

Introduction

This handbook has been written to provide detailed information to parents and students about the La Center Middle School Accountability Program. These procedures have been developed in conjunction with revised School Board Policy 2421, Promotion/Retention, which was adopted in January, 2002, to be implemented in the 2002-03 school year.

The program was developed over a period of more than three years, which began with a focus of how to help students successfully transition from elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school. As the work progressed, a system to ensure that students were adequately prepared to move from one grade to the next became the primary objective. An additional concern was to balance the need for student accountability with appropriate academic assistance when needed.

The purpose of the accountability program is for all students to succeed in their learning and to be ready for advancement to the next grade. Partnerships between parents, teachers, and students are critical for this success. Procedures in the program provide for identification of struggling students and notification of parents as early as possible. When that occurs, parents and teachers work together with the student to develop an assistance plan designed to help the student meet the promotion standards.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any questions about the program defined in this handbook.

La Center School District No. 101 School Board Policy	Policy No. 2421 Section: INSTRUCTION
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Promotion/Retention

The board recognizes that the rate of physical, social, emotional and academic growth will vary among individual students. Since each student grows at his/her own rate, these individual growth characteristics shall be recognized in classroom programming.

After a student has successfully completed a year of study in kindergarten through eighth grade, he/she will be promoted to the next grade. Promotion to the next level at the high school level will be determined by achieving minimum levels of earned academic credit that count towards minimum graduation requirements.

Promotion to the next grade level may not be beneficial to the student in grades K-8 when he/she is not demonstrating minimum performance in relation to ability and grade level.

The superintendent shall establish procedures which provide guidance in establishing criteria for promotion in grades K-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12.

Promotion Standards

The La Center Middle School Accountability Program establishes clear and consistent standards for promotion, holds students accountable to meet those standards, and provides for early interventions to assist struggling students. These procedures also provide frequent communication with parents/guardians of those students at risk of non-promotion.

- To be eligible for promotion to the next grade level, La Center Middle School students earn promotion points to meet minimum achievement standards.
- In 6th and 7th grades, grade point average (GPA) and points for meeting minimum grade requirements in core classes combine for the possibility of sixteen (16) promotion points per school year. To be promoted, 6th and 7th grade students must earn at least 11.4 promotion points each school year.
- In 8th grade, the option of including two (2) points for each section of the WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) passed increases the promotion points possible to twenty-two. Without the WASL, 8th grade students must earn at least 11.4 points. With the WASL they must earn a minimum of 14.4 of the twenty-two points possible.

Promotion Point Requirements in Brief:

6th grade, 7th grade and 8th grade:

GPA points + Core Class Points
(8 possible) (8 possible)

Must total a minimum of 11.4 points of the 16 points possible.

WASL option (8th grade only):

GPA points + Core Class Points + # of WASL sections passed
(8 possible) (8 possible) (6 possible)

Must total a minimum of 14.4 points of 22 points possible.

Explanation of Promotion Points

Points toward promotion are earned and awarded in three ways: 1) passing core classes with a minimum C- grade, 2) grade point average (GPA), and 3) standards met on the Washington Assessment of Student learning (WASL).

Core Class Points (8 points possible)

Students earn one promotion point (1) for meeting minimum grade standards in each semester of a core class. Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies are considered the core classes. The minimum grade for which points are awarded in those classes is a “C-.” Students whose semester grade is below a “C-” will not receive points toward promotion for that class. Eight (8) promotion points from core class credits are possible in each year.

Core Class Points Available			
Core Classes:	1st Semester	2nd Semester	Whole Year
Language Arts	1	1	2
Mathematics	1	1	2
Science	1	1	2
Social Studies	1	1	2
Total Available			8

Non-Core Classes

In content areas such as band, choir, art, physical education or any other class not listed above, students do not directly earn promotion points for C- grades or higher. However, grades in those classes do contribute to the overall grade point average, which does translate to promotion points.

Points for GPA (8 points possible)

The student's GPA is calculated using grades for **all classes**. The GPA translates directly into promotion points. The first semester GPA is added to the second semester GPA to determine the total GPA for the school year. For example:

$$\begin{array}{rcccl} \text{1st Semester GPA} & & \text{2nd Semester GPA} & & \text{Total GPA for the Year} \\ 3.25 & + & 3.50 & \longrightarrow & 6.75 \end{array}$$

The 6.75 GPA would then be added as promotion points into the total for the year. The highest number of promotion points which can be earned each year from GPA is eight (8).

WASL Options for 8th Graders (6 points possible)

The WASL is administered to students in the spring of their 7th grade year, with scores reported at the beginning of the student's 8th grade year. The test assesses student skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students can earn two (2) promotion points for each of the three sections of the WASL they pass.

Including points for the WASL along with those for GPA and core class performance raises the promotion points possible to twenty-two (22). Students using this option must accumulate at least 14.4 points for promotion. Both options will be calculated, and the option yielding the highest point total will be used.

Calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA)

For computational purposes, each letter grade is associated with a given number of grade points. Individual letter grades are assigned grade points as follows:

		B+	3.3	C+	2.3		
A	4.0	B	3.0	C	2.0	D	1.0
A-	3.7	B-	2.7	C-	1.7	F	0.0

The GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned in a term by the number of graded classes. The GPA calculations for a student having the following grades are shown as an example below:

Math	B-	2.7	
Soc. Studies	C+	2.3	<u>16.7 grade points</u>
English	B+	3.3	6 classes
Science	B	3.0	↓
Art	A-	3.7	2.78 GPA
Health	C-	<u>+ 1.7</u>	
Total grade points		16.7	

Grading Scale

Although each individual teacher is responsible for determining specific grading criteria for their classes, all teachers will use the following percentage grading scale. A modified grading scale may be used for special-needs students on an individual basis.

	87 – 89....B+	77 – 79....C+	
93 – 100....A	83 – 86....B	73 – 76....C	60 – 69....D
90 – 92....A-	80 – 82....B-	70 – 72....C-	Below 60...F

The standard practice of rounding will be in effect and used by all staff. The percentage will be rounded up if the fractional percentage is .5 or higher and rounded down if less than .5.

Academic Intervention Plan

Any student identified as being in danger of not meeting promotion standards will be placed on an Academic Intervention Plan. The

criteria used to determine that an intervention plan is needed are as follows: a grade of “D” or “F” in any core class; a grade point average lower than 1.7; or a deficiency in accumulated promotion points. Parents will be notified of the need for a formal intervention plan, and a conference will be scheduled for parents and student to meet with staff to determine the appropriate interventions. The student’s progress while in the assistance program will be monitored and adjustments to the interventions will be made if warranted.

At the following intervals during each semester, grades and GPAs will be reviewed and grade reports provided to parents. Students meeting deficiency criteria outlined above will be identified and Academic Intervention Plans will be initiated.

5th week (middle of 1st quarter)
9th week (end of 1st quarter)
14th week (middle of 2nd quarter)

In addition to sending reports cards at the intervals above, individual progress reports from each class will be sent home with students at the 3rd and 7th week of each quarter.

Parent Notifications

Academic Intervention Letter – When academic deficiency becomes apparent, this letter is sent home to inform the parents of the need to schedule a conference with teachers, parents, student and principal. If there is no response to the request for conference, a follow-up telephone call will be made.

Intervention Follow-up Letter (s) – If academic difficulties continue after the intervention plan is implemented, this letter is sent to request a follow-up conference to re-examine the plan and revise as needed. A follow-up call is made if no response is received.

Promotion Standards Summary Report – A summary record of student progress toward meeting promotion standards will be made available to parents of students who have been placed on intervention plans. A sample is included in this handbook.

Notice of Non-promotion – This letter is sent to parents if the student fails to meet required standards for promotion after final grades are submitted.

Notice of Promotion – Students who meet promotion standards after previously being placed on an intervention plan will receive a notice of promotion. This letter will also be sent to students who have successfully passed the entrance exam administered after completion of the summer tutoring program.

Appeal Process

As stated in school board policy, “On rare and exceptional occasions, the principal will have the authority to promote a student who has not met minimum promotion standards. The circumstances of the student must be very extraordinary to warrant this action by the principal. The principal’s decision will be final.”

Decisions regarding the promotion of a student who has not earned the required number of promotion points will take into consideration recommendations from teachers and the student’s performance on standardized tests. In addition, other information provided by parents, student or staff that may be pertinent to the decision will also be taken into consideration.

Parents may initiate this process by submitting to the principal a written request that their child’s non-promotion be reconsidered. In the request, the parent should identify the circumstances or reasons that would make promotion appropriate even though promotion standards were not met.

Entrance Exam

Students will be given the opportunity to take the exam twice during the summer; once in June and once in August. Meeting minimum requirements on the exam will qualify the student for promotion. Failure to earn a passing score on the entrance exam will result in repeating the previous grade. Students have the right to make an appeal to the principal.