CLASSES

A child shall be admitted to a developmentally appropriate class if he/she is failing and after testing, results indicate 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.

#### 4.0 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Every teacher shall keep a record indicating concepts and/or skills for each child. Each teacher will utilize a variety of assessment tools and will use an appropriate code to indicate the type of assessment tool; for example, E for essay, T/F for true and false, MC for multiple choice, PR for project, RES for research, EX for experiment etc.  
Promotional Policies Continued

On these check lists of skills and/or concepts the teacher shall indicate the skills and/or concepts each child mastered during the school year. The checklist shall be turned over to the next teacher who shall utilize the information to plan a successful program for each child.

4.2 An LEP child shall receive grades with a special notation.

4.3 Additional Courses – Physical Education including Cultural Dance, Art, Music, shall be graded as:

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

4.3 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

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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