

Instructions

In accordance with the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) PreK–3 Comprehensive Literacy Policy, all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to submit a draft promotion and retention policy to MSDE by September 1, 2025. The purpose of this checklist is to help LEAs assess whether their existing or draft policies meet the minimum policy expectations outlined in Section III.D of the state policy and detailed in the April 25, 2025 memo to superintendents.

This alignment checklist serves two key purposes:

1. To ensure that all required components—including promotion criteria, good cause exemptions, parent/guardian notification protocols, and student support systems—are addressed in the LEA's draft policy.
2. To support policy development and revision that is grounded in evidence-based literacy practices and aligned with Maryland's statewide goals for reading proficiency, equity, and early intervention.

MSDE will conduct a non-evaluative review of each submitted draft policy using a version of this checklist. Feedback will be provided to help districts strengthen their policies prior to full implementation in School Year 2027–2028.

LEAs may choose to:

- Submit a currently adopted policy (unrevised),
- Revise an existing policy using this checklist and MSDE guidance, or
- Draft a new policy using the MSDE sample as a model.

LEAs may use this checklist to self-assess their district's policy and identify areas that may require updates or clarification. District policies should reflect a strong commitment to early identification, high-quality instruction, family engagement, and a clear system of support for students demonstrating reading difficulties.

Promotion Criteria and Retention Eligibility

Policy Component Requirement: The district promotion and retention policy...	✓ Exists in Current Policy	⚠ Needs Updating or Clarification	✗ Not in Place or Missing	Notes/Next Steps
1. States that students must demonstrate adequate reading proficiency on the Grade 3 MSDE ELA assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Includes MSDE-approved reassessment options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Allows for the use of triangulated data from multiple valid and reliable measures (e.g., CBMs, diagnostics, and benchmarks), but explicitly excludes screener or benchmark data in isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Defines that a student may only be retained if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They do not meet reading proficiency - They do not qualify for a Good Cause Exemption - Their parent/guardian consents to retention or fails to respond to district's decision in a timely manner 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Good Cause Exemptions

Policy Component Requirement: The district promotion and retention policy...	✓ Exists in Current Policy	⚠ Needs Updating or Clarification	✗ Not in Place or Missing	Notes/Next Steps
1. Students with IEPs participating in the Alternate Framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Multilingual learners who have received less than two years of WIDA-aligned instruction or are not progressing in language acquisition according to WIDA ACCESS data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Students with IEPs or 504s that have received two or more years of reading intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Students previously retained once in grades K-3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Process for teacher documentation, principal review, and written recommendation to superintendent/designee is outlined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Parent/Guardian Notification and Consent

Policy Component Requirement: The district promotion and retention policy...	✓ Exists in Current Policy	⚠ Needs Updating or Clarification	✗ Not in Place or Missing	Notes/Next Steps
1. Outlines process for notifying families of promotion/retention decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Requires invitation to meet with families before final retention decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Includes communication that provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of current reading performance - Required proficiency level for promotion - Risks/benefits of promotion vs. retention - MSDE-approved list of supplemental supports 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Captures final family decision: retain or promote with required supplemental supports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR NO RESPONSE:

Policy Component Requirement: The district promotion and retention policy...	✓ Exists in Current Policy	⚠ Needs Updating or Clarification	✗ Not in Place or Missing	Notes/Next Steps
1. Describes multiple outreach efforts (e.g. mail, phone, email, home visits, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Includes required certified mail timeline: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sent by June 30- Follow-up by July 31 stating that the school's decision of retention will occur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Supports for Retained Students

Policy Component Requirement: The district promotion and retention policy...	✓ Exists in Current Policy	⚠ Needs Updating or Clarification	✗ Not in Place or Missing	Notes/Next Steps
1. Requires SRIP review and update for all retained students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Ensures continued access to Tier I (core instruction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Includes intensified intervention beyond previous year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Describes use of evidence-based strategies with proven impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Provides for daily, small-group, explicit reading intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Requires frequent progress monitoring and data-based adjustments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Provides access to before and/or after-school supplemental supports aligned to MSDE-approved reading intervention options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Includes a family "Read at Home" plan with optional workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

