

Overview

In October 2017, BESE approved revisions to [Bulletin 1566](#) that support LEA flexibility with regard to student promotion.¹ The new policy ensures that struggling students have plans in place to address their academic needs. This guidance provides information for school systems to implement the revised promotion and support policy.

Struggling students must be identified early and receive intensive supports to ensure growth and the ability to stay on track towards graduation. BESE's approved policy promotes the following beliefs:

- Effective, targeted instructional support integrated into on-grade-level instruction using a top tier curricula is critical to success.
- Struggling students must be identified as early as possible.
- LEAs and schools must be accountable for the improvement of individual struggling students.
- Parents must be aware of their students' challenges and partner with the school to support student improvement.
- Students must feel supported, valued, but engaged in their improvement efforts.
- Success comes from instructional and counseling support, but may also come from other interventions such as retention.

New Policy and Process ([Bulletin 1566 §701 and §703](#))²

The LDE will provide each LEA a roster of 3rd and 4th grade students who scored below "Basic" in at least two core academic subjects (ELA, math, science, and social studies). Beginning in fourth grade, the student must receive an [individual academic improvement plan](#), reviewed with and signed by the student's legal guardian(s). The plan must outline at least two allowable interventions (see page 2) per "Basic" received by subject area. The individual academic improvement plan should continue until the student meets academic expectations.

The new process for promotion or retention determinations includes the following steps ([see Appendix B for details](#)):

At the end of the school year beginning in grade 4 and based on preponderance of evidence about student learning, the school system identifies students in need of additional academic supports and develops individual academic improvement plans:

- **Action Step 1: Identify students.** Identify students using all available information about student learning and the results/roster provided by LDE.
- **Action Step 2: Engage family and create a plan.** Engage family at school level to discuss intervention options for student. Create an [individual academic improvement plan](#) in partnership with teacher and family. Parent/legal guardian signs [individual academic improvement plan parent/legal guardian agreement form](#).
- **Action Step 3: Determine status.** Continue individual academic improvement plan until student meets expectations; and per school system policy, determine final retention or promotion status.

¹ [Click here](#) to view the approved revisions to Bulletin 1566, Pupil Progression Policies and Procedures. For specifics on the updates made to the prior policy, please refer to [this chart](#).

² Additional updates will be made to the policy during at the December 2017 BESE meeting after which time this guidance may be updated to reflect said changes.

Intervention Options

If a student is identified as needing an [individual academic improvement plan](#), the school system is required to choose at least two high quality interventions for each core academic area from the list below. Those interventions must be included in the plan created at the parent/legal guardian meeting. The parent/legal guardian shall sign an [agreement form](#) indicating the selected interventions.

Options	Requirements and Resources
Enrollment in a summer program	<p>Program uses a tier 1 instructional curricula or learning program.</p> <p>Program taught by a Highly Effective or Effective Proficient teacher.³</p> <p>No more than 35% of the instructional time can be made up of learning below the student’s registered grade level.</p> <p>At least 65% of instructional time should be targeted to help students access on grade level learning, which includes any additional instructional time.</p>
Additional In-school support	<p>Additional learning minutes should come from free time during the school day or after school support.</p> <p>Student should never be pulled out of on grade level, core academic instruction with peers to receive below level instructional support.</p> <p>No more than 35% of the instructional time can be made up of learning below the student’s registered grade level.</p> <p>At least 65% of instructional time should be targeted to help students access on grade level learning, which includes any additional instructional time.</p>
Access to high quality (tier 1) curriculum	<p>Use of a top tier program that includes built in instructional support.</p>
Placement in classroom with a highly effective or effective proficient teacher	<p>Student is placed in the classroom of a teacher rated highly effective overall or highly effective on value added model or has proven to grow students on the LDE roster in the past.</p>
<p>Additional in-school support resources:</p> <p>Louisiana Believes Teacher Support Toolbox (by grade and subject)</p> <p>K-12 Math Planning Resources: Helping students who struggle (by grade)</p> <p>Diverse Learners Guide and the Supports Flow Chart (ELA Guidebooks 2.0)</p>	

³ This is subject to approval by BESE at its December 2017 meeting.

Appendix A: Bulletin 1566 Summary

Students are expected to score “Basic” in at least two core academic subjects, including ELA, math, science, and social studies; however, the LEA shall make promotion and retention decisions based on a preponderance of evidence of student learning, including LEAP results.

If a student does not score “Basic” in at least two core academic subjects, the student shall be provided with an individual academic improvement plan, reviewed with and signed by the student’s parent or legal guardian. The plan must outline at least two allowable interventions/supports to be provided during the school year and/or during the summer (see page 2 for detailed description of interventions).

LEAs shall offer, at no cost to students, extended on grade-level instruction to students who did not take the LEAP tests or who failed to meet the promotional standard set forth in §701 and §703 of Bulletin 1566. The LEA shall provide transportation to and from the assigned LEAP instructional support summer site(s) from, at a minimum, a common pick-up point.

Summer instructional support programs shall use curriculum determined by the LDE to fully align to Louisiana State Standards. In response to feedback received from local school systems, the Department will propose at the December 2017 BESE meeting that the recently approved revisions to Bulletin 1566 with regard to summer instructional support be revised to allow for teachers rated “Effective: Proficient,” in addition to those rated “Highly Effective,” be able to serve as summer instructional support instructors. Remedial (below grade-level) instruction shall be limited to only necessary and focused skills as identified from top quality assessments and cannot account for more than 35 percent of the total summer instructional support instructional time. Students with disabilities attending summer instructional support shall receive special supports as needed. No summer retest will be provided or required.

Appendix B: Promotion or Retention Determination Process

Per Bulletin 1566, promotion remains a local decision and there is no forced promotion at any grade. The process should include the following steps:

Action Step 1: Identify students.

The LDE will provide to each LEA a roster of third and fourth grade students who scored below “Basic” in at least two core academic subjects, including ELA, math, science, and social studies. The school system will use the roster to determine which students should be placed on an individual academic support plan at the end of fourth grade.

Action Step 2: Engage family and create a plan.

If a student is identified as not meeting “Basic” in at least two subject areas by the end of fourth grade, then the school must hold an individual parent meeting with the child’s family to build an [individual academic support plan](#) in partnership with the teacher. The school and the family must sign an [agreement](#) stating each party’s commitment to executing the plan.

This agreement must be kept on file and the department will monitor districts each year. Any district with less than 90% of documents on file will require further monitoring.

Action Step 3: Determine status.

Continue individual academic improvement plan until student meets expectations and when applicable, determine final retention or promotion status. The school system will make that determination based on available data.

If retention is deemed the appropriate action for the struggling student, the following requirements must be met:

- Criteria for determination should be listed in school system PPP and adhered to in all retention decisions
- District should consider recommendations from LDE on what leads to retention, including but not limited to:
 - Parent recommendation/agreement
 - Student maturity
 - Combination of at least 2+ test scores
 - Student work results throughout the school year
 - Teacher recommendation
- Summer school must be offered to student before retention takes effect
- Parent meeting must be held to ensure parents understand rights relative to retention and sign permission to retain document provided by LDE.

If promotion through instructional support is deemed the appropriate action for a struggling student in any given year, then instructional support plan must be developed or updated using the academic improvement plan template.