



**Diboll ISD**

**Grade Placement Committee  
Meeting Procedures**

## **Introduction**

Enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature (1999), the Student Success Initiative (SSI) grade advancement requirements apply to 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 (GPC) 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 guardians, and community members working in partnership to meet individual student needs. These procedures are designed to outline the requirements of the grade placement manual and support school personnel in the implementation of the grade advancement requirements of the SSI, including the coordination of GPC's as required by law.

## **Prior to the First SSI Assessment**

### **Notification Prior to TAKS**

Within the first weeks of school, parents and guardians of students enrolled in grades kindergarten through eighth should be notified of the Student Success Initiative requirements. These required documents are located in the Texas Education Agency's Grade Placement Committee Manual. Both the letters and brochures are available in English and Spanish to help meet the requirement of a good-faith effort to provide parent notifications in the parent's native language. These brochures and letters should be sent home with all grade 5 and grade 8 students to ensure that parents are fully informed of the law.

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. Diboll ISD will provide early notice to parents or guardians in their native language, 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. This notice shall be provided before the end of the school year preceding the grade advancement requirements. A copy of this notification will be maintained in the student's permanent record file.

### **Accelerated Instruction Prior to TAKS**

All students at risk of failing an SSI assessment **must** be provided additional accelerated instruction. Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) and Accelerated Mathematics Instruction (AMI) funds will be used to fund reading and mathematics interventions for at-risk students. Diboll will use results from universal screenings, unit assessments, and benchmarks 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 will include performance on classroom assessments, teacher observations, progress reports, and report cards.

# **First Administration of TAKS**

All eligible students should take the first administration of the TAKS reading test at grades 5 or 8 and the TAKS mathematics test at grades 5 or 8. SSI grade advancement requirements apply to all students enrolled in grades 5 and 8 who take TAKS. This includes students identified as special education and limited English proficient (LEP) students who take TAKS in English or Spanish. The law requires that a student be given three opportunities for testing. Make-up tests for students who are absent are allowed during the week of the first and second SSI test administrations. 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. Diboll ISD will 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, Diboll ISD 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, Diboll ISD will receive results from the first 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 (Students made the required score to meet the passing standard.)*

*Did Not Meet Standard (Students did not make the required score to meet the passing standard, were absent on the date of administration, or otherwise did not submit an assessment that could be scored.)*

Students who **met the standard** have met the state-identified assessment criterion for promotion to the next grade level; however, students must meet all local requirements for promotion in addition to meeting the passing 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.

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

## **Notification**

Diboll ISD will notify parents and guardians within five working days of receipt of the results that their child did not meet the passing standard on the TAKS test and that not meeting the passing 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 GPC. These required documents are located in the Texas Education Agency's Grade Placement Committee Manual. For documentation purposes, a copy of this notification should be maintained in the student's permanent record file.

## **Required Accelerated Instruction**

In 2009 the legislature passed House Bill 3, which supports the goals of SSI by strengthening the state's accelerated instruction provisions for students in grades 3-8. Districts are now required to provide accelerated instruction to all students who do not demonstrate proficiency on TAKS. Whether they are in an SSI grade (grade 5 or 8) or a non-SSI grade (grades 3, 4, 6, or 7), students who do not meet the standard on TAKS must receive appropriate instructional intervention so that they will be able to make the academic progress necessary to do on-grade-level work at the next grade. Accelerated instruction may require participation by the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

In the notice to parents and guardians, notification will outline the intervention plan for accelerated instruction. Accelerated instruction should be consistent with previous diagnostic testing and intervention activities the student has received. For students served by special education, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee must determine the accelerated instruction plan. Accelerated instruction will 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, in the event that accelerated instruction occurs outside of regular school hours, Diboll ISD will be responsible for providing transportation to eligible students required to attend.

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 will monitor each student's progress during accelerated instruction.

## **Second Administration of TAKS**

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

Make-up testing for students who are absent is allowed during the week of the second TAKS SSI test administration. 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 GPC. 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, Diboll ISD 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 (Students made the required score to meet the passing standard.)*

*Did Not Meet Standard (Students did not make the required score to meet the passing standard, were absent on the date of administration, or did not return an assessment that could be scored.)*

As with the first administration, students who **met the standard** have met the state-identified assessment criterion for promotion to the next grade level; however, students must meet all local requirements for promotion in addition to meeting the passing 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.

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

## **Notification**

The district will notify the campus principals upon receipt of the test results. The principal must notify parents that their child did not meet the passing 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 passing 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. Notification forms located in the Texas Education Agency's Grade Placement Committee Manual will be utilized. For documentation purposes, schools should maintain a copy of this notification in the student's permanent record file.

## **Grade Placement Committee**

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. 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.

### ***Students Served by Special Education***

For students served by special education, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee serves as the GPC. 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).

### ***Students Identified as Limited English Proficient***

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 committee, which serves as the GPC.

## ***The GPC Meeting***

The proposed date, time, and location of the GPC meeting will be contained in the notification to parents. There should be an opportunity for the parent/guardian 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, and make assessment decisions based on local policy.

The GPC will complete the following:

- ❖ 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 a substitute assessment from the state-approved list (if adopted as an option within the local board policy). The decision to take the substitute assessment **must** be unanimous; otherwise, the student must take TAKS.
- ❖ Prescribe accelerated instruction for the student as required by TEC §28.0211.
- ❖ Mark the student's report card with a designation, such as "promotion pending," if the student has not fulfilled all requirements for promotion.

## **Parental Waiver**

Diboll ISD local policy establishes 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).

## **Third Administration of TAKS**

Students who did not meet the passing standard on the first or second administrations of the TAKS grades 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. Campuses should prepare test administration details, such as school location, room location(s), and test administrators. A parent or guardian may request that the student not participate in the third testing opportunity due to potential harm to the student.

## **Results**

By rule, Diboll ISD will receive results from the third administration of TAKS within ten working days of receipt of the test materials by the testing contractor. At this point, students will be in one of two groups:

*Met Standard (Students made the required score to meet the passing standard.)*

*Did Not Meet Standard (Students did not make the required score to meet the passing standard, were absent on the date of administration, or turned in an assessment that could not be scored.)*

As with the first and second administration, students who **met the standard** have met the state-identified assessment criterion for promotion to the next grade level; however, students must meet all local requirements for promotion in addition to meeting the passing 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.

Students **who did not meet the passing standard** on any of the three testing opportunities of a TAKS SSI assessment and who meet the testing eligibility requirements as specified by 19 TAC §101.2003(b) have not met the state-identified assessment criterion for promotion to the next grade level. At this point the student is **retained in the current grade (grade 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, 19 TAC §101.2007(b).)

## **Notification**

The district will notify the campus principals 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 passing standard on the third testing opportunity. The notice to parents must state that because the student has not met the passing 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.** 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. 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 passing standard after 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 AIP 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.

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

- ❖ 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
  - 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 GPC is final and may not be appealed.
- ❖ Document the decision in accordance with local policy.

## **Requirements for Special Populations**

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. In such cases, an LPAC member must serve on the ARD committee to ensure that issues related to the student's language proficiency are duly considered.

### **Students Served by Special Education**

Students subject to SSI requirements include those served by special education who take TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), or TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M). The ARD committee will determine which assessment, TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), or TAKS–M, is appropriate for the individual student in each SSI content area and grade level and will make all decisions involving accelerated instruction and promotion. In the case where a student's IEP states that the student is to take one of these assessments and the student does not meet SSI assessment expectations, the ARD committee will serve as the GPC.

The role of the ARD committee in making decisions about students subject to SSI requirements is defined in the following Texas Administrative Code:

TAC § 101.2003 Grade Advancement Testing Requirements(d) A student receiving special education services under the TEC, Chapter 29, Subchapter A, enrolled in Grades 5 or 8 and who is receiving instruction in the essential knowledge and skills in a subject specified under subsection (a) of this section is eligible under this section. In accordance with §101.5(b) of this title (relating to Student Testing Requirements) and TEC, §28.0211(i), the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee shall determine appropriate assessment and acceleration options for each eligible student. Assessment decisions must be made on an individual basis and in accordance with administrative procedure established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). These decisions shall be documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP).

For the students described above, a duly constituted ARD committee must make decisions regarding **appropriate** 1) assessment, 2) accelerated instruction, and (3) grade placement based on a student's specific disability-related needs.

The ARD committee makes assessment and instructional decisions for students receiving special education services, including those who take TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), or TAKS–M. If a student has not met the passing standard after two testing opportunities, the ARD committee will meet to prescribe accelerated instruction for that student and to determine if the student will continue to take TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS–M or take a substitute assessment for the third testing opportunity. 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, Chapter 89, Subchapter AA.

### **Students with Dyslexia or Related Disorders**

The SSI grade advancement requirements apply to all students enrolled in grades 5 or 8, except those students granted a LEP exemption by an LPAC committee and students served by special education who do not participate in a TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), or TAKS–M administration on the basis of special education as determined by an ARD committee and documented in their IEP. 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, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS–M 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.

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.

### **Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students**

LEP students who take TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), or TAKS–M 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.

The SSI grade advancement requirements **do not** apply to recent immigrant students granted a LEP exemption under Texas law. Consequently, students who participate in linguistically accommodating testing (LAT) are not subject to SSI requirements. 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 does not 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 the GPC shall make its decisions in consultation

with a member of the student's LPAC. After consultation, the GPC will prescribe accelerated instruction and review parental waiver requests.

If a LEP student does not meet the passing standard on the third administration of an assessment required under the SSI, the student is automatically retained. The GPC, after consulting with a member of the student's LPAC, will determine an accelerated instruction plan (AIP) 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 a 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.