

Exceptions to the High Stakes testing policy

1. Policy Override – 4th and 8th grades

The local school system (LEA) may override the State policy for students scoring at the *Unsatisfactory* level in English language arts or mathematics, if the student scores at the *Mastery* or *Advanced* level in the other, provided that

- the decision is made in accordance with the local Pupil Progression Plan, which may include a referral to the School Building Level Committee (SBLC);
- the student has participated in **both** the spring and summer administrations of LEAP and has attended the summer remediation program offered by the LEA (the student shall participate in the summer retest only on the subject that he/she scored at the *Unsatisfactory* achievement level during the spring test administration); and
- parental consent is granted.

Policy Override – 8th grade only

The local school system (LEA) may override the State policy for 8th grade students scoring at the *Unsatisfactory* level in English language arts or mathematics, if the student scores at the *Basic* level in the other, provided that the following criteria are met:

- the student scored **Approaching Basic** or above on the Science and Social Studies components of LEAP;
- the student had an overall 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale;
- the student had a minimum 92% attendance during the school year;
- the decision is made in accordance with the local Pupil Progression Plan, which may include a referral to the School Building Level Committee (SBLC);
- the student has participated in **both** the spring and summer administrations of LEAP and has attended the summer remediation program offered by the LEA (the student shall participate in the summer retest only on the subject that he/she scored at the *Unsatisfactory* achievement level during the spring test administration); and
- parental consent is granted.

If a student meets the criteria for this override, and is promoted with an *Unsatisfactory*, the student must enroll in and pass a high school remedial course in the *unsatisfactory* subject before enrolling in or earning Carnegie credit for English or mathematics.

2. Students with Disabilities Eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) participating in LEAP Alternate Assessments

- Students with disabilities who participate in the LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA 1), shall have promotion decisions determined by the SBLC.
- Students with disabilities who participate in the LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 2 (LAA 2), shall have promotion decisions determined by the SBLC.

3. **Waiver for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students**

- LEP students shall participate in statewide assessment. The SBLC shall be granted the authority to waive the State's grade promotion policy for a LEP student. A LEP student who was granted a waiver at the 4th grade level is ineligible for a waiver at the 8th grade level.

4. **Waiver for Extenuating Circumstances**

A school system, through its superintendent, may grant a waiver on behalf of individual students who are unable to participate in LEAP testing or unable to attend LEAP summer remediation because of one or more of the following extenuating circumstances as verified through appropriate documentation:

- a physical illness or injury that is acute or catastrophic in nature.
- a chronic physical condition that is in an acute phase.
- court-ordered custody issues.

Documentation:

- *Physical Illness:* Appropriate documentation must include verification that the student is under the medical care of a licensed physician for illness, injury, or a chronic physical condition that is acute or catastrophic in nature. Documentation must include a statement verifying that the illness, injury, or chronic physical condition exists to the extent that the student is unable to participate in testing and/or remediation.
- *Custody Issues:* Certified copies of the **court-ordered** custody agreements must be submitted to the LEA at least ten (10) school days prior to summer remediation or retesting.

Student Eligibility/Retest Requirements:

- Students who meet the criteria for extenuating circumstances under the *physical illness, chronic physical condition, or court-ordered custody category* related to LEAP and
- who are unable to participate in **both** the spring and the summer administration of LEAP, **or**
- who failed to achieve the *Basic/Approaching Basic* combination on the spring administration of LEAP English Language Arts and Mathematics tests and are unable to participate in LEAP summer retest
 - shall take The Iowa Tests for grade placement within ten (10) school days of returning to school, which may include hospital/homebound instruction, in order to ensure the appropriate level of instruction;
 - must score at or above the cutoff score on the selected form of The Iowa Tests for grade placement to be promoted to the 5th or 9th grade; and
 - are not eligible for a retest. These students may be eligible for the policy override, the 4th grade appeal, or the 8th grade waiver in accordance with the local Pupil Progression Plan.

Students who meet the criteria for extenuating circumstances under the *physical illness, chronic physical condition, or court-ordered custody category* related to LEAP and

- who are unable to participate in the spring testing **and/or** summer remediation, including the provision of remediation through hospital/home bound instruction, are required to take the LEAP summer retest. These students may be eligible for the policy override, the 4th grade appeal, or the 8th grade waiver in accordance with the local Pupil Progression Plan.

5. **State-Granted Exceptions:**

- A local school superintendent, a parent or guardian, or the State Department of Education may initiate a request for a State-granted waiver from the State Superintendent of Education on behalf of individual students who are not eligible for promotion because of LEA error or other unique situations not covered under extenuating circumstances.
- The Department of Education will provide a report to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education detailing State-granted waivers.

Documentation:

- *LEA Error:* The LEA superintendent or parent must provide the State Superintendent of Education with school- and student-level documentation detailing the error, how the error occurred, and how the error will be corrected so that it will not occur again in the future.
- *Other Unique Situations:* Documentation must be provided to the State Superintendent of Education detailing the unique situation and justifying why a waiver should be granted.

Testing/Promotion Decisions:

The Department of Education will communicate to the LEAs the means for establishing promotional decisions for those students who have received a State-granted waiver.

The promotion policies outlined above will be reviewed in 2008.