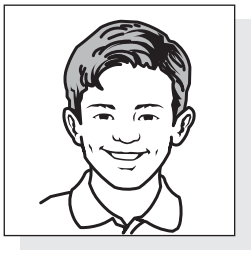
Updates to the *2007–2008 Grade Placement Committee Manual*

10/11/07	Page 36	The last paragraph has been revised to reflect new information regarding LEP students who receive special education services.
10/11/07	Page 42	The website address for ARI/AMI funding has been updated.
10/22/07	Page 14	In the SSI Activities Timeline, the first administration of math has been changed from April 7, 2008, to April 8, 2008, to reflect the correct test administration date.
10/22/07	Page 15	In the SSI Activities Timeline, the administration of the math test on May 13, 2008, has been changed from "First" to "Second" to reflect the correct test administration.
10/22/07	Page 16	In the SSI Activities Timeline, the third administration of reading has been changed from July 1, 2008, to July 2, 2008, and the third administration of math has been changed from July 2, 2008, to July 1, 2008, to reflect the correct test administration dates.
6/17/08	Page 33	The page references in paragraph 1 have been inadvertently omitted. The third sentence should read, "The flowcharts on pages 9–13 outline…."
6/17/08	Page 33	The page reference in the grade 3 reading paragraph should be page 9, not page 8.
6/17/08	Page 33	The page reference in the grade 5 reading paragraph should be page 10, not page 9.
6/17/08	Page 33	Both the grade and page reference in the grade 8 reading paragraph are incorrect. The grade should be 8, and the page reference should also be 8.
6/17/08	Page 34	The page reference in the grade 5 mathematics paragraph has been inadvertently omitted. The second sentence should read, "The flowchart for TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) for grade 5 mathematics on page 11 outlines…."

6/17/08	Page 34	Both the grade and page reference in the grade 8 mathematics paragraph are incorrect. The grade should be 8, and the page reference should be 13.



Grade Placement Committee Manual

For Grade Advancement Requirements of the Student Success Initiative

Phase Three Update for 2007–2008 School Year

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature (1999), the Student Success Initiative (SSI) grade advancement requirements apply to the grade 3 reading test, the grade 5 reading and mathematics tests, and the grade 8 reading and mathematics tests. As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level only by passing these tests or by unanimous decision of his or her grade placement committee that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction.

The goal of the SSI is to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. This effort depends greatly on schools, parents, and community members working in partnership to meet individual student needs. This manual is designed to support school personnel in the implementation of the grade advancement requirements of the SSI, including the coordination of grade placement committees as required by law.

> In addition to local policy relating to grade advancement, students in grades 3, 5 and 8 shall demonstrate proficiency in the subjects required by TEC §28.0211(a), in order to advance to the next grade. Demonstrated proficiency is defined under this section as meeting the passing standard on the appropriate assessment instruments specified by §101.2003(a) of this title (relating to Grade Advancement Testing Requirements) or on a state-approved alternate assessment authorized in §101.2011 of this title (relating to Alternate Assessment). A student who does not demonstrate proficiency as described in this section may only advance to the next grade if the student's Grade Placement Committee, as specified in §101.2007 of this title (relating to Role of Grade Placement Committee), determines by unanimous decision, in accordance with the standards for promotion established by the local school board, that the student is likely to perform at grade level at the end of the next year given additional accelerated instruction.
>
> Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §101.2001(b)

Purpose

This manual has three purposes:

- to provide clear administrative guidance, with step-by-step instructions that are illustrated with examples of student situations and sample forms and letters;
- to guide grade placement committees (GPCs) in their decision-making responsibility concerning accelerated instruction, alternate assessment, review upon appeal by a parent whether to promote or retain a student, and the accelerated instruction plan; and
- to assist district- and campus-level personnel with regard to accelerated instruction.

GPC Manual Organization

The GPC Manual is organized as follows:

- SSI Activities Guide
- SSI Topics
- Appendices
  - — Law and Rules
  - — Sample Forms and Letters

The **SSI Activities Guide** is designed to be a chronological explanation of the SSI activities and requirements that occur throughout the school year. The guide includes interactive flowcharts, a timeline of important SSI testing and notification dates and requirements, and important information about SSI requirements and activities at each step of the testing cycle: Prior to the First SSI Assessment, First Administration, Second Administration, and Third Administration. The guide also includes checklists for each administration.

The **SSI Topics** section provides specific program information organized by subject matter. The topics include Requirements for Special Populations, Accelerated Instruction, the Grade Placement Committee, Parent Notification, Mobile and Migrant Students, Summer Accelerated Instruction and Testing, Scoring and Reporting, and Alternate Assessment Option.

The **Law and Rules** appendix contains links to the Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.0211 pertaining to grade advancement requirements and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter BB, Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative.

The **Sample Forms and Letters** appendix includes a list of sample forms and letters that districts may use for the required and optional notification and progress-monitoring activities for the SSI. The forms are available in English and Spanish and are in a form that facilitates downloading and editing for local use on the Student Success Initiative page of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Student Assessment Division website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html.

Overview of the Grade Advancement Requirements of the Student Success Initiative

The Student Success Initiative (SSI), introduced by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999, is a system of support structured to ensure that all students gain sufficient understanding of the knowledge and skills in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. The SSI is actually a set of three initiatives that, together, support on-grade-level student achievement in reading and mathematics so that every student can succeed throughout his or her school career. These three initiatives are the Texas Reading Initiative, the Texas Math Initiative, and the grade advancement requirements in reading at grade 3, in reading and mathematics at grade 5, and beginning in the 2007–2008 school year, in reading and mathematics at grade 8. The SSI provides schools with a number of resources, including early diagnostic assessments, funds for accelerated instruction and intervention, mechanisms for progress monitoring, professional development, and strong academic support.

In 1999–2000 the Texas Education Agency (TEA) began to take a series of focused steps through the SSI to assist school districts in preparing students to read on or above grade level by the end of grade 3 and to ensure their success on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The SSI has been phased in over time. The first group of grade 3 students who were required to pass the TAKS reading test in 2002–2003 were those who were enrolled in kindergarten when the SSI was first passed into law. Systemic efforts to support the reading and mathematics achievement of this cohort group and every subsequent student group have been funded by the Texas Legislature.

This manual focuses on the grade advancement requirements of the Student Success Initiative as set forth in TEC §28.0211, Satisfactory Performance on Assessment Instruments Required; Accelerated Instruction, which provides that

> Except as provided by Subsection (b) or (e), a student may not be promoted to:
>
> (1) the fourth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the third grade reading assessment instrument under Section 39.023;
>
> (2) the sixth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the fifth grade mathematics and reading assessment instruments under Section 39.023; or
>
> (3) the ninth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the eighth grade mathematics and reading assessment instruments under Section 39.023.

The law allows students three testing opportunities during the spring and summer of the year, outlines the provision of accelerated instruction after each testing opportunity, and describes parents' rights regarding promotion and retention. The entire text of the law is available online at http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/ed.toc.htm.

The law was further clarified through the adoption of 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Assessment, Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative (herein referenced as "commissioner's rules"). Text of this chapter can be accessed online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter101/ch101bb.html. The purpose of these rules is to ensure the effective implementation of the grade advancement testing requirements as part of an overall system of support for student academic achievement. This system includes but is not limited to the following:

- informal and formal assessment of student needs at preceding grades and corresponding early intervention activities that address those needs;
- continuous and ongoing evaluation by a variety of means;
- research-based instructional programs;
- targeted accelerated instruction informed by multiple testing opportunities and other means of evaluation;
- a grade placement committee that decides on an individual student basis the most effective way to support a student's academic achievement on grade level;
- a state-approved alternate assessment option for the third testing opportunity (English version of the TAKS grade 3 reading test only); and
- an accelerated instruction plan for every student who does not meet the standard on the required grade advancement assessments after three opportunities, whether he or she is retained or promoted upon parent appeal to his or her grade placement committee.

Students subject to SSI requirements include those served by special education who take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) and students with dyslexia or other related disorders. However, students who meet the participation criteria for TAKS–M are not subject to SSI requirements in 2007–2008, as this assessment is in its first operational year. Additionally, due to the design of the TAKS-Alt assessment (in that teachers make observations throughout the academic year and are expected to provide any necessary remediation during the course of the academic year), students participating in TAKS-Alt are also not subject to SSI requirements. Students who are exempt from a state-mandated assessment due to their limited English proficiency (LEP) are not subject to SSI requirements.

Special provisions for these populations are discussed in the Requirements for Special Populations section of this manual. The commissioner's rules also describe the test administration schedule, the role of the grade placement committee, and the responsibilities for notification. It is the intent of the rules that parents be fully informed throughout the process. The commissioner's rules describe the requirements for accelerated instruction, the provision for a parental waiver of the third administration of the assessment due to potential harm to the student, the parental appeal process, the responsibilities for scoring and reporting, and credit for high school graduation.

This manual is designed to provide school staff with the resources to implement the law and the rules. Parents serving on grade placement committees may also wish to consult the manual.

Grade Advancement Requirements for Reading and Mathematics at Grades 5 and 8

Beginning in 2004–2005 the SSI grade advancement requirements were extended to students enrolled in grade 5 who take state assessments in reading and mathematics. In 2007–2008 the SSI grade advancement requirements are being extended to students enrolled in grade 8 who take state assessments in reading and mathematics. Although the SSI applies to reading and mathematics at grades 5 and 8, and only to reading at grade 3, the other statutory requirements for grade advancement are the same at all three grade levels. However, there are procedural differences for implementing the SSI grade advancement requirements at grades 5 and 8 because there are two subject-area tests required for grade advancement. The interactive flowcharts for grades 5 and 8 illustrate the process for determining whether a student has met the SSI requirements in reading and mathematics at grades 5 and 8.

The first two administrations of the grade 5 and grade 8 TAKS mathematics tests and the first two administrations of the grade 5 and grade 8 TAKS reading tests occur at different times during the year. The mathematics test administrations for grades 5 and 8 are scheduled later to allow students sufficient opportunity to learn the mathematics TEKS that are first introduced in those grades. Due to the difference in testing dates, the reporting of test results and the scheduling of accelerated instruction and grade placement committee meetings must be separate for a student who does not meet the standard in reading and mathematics. Because the final administrations of the reading and mathematics tests for grades 5 and 8 are within the same week, districts may choose to combine notification letters and GPC meetings for those students who did not meet the standard on either test after three testing opportunities.

To help districts follow the different SSI activities schedules for reading and mathematics, the timeline indicates separately the testing, reporting, and notification dates for grades 3, 5, and 8 reading and grades 5 and 8 mathematics.

SSI Activities Guide

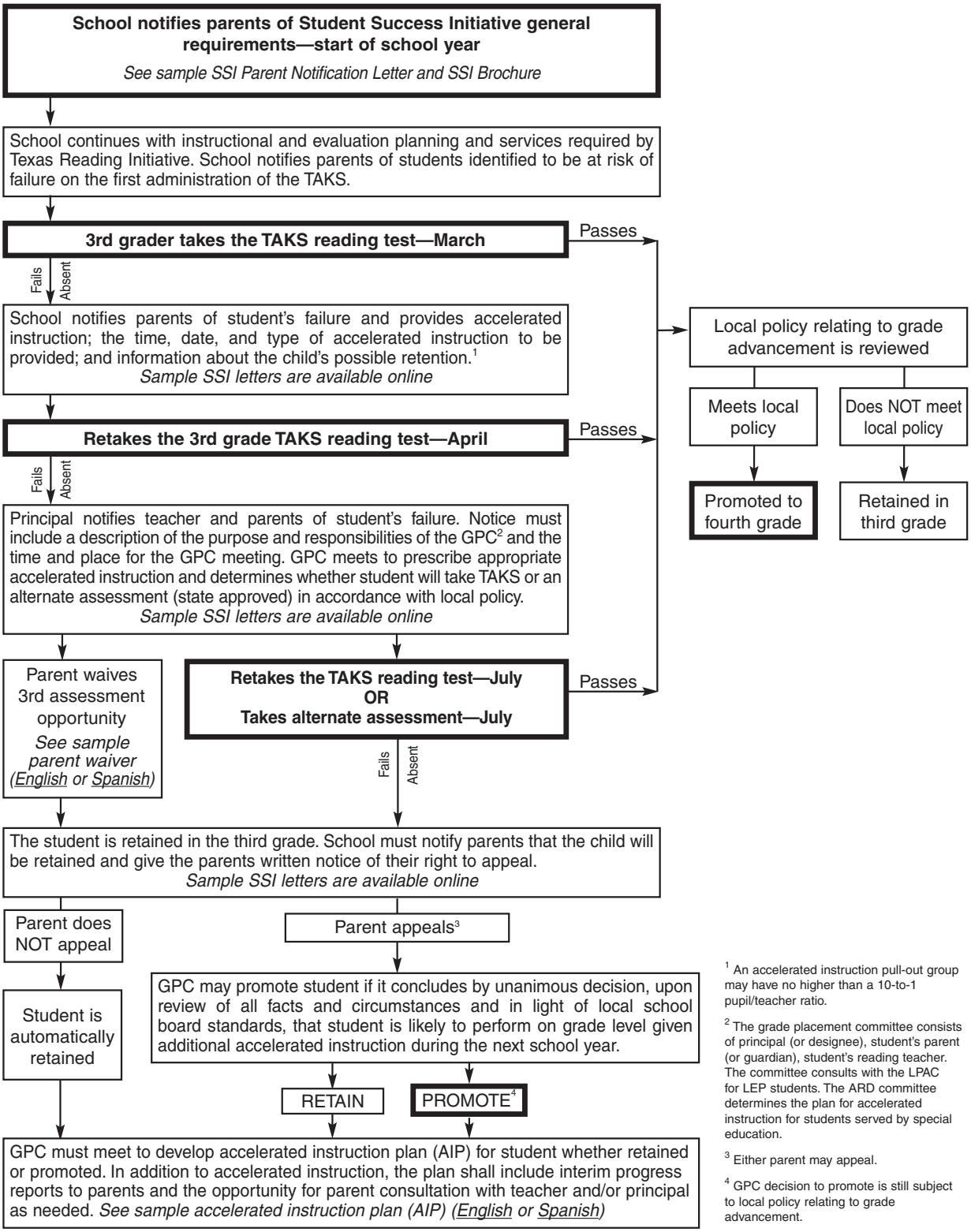
This Activities Guide outlines the step-by-step responsibilities for school personnel in the implementation of the Student Success Initiative. It includes the following subsections:

- Interactive Flowcharts
- Activities Timeline (includes listing of corresponding forms)
- Prior to the First SSI Assessment
- First Administration of TAKS
- Second Administration of TAKS
- Third Administration of TAKS

The sample forms and letters referenced in the Activities Guide are available online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html.

Interactive Flowcharts for Students Taking TAKS

SSI Grade Advancement Requirements for Students Enrolled in Grade 3 Taking TAKS Reading



[1] An accelerated instruction pull-out group may have no higher than a 10-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio.

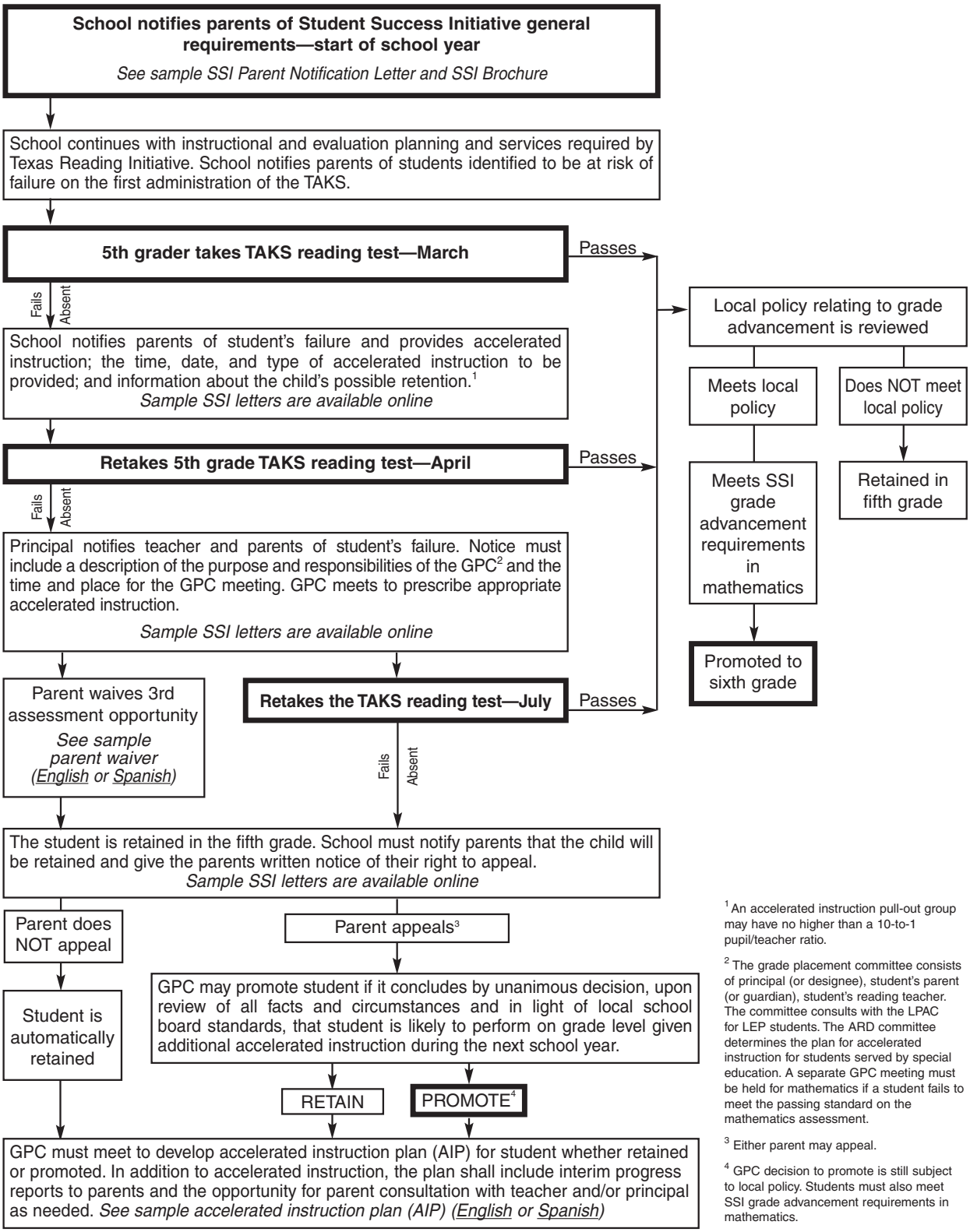
[2] The grade placement committee consists of principal (or designee), student's parent (or guardian), student's reading teacher. The committee consults with the LPAC for LEP students. The ARD committee determines the plan for accelerated instruction for students served by special education.

[3] Either parent may appeal.

[4] GPC decision to promote is still subject to local policy relating to grade advancement.

Interactive Flowcharts for Students Taking TAKS

SSI Grade Advancement Requirements for Students Enrolled in Grade 5 Taking TAKS Reading



[1] An accelerated instruction pull-out group may have no higher than a 10-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio.

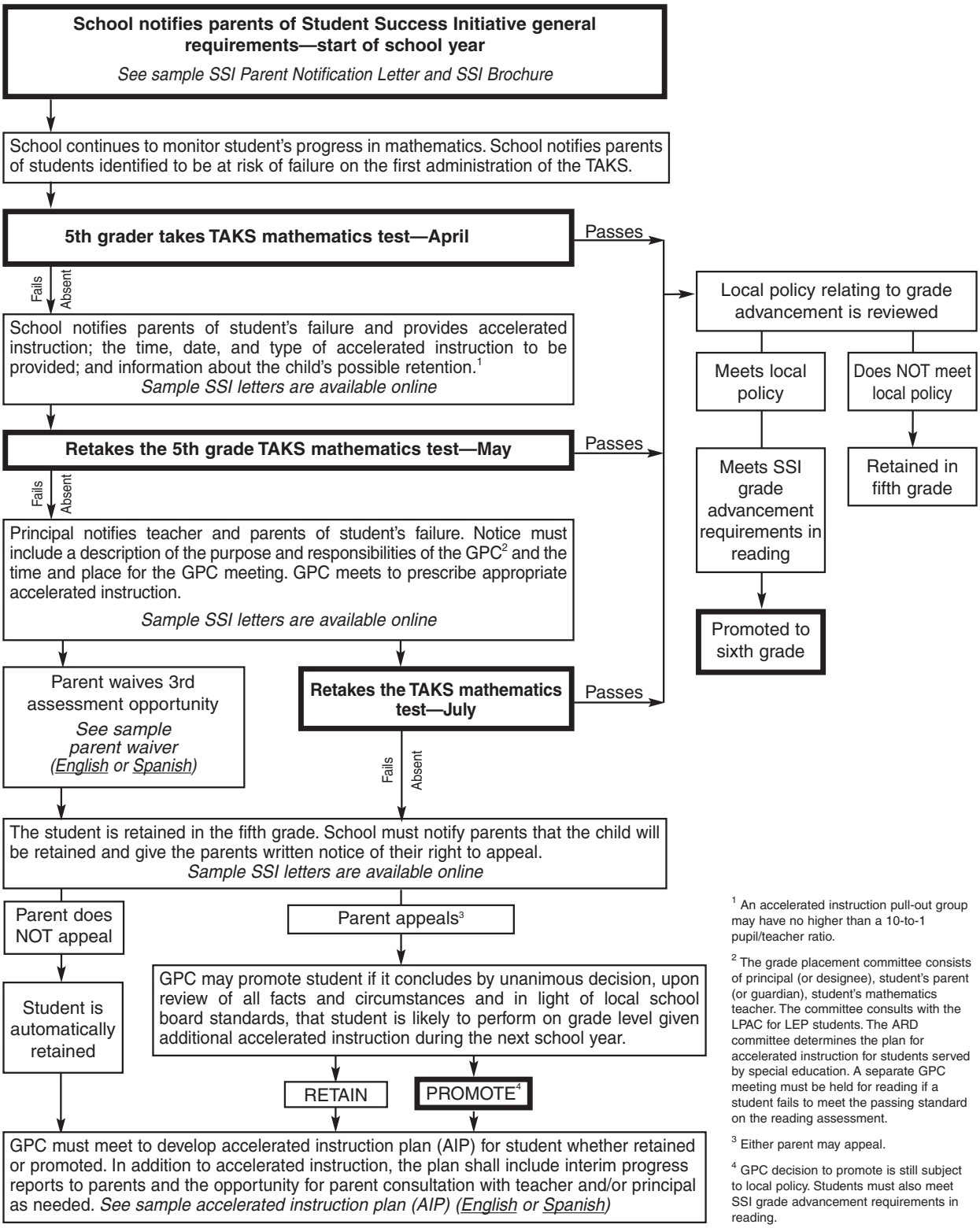
[2] The grade placement committee consists of principal (or designee), student's parent (or guardian), student's reading teacher. The committee consults with the LPAC for LEP students. The ARD committee determines the plan for accelerated instruction for students served by special education. A separate GPC meeting must be held for mathematics if a student fails to meet the passing standard on the mathematics assessment.

[3] Either parent may appeal.

[4] GPC decision to promote is still subject to local policy. Students must also meet SSI grade advancement requirements in mathematics.

Interactive Flowcharts for Students Taking TAKS

SSI Grade Advancement Requirements for Students Enrolled in Grade 5 Taking TAKS Mathematics



[1] An accelerated instruction pull-out group may have no higher than a 10-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio.

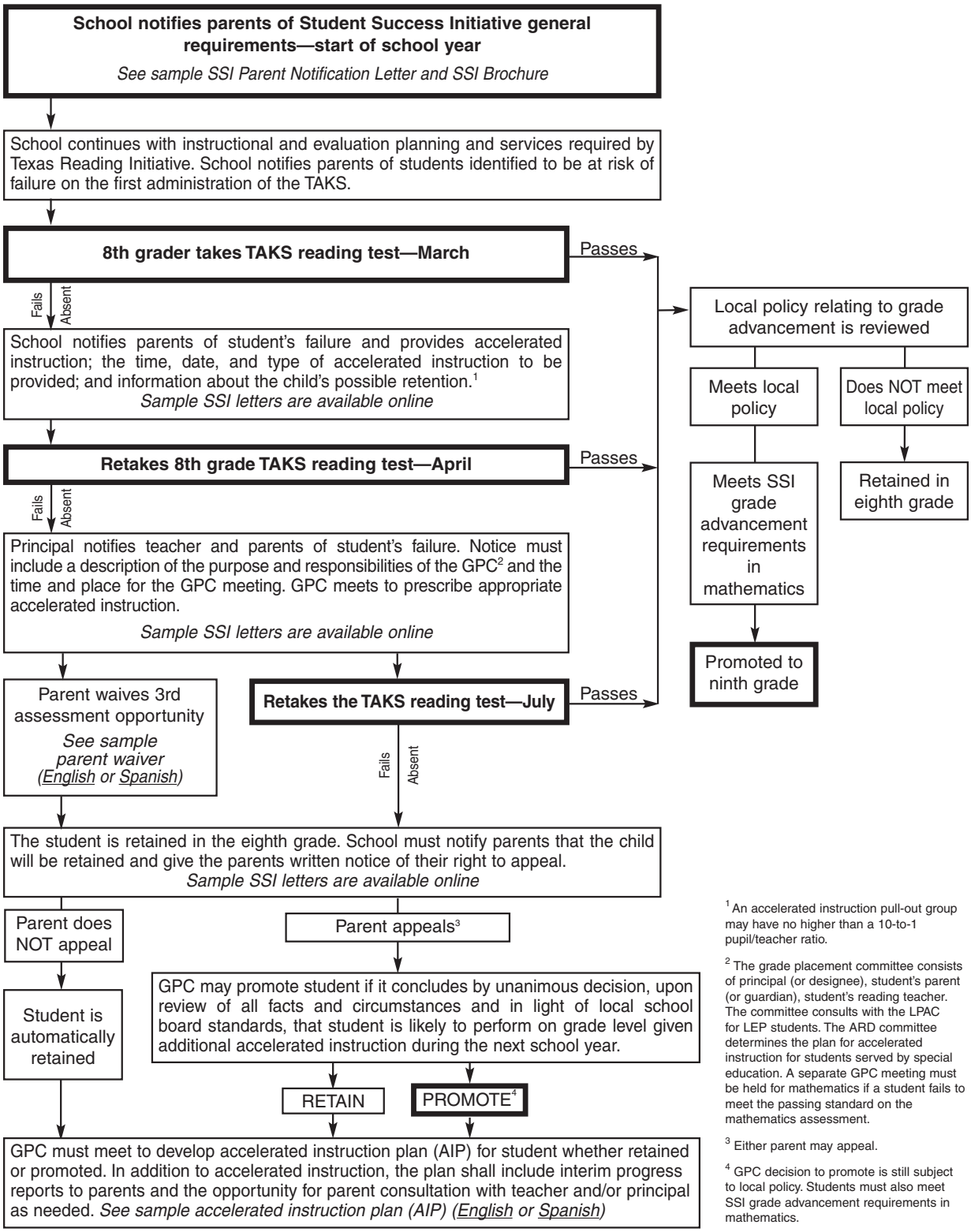
[2] The grade placement committee consists of principal (or designee), student's parent (or guardian), student's mathematics teacher. The committee consults with the LPAC for LEP students. The ARD committee determines the plan for accelerated instruction for students served by special education. A separate GPC meeting must be held for reading if a student fails to meet the passing standard on the reading assessment.

[3] Either parent may appeal.

[4] GPC decision to promote is still subject to local policy. Students must also meet SSI grade advancement requirements in reading.

Interactive Flowcharts for Students Taking TAKS

SSI Grade Advancement Requirements for Students Enrolled in Grade 8 Taking TAKS Reading



[1] An accelerated instruction pull-out group may have no higher than a 10-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio.

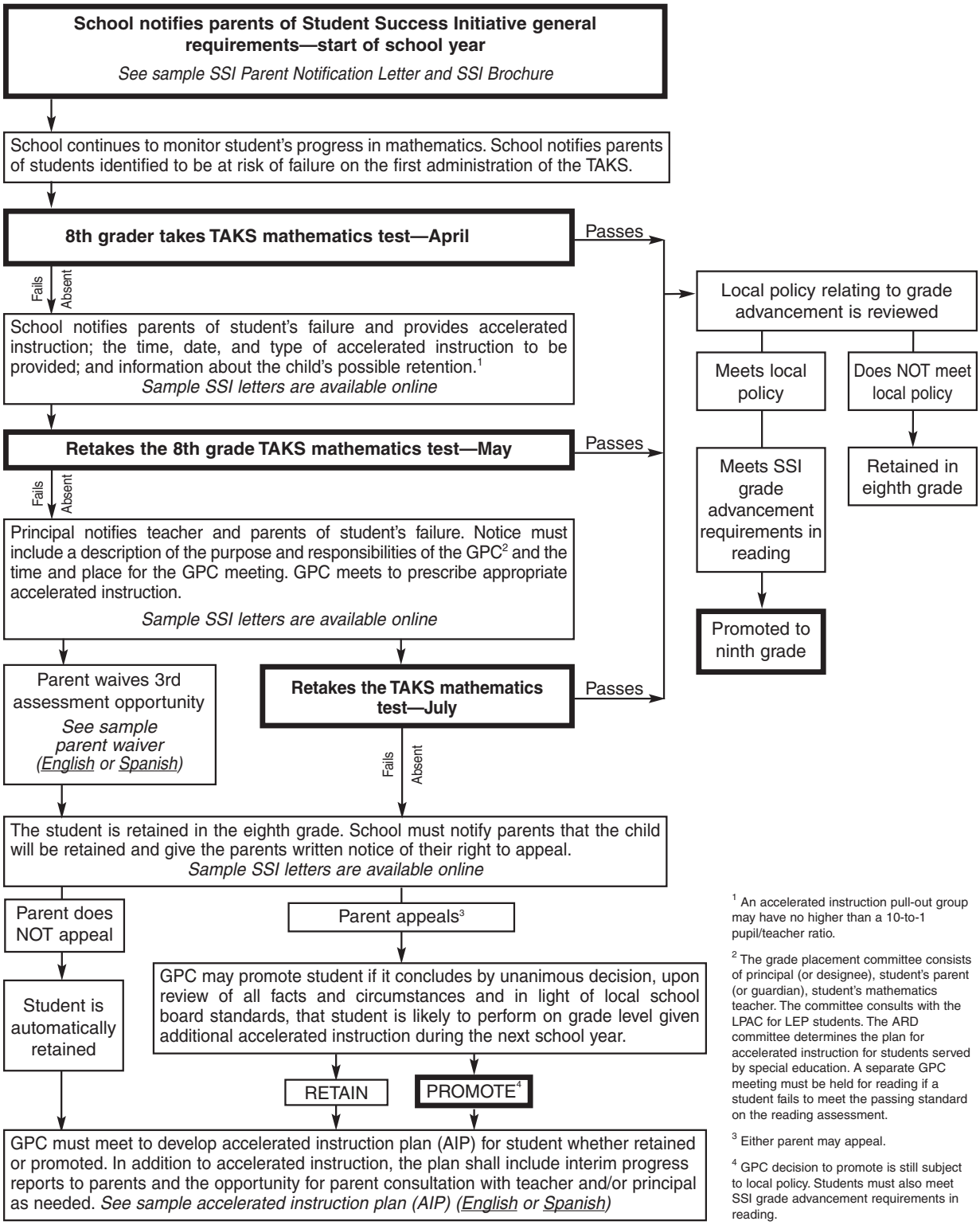
[2] The grade placement committee consists of principal (or designee), student's parent (or guardian), student's reading teacher. The committee consults with the LPAC for LEP students. The ARD committee determines the plan for accelerated instruction for students served by special education. A separate GPC meeting must be held for mathematics if a student fails to meet the passing standard on the mathematics assessment.

[3] Either parent may appeal.

[4] GPC decision to promote is still subject to local policy. Students must also meet SSI grade advancement requirements in mathematics.

Interactive Flowcharts for Students Taking TAKS

SSI Grade Advancement Requirements for Students Enrolled in Grade 8 Taking TAKS Mathematics



[1] An accelerated instruction pull-out group may have no higher than a 10-to-1 pupil/teacher ratio.

[2] The grade placement committee consists of principal (or designee), student's parent (or guardian), student's mathematics teacher. The committee consults with the LPAC for LEP students. The ARD committee determines the plan for accelerated instruction for students served by special education. A separate GPC meeting must be held for reading if a student fails to meet the passing standard on the reading assessment.

[3] Either parent may appeal.

[4] GPC decision to promote is still subject to local policy. Students must also meet SSI grade advancement requirements in reading.

SSI Activities Timeline

Grade Advancement Requirements of the Student Success Initiative

2007-2008 School Year

	Date	Action	Sample Forms for Required Notification	Sample Forms for Optional Notification and Documentation
Before Testing	Fall 2007	Notify Parent of SSI Policy Document Notification	3R.1, 5R.1, 8R.1, 5M.1, 8M.1 SSI Brochures	Handbook Notification
	October 2007	Inform Parent of Child's Progress in Reading (Grade 3) and Reading and Math (Grades 5 and 8)—Beginning of Year		■ Parent Notification of Child's Progress—3R.4, 5R.4, 8R.4; 5M.4, 8M.4 ■ Progress Reports—3R.5, 5R.5, 8R.5; 5M.5, 8M.5
	October 2007	Document Campus Planning for Accelerated Reading and Math Instruction Funds		
	October 2007	Provide First-Quarter Principal Monitoring Information		
	January 2008	Inform Parent of Child's Progress in Reading and Math (Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading and Grades 5 and 8 Math)—Middle of Year		■ Parent Notification of Child's Progress—3R.6, 5R.6, 8R.6; 5M.6, 8M.6 ■ Progress Reports—3R.7, 5R.7, 8R.7; 5M.7, 8M.7
Reading First Administration	March 4, 2008	Administer First TAKS Grade 3, 5, or 8 Reading Tests (Make-up Testing Allowed Until March 8)		
	March 21, 2008	■ Receive Student Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests ■ Begin Accelerated Instruction		
	March 28, 2008	Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests (For Students Who Met Standard)	Confidential Student Report	Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.8, 5R.8, 8R.8
	March 28, 2008	■ Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests and Plans for Accelerated Instruction (For Students Who Did Not Meet Standard)	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.9, 5R.9, 8R.9 ■ Confidential Student Report	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.9, 5R.9, 8R.9 ■ Reading Progress Reports—3R.10, 5R.10, 8R.10
Mathematics First Administration	April 8, 2008	Administer First TAKS Grade 5 or 8 Math Tests (Make-up Testing Allowed Until April 10)		
	April 25, 2008	■ Receive Student Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests ■ Begin Accelerated Instruction		
	May 8, 2008	Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests (For Students Who Met Standard)	Confidential Student Report	Parent Notification of Student Performance—5M.8, 8M.8
	May 8, 2008	■ Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests and Plans for Accelerated Instruction (For Students Who Did Not Meet Standard)	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—5M.9, 8M.9 ■ Confidential Student Report	Math Progress Reports—5M.10, 8M.10

* Forms or letters specific to grades or subject areas are identified as follows: 3R = grade 3 reading; 5R = grade 5 reading; 5M = grade 5 mathematics; 8R = grade 8 reading; 8M = grade 8 mathematics.

	Date	Action	Sample Forms for Required Notification	Sample Forms for Optional Notification and Documentation
Reading Second Administration	April 30, 2008	Administer Second TAKS Grade 3, 5, or 8 Reading Tests (Make-up Testing Allowed Until May 3)		
	May 16, 2008	Receive Student Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests		
	May 23, 2008	Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests (For Students Who Met Standard)	Confidential Student Report	Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.11, 5R.11, 8R.11
	May 23, 2008	■ Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests and Plans for Accelerated Instruction (For Students Who Did Not Meet Standard)	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.12, 5R.12, 8R.12 ■ Confidential Student Report	
	May 30, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Convene and Document GPC Meetings for Students Who Did Not Meet Standard in Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading (Includes Accelerated Instruction Plan)	Confirmation of Participation in Grade Placement Committee—3R.13, 5R.13, 8R.13	
	June 2, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Notify Parents of GPC Decisions	Parent Notification of Grade Placement Committee Decisions—3R.15, 5R.15, 8R.15	
Mathematics Second Administration	May 13, 2008	Administer Second TAKS Grades 5 or 8 MathTests (Make-up Testing Allowed Until May 15)		
	June 2, 2008	Receive Student Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests		
	June 6, 2008	Notify Parents of Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests (For Students Who Met Standard)	Confidential Student Report	Parent Notification of Student Performance—5M.11, 8M.11
	June 6, 2008	■ Notify Parents of Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests and Plans for Accelerated Instruction (For Students Who Did Not Meet Standard)	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—5M.12, 8M.12 ■ Confidential Student Report	
	June 13, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Convene and Document GPC Meetings for Students Who Did Not Meet Standard in Grades 5 or 8 Math (Includes Accelerated Instruction Plan)	Confirmation of Participation in Grade Placement Committee—5M.13, 8M.13	
	June 16, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Notify Parents of GPC Decisions	Parent Notification of Grade Placement Committee Decisions—5M.15, 8M.15	

	Date	Action	Sample Forms for Required Notification	Sample Forms for Optional Notification and Documentation
Reading Third Administration	July 2, 2008	Administer Third TAKS Grades 3, 5, or 8 Reading Tests (No Make-up Testing)		
	July 18, 2008	Receive Student Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests		
	July 25, 2008	Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests (For Students Who Met Standard)	Confidential Student Report	Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.19, 5R.19, 8R.19
	July 25, 2008	■ Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 3, 5, and 8 Reading Tests and Plans for Accelerated Instruction (For Students Who Did Not Meet Standard)	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—3R.20, 5R.20, 8R.20 ■ Confidential Student Report	
	August 1, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Convene and Document GPC Meetings for Students Who Did Not Meet Standard in Grades 3, 5, or 8 Reading	Confirmation of Participation in Grade Placement Committee—3R.21, 5R.21, 8R.21	
	August 2, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Notify Parents of GPC Decisions	Parent Notification of Grade Placement Committee Decisions—3R.23, 5R.23, 8R.23	
Mathematics Third Administration	July 1, 2008	Administer Third TAKS Grades 5 or 8 Math Tests (No Make-up Testing)		
	July 18, 2008	Receive Student Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests		
	July 25, 2008	Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests (For Students Who Met Standard)	Confidential Student Report	Parent Notification of Student Performance—5M.19, 8M.19
	July 25, 2008	■ Notify Parent of Results for TAKS Grades 5 and 8 Math Tests and Plans for Accelerated Instruction (For Students Who Did Not Meet Standard)	■ Parent Notification of Student Performance—5M.20, 8M.20 ■ Confidential Student Report	
	August 1, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Convene and Document GPC Meetings for Students Who Did Not Meet Standard in Grades 5 or 8 Math	Confirmation of Participation in Grade Placement Committee—5M.21, 8M.21	
	August 2, 2008 (Suggested Date)	Notify Parents of GPC Decisions	Parent Notification of Grade Placement Committee Decisions—5M.23, 8M.23	
End of Year	Late Spring 2008	For Grade 2 Students: Notify Parent of Child's Progress in Reading at End of Grade 2	Parent Notification of Grade 2 Child's Progress in Readin—3R.2 Summary of Diagnostic Reading Inventory Results—3R.3	
	Late Spring 2008	For Grade 4 Students: Notify Parent of Child's Progress in Reading and Math at End of Grade 4	Parent Notification of Grade 4 Child's Progress in Reading and Math—5R2	
	Late Spring 2008	For Grade 7 Students: Notify Parent of Child's Progress in Reading and Math at End of Grade 7	Parent Notification of Grade 7 Child's Progress in Reading and Math—8R2	

NOTE: All of these sample forms and notification letters are on the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html in a format that facilitates downloading and editing for local use. All forms are provided as samples only. When modifying any of the sample forms for local purposes, schools should be careful to include all of the components required by the grade advancement law and commissioner's rules.

PRIOR TO THE FIRST SSI ASSESSMENT

Notification Prior to TAKS

School notifies parents of Student Success Initiative general requirements—start of school year.

Within the first weeks of school, parents should be notified of the Student Success Initiative requirements. Sample parent notification letters are available online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html. Three brochures, *Prepare for Success—A Parent Guide to the Student Success Initiative at Grade 3, Prepare for Success—A Parent Guide to the Student Success Initiative at Grade 5*, and *Prepare for Success—A Parent Guide to the Student Success Initiative at Grade 8,* are shipped to school districts with the GPC manual and are also available online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/. Both the letters and brochures are available in English and Spanish to help districts meet the requirement of a good-faith effort to provide parent notifications in the parent's native language. These or similar brochures and letters should be sent home with all grade 3, grade 5, and grade 8 students to ensure that parents are fully informed of the law. In addition, TAC §101.13 requires the following:

The superintendent of each school district and chief administrative officer of each charter school shall be responsible for the following in order to provide timely and full notification of testing requirements for advancement at certain grades:

(1) notifying each student and his or her parent or guardian in writing no later than the beginning of the student's first-grade year or no later than the beginning of the student's kindergarten year, for students attending kindergarten in a public school, of the testing requirements for grade advancement as specified in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §28.0211;

(2) notifying each student in grades 1–8 who is new to the school district or charter school and his or her parent or guardian in writing of the testing requirements for grade advancement; and

(3) notifying each student required to take the grade advancement tests of the dates, times, and locations of testing.

School districts may also choose to include the SSI requirements in the school district handbook. (See Form A, sample handbook notification.)

In addition to the parental notification required at the beginning of the school year, parental notification is required at several points during the SSI process. According to §101.2009 of the commissioner's rules,

> (b) The district shall provide early notice to parents or guardians of students identified in a preceding grade to be at risk of failure on the first administration of the test required for grade advancement the next year. The superintendent must establish the instruments/procedures to be used to make this determination. In the case of second grade students, it must include the results of the reading inventory required under Texas Education Code, §28.006. This notice shall be provided before the end of the school year preceding the grade advancement requirements.

Schools should maintain a copy of this notification in the student's permanent record file. Schools may also wish to provide notification of progress at the beginning and middle of grades 3, 5, and 8, based on any additional evaluation.

To the extent possible, all notifications should be in the language spoken most often in the home.

Accelerated Instruction Prior to TAKS

All students at risk of failing an SSI TAKS assessment **must** be provided additional accelerated instruction. Districts eligible for Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) and Accelerated Mathematics Instruction (AMI) funds should use these funds for reading and mathematics interventions for at-risk students.

Districts should use results from diagnostic tools and, for grades 5 and 8, previous TAKS tests as the primary criteria for identifying students who are struggling in reading and/or mathematics. Additional considerations may include performance on classroom assessments, teacher observation, progress reports, and report cards.

Tips for Best Practice

Although not required by law, the following practices have been shown to be effective in helping students achieve success. At a minimum, schools should

- identify target students and determine instructional priorities;
- provide at least 30 minutes a day of additional systematic and explicit instruction;
- provide small-group instruction, i.e., one adult per three to four students;
- provide a minimum of 60 sessions (12 weeks) of intervention help for students;
- use highly trained professionals to deliver instruction and provide intervention; and
- coordinate the use of funds.

3rd grader takes the first administration of the TAKS reading test.
5th grader takes the first administration of the TAKS reading and mathematics tests.
8th grader takes the first administration of the TAKS reading and mathematics tests.

FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF TAKS

All eligible students should take the first administration of the TAKS reading tests at grades 3, 5, or 8 and/or the TAKS mathematics tests at grades 5 and 8. The dates for these assessments can be found on the testing calendar and on the SSI Activities Timeline. SSI grade advancement requirements apply to all students enrolled in grades 3, 5, and 8 who take TAKS. This includes nonexempt LEP students who take TAKS in English or Spanish. For specific information about how the SSI grade advancement requirements apply to LEP students and students who are served by special education, refer to the Requirements for Special Populations section of this manual.

The law requires that a student be given three opportunities for testing. Make-up tests are allowed during the week of the first and second SSI TAKS test administrations for students who are absent. No make-up testing will be allowed for the third test administration. A student who is absent both on the initial testing day and during make-up testing will be required to take the test during the next scheduled test administration. The district must provide appropriate accelerated instruction as warranted for students who are absent or otherwise do not have valid test results. If a student has missed a testing opportunity, the district may administer a local test or an individual inventory or other diagnostic assessment to determine accelerated instruction needs prior to the next state-designated testing date.

Results

By rule, schools will receive results from the first administration of TAKS within ten working days of receipt of the test materials by the testing contractor. Refer to the *2008 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* for specific dates for returning test materials. Both the calendar of events in the coordinator manual and the Activities Timeline in this manual include dates for receiving results. Schools must return test materials on schedule to receive results on the date specified. When the results are received, students will be in one of two groups:

- Met Standard (A scale score of 2100 or higher is required to meet the passing standard on the TAKS grade 3 reading, grade 5 reading, grade 5 mathematics, grade 8 reading, and grade 8 mathematics tests)
- Did Not Meet Standard (Students did not make the required score to meet the standard, were absent on the date of administration, or turned in an assessment that could not be scored)

Students who **met the standard** have met the state-identified criterion for promotion to the next grade level; however, local districts may have additional requirements for promotion. Students must meet all local requirements for promotion in addition to meeting the standard on TAKS. Students who pass a grade advancement test but are retained due to local policy will be subject to all of the SSI grade advancement requirements during the repeated school year, including the statewide passing standards in effect during that school year.

Students who **did not meet the standard** have not met the state-identified criterion for promotion to the next grade level.

> School notifies parents of student's failure and provisions for accelerated instruction; the time, date, and type of accelerated instruction to be provided; and information about the child's possible retention.

Notification

Districts must notify parents within five working days of receipt of the results that their child did not meet the standard on the TAKS test and that not meeting the standard on the assessment after three testing opportunities will result in automatic grade-level retention. This notice should explain fully the grade advancement policy and the review process by the grade placement committee. To the extent possible, all notifications should be in the language spoken most often in the home. Sample letters in English and Spanish are available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html. Districts/schools may wish to attach a cover letter with this sample notification or design a letter that is written in a style more consistent with their own correspondence with parents. For documentation purposes, a copy of this notification should be maintained in the student's permanent record file.

Required Accelerated Instruction

In the notice to parents, school personnel must outline the intervention plan for accelerated instruction. Accelerated instruction should be consistent with previous diagnostic testing and intervention activities the student has received. As specified in TAC §101.2013(a), group-administered accelerated instruction may **NOT** have a ratio of more than 10 students to each teacher. This instruction may be conducted within the school day or after school; however, each school district and each charter school shall be responsible for providing transportation to eligible students required to attend acceleration programs if these programs occur outside of regular school hours.

As outlined in the rules, accelerated instruction shall be based on but not limited to the following:

- assessment of specific student needs
- best instructional practices
- use of a variety of instructional models

School personnel should monitor each student's progress during accelerated instruction. A study guide will be provided by TEA for each student who does not meet the state passing standard. Study guides are also available on the TEA Student Assessment Division website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/.

☑ . . . Checklist for the First Administration of TAKS

- ❑ Administer TAKS to eligible students.
- ❑ Receive results within ten working days of receipt of test materials by the testing contractor.
- ❑ Notify parents of results within five working days of receiving test results from testing contractor.
- ❑ Document notification in permanent record file.
- ❑ Develop and implement intervention plans for accelerated instruction for students who did not meet the standard.
- ❑ Ensure that group size requirements are met.
- ❑ Document and monitor student progress.

Student retakes the grade 3 TAKS reading test.
Student retakes the grade 5 TAKS reading and/or mathematics test.
Student retakes the grade 8 TAKS reading and/or mathematics test.

SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF TAKS

Students who did not meet the standard on the first administration of the TAKS reading tests at grades 3, 5, or 8 and/or the mathematics tests at grades 5 and 8 should take the second administration of the applicable assessment on the scheduled administration date. Schools should prepare for test administration details such as room location(s) and test administrators.

Make-up testing is allowed during the week of the second SSI TAKS test administration for students who are absent. A student who is absent both for the second administration and during make-up testing will be required to test during the third administration unless a parental waiver is approved. A student who is absent for both the first and second test administrations must be provided appropriate accelerated instruction, as determined by the student's grade placement committee. Since no test results will be available, the district may administer a local test or an individual inventory or other diagnostic assessment to determine accelerated instruction needs prior to the next state-designated testing date.

Results

By rule, schools will receive results from the second administration of TAKS within ten working days of receipt of the test materials by the testing contractor. When the results are received, students will be in one of two groups:

- Met Standard (A scale score of 2100 or higher is required to meet the passing standard on the TAKS grade 3 reading, grade 5 reading, grade 5 mathematics, grade 8 reading, and grade 8 mathematics tests)
- Did Not Meet Standard (Students did not make the required score to meet the standard, were absent on the date of administration, or turned in an assessment that could not be scored)

As with the first administration, students who **met the standard** have met the state-identified criterion for promotion to the next grade level; however, local districts may have additional requirements for promotion. Students must meet all local requirements for promotion in addition to meeting the standard on TAKS. Students who pass a grade advancement test but are retained due to local policy will be subject to all of the SSI grade advancement requirements during the repeated school year, including the statewide passing standards in effect during that school year.

Students who **did not meet the standard** have not met the state-identified criterion for promotion to the next grade level. At this point the school **must** notify parents and convene a grade placement committee (GPC).

Principal notifies teacher and parents of student's failure. Notice must include a description of the purpose and responsibilities of the GPC and the time and place for the GPC meeting. GPC meets to prescribe appropriate accelerated instruction and determines whether student will take TAKS or the state-approved alternate assessment in accordance with local policy.

Notification

The district must notify the campus principal within five working days of receipt of the test results. Upon receiving the results, the principal must notify parents that their child did not meet the standard on the second administration of the TAKS test. As with the first notification, the notice to parents should state that the student is automatically retained if he/she does not meet the standard after three testing opportunities. This notification should also include a description of the purpose and responsibilities of the GPC and the time and place for the GPC to hold its first meeting. If more than one parent or guardian has the authority to make educational decisions regarding the student, a good-faith effort must be made to notify both parents, but participation of one parent or guardian is sufficient. To the extent possible, notifications should be sent in the language spoken most often in the home. For documentation purposes, schools should maintain a copy of this notification in the student's permanent record file.

Grade Placement Committee

Role and Membership

In accordance with the TEC §28.0211, the superintendent of each school district and chief administrative officer of each charter school shall establish procedures for convening a GPC for each student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on the second administration of a test required for grade advancement. Decisions by the GPC shall be made on an individual student basis to ensure the most effective way to support the student's academic achievement on grade level.

The GPC shall be composed of the following members:

- the principal or principal's designee
- the student's parent or guardian
- the student's teacher(s) of the subject of the grade advancement test(s) on which the student has failed to demonstrate proficiency

If a parent, guardian, or designee is unable to attend a meeting, the district may use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual and conference telephone calls. The district may designate an individual to act on behalf of the student in place of a parent, guardian, or designee if no such person can be located. A surrogate parent named to act on behalf of a student with a disability shall be considered a parent for purposes of TEC §28.0211.

If the teacher is unavailable, the principal shall designate a certified professional educator who is most familiar with the student in the subject area to serve on the GPC.

The district may accept a parent's or guardian's written designation of another individual to serve on the GPC for all purposes. Parents may also have other individuals present to assist them in the decision-making process. Local policy for involvement of other members should be reviewed. The district may accept a parent's or guardian's written and signed waiver of participation in the GPC and designation of the remaining members of the GPC as the decision-making entity for all purposes.

For students served by special education, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee serves as the grade placement committee. The ARD committee is responsible for determining grade placement and accelerated instruction. All accelerated instruction must be documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP).

For a LEP student who has not met SSI requirements, the LPAC should make recommendations to the GPC. These recommendations should be recorded in the minutes of the GPC meeting. If a LEP student is also served by special education, the LPAC should make recommendations to the ARD, which serves as the GPC.

The GPC Meeting

The proposed date, time, and location of the GPC meeting should be contained in the notification to parents. School personnel and parents should determine a convenient time for the meeting. For documentation purposes, minutes of the GPC meeting should be taken and maintained in the student's permanent record file with a copy given to the parents. At this meeting the committee will establish that all required members are present, review accelerated instruction and assessment data, and make assessment decisions based on local policy. The GPC will

- review any waiver requests from the parent or guardian (see Parental Waiver below);
- determine whether the student will take TAKS for the third administration or an alternate assessment from the state-approved list (if adopted as an option within the local board policy). There is a state-approved alternate assessment only for the English version of the TAKS grade 3 reading test. The decision to take the alternate assessment **must** be unanimous; otherwise, the student must take TAKS;
- prescribe accelerated instruction for the student as required by TEC §28.0211; and
- mark the student's report card with a designation if the student has not fulfilled all requirements for promotion, such as "promotion pending."

Parental Waiver

The commissioner's rules, TAC 19 §101.2015, require districts to establish a waiver process by which a parent or guardian may request that a student not participate in the third testing opportunity due to potential harm to the student. The provision of this waiver is intended to provide flexibility for a parent or guardian in making appropriate decisions in the best interest of the child. In making this decision, parents may consult with the other GPC members as they review the student's options. A district may not initiate a waiver process.

If the waiver is granted, the student is automatically retained. The GPC would still be required to determine the appropriate accelerated instruction for the summer. The GPC would be reconvened after the summer accelerated instruction is completed to discuss any parental appeal of the automatic retention and to determine the accelerated instruction plan for the following school year (whether the student has been retained or promoted).

☑ . . . Checklist for the Second Administration of TAKS

- ❑ Administer TAKS to eligible students—those who did not meet the standard or did not receive a score on the first test administration.
- ❑ Receive results within ten working days of receipt of test materials by the testing contractor. District notifies principal within five working days of receipt of student test results. Upon receipt, the principal must notify the teacher and parents.
- ❑ Notify parents of GPC meeting.
- ❑ Document notification in permanent record file.
- ❑ Consult with the LPAC for students with limited English proficiency who did not meet the standard.
- ❑ Convene an ARD that will serve as the GPC for students served by special education.
- ❑ Convene GPC with required members.
    - ❍ Review membership.
    - ❍ Review accelerated instruction and assessment data.
    - ❍ Determine TAKS or alternate assessment (English version of TAKS grade 3 reading only), or review waiver request.
- ❑ Prescribe and implement accelerated instruction for students who did not meet the standard.
- ❑ Ensure that group size requirements are met.
- ❑ Document and monitor student progress.

Student retakes the TAKS grade 3 reading test.
Student retakes the grade 5 reading and/or mathematics test.
Student retakes the grade 8 reading and/or mathematics test.
Student takes a state-approved substitute assessment.

THIRD ADMINISTRATION OF TAKS OR STATE-APPROVED SUBSTITUTE ASSESSMENT

Students who did not meet the standard on the first or second administrations of the TAKS grades 3, 5, or 8 reading, or grades 5 or 8 mathematics tests should take either the third administration of the TAKS test(s) on the scheduled administration date or, if allowable by local policy, take the substitute assessment approved by the state, which may be administered within a three-week testing window provided in the testing calendar. There is a state-approved alternate assessment only for the English version of the TAKS grade 3 reading test. Schools should prepare for test administration details, such as school location, room location(s), and test administrators.

Results

By rule, schools will receive results from the third administration of TAKS within ten working days of receipt of the test materials by the testing contractor. Schools that return test materials on schedule will receive results by the date specified in the testing calendar. At this point, students will be in one of two groups:

- Met Standard (A scale score of 2100 or higher is required to meet the passing standard on the TAKS grade 3 reading, grade 5 reading, grade 5 mathematics, grade 8 reading, and grade 8 mathematics tests)
- Did Not Meet Standard (Students did not make the required score to meet the standard, were absent on the date of administration, or turned in an assessment that could not be scored)

As with the first two administrations, students **who met the standard** have met the state-identified criterion for promotion to the next grade level; however, local districts may have additional requirements for promotion. Students must meet all local requirements for promotion in addition to meeting the standard on the TAKS test. Students who pass a grade advancement test but are retained due to local policy will be subject to all of the SSI grade advancement requirements during the repeated school year, including the statewide passing standards in effect during that school year.

Students **who did not meet the standard** on any of the three testing opportunities of an SSI TAKS assessment and who meet the testing eligibility requirements as specified by TAC §101.2003(b) have not met the state-identified criterion for promotion to the next grade level. At this point the student is **retained in the current grade (grades 3, 5, or 8)** unless the parent, guardian, or designee appeals that decision. School personnel may **not** appeal this decision unless the parent or guardian has designated the remaining members of the GPC as the decision-making entity for all purposes. (See Commissioner's Rules, §101.2007(b).)

The student is retained. Principal must notify parents that the child will be retained and give the parents written notice of their right to appeal.

Notification

The district must notify the campus principal within five working days of receipt of the test results. Upon receiving the results, the principal must notify parents that their child did not meet the standard on the third testing opportunity. The notice to parents must state that because the student has not met the standard on the assessment, the student is automatically retained in the current grade and the parent must appeal in order for the GPC to review the retention. **The parent must be given the opportunity to appeal the automatic retention.** (See sample forms and letters posted online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html.) The parent or guardian may appeal the retention by submitting a request to the GPC within five working days of receipt of the retention notification.

The notice to parents shall include a description of the purpose and responsibilities of the GPC and the time and place for the required GPC meeting. If more than one parent or guardian has the authority to make educational decisions regarding the student, a good-faith effort must be made to notify both parents, but participation of any one parent or guardian is sufficient. To the extent possible, all notifications should be in the language spoken most often in the home. Sample letters are included in this manual. A copy of this notification should be maintained in the student's permanent record file.

Grade Placement Committee

The GPC Meeting

The proposed date, time, and location of the GPC meeting should be contained in the notification to parents. There should be an opportunity for the parent to participate in determining a convenient time for this meeting. Minutes of the GPC meeting should be taken and maintained in the student's permanent record file with a copy given to the parents. At this meeting the committee will establish that all required members are present, review accelerated instruction and assessment data, determine an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for the next year, and **if the parent has filed an appeal**, review all facts and circumstances and vote whether to promote the student in accordance with standards established by the local school board. Students served by special education or who are LEP will be reviewed in the same manner as with the first GPC meeting.

For every student who does not meet the standard on any of the three testing opportunities, the GPC must develop an AIP. This plan shall include the accelerated instruction that the district must provide during the next school year. The plan must be designed to enable the student to perform on the appropriate grade level by the end of the next school year. The accelerated instruction plan must provide for interim progress reports to the student's parent or guardian and the opportunity for parent consultation with the teacher and/or principal as needed. (See sample AIP Progress Reports.)

GPC may promote student if it concludes by unanimous decision, upon review of all facts and circumstances and in light of local school board standards, that student is likely to perform on grade level given additional accelerated instruction during the next school year.

If an appeal has been initiated by the parent or guardian, the GPC must

- review all facts and circumstances, in accordance with standards adopted by the local school board, regarding whether the student, given additional accelerated instruction, is likely to perform on grade level during the next school year. These standards may include but are not limited to the following;
  - — evidence of satisfactory student performance, including grades, portfolios, work samples, local assessments, and individual reading and mathematics diagnostic tests or inventories;
  - — improvement in student test performance over the three testing opportunities; and
  - — extenuating circumstances that have adversely affected student participation in either the required assessments or accelerated instruction;
- determine the grade-level placement of the student. According to TEC §28.0211(e), a student may be promoted only if the GPC decision is unanimous. However, in cases where both parents participate in the GPC decision-making process, if both school representatives agree to promote and if **either** parent or guardian agrees to promote, the child is promoted. The review and final decision of the GPC must be appropriately documented as meeting the standards adopted by the school board. The decision of the grade placement committee is final and may not be appealed; and
- document the decision in accordance with local policy.

☑ . . . Checklist for the Third Administration of TAKS or Alternate Assessment

- ❑ Administer TAKS to eligible students—those who did not meet the standard or did not receive a score on the first and second test administrations.
- ❑ Receive results within ten working days of receipt of test materials by the testing contractor. District notifies principal within five working days of receipt of student test results. Upon receipt, the principal must notify the teacher and parents.
- ❑ Notify parents of automatic retention, of the GPC meeting, and of the opportunity for parent appeal for a student who did not meet the standard on any of the three opportunities.
- ❑ Consult with the LPAC for each student with limited proficiency in English who did not meet the standard.
- ❑ Convene an ARD, which will serve as the GPC for each student served by special education.
- ❑ Provide an opportunity for parent appeal.
- ❑ Document notification in permanent record file.
- ❑ Convene GPC with required members.
    - ❍ Review membership.
    - ❍ Review assessment data.
    - ❍ Review appeal (if applicable).
        - Vote on appeal of grade-level placement.
- ❑ Develop and implement an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for each student who did not meet the standard for the following school year.

SSI Topics

This SSI Topics section provides specific program information organized by subject matter. It includes the following subsections:

- Requirements for Special Populations
- Accelerated Instruction
- The Grade Placement Committee (GPC)
- Parent Notification
- Mobile and Migrant Students
- Summer Accelerated Instruction and Testing
- Scoring and Reporting
- Alternate Assessment Option

REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Students Receiving Special Education Services

Students subject to SSI requirements include those served by special education who take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee of each student receiving special education services will determine appropriate assessment options for the individual student and make any decision involving accelerated instruction and promotion. The flowcharts on pages 9 to 13 outline how the SSI grade advancement requirements affect students served by special education who take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). In the case where a student's IEP states that the student is to take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) and the student does not meet SSI assessment expectations, the ARD committee will serve as the GPC.

For each SSI grade level and subject area listed below, the ARD committee will determine which assessment is appropriate for the individual student.

SSI Requirements for Students Served By Special Education Who Take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated)

Enrolled Grade 3 Students Who Take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) Reading

Based on the ARD committee decision, some grade 3 students who are instructed in the grade 3 reading TEKS will take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). The flowchart for TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 3 reading on page 9 outlines how the SSI grade advancement requirements affect all students who take the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 3 reading test, including students served by special education.

Enrolled Grade 5 Students Who Take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) Reading

Based on the ARD committee decision, some grade 5 students who are instructed in the grade 5 reading TEKS will take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). The flowchart for TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 5 reading on page 10 outlines how the SSI grade advancement requirements affect all students who take the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 5 reading test, including students served by special education.

Enrolled grade 8 Students Who Take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) Reading

Based on the ARD committee decision, some grade 8 students who are instructed in the grade 8 reading TEKS will take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). The flowchart for TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 8 reading on page 12 outlines how the SSI grade advancement requirements affect all students who take the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 8 reading test, including students served by special education.

Enrolled Grade 5 Students Who Take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) Mathematics

Based on the ARD committee decision, some grade 5 students who are instructed in the grade 5 mathematics TEKS will take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). The flowchart for TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 5 mathematics on page 11 outlines how the SSI grade advancement requirements affect all students who take the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 5 mathematics test, including students served by special education.

Enrolled grade 8 Students Who Take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) Mathematics

Based on the ARD committee decision, some grade 8 students who are instructed in the grade 8 mathematics TEKS will take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). The flowchart for TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 8 mathematics on page 13 outlines how the SSI grade advancement requirements affect all students who take the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) grade 8 mathematics test, including students served by special education.

The ARD committee makes assessment and instructional decisions for students receiving special education services, including those who take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated). If a student has not met the passing standard after two TAKS testing opportunities, the ARD committee will meet to prescribe accelerated instruction for that student and to determine if the student will take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) or an alternate assessment for the third testing opportunity (applicable only to the English version of the TAKS grade 3 reading test). If a student has not met the passing standard after three testing opportunities, the ARD committee will determine whether the student will be promoted or retained. The ARD committee decision regarding promotion does not have to be unanimous but must follow the general rules governing ARD committee decision-making as set forth in 19 TAC §89.1050.

Special Education Scenarios

Tommy is a student served by special education. Does he take TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS-M, or TAKS-Alt?	Tommy takes the test that his ARD committee determines to be the most appropriate measure of his academic achievement and progress.
Jeanie did not meet the standard on the first administration of a TAKS test required by the SSI. Her parents request an ARD committee meeting to ask whether TAKS (Accommodated) might be a more appropriate assessment. Can the ARD committee change the testing requirement at this time?	Yes. For the second administration Jeanie may take the TAKS (Accommodated), as determined through the ARD process. The ARD committee makes this determination by reviewing the accommodations Jeanie is provided during instruction and classroom assessments as well as those allowed on TAKS (Accommodated) but not allowed on TAKS.
Tomika takes a TAKS test, does not meet the standard, and is then referred for testing to see if she qualifies for special education services. If she qualifies, is she subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements?	Yes. All students served by special education who are enrolled in grade 3, grade 5, or grade 8 and take either a TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) test in an SSI subject area are subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements. If Tomika qualifies for special education services, the ARD committee will determine appropriate testing and accelerated instruction and serve as the GPC as needed.
Kay is served by special education. She receives instruction for reading and spelling in the dyslexia program and receives assistance with schoolwork in content mastery. Who determines which assessment Kay takes? Who determines which accommodations are appropriate for her to use during testing?	The ARD committee makes these determinations.
Ana is an enrolled grade 3 student served by special education and is also classified as LEP. Do the SSI grade advancement requirements apply to her?	If she is taking the TAKS or the TAKS (Accommodated) reading test, then these requirements apply.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

The SSI grade advancement requirements **do not** apply to LEP-exempt students; however, nonexempt LEP students who take TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) in English or Spanish are subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements. The student's language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) shall determine appropriate assessment options for each eligible student.

Grade advancement decisions for LEP-exempt students will continue to be made in accordance with locally determined procedures.

Under the SSI requirements, a GPC is formed if a student fails to meet the passing standard after two SSI testing opportunities. In the case where a GPC convenes for a LEP student who has not passed the required statewide assessment, the commissioner's rules specify that an LPAC member shall be consulted by the GPC. After consultation with an LPAC member, the GPC will prescribe accelerated instruction, review parental waiver requests, and make a determination about alternate testing options for the student, as stated in this manual.

If a LEP student fails to meet the passing standard on the third administration of an assessment required under the SSI, the student is automatically retained. The GPC, after consulting again with a member of the student's LPAC, will determine an accelerated instruction plan for the upcoming school year and make promotion decisions if the student's parent has appealed the automatic retention. The GPC may consider the LPAC member's advice regarding promotion or retention, but the decision to promote must be made by the unanimous decision of the GPC members (the principal or principal's designee, the teacher in the subject area failed, and the parent or guardian).

LEP Students Who Receive Special Education Services

For LEP students who are served by special education, the ARD committee in conjunction with the LPAC makes the final decisions about assessment and grade placement so that issues related to both the student's disability and language proficiency are carefully considered.

LEP Scenarios

José is in a bilingual program. Should he take an English or a Spanish test?	The language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) makes that determination prior to the first test administration.
Ana is a grade 5 student served by special education and is also classified as LEP. Do the SSI grade advancement requirements apply to her?	If she does not meet eligibility criteria for a LEP exemption and takes TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) in reading and/or mathematics as determined by her ARD committee, then these requirements apply.
Tui has not met the standard on the second administration of TAKS. Does the LPAC need to meet? If so, when?	The LPAC meets BEFORE the GPC to decide on recommendations for Tui's accelerated instruction and the next test and to provide these recommendations to the GPC. The LPAC's review of options may include the alternate assessment on the third administration if allowable by local board policy.
Sonia did not meet the standard on the first administration of a TAKS test covered by the SSI. Is it permissible for the LPAC to exempt her from the other test administrations?	No. Once the LPAC determines that a LEP student meets the eligibility criteria for the first administration, it cannot exempt the student from the second or third administration.
If Roberto took the Spanish version on the first administration and did not meet the standard, can the LPAC move him to the English test for the second or third administration?	Only under rare circumstances would it be permissible for the LPAC to change the language of the test. In such a case the LPAC must make the decision carefully and provide thorough documentation justifying the need for change.
Maria met the standard in Spanish on the first administration. Can she take the test in English during the second or third administration in order to meet state criteria to exit the bilingual program?	No. Once a student has met the standard, the student is not eligible for further administrations of the assessment during the same school year.
Are exemptions for recent immigrants treated as "did not meet the standard" for GPC purposes?	No. A student who is exempt from the assessment is not subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements. However, local district grade advancement policies remain in place.

Students with Dyslexia or Related Disorders

The SSI grade advancement requirements apply to all students enrolled in grades 3, 5, and 8, except those LEP students and students served by special education who have been exempted from the TAKS or TAKS (Accommodated) tests. These requirements include students who do not receive special education services but are dyslexic or have related disorders. Districts should carefully review all information relating to allowable and nonallowable accommodations for the TAKS and TAKS (Accommodated) tests to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations when taking an SSI assessment.

With regard to the impact of the commissioner's rules on students with dyslexia, the rules require that individual student needs, including dyslexia, must be taken into consideration in decisions regarding testing, accelerated instruction, and promotion. For more information, educators may access 19 TAC §101.2003(g) online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter101/ch101bb.html.

The GPC must ensure that accelerated instruction and promotion decisions are made on an individual basis. Upon a parent's appeal of the automatic retention due to his or her child's not passing an assessment required under the SSI, the GPC is required to look at "all facts and circumstances" regarding the student's grade-level academic achievement and progress. Dyslexia should be considered in this review as well as in the development of the accelerated instruction plan for the next year.

Students with Dyslexia: Question and Answer

1. What assistance is available for students with dyslexia?

Current administrative rules and procedures require districts and charter schools to develop programs to meet the needs of students with dyslexia.

The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders contains the SBOE's approved procedures concerning dyslexia and related disorders. Chapter IV of the handbook contains procedures for the identification of students with dyslexia, including whether the student qualifies for services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (§504) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The handbook includes a list of professional organizations that may be contacted as a resource and includes contact information for our State Dyslexia Headquarters and hotline (800-232-3030). Allowable testing accommodations for students, including students with dyslexia, may be found in this handbook or the *2007–2008 Accommodations Manual*.

The Texas Reading Initiative (TRI) continues as a system of support for struggling readers. The TRI early reading instruments assist in timely identification of students at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Accelerated Reading Instruction provides targeted intervention, and the TRI teacher academies provide teachers with appropriate instructional tools for focused intervention.

Dyslexia Scenarios

Patrick is a student with dyslexia and is served in an alphabetic phonics program. Is he subject to the grade advancement requirements?	Yes.
Belinda receives accommodations for each administration of TAKS. Will those be allowed on each administration of a TAKS test required by the SSI?	Yes, as long as the accommodations are allowable and routinely used with the student in her classes. See the *2007–2008 Accommodations Manual*. for information on allowable accommodations.
Candice has not met the standard after three attempts. How should the GPC determine her potential for achievement or proficiency as described in the commissioner's rules?	The GPC should review individual testing used to determine dyslexia, review teacher and parent information about her ability to "handle" her schoolwork and her knowledge of the content, determine whether appropriate accommodations were used when she took TAKS, and develop an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for the next year. If the parent has appealed the automatic retention, the GPC must also review all facts and circumstances to determine whether the student, if promoted, is likely to perform on grade level the next year with additional accelerated instruction.
Penny is a student with dyslexia served by special education. How do the SSI grade advancement requirements apply to her?	The ARD committee determines the appropriate accelerated instruction, assessment, and grade placement, as with any other student served by special education.
Justin qualified for the dyslexia program shortly after the first administration of TAKS, on which he did not meet the standard. How does his participation in the dyslexia program affect his future testing and placement?	His participation in the dyslexia program will not affect his future testing or placement. However, the GPC will consider his potential for achievement or proficiency.
Ian is a student with dyslexia but has been released from the dyslexia program at his school. He does receive accommodations in some classes and in testing situations. Can he receive accommodations on TAKS?	Yes, as long as the accommodations are routinely used for Ian and the accommodations are allowable.
Sandra is dyslexic and has not met the standard after the second administration of TAKS. Her parents have asked for a waiver for the third administration due to potential harm but do not want her retained. What are the options for the GPC to consider?	Even if the waiver is approved, Sandra would still participate in appropriate accelerated instruction over the summer. Since she has not met the standard on any of the three testing opportunities, she is automatically retained. The GPC will determine an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for the next year. If the parent appeals the retention, the GPC will also consider grade-level placement.

ACCELERATED INSTRUCTION

Policy Requirements

TEC §28.0211 requires accelerated instruction to be provided to a student in the applicable subject whenever the student does not meet the standard on a state assessment for grades covered by the grade advancement requirements. The type of accelerated instruction is a local decision that should be based on individual student need. Accelerated instruction should continue until the student meets the standard on the grade advancement test(s).

According to 19 TAC §101.2013(a) and TEC §28.0211(c), a 10:1 (or lower) student-to-teacher ratio is required when providing accelerated instruction in a pull-out group. This applies to any period of time in which accelerated instruction is being provided in response to the SSI grade advancement requirements, including summer school. The ratio is not applicable for the student's entire instructional day.

When a student has not met the passing standard or was absent for the first testing opportunity, the district must provide accelerated instruction before the next testing opportunity. For students who are absent for a test required by the SSI, the district may choose to administer a local test or other diagnostic assessment to determine accelerated instruction needs. All students who do not demonstrate proficiency on a TAKS administration, including all tests required under the SSI, will be provided a TAKS study guide from the Student Assessment Division.

If a student has not met the passing standard or was absent for two testing opportunities, the GPC is required to meet and prescribe accelerated instruction for the student. The GPC should be specific about the accelerated instruction the student will receive before the third test administration. Accelerated instruction is subject to state compulsory attendance laws as specified by TEC §25.085(d)(3), which refers to "an accelerated instruction program to which the student is assigned under Section 28.0211." This includes summer accelerated instruction programs. However, the GPC may be flexible in prescribing accelerated instruction to meet the needs of students with special summer circumstances. (See the Summer Accelerated Instruction and Testing section.)

The law requires the GPC to meet and create an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for the next school year for each student who has not met the passing standard after three testing opportunities, whether the student is retained or promoted by the GPC. This AIP should include interim progress reports to the parent as well as the opportunity for parent consultation with the teacher and/or principal as needed. The accelerated instruction should continue until the GPC determines that the student has demonstrated proficiency in the areas addressed by the plan.

If a parental waiver request has been granted for the third testing opportunity due to potential harm to the student, the student must still participate in all accelerated instruction required by the GPC. The AIP should be designed to address the instructional needs of each individual student.

Designing Accelerated Instruction and Accelerated Instruction Plans

Accelerated instruction should begin as soon as possible after a district has been notified that a student has not met the standard on a grade advancement test. Instruction should continue until the student's next (second and/or third) testing opportunity. Students in grades 3, 5, or 8 who are identified as being at risk for failure on an SSI TAKS test should receive accelerated instruction throughout the school year, plus further accelerated instruction after each testing opportunity on which they are unsuccessful. It is important to note that this instruction should build on any accelerated instruction the student has received prior to TAKS.

Neither the law nor the rules specify the amount of time to be provided for the accelerated instruction. To support the SSI requirements, the law and the commissioner's rules provide districts and charter schools with flexibility to determine on an individual student basis the appropriate form, content, and timing of the accelerated instruction. The policy governing accelerated instruction is intended to allow districts flexibility to meet individual student needs. Although students' instructional needs may vary, all students deserve qualified professional delivery of instruction by highly trained educators. Therefore, a component of the SSI is training for classroom teachers in frequent and ongoing assessment and instructional strategies to meet the full spectrum of student needs. The coordination of regular instruction and accelerated instruction both before and after the TAKS administrations is strongly recommended.

In designing an AIP, the GPC should use a student's TAKS results and other performance data, such as previous diagnostic tests, classroom assessments, grades, teacher observation, and academic progress reports, to build a program that enhances the instruction the student has already received. In addition, a district should employ best instructional practices as identified through current scientific reading and mathematics research. A district may obtain and implement these practices with technical assistance from regional education service centers.

Identifying At-Risk Students

School personnel should use early reading instruments required by the Texas Reading Initiative to identify grade 3 students who are at risk in reading. For students in grade 5 or 8, results from previous TAKS tests and other diagnostic tools are the primary criteria for identifying students who are struggling in reading and/or mathematics. Instruments such as the Texas Mathematics Diagnostic System (TMDS) or district-created progress-monitoring tools may be used to identify students. Additional considerations may include performance on classroom assessments, teacher observation, progress reports, and report cards.

Accelerated Reading Instruction

The agency's Division of Curriculum provides guidelines for an accelerated reading program for all students in grades K–8 who are identified as needing reading intervention. Grade 3 students identified as being at risk for reading failure should be served by the ARI program during the school year (pre-TAKS), and those who do not pass the grade 3 TAKS reading test should be provided additional accelerated reading instruction (post-TAKS). ARI guidelines are available from the Texas Reading Initiative website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/. Although recommendations are made in this document, districts are ultimately responsible for specific decisions regarding both pre-TAKS and post-TAKS accelerated instruction.

The professional development materials created for the Texas Teacher Reading Academies (TRAs) are a valuable resource for teachers. Districts may offer the TRA training locally, or teachers may attend training sessions at their regional education service center. Texas Teacher Reading Academies in CD or online format for grades K–4 are also available from the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGCRLA) website at http://www.texasreading.org. Additional resources for struggling readers, such as *Supplemental Instruction for Struggling Readers, Grades 3–5: A Guide for Tutors*, may be accessed at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/elar/ or the TEA Texas Reading Initiative website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/.

Accelerated Mathematics Instruction

Resources for students who are identified as being at risk in mathematics may be found in the Texas Teacher Math Academy. (See the Texas Math Initiative website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/math/.) These materials will assist teachers in grouping students flexibly, identifying error patterns, and determining where students have misconceptions about the content they are learning. Teachers may access additional support materials developed by the Charles A. Dana Center at http://www.utdanacenter.org/mathtoolkit/.

Funding for Accelerated Instruction

Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) and Accelerated Mathematics Instruction (AMI) funds are available to eligible districts for providing intervention to at-risk students. The funding is distributed based on the number of students who, in the preceding school year, took a TAKS assessment required by the SSI and did not meet the passing standard. The funds are to be used to provide immediate intervention to students in grades K–8 who are struggling in reading and/or mathematics. They may also be used to provide required accelerated instruction for students who fail one or more of the state-mandated grade 3 reading, grade 5 reading and mathematics, and grade 8 reading and mathematics assessments administered in the spring. ARI and AMI Entitlement amounts are posted on the Formula Funding page of the TEA website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/formfund/ari/fy08allocation.pdf.

Accelerated Instruction: Questions and Answers

1. How is the "accelerated instruction" referenced in the SSI grade advancement requirements of TEC §28.0211 similar to or different from the "accelerated reading instruction" component of the SSI mandated by TEC §28.006?

The intent of both laws is to provide immediate intervention based on a student's individual instructional needs. According to TEC §28.006, districts shall implement an "accelerated reading instruction program" for students who, based on the results of the early reading instruments in grades K–2, are determined to be at risk for reading failure. This accelerated instruction is designed to provide immediate intervention upon identification of student need in order to prevent reading failure. Based on current reading research, it is recommended that this preventive intervention be provided in small-group settings of 3 to 4 students.

According to TEC §28.0211, districts must provide accelerated instruction to a student after he or she has not met the standard on a TAKS test required by SSI. This accelerated instruction is to take place with no more than 10 students to one teacher when provided in a pull-out group setting. Both laws allow the district to determine the form, content, and timing of the accelerated instruction.

2. **During the last 12 weeks of the school year, does TEC §25.112(a)(2) [Class Size] allow a district to exceed the 10:1 ratio required for SSI group-administered accelerated instruction?**

No. It should be noted that the 12-week exemption in TEC §25.112 is intended to accommodate end-of-the-year enrollment increases that cause districts to slightly exceed the 22:1 ratio in a kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, or grade 4 class. This exemption would not apply to the period of time in which accelerated instruction in a pull-out group setting is being provided. In these settings, the required ratio is not to exceed 10:1.

3. **If a student does not meet the passing standard on a test required under the SSI and is promoted by the GPC, does the student take the TAKS tests for the next grade level or repeat the test that he or she did not pass in the preceding school year? Whichever is the case, can accelerated instruction stop when the student passes?**

Any student who is promoted to the next grade by the GPC must receive an accelerated instruction plan for the next school year. The promoted student would take only those tests required for the grade level in which he or she is enrolled. The GPC may consider demonstrated proficiency on a TAKS test taken in the next grade to determine whether additional accelerated instruction is necessary.

4. **Will additional staffing be needed for the required accelerated instruction?**

Each district must decide how it will provide accelerated instruction. Districts may choose to hire additional personnel to deliver the accelerated instruction. However, districts may modify instructional schedules of regular classroom teachers so that appropriate highly qualified personnel are made available to deliver the accelerated instruction as needed. All personnel involved in providing accelerated instruction must meet any applicable federal regulations of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

5. **If schools need to provide transportation for children after school hours or during the summer, will the state fund this transportation?**

Schools are responsible for providing transportation to students required to attend acceleration programs if these programs occur outside of regular school hours. Summer and after-school tutorial programs are not funded under TEC §42.155. However, there are a number of funding sources that could be used, including ARI/AMI funds and any other state funds not otherwise dedicated. Coordination of different funding sources may facilitate a district's ability to provide transportation to and from accelerated programs. Federal funds may also be an option for some districts.

6. **What can teachers do to help all their students prepare for the grade 3 TAKS reading, grade 5 TAKS reading and mathematics, and grade 8 TAKS reading and mathematics assessments?**

Teachers should be experts in the content they are teaching, and the foundation for classroom instruction should be the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The TAKS tests are directly based on the TEKS and are designed to measure how well students are learning the knowledge and skills in the TEKS. Although not all TEKS are eligible for testing, all TEKS are critical building blocks that provide students with the background, knowledge, and skills they need to achieve academic success. Some TEKS are tested directly, while others supplement or help strengthen the skills that are tested. Therefore, it is vital to teach the TEKS in their entirety for each subject and grade level.

Effective teachers make learning interesting, challenging, and meaningful. The most effective preparation for TAKS does not include instruction focused on TAKS worksheets or drills but instead includes TEKS-based instructional activities that provide students with multiple and varied opportunities to learn and discover.

Students should be taught a wide variety of strategies that they can access, depending on the context of the problem they are solving or the text they are reading. Instructional strategies that require students to think through and process rich, complex problems or to utilize critical-thinking skills when reading are encouraged. In the upper elementary grades and middle school, integration of learning opportunities between content areas will support students as they apply skills and strategies in numerous contexts.

THE GRADE PLACEMENT COMMITTEE (GPC)

Purpose of the GPC

A school district must establish a grade placement committee (GPC) for each student who does not demonstrate proficiency on the second administration of TAKS. Each student's GPC will

- determine appropriate accelerated instruction that the district must provide the student before the third test administration;
- decide whether the student should take the alternate assessment for the third testing opportunity (the English version of grade 3 reading only), depending on local policy;
- consider all facts and circumstances if a parent appeals the automatic retention of a student who does not demonstrate proficiency after three testing opportunities. The GPC may promote the student if it determines, by **unanimous** decision and in accordance with local school board standards, that the student is likely to perform satisfactorily at the next grade level given additional accelerated instruction; and
- develop a plan for the accelerated instruction the student shall receive during the next school year, regardless of whether the student is retained or promoted.

The superintendent of each school district or chief administrative officer of each charter school is responsible for establishing local procedures for the convening of a GPC. Additionally, local school boards have the authority to establish further GPC policies beyond those required in the rules. The district has authority to determine "the time and place for convening" the GPC under TEC §28.0211(c).

For students served by special education, the ARD committee serves as the GPC. For LEP students, the GPC makes decisions in consultation with a member of the student's LPAC. If a LEP student is served by special education, the ARD committee, serving as the GPC, makes all decisions for the student. However, 19 TAC §101.2003(f) specifies that an LPAC member must serve on the ARD committee to ensure that issues related to the student's language proficiency are duly considered.

Required Members of the GPC

The GPC consists of the principal or principal's designee, the teacher of the subject-area test not passed by the student, and the student's parent or guardian. The intent of the law governing the SSI grade advancement requirements is that the GPC meet with all its members in attendance. Ideally, the GPC consists of the primary members listed above. However, the commissioner's rules provide for specific alternatives in the event that any one of the members is unable or unavailable to meet. (See 19 TAC §101.2007.)

With regard to the principal:

The law allows for the principal to appoint a designee to serve on the GPC in his or her place. The intent of this provision is to enable the GPC to function most effectively in the interest of the student. Principals are encouraged but not required to make decisions regarding designees as early as possible and to inform parents of the decision.

With regard to the teacher:

Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.0211(c) requires that the teacher of the subject-area test not passed by the student be a member of the GPC. Therefore, the law intends for the GPC to include a teacher assigned to this student for that subject if at all possible. In the case where the original teacher is no longer a district employee, the teacher serving on the GPC may be someone other than the original classroom teacher. In addition, the teacher "most familiar with the student in the applicable subject area" may have changed since the previous administration of TAKS. For example, the teacher in a summer program may be determined to be more familiar with the student's progress in the applicable subject than the classroom teacher. In either case, the teacher "most familiar with the student" in the applicable subject area should serve on the GPC.

The commissioner's rules also provide that when the student's teacher is unavailable, "the principal shall designate a certified professional educator who is most familiar with the student in the [applicable] subject area to serve on the GPC." (See 19 TAC §101.2007(b).) The term "unavailable" in this rule is understood to apply to exceptional circumstances such as extended illness, leave of absence, or change in employment. It should be emphasized that this rule authorizes a district to switch personnel **only** when necessary to ensure that the student has the GPC to which he or she is entitled under the statute.

With regard to the parent:

The rules provide several options to ensure that the parent is represented on the GPC in the event that he or she is unable or unavailable to serve on the GPC. (See 19 TAC §101.2007(b).) The parent has the option to designate another individual to serve on the GPC for all purposes; this designation must be provided in writing to the principal. The parent also may waive participation in the GPC and designate the remaining members of the GPC as the decision-making entity for all purposes. The principal may designate an individual to fulfill the parent's role if a parent cannot be located. Additionally, a surrogate parent named to act on behalf of a student with a disability shall be considered a parent for purposes of TEC §28.0211.

The district shall make a good-faith effort to notify a parent about the GPC meeting. There may be circumstances, however, when a parent cannot physically be present to attend the GPC meeting but wants to retain the right to participate. The rules provide that if a parent or designee is unable to attend a meeting, the district may use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual and conference telephone calls. This rule does not, however, authorize the district to arbitrarily decide not to meet. Instead, it directs the district to accomplish the purpose and intent of the statute—to have the committee actually meet and address the needs of the student—even though the parent cannot attend.

If a parent is unavailable and no designee or surrogate parent has been named, the remaining members of the GPC must convene as required by TEC §28.0211 and take any actions required; however, the GPC may not agree to promote a student under TEC §28.0211(e) unless a parent or designee has appealed or has waived his or her rights to the remaining members of the GPC. A district may allow an appeal to be filed in writing by the parent in lieu of attendance at the GPC.

If more than one parent has the authority to make educational decisions regarding the student, both may serve on the GPC, but participation of only one parent is sufficient. If both parents serve on the GPC but do not agree, either may agree to promote the student (if the remaining members of the GPC also agree to the promotion).

Required GPC Meetings

The law and rules specify a minimum number of GPC meetings that must occur at specific times during the school year in accordance with accelerated instruction and retesting opportunities. The GPC is first established and required to meet after a student does not meet the standard or is absent from the second administration of a grade advancement test. At this first meeting the GPC is responsible for prescribing accelerated instruction designed to meet the student's needs prior to the third testing opportunity. The GPC should also consider and decide on any waiver requests from parents or guardians for the third administration and whether the student will take TAKS or an alternate assessment from the state-approved list (if allowed by local policy).

The GPC is also required to meet after a student does not meet the standard, is absent, or was waived from the third administration of the grade advancement test (resulting in the automatic retention of the student). At this meeting the GPC is responsible for establishing an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for instruction to be provided to the student during the next school year.

In addition to the required minimum number of meetings set by state law and rules, districts have the authority to establish further GPC policies or procedures.

Parental Request for Waiver of Third Administration

The commissioner's rules (19 TAC §101.2015) require districts to establish a waiver process by which a parent or guardian may request that a student not participate in the third testing opportunity due to potential harm to the student. The provision of this waiver is intended to provide flexibility for a parent or guardian in making appropriate decisions in the best interest of the child. If the district procedure for granting waivers allows, the waiver decision can be made in consultation with the GPC. A student must still participate in the accelerated instruction determined by the GPC, even if the third testing opportunity is waived.

The waiver request must provide documentation of potential harm, student need, and other appropriate information. Since this is a waiver for the third and final testing opportunity, the student would be automatically retained if the district grants the waiver, as would any other student who has not met the standard in the applicable subject on any of the three testing opportunities. The parent must initiate an appeal of the automatic retention in order for the GPC to review whether to promote the student. The GPC would then review the question of retention or promotion and also determine the appropriate accelerated instruction plan for the next year, regardless of whether the student is promoted or retained.

Parental Appeal of an Automatic Retention

If a student is automatically retained, the parent must be notified of their right to appeal the retention. The parent or guardian may appeal the retention by submitting a request to the GPC within five working days of receipt of the retention notification. If an appeal has been initiated by the parent or guardian, the GPC must

- Review all facts and circumstances, in accordance with standards adopted by the local school board, regarding whether the student, given additional accelerated instruction, is likely to perform on grade level during the next school year. These standards may include but are not limited to the following:

- — Evidence of satisfactory student performance, including grades, portfolios, work samples, local assessments, and individual reading and mathematics diagnostic tests or inventories
- — Improvement in student test performance over the three testing opportunities
- — Extenuating circumstances that have adversely affected student participation in either the required assessments or accelerated instruction
- — Consideration of whether a student was not enrolled in a Texas public school for part of the school year

- Determine the grade-level placement of the student. According to rule, a student may be promoted only if the GPC decision is unanimous. The review and decision of the GPC must be appropriately documented as meeting the standards adopted by the school board.
- Document the decision in accordance with local policy.
- Determine an accelerated instruction plan, whether the student is promoted or retained.

This review may take place at this same meeting or at an additional meeting or meetings.

The decision of the GPC is final and may not be appealed.

Student Retention

There is no longer any state law limiting the number of student retentions. State law was changed in 1995 to require that student advancement be based on proficiency in the state-mandated curriculum. TEC §28.0211, Student Advancement, states, "A student may only be promoted on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level." The agency reiterates that the SSI supports grade-level academic achievement in the state-mandated curriculum. Two specific provisions of the SSI grade advancement rules are intended to address the concerns of multiple retention—19 TAC §101.2019(a), which provides that a student retained at grade 8 may earn course credit for high school graduation, and 19 TAC §101.2019(b), which allows local policy to provide for the placement of retained students in an age-appropriate learning environment.

While TEC §28.0211 established statewide grade advancement requirements, districts may establish local standards as long as these standards do not conflict with the state requirements. A student who meets the requirements of SSI grade advancement is still subject to local policy relating to grade advancement.

Students who meet the standard on a grade advancement test but are retained due to local policy will be subject to all of the SSI grade advancement requirements during the repeated school year, including meeting all statewide passing standards in effect during that school year.

The Grade Placement Committee: Questions and Answers

1. Is the parent the <u>only</u> person in the GPC who can appeal a retention after a student has not met the standard a third time?

Yes. However, a parent may designate by signed authorization someone to act on his or her behalf and/or waive his or her rights to the remaining members of the GPC. If a parent waives participation completely, another GPC member may initiate the appeal (e.g., the parent designee or the student's teacher).

2. Must the decision to promote a student be unanimous?

Yes. In order to promote a student upon appeal by a parent, the GPC must agree unanimously that the student, upon review of all facts and circumstances and in accordance with local school board standards, is likely to perform satisfactorily at the next grade level given additional accelerated instruction. However, as specified by 19 TAC §101.2007(b), "If both parents or guardians serve on the GPC but do not agree, either may agree to promote the student (if the remaining members of the GPC also agree to the promotion)." For students served by special education, the ARD committee serves as the GPC and follows ARD procedures for making placement decisions. (See Requirements for Special Populations.)

3. Is the GPC's decision to promote or retain a student final?

Yes. TEC §28.0211(e) states, "The decision of the grade placement committee is final and may not be appealed."

4. What type of documentation is needed if the GPC decides to promote a student to the next grade level?

Although the rules do not specify required documentation supporting a student's promotion by a GPC, it would be prudent for the school to maintain records relating to all GPC meetings held, including the signatures of attendees, issues discussed, and decisions made, along with evidence supporting the GPC's decision that the student is likely to perform on grade level if promoted. This evidence may include samples of the student's work, report cards, written observations from subject-area teachers who have worked with the student, and results of any formal or informal assessments that may have been administered to the student and used in making the promotion decision.

5. Can GPC meetings be combined for students who do not meet the passing standard on both the grade 5 reading and mathematics tests or the grade 8 reading and mathematics tests?

The dates for the first two test administrations of the mathematics test at grades 5 and 8 are later in the spring than the administration dates for the reading test at grades 5 and 8. Given the staggered testing dates, a GPC should be convened for each student who has not met the passing standard after the second administration of the reading test without regard to whether the student is at risk of failing an upcoming mathematics assessment. A separate GPC meeting must then be held for each student who does not meet the standard on the second administration of the grade 5 mathematics test.

If a student fails to meet the passing standard on both the reading and mathematics tests at grade 5 or 8 after three testing opportunities, district policy may allow for the two GPC meetings to be held on the same day or simultaneously to coordinate efforts for accelerated instruction for the upcoming school year. In a joint meeting, the teachers for both mathematics and reading must be present, and if the parent has appealed the student's retention, a separate decision-making process must occur for each subject area. The decision to promote must be a unanimous decision by the principal, the teacher in the subject area in which the student failed, and the parent.

Grade Placement Committee Scenarios

Craig was absent for all three administrations of the test. Is he automatically retained?	Yes. Any student who does not meet the standard after three test administrations is automatically retained. A parent must appeal this retention to the GPC in order for the GPC to then review all facts and circumstances regarding this student's situation.
D'Neisha's mother removed her to be homeschooled before the first TAKS administration. When D'Neisha returns in the following school year, does a grade placement committee need to meet to determine grade-level placement?	No. The district should follow local policy for grade-level placement for any student upon enrollment from any school other than a Texas public school. This includes private schools and homeschooling.
Samantha's parents disagree about whether she should take the third administration of the assessment—one parent files a waiver, and the other disagrees. Will Samantha have to take a test?	This depends on the specific waiver process established by the local district. The commissioner's rules require districts to establish a waiver process for the third administration due to potential harm to the student. This process must include documentation of potential harm, student need, and other applicable information.
Ashley's parents have asked for and been granted a waiver for her not to take the third administration. However, they do not want Ashley to be retained in her current grade. When the GPC meets for the first time, can they make the grade placement decision at this point?	No. Ashley needs to have the opportunity to participate in sufficient accelerated instruction through the end of summer school prior to the time the GPC makes a grade placement decision.
Nicholas is a third grade GT student who had back surgery. He was unable to sit up for any of the three TAKS administrations. His homebound teacher gave him an informal reading inventory in late May that indicates he is reading on a grade 7 level. If his GPC unanimously votes to promote him, does he still need to have an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) for the next year?	Yes. In this case, the GPC may likely determine that the appropriate AIP provides that Nicholas should continue in his regular classroom instruction, including instruction already provided in the GT program. The AIP might include a progress-monitoring report early in the next year, at which time the GPC could agree that the AIP has been successfully completed and is no longer needed.

PARENT NOTIFICATION

Districts must inform the parents of every child about the overall requirements of the law regarding the SSI grade advancement. 19 TAC §101.13(b) states:

> The superintendent of each school district and chief administrative officer of each charter school shall be responsible for the following in order to provide timely and full notification of testing requirements for advancement at certain grades:
>
> 1. notifying each student and his or her parent or guardian in writing no later than the beginning of the student's first-grade year or no later than the beginning of the student's kindergarten year, for students attending kindergarten in a public school, of the testing requirement for grade advancement as specified in the Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.0211;
> 2. notifying each student in grades 1–8 who is new to the school district or charter school and his or her parent or guardian in writing of the testing requirements for grade advancement; and
> 3. notifying each student required to take the grade advancement tests of the dates, times, and locations of testing.

Parents should also be notified at the beginning of a grade advancement year. To assist with this notification, the agency has developed three brochures, *Prepare for Success—A Parent Guide to the Student Success Initiative at Grade 3, Prepare for Success—A Parent Guide to the Student Success Initiative at Grade 5*, and *Prepare for Success—A Parent Guide to the Student Success Initiative at Grade 8*. These brochures are available on the agency website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/ and have been sent to districts for distribution.

Early Notification for At-Risk Students

Parents whose children may be at risk for reading failure based on the results of the early reading instruments given in K–2 must be notified under the SSI as mandated by TEC §28.006. TEC §28.006 requires schools to notify parents of all K–2 students of the early reading instrument results and to notify the parents of K–2 students identified as being at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, about placement in an accelerated reading program.

The commissioner's rules also address early notification. This notification applies to students entering grades 3, 5, and 8. 19 TAC §101.2009(b), Notice to Parents or Guardian, states:

> The district shall provide early notice to parents or guardians of students identified in a preceding grade to be at risk of failure on the first administration of the test required for grade advancement the next year. The superintendent must establish the instruments/procedures to be used to make this determination. . . . This notice shall be provided before the end of the school year preceding the grade advancement requirements.

Parent Notification after Test Administration

The commissioner's rules cited in 19 TAC §101.2009(c) specify that notification to parents of students who did not demonstrate proficiency on the first TAKS administration shall include "the student's test results, description of the grade advancement policy, the accelerated instruction to which the student has been assigned, and the possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next school year." This notification should be made within five working days of district receipt of student test results from this administration.

Parent notification requirements for students who have failed to demonstrate proficiency after the second administration are found in 19 TAC §101.2007(c). The rules specify that the district notification should include a description of the purpose and responsibilities of the GPC and a time and place for the first GPC meeting.

After a student fails to meet the standard on the third administration, the GPC must reconvene. As per 19 TAC §101.2007(e), parents must be notified of test results, the time and place of the GPC meeting, and the parents' opportunity to appeal the automatic retention of their child. The district must have a procedure to ensure that a good-faith effort is made toward securing the parent or guardian's receipt of the retention notification. The parent or guardian must submit an appeal to the GPC within five working days of receiving the retention notification.

Sample Notification Forms and Letters

Sample letters that districts may use to meet parental notification requirements about grade advancement requirements are posted to the Student Assessment Division website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html. These materials cover the scope of required notices and forms related to the grade advancement requirements in a format that facilitates downloading and editing for local use. The materials are provided in both English and Spanish to help districts meet the requirement of a good-faith effort to provide parent notifications in the parent's native language. A number of optional forms are also provided.

The SSI Activities Timeline includes a listing of the sample required and optional notification letters and forms, organized by SSI activity and date.

MOBILE AND MIGRANT STUDENTS

Mobile Students

Student mobility within and across school districts is a significant challenge to effective implementation of the SSI grade advancement requirements. Continuity in understanding and addressing a student's needs for grade-level academic achievement requires effective coordination and communication across schools and districts. Schools must ensure sufficient documentation of student progress in regard to SSI grade advancement, including additional accelerated instruction, testing history, and GPC minutes as well as any other pertinent documentation.

When a student moves from one Texas public school district to another after the first or second administration of a test required under the SSI, the receiving district is responsible for reviewing the student's records and, if applicable, providing appropriate accelerated instruction and additional testing opportunities as required by the law. The receiving district must coordinate with the previous district in regard to testing history and accelerated instruction. Section 19 TAC 101.2003(h), Grade Advancement Testing Requirements, states, "A school district or charter school must determine a student's previous testing history and, if applicable, the accelerated instructional program he or she has received."

According to 19 TAC §101.2003, any student who is enrolled at the time of testing is required to take the statewide SSI TAKS tests or TAKS (Accommodated), if appropriate. There is no minimum period of enrollment before the tests. A student who has transferred from another state or a private/home school and who enrolls in a Texas public school late in the school year but prior to the second or third test administration is required to take tests on the next scheduled administration date but may not be subject to the automatic retention requirements. For example, students who are not enrolled in a Texas public school or charter school between January 1 and April 15 of the SSI year but who enroll before the end of the school year are subject to all of the grade advancement requirements under SSI except for the automatic retention component. This also applies to students who are enrolled anytime between January 1 and April 15 of the SSI year but who are not eligible for enrollment on the day the test is given. However, if a student has been enrolled in a Texas public or charter school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and the student was eligible to be enrolled during the week of the test date, the student is subject to all the requirements of the SSI, including the automatic retention component.

Students who transfer directly from one Texas public school district or charter school to another in an SSI year are subject to all the SSI requirements. This includes students who transfer between grade levels. If the student has not met the SSI requirements for the previous school year, the receiving school must review the student's testing and accelerated instruction history and provide additional accelerated instruction and a GPC, as needed. Receiving districts can disagree with the GPC from the student's previous district since the district where the student is currently enrolled is responsible for the student.

Out-of-state or private/home-school students who enroll after the completion of an SSI school year are not subject to the requirements of the SSI for that year. When a student has been promoted in another state or in a nonpublic school before enrolling in a Texas public school, a GPC does not have any mandated responsibility to determine the grade placement of the student. Districts may continue to decide on these grade placements as a local responsibility. According to local policy, the district may choose to honor or to reject the placement decision of the other state or nonpublic school with or without the administration of an assessment to make the placement decision.

19 TAC §101.2007(f)(4) notes that when making promotion decisions, a GPC might consider, as part of standards adopted by the local school board, the period of time a student was not enrolled in a Texas public school.

Mobile Student Scenarios

Melayne did not meet the standard on the first administration of TAKS and then withdrew for homeschooling. Will she be subject to the grade advancement policy if she returns to the public school the following year?	No. The district should follow local policy for grade-level placement for any student upon enrollment from any school other than a Texas public school. This includes private schools and homeschooling.
Eileen did not meet the standard on the first administration of TAKS and then withdrew to go to a private school. She is promoted by the private school and then returns the next school year to public school. In which grade is she placed? Does it make a difference if the private school is accredited or not?	If Eileen has been promoted by the private school, local policy for grade-level placement upon entry from private schools should be implemented, including any consideration of accreditation status.
Ken moves to a Texas district from Louisiana on April 3. Do the SSI grade advancement requirements apply to him, and if so, how?	All the grade advancement requirements except for the automatic retention component apply to students who move into the state and enroll in a public school **after** the week of the first test administration. However, these students must still participate in all other SSI requirements, such as assessment, accelerated instruction, the GPC process, and an accelerated instruction plan (AIP).
Jarrell moves into the state and is enrolled in school after the first administration of the grade 5 TAKS reading test but before the first administration of the grade 5 TAKS mathematics test. Is he subject to the SSI requirements in both subjects?	Jarrell is subject to all the SSI requirements in mathematics, including automatic retention, because he will be enrolled for three testing opportunities. Jarrell will be subject to all the SSI requirements in reading except for the automatic retention component because he was not eligible to be enrolled for the first administration of the TAKS reading test.

Migrant Students

Students identified as migrant are required to test if they are enrolled during the time of testing and are not otherwise exempted from testing through limited English proficiency or special education status. A migrant student who withdraws from a Texas public school during the school year of a grade advancement test is not subject to the grade advancement requirements of TEC §28.0211 unless the student re-enrolls during that school year and meets other eligibility requirements. Moreover, according to 19 TAC §101.2007(h), any student who has been promoted upon completion of a school year in another state (or in a nonpublic school) may be enrolled in that grade without regard to his or her participation in TEC §28.0211. This rule applies to many migrant students.

A student who is enrolled at any time between January 1 and April 15 of the SSI school year is subject to all the grade advancement requirements if the student is (1) enrolled during the week of the first general SSI test administration, or (2) eligible to be enrolled during the first general SSI test administration as defined by residence in Texas during that time. A student who enrolls after the week of the first SSI test administration is not subject to the automatic retention component of the SSI but still receives the benefits of all the other SSI components, such as accelerated instruction.

Migrant students who do not pass the first two administrations of an SSI TAKS assessment and who will be in another state for the third test administration will be able to meet testing requirements through either TAKS or the alternate assessment (if taking the English version of the grade 3 reading test). During the summer migrant students can take any of the TAKS reading and/or mathematics tests at a receiving-state site under the oversight of the Texas Migrant Interstate Program (TMIP). Migrant students who are unable to participate in the summer administration of an SSI test may be given an alternate assessment, which may be considered by the GPC as evidence in its review. Migrant students who are in the state but residing away from their home district for the summer test administration may register to test in or near the district where they are residing during the summer. (See the Summer Accelerated Instruction and Testing section of this manual.)

Informed and continuous communication between all parties involved is critical to the migrant student's academic success. Districts and GPCs may wish to keep in contact with Migrant Service Coordinators to effectively communicate and address migrant students' needs.

Migrant Student Scenarios

Mari is a migrant student who moves out of state after she has taken the first test and has not met the standard. Is she subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements?	Mari is subject to these requirements if she is enrolled in a Texas public school. A migrant student who withdraws from a Texas public school during the school year and does not return prior to the next school year is not subject to the grade advancement policy. However, she is still subject to local district policy regarding placement when she returns.
Can Mari take other tests outside of Texas?	Mari may take other tests outside of Texas. The Texas Migrant Interstate Program (TMIP) will coordinate with receiving summer sites to identify students who are eligible for SSI TAKS tests. TMIP will also coordinate study materials and test administrator training and send Texas educators to receiving states to assist with the third SSI test administration.
Adelita and her family move within Texas after Adelita has not met the standard on two administrations of TAKS. Who will provide the accelerated instruction for her? Who will fund this instruction? Will the ESCs have a role?	The receiving district must coordinate with the previous district with regard to testing history and accelerated instruction to ensure that Adelita is afforded equal opportunity and access to free public education in Texas. ESC staff may assist in coordinating between the home base and receiving district to obtain TAKS results and information about prescribed accelerated instruction. The same funds used for all students in the receiving school district are to be used for migrant students moving throughout the state of Texas.
Tony is a migrant student who moves out of state after he has not met the standard on the first two tests. How will his AIP be transferred with him?	The New Generation System (NGS) Texas Database for migrant students is currently capable of downloading TAKS test results for identified migrant students. Student profiles are easily accessible for all nationwide migrant program personnel registered with the NGS database at no cost to the receiving sites. A method to carry AIP and TAKS results is through the Texas Migrant Student Transfer Packet System, better known as the "Red Bag." Parents are trained and encouraged to place all educational and medical records in the bag and present it upon arriving at the receiving state.
Tran moves out of state and needs study materials such as the TAKS study guide. How can those be accessed and at what cost?	Students who do not meet the standard on the first administration of TAKS will be issued a study guide at no cost to the student. Receiving states that would like to invest in and stock study guides in preparation for summer school may call TEA or print a master for copying from the TEA website.

SUMMER ACCELERATED INSTRUCTION AND TESTING

If a student has not met the passing standard after two testing opportunities required under the SSI, the GPC meets and prescribes the accelerated instruction to be offered before the next testing opportunity. The accelerated instruction should be designed to meet the student's academic needs. Since the GPC is allowed flexibility in prescribing the accelerated instruction, the committee should make an effort to accommodate the needs of students and parents who may have special circumstances that affect a child's ability to attend an established summer program in the district.

Accelerated instruction is required under state law related to SSI grade advancement (TEC §28.0211). Therefore, it is subject to state compulsory attendance laws as specified by TEC §25.085(d)(3), which refers to "an accelerated instruction program to which the student is assigned under Section 28.0211." This would apply to a summer school program that has been prescribed by the GPC.

Summer Out-of-District Accelerated Instruction

19 TAC §101.2013 addresses students who will be residing outside their home district during the summer. A student who did not meet the standard on the first two administrations of an SSI TAKS assessment and who will be residing away from his or her home district may participate in any established, on-campus accelerated instruction program in the local district where he or she will be living for the summer. The district must accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in its accelerated instruction program provided the program meets the needs of that student as prescribed by the student's grade placement committee. The student's home district should contact the receiving district to ensure that the accelerated instruction is appropriate, and districts should enact a reciprocal agreement to ensure that all relevant information about the student is communicated.

When a district is receiving a student from out-of-district, the district is not required to schedule an additional class in cases where the out-of-district student increases the student-to-teacher ratio above 10:1 for accelerated instruction. In this situation, the district should include the out-of-district student in the existing class and request a waiver from TEA to allow for the additional student. Since the district is not required to set up an additional class or provide additional instructors for out-of-district students, the cost of adding a student should be minimal. A district may use accelerated reading instruction (ARI) or accelerated mathematics instruction (AMI) funds to pay for any additional students.

Summer Out-of-District Testing

In addition to attending out-of-district accelerated instruction programs, students who need to take the third administration of an SSI grade advancement test out-of-district may do so in the local district where they will be living for the summer. The district must accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in the third test administration, provided the district is scheduled to administer an SSI TAKS assessment to local students and the out-of-district student has registered in advance to take the test. To register a student for out-of-district testing, the home district must call the testing contractor by a specified deadline. A district may choose to test walk-in students or out-of-district students who register after this deadline, but the district is not required to do so. Precoded campus identification sheets will be provided for all out-of-district students who are registered. A district must hand-grid answer documents for all out-of-district students taking the test. Appropriate materials identification sheets must be hand-gridded for walk-ins and late registrants if the district chooses to allow them to test.

Summer Accelerated Instruction and Testing: Question and Answer

1. **Are alternate test dates permitted for the third TAKS test administration that takes place during the summer?**

The agency understands that districts may be out of session during the third TAKS administration. Districts may request an alternate testing date for the third TAKS administration as well as any other administration in which the district is out of session. However, test security must be maintained. The alternate test administration must be for all eligible students on a campus.

Summer Accelerated Instruction and Testing Scenarios

Juan lives with his mother and stepfather. He did not meet the standard on the first two administrations of TAKS. In the summer, he goes to live with his father in another Texas district. Who will provide his accelerated instruction?	A school district must accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in any established, on-campus accelerated instruction programs, provided the student is living away from his or her home district, the program meets the instructional needs of that student as established by the GPC, and adding the student does not require the district to create an additional class. Juan's home district should contact the district where his father lives to determine whether the program will meet Juan's needs. If that program is appropriate, a reciprocal agreement should be established between the districts to ensure a smooth transition.
Terry attends a charter school. He has not met the standard on the first two administrations of TAKS. Is the charter school responsible for providing accelerated instruction during the summer months?	Yes. The charter school, like any public school, is required to provide all SSI grade advancement services, including accelerated instruction during the summer months. A charter school may not defer responsibility for accelerated instruction to a public school district. However, a charter school may establish a reciprocal agreement with a local district if both parties concur. If a student transfers at the beginning of the summer to a public school in the district in which he resides, the receiving school is responsible for providing accelerated instruction.
Lisa is required to attend summer school as part of her accelerated instruction plan. Her parents refuse to allow her to attend. What should the district do?	Compulsory attendance laws pertain to accelerated instruction programs required by a student's GPC. The GPC should keep documentation if a parent refuses accelerated instruction.
Tina is spending the summer with her grandparents in another state. May the grade placement committee design an accelerated instruction plan that takes this into consideration?	The GPC is allowed flexibility in prescribing accelerated instruction. Extenuating circumstances that prevent a student from receiving accelerated instruction in the home district may be considered, provided that the student's instructional needs are met by the plan. An independent study plan or arrangements for the provision of instruction at a private school or other facility may be considered. Independent study plans should be documented and monitored by the home district to ensure that the student is receiving the necessary instruction.
Kayla will be in the care of her grandparents at the time of the third testing opportunity. May she take the test in the Texas public school district in which they live?	A campus or district must accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in the third administration of an SSI test if that campus or district is testing one or more local students on the applicable test and if the student has registered for out-of-district testing by a date established by the testing contractor.

SCORING AND REPORTING

TAKS Scale Score Passing Standards

The State Board of Education (SBOE) is charged by law with the responsibility to set performance standards on TAKS. As part of the standard-setting process, the SBOE accepted the recommendation of a standard-setting advisory panel to adopt the following labels to describe levels of student performance on TAKS: "Commended," "Met Standard," and "Did Not Meet Standard."

Beginning in the 2004–2005 school year, the scale score passing standards on all TAKS tests in grades 3–10 were set at the panel recommendation of 2100 for "Met Standard." Students scoring below 2100 fall into the "Did Not Meet Standard" category.

The scale score system ensures that the standards for the "Met Standard" and "Commended" levels remain constant across years, even when the test itself and the students taking the test differ each year. The TAKS tests may vary slightly in difficulty across test administrations since the same test is not given from year to year. As a result, the raw scores students must achieve to meet the passing standard may also vary slightly across administrations. However, the scale scores established at each standard do not vary and ensure that equivalent performance is maintained at each test administration, as required by SBOE rule. Raw-score–to–scale-score tables are posted on the TEA Student Assessment Division website after each test administration and provide information about the raw scores needed to meet the scale score passing standard on a particular test.

Reporting of Test Results to Districts

In accordance with TEC §39.0231, the agency ensures that each TAKS test administered in accordance with TEC §28.0211 is scored and that the results are returned to the appropriate school district not later than 10 working days after receipt of the test materials by the testing contractor. The reporting dates for SSI TAKS tests are specified in the Activities Timeline in this manual and in the Student Assessment Testing Calendar, which is posted on the agency website. The agency produces a number of performance reports for the TAKS program that are clear and user-friendly for administrators, teachers, and parents. The Confidential Student Report (CSR) and the parent guide to the CSR, *Understanding the Confidential Student Report—A Guide for Parents*, provide specific information about a student's performance on the test. Student performance reports provided to the school can help inform decisions about the post-TAKS accelerated instruction required under the SSI grade advancement requirements.

A cumulative summary report is provided for each district and campus following the second and third administrations of an SSI TAKS assessment. This report contains cumulative pass-rate information for each demographic group tested. For more information on how cumulative results are reported, refer to *Interpreting Assessment Reports*, a guide produced by the Student Assessment Division and available on the Student Assessment Division website.

In addition to providing hard-copy results of SSI TAKS tests to districts, the testing contractor also reports test results electronically on a secure website. Through this service, districts may access student test results a few days before the shipped reports arrive. This allows districts additional time to notify parents of test results, begin accelerated instruction, and convene grade placement committees, as applicable.

District and PEIMS Reporting Requirements

The law requires certain information related to the grade advancement requirements to be reported by the district to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Subsection (b) of 19 TAC §101.2017, Scoring and Reporting, states:

> (b) As specified by Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.051(b)(7), the superintendent of each school district and chief administrative officer of each charter school shall report the following information to the Texas Education Agency:
>
> 1. the percentage of students, aggregated by grade level, provided accelerated instruction under TEC §28.0211(c);
> 2. the results of assessments administered under TEC §28.0211(c);
> 3. the percentage of students promoted through the Grade Placement Committee process under TEC §28.0211; and
> 4. the subject of the assessment instrument on which each student failed to perform satisfactorily, and the performance of those students in the school year following that promotion on the assessment instruments required under TEC §39.023.

To report information about promotion and retention to the agency, districts should use the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data element, E1030—SSI-Promotion-Retention-Code. Districts should ensure that staff members responsible for meeting these reporting requirements are familiar with instructions in the Student Assessment Division's *District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and in the PEIMS Data Standards issued annually by the agency.

For information about how the state accountability system accommodates student mobility in SSI grades (those who enroll after the PEIMS snapshot dates or change campuses/districts between SSI assessments), district personnel should refer to the *Accountability Manual*, produced by the Division of Performance Reporting and located on the Texas Education Agency Division of Performance Reporting website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT OPTION FOR TAKS

State law allows a school district the option of using a substitute assessment in place of TAKS on the third testing opportunity. TEC §28.0211(b) specifies, "A school district may administer a substitute assessment instrument to a student who has failed an assessment instrument specified under Subsection (a) on the previous two opportunities."

The commissioner's rules require that local school boards establish policy for a district-wide procedure for use of the substitute assessment option. There are two options local boards may choose:

1. to use only TAKS on the third administration; or
2. to authorize the superintendent to select a test from the Commissioner's List of Alternate Assessments and then allow the GPC to decide whether the alternate assessment or TAKS is appropriate on an individual student basis.

If a district chooses to allow an substitute assessment option, all students taking this option in the district must use the same substitute assessment selected by the district for the applicable subject area and grade.

The Student Assessment Testing Calendar includes a testing window for the substitute assessment. The window is scheduled to cover the last two weeks of June and the beginning of July in order to allow districts to schedule this assessment to coincide with summer school programs. The Commissioner of Education establishes the test dates for the three administrations of the test. The SSI statute specifies that accelerated instruction be provided to students who have not passed the test. In order to provide sufficient instructional time for the student's accelerated instruction program, an adequate number of days must be scheduled between each administration of the assessment.

Commissioner's List of Alternate Assessments

Section 28.0211(b) of the Texas Education Code (TEC) specifies: "A school district may administer an substitute assessment instrument to a student who has failed an assessment instrument specified under Subsection (a) on the previous two opportunities." As specified in 19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Assessment, Subchapter BB, Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative, §101.2011, the commissioner provides annually to school districts and charter schools a list of state-approved group-administered achievement tests certified by test publishers as meeting the requirements of TEC, §28.0211. The district may select only one test for each applicable grade and subject to be used under this section, and the substitute assessment must be given during the period established in the testing calendar to coincide with the date of the third administration of the statewide assessment. Test publishers are required to provide results of the substitute assessments to school districts within ten working days following receipt of the test materials from the school district. School districts and charter schools are required to follow the same procedures for ensuring test security and confidentiality that are required during the regular administrations of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests.

Currently one assessment instrument has been approved for the substitute assessment option:

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Form B, grade 3 English Reading Test, produced by the Riverside Publishing Company.

Alternate Assessment Option: Questions and Answers

1. Are norm-referenced tests eligible for the substitute assessment option?

Yes. Both criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) and norm-referenced tests (NRTs) are eligible for inclusion on the Commissioner's List of Alternate Assessments.

2. Is the Commissioner's List of Substitute Assessments the same list as the Commissioner's List of Early Reading Instruments?

No. These are two distinct lists of assessment instruments that are designed for different purposes. The substitute assessment instruments are used to evaluate student achievement. The early reading instruments are used to diagnose students' instructional needs and to inform reading instruction.

Appendices

Appendix A

Laws and Rules

Texas Education Code

The Texas Education Code (TEC) is available on the Internet in PDF or Word format, which allows users to print copies as needed and search the electronic version for specific topics. Statute updates from the 80th Legislature will be made available in February 2008.

The following chapter/subchapter of the TEC details the obligations of school districts to students who do not meet standard on the TAKS reading tests in grades 3, 5, and 8, and the TAKS mathematics tests in grade 5 and 8:

Texas Education Code
Subtitle F. Curriculum, Programs, and Services
Chapter 28. Courses of Study; Advancement
Subchapter B. Advancement, Placement, Credit, and Academic Achievement Record § 28.0211. Satisfactory Performance on Assessment Instruments Required; Accelerated Instruction

The complete text can be accessed online at http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/ed.toc.htm.

Texas Administrative Code

The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) and updates to the TAC are available on the Internet in PDF format, which allows users to print copies as needed and search the electronic version for specific topics.

The following chapter of the TAC details the Student Success Initiative:

19 TAC Chapter 101, Assessment, Subchapter BB, Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative

The complete text can be accessed online at
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter101/ch101bb.html

Updates are made periodically to the TAC. These updates reflect the latest published adopted rule actions taken by the State Board of Education and the commissioner of education. The updates may be accessed at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tacupdates/index.html.

Appendix B

Sample Forms and Letters

Sample Forms and Letters

Sample forms and letters that cover the scope of required notices and forms related to the grade advancement requirements are available in English and Spanish in a format that facilitates downloading and editing for local use. They can be accessed at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html.

The forms are arranged on the website in the following manner:

General Use Forms
Grade 3 Reading (English)
Grade 5 Reading (English)
Grade 5 Mathematics (English)
Grade 8 Reading (English)
Grade 8 Mathematics (English)
Grade 3 Reading (Spanish)
Grade 5 Reading (Spanish)
Grade 5 Mathematics (Spanish)
Grade 8 Reading (Spanish)
Grade 8 Mathematics (Spanish)