PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

The district shall establish uniform grading protocols and standards for students in grades K-12.

Promotion and retention decisions are made by the school principal or his/her designee, and such decisions are final.

Promotion and retention from one grade level to another grade level is based upon academic achievement as indicated by grades, local curriculum assessments, and other pertinent data including but not limited to ability, age, attendance, disabilities, and the probable effect of promotion or retention upon the student. It is the policy of the Mount Vernon City School District that the placement or promotion of a student into a grade, class, or program should be based on multiple data points on various assessments. The district shall publish procedures to implement this policy, with the intent to provide services to underachieving students rather than punishing them for failure. The district procedures shall include clear and equitable criteria and shall require evidence of student learning through multiple measures, data points both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

CURRENT PROCEDURES
Intensive Interventions to support student progress are to be implemented by the first progress report and monitored quarterly by the school leader and school-based Response to Intervention (RTI) Instructional Support Team. All students regardless of subgroups are entitled to intervention services. Interventions may include additional instruction time, academic intervention services, tutoring, specialized programs, Response to Intervention, Saturday school, before or after school instructional support, etc.

The K-8 Response to Intervention (RTI) process and protocols must be strictly adhered to with at least three meetings with parents, parental notification letters, and additional documentation. These interventions should be provided to the students that require additional academic support. Every effort is to be made to identify students who are at risk of failing early. Should parental contact not be feasible, then the Committee will move forward with recommendations in the best interest of the student.

A student may be retained only one year between grades K – 8. Any additional retentions must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools or designee. (Extenuating circumstances may be unique to a student’s needs).

No student will be retained without an appropriate educational plan defining what will occur that is instructionally different for the student in the retained year (as outlined in the RTI handbook). Once the educational plan has been implemented, the student will be monitored regularly as per the Response to Intervention process.

A school-based recommendation to retain shall be made using a case conference approach involving the classroom teacher, building principal, school psychologist, or counselor, English as New Language (ENL) Specialist, Special Education specialist or service provider, and parent/guardian. Letters of Concern must be sent to parents/guardians by February 1st. These decisions must be communicated with the Central Office no later than March 1st.

Factors to be considered include teacher recommendation; student strengths and weaknesses; classroom achievement and attitude; standardized test scores; data from formative and summative classroom assessments; district and school progress monitoring tools; social and emotional development; results of the family conference; and for identified students, recommendations by the Committee of Special Education. The building principal should communicate the recommendation to the Central Office (Deputy Superintendent, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, the Office of School Improvement and Pupil Personnel). Appropriate documentation in a retention portfolio for students who have not demonstrated sufficient progress will be sent to the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. If a principal determines that the retention portfolio has not attained minimum promotion benchmarks, the student will not be promoted. All academic decisions are to be shared with parents/guardians. Appeals will be made at the school district level. The Superintendent of Schools or designee will make the final determination.

PROMOTION CRITERIA

It is the expectation that students pass the four core academic subjects which are English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, however in
order to be promoted to the next grade level, the student must earn a final report card grade of “65 or better” and/or at least Level 2 NYSED on English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The following chart will be used for determining grade level program needs:

### REPORT CARD EQUIVALENCY CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>NUMERICAL GRADE</th>
<th>NYS Standard Performance</th>
<th>PASS/FAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 4</td>
<td>85-100%</td>
<td>Exceeds Standards and/or Expectations. Demonstrates knowledge and skills above grade level</td>
<td>PASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 3</td>
<td>75-84%</td>
<td>Meets Standards and/or Expectations. Demonstrates knowledge and skills at grade level</td>
<td>PASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 2</td>
<td>65-74%</td>
<td>Minimally meets Standards and/or Expectations. Demonstrates knowledge and skills at grade level</td>
<td>PASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL 1</td>
<td>0-64%</td>
<td>Does not meet Standards and/or Expectations. Does not demonstrate knowledge and skills for Level 2</td>
<td>FAIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Grades below 65 are considered failing.

**NYS Level 1:** Students performing at this level are well below proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate limited knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Learning Standards that are considered insufficient for the expectations at this grade.

**NYS Level 2:** Students performing at this level are minimally proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Learning Standards that are considered sufficient for the expectations at this grade. Students performing at Level 2 are considered on track to meet current New York high school graduation requirements.

**NYS Level 3:** Students performing at this level are proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Learning Standards that are considered sufficient for the expectations at this grade.

**NYS Level 4:** Students performing at this level excel in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Learning Standards that are considered more than sufficient for the expectations at this grade.

### ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK FOR ACHIEVING PROMOTION CRITERIA in Grades K–8

The student may:

1. Be retained once in grades Kindergarten (K) through Eight (8) for the following school year,
2 Attend the Mount Vernon City School District intervention summer school program for at least 16 of the 20 days and earn a grade of “65 (Level 2)” or better in the subject(s) taken. Student may take a maximum of two (2) subjects in summer school (ELA and Mathematics), OR

3 Be placed in Strategic Reading and/or Transitional Math the coming school year if the areas failed were ELA and/or Math, OR

4 Be placed in a district mandated intervention program during the school year (such as Academic Intervention Services, Response to Intervention, before/afterschool intervention program, etc.)

Please note:
   a) Students whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) states they will not participate in State assessments and local assessments are not held to the promotion standards as set forth in the promotion, retention and grading policy.
   b) Students whose IEP specifies a modified promotion standard due to the nature of the disability should be promoted based on the IEP standard and goal completion.
   c) Students who have been in the country for three (3) years or less shall not be considered for retention solely based on the student's progress of acquiring the English language. In addition, ELLs/MLLs may receive additional services such as AIS and access to all before, during and after school programs.
GRADING POLICY

The following uniform grading policy shall be utilized to grade students K – 12:

**Exams and Quizzes including Midterms and Finals** 30-50%
Overall testing will account for no less than 30% and not more that 50% of the student’s grade.

**Projects, literacy tasks, presentations, portfolios, lab reports** 20 - 30%
Teachers shall provide challenging projects/literacy tasks for their students based on their ability levels and the scope and sequence of the course. Projects shall be designed by the teacher to enhance students’ reading, writing, listening, speaking, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**Homework** 10%
Homework will be assigned on a constant and regular basis throughout each semester and will be collected and monitored by teachers to objectively evaluate the students’ performance in this area.

**Class Participation** 20-30%
This component of each student’s grade is determined by the quality and frequency of each student’s performance in class activities, including written assignments, oral recitations and presentations as well as participation in group and individual activities, exercises, discussions, exit tickets and projects in class. In this area students shall be graded objectively on the basis of their “achievement level,” not in terms of their “personality type.” Sensitivity to those students whose cultural or psychological background, learning disabilities, and/or limited familiarity with English inhibit their verbal participation in classroom activities shall be taken into consideration in the determination of students’ performance in this area. Students’ participation in class activities must be evaluated and recorded by the teacher on an ongoing basis.

Each of the above four factors must be a component of the students’ grade. Students who have been absent from class for verified, legitimate reasons (such as illness, court appearances, family emergencies, attendance at funerals, etc.) shall be given a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work, including examinations. It is the responsibility of the teacher, in consultation with the department supervisor, to develop and appropriate vehicle and procedure for “make-up” work.

All teachers must maintain accurate written and/or digital records (e.g. Schoology, Gradebook) containing the grades on examinations, quizzes, homework assignments, projects, presentations activities, etc. which contribute to the determination of each students’ final grade for the marking period. Teachers should be prepared to substantiate a grade to a parent/guardian and administrator if needed.

The school year shall consist of four quarterly reports or marking periods. According to the grading policy, the lowest grade given for the first, second and third marking period is 55%. During the fourth marking period, the grade given will be the actual average that the student earned for the marking period. All marking periods will be averaged together to obtain a final grade for the student.

Grading will be Pass/Fail for Plato Credit Recovery; Swimming will not be calculated in a student’s Grade Point Average (GPA).
All teachers and all departments will follow the breakdown of grading components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Grading Component Grades K - 5</th>
<th>Grading Component Grades 6 - 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative &amp; Summative Assessments</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams/Projects/Quizzes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classwork/Class Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labs/Portfolios/Journals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations/Literacy Tasks</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-core courses may use grading policy range and is subject to teacher’s discretion.

**Midterms and Finals**

Midterms and Finals are to be administered during class time to maximize instructional time. Midterms will make up 20% of the second marking period grade and Finals will be make up 20% of the fourth marking period grade. Midterms can be project based.

For half-year courses, the midterm will be 10% of the first marking period of the course, and the final exam will make up 10% of the second marking period of the course.

**Regents Courses**

Students are required to sit for the Regents examination in any course culminating in a Regents exam. A final exam can be waived in lieu of the Regents exam.
**APPEAL PROCESS**

An appeal process by the Promotion, Retention and Grading Committee, a team of Mount Vernon City School District Administrators and Educators, to review and make decisions affecting *promotion* or *retention* of specific students is expressly authorized. After the second marking period, a *Letter of Concern* is provided to parents. A copy of the letter is to be sent to the Promotion and Retention Committee. By February 1st, *Promotion in Doubt* or mid–year *Letter of Concern* to parents must be submitted to the Promotion and Retention Committee. All appeals by the Promotion, Retention and Grading Committee will be conducted between June 1st through June 20th.

Students qualify for the appeal process if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Student has a documented medical condition.
- Student has a documented “homeless” condition.
- There are extenuating circumstances deemed appropriate by Principal and the Promotion and Retention Committee.

The Promotion and Retention Committee will consist of the Deputy Superintendent (or his/her designee), Assistant Superintendent of School Improvement (or his/her designee), Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction (or his/her designee), School Principal (or his/her designee), Standards Administrator of English as New Language (or his/her designee), Associate Superintendent of Pupil Personnel (or his/her designee). The Director of Pupil Personnel/Assistant Director of Special Education (or his/her designee) must also be present if the child is a student with disabilities. Appeals will be heard by the Promotion and Retention Committee which represents administrators and teachers. These designated individuals shall attend the Promotion and Retention Committee meeting to review relevant evidence and documentation for the purpose of rendering a decision. No Promotion and Retention Committee meeting will be held without total representation by all designated individuals. The Superintendent of Schools or designee will make the final determination.

The Promotion and Retention Committee shall have a full range of options in making a decision including promotion, retention and mandatory summer school attendance. The decision of the Promotion and Retention Committee is final and not subject to further appeal.
Please note: The Superintendent of Schools maintains the discretion to have the final authority to overturn a building level decision for promotion or retention. A parent may request retention to the Committee.

All provisions within this policy are subject to the availability of appropriate levels of district fiscal resources.