

### Why T9 is Important for Students:

Prior to the 2014-15 school year, nearly 40% of Louisiana students retained in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade never entered high school. In response, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) developed Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (T9) to allow students who would have been retained in 8<sup>th</sup> grade to move to a high school campus and receive targeted academic remediation. By identifying and serving T9 students, middle and high schools can drastically decrease drop-out rates and dramatically improve life outcomes for Louisiana's most vulnerable students.

### A Student's Experience Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

To understand the benefits of Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade, schools and families must first understand these basic facts about T9:

- 1) Only students who fail the ELA and/or math portion of the LEAP are eligible for placement into Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In order to be placed in T9, these students must then complete post-LEAP remediation in the non-proficient subject area(s).
- 2) The sending middle school is responsible for promoting students to Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade. All requirements for promotion must be outlined in the middle school's Pupil Progression Plan.
- 3) Students promoted to T9 take high school courses and have the same diploma options as all other high school students. T9 students are placed on a five-year timeline for graduation from high school, but can still graduate in four years.
- 4) High schools provide each T9 student with targeted academic remediation in the subject area(s) that the student did not pass on the LEAP, as well as additional counseling supports.
- 5) After completing their Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, students will automatically be promoted to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. However, students who earn enough high school credits can be promoted directly to 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Responsibilities of Middle Schools:

Middle school educators play a critical role in ensuring 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are promoted appropriately to T9 or 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In order to promote a student that has failed the ELA and/or math state test to Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade, middle schools must provide eligible students with remediation in the appropriate content area(s), adhere to their local Pupil Progression Plans, and complete the following steps:

Middle School Action Items	School Personnel	Timeline
Identify 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students at risk of not achieving proficiency on state exams	SBLC team, teachers, counselors	Prior to state testing
SBLC reviews coursework, behavioral data, and other relevant data to determine the appropriate promotion decision for each student	SBLC team	After state testing, prior to the completion of school
Communicate to eligible families that <b>completing remediation in non-proficient subject areas (ELA and/or math) is required for promotion to Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	School leaders, counselors	May and/or June
Make final retention or T9 promotion decisions and communicate those decisions appropriately with families and receiving high schools	School leaders, counselors, teachers	Following the completion of subject remediation

### Responsibilities of High Schools:

Bulletin 1566 requires high schools to provide all T9 students with remediation in any subjects in which they did not score at or above proficient on the LEAP. Schools are also required to provide T9 students with dropout prevention and mentoring services based on proven strategies to retain and graduate at-risk students. For specific action items that must be completed by high schools, see the table on the following page.

High School Action Items	School Personnel	Timeline
Design flexible curricula that can be adapted to meet the needs of individual T9 students and train relevant teachers on the curricula	Academic leaders, teachers, counselors	June – August of preceding summer
Communicate in writing with families of incoming T9 students about how T9 is different from traditional 9 <sup>th</sup> grade, including the five-year timeline for graduation, what the academic program will be, and what supports students can expect to receive to ensure successful promotion to 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	School leaders, counselors	August – September of initial semester
Create an ongoing, individualized, and custom counseling structure and support team to assist each individual T9 student	Counselors, teachers, support team members	August – September, follow up quarterly
Using the <a href="#">high school planning guide</a> and <a href="#">T9 guidance document</a> , work with T9 students and families to develop Individual Graduation Plans	Counselors, support team members	Review progress at the end of each quarter

**How T9 Affects School Accountability:**

Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> Grade can have a positive impact on School Performance Scores for both middle and high schools.

- Credit accumulation for School Performance Scores only applies to a student’s T9 year, not their traditional 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. Credits earned by T9 students will be included in the sending middle school’s dropout/credit accumulation index (DCAI).
- T9 students are not included in a school’s graduation cohort until their second year of high school, meaning high schools can receive full credit in their SPS for graduating a T9 student in five years.
- Only proficient EOC scores from T9 students count toward a high school’s SPS. If a T9 student does not earn a “Good” or “Excellent” on an EOC exam, that score does not impact a school’s SPS.