The purpose of an educational program is to provide for each student an appropriate academic, social and emotional environment and supports each student reaching his/her maximum potential development. Appropriate challenge is determined by assessing current levels of academic, social and emotional states to determine the zone of proximal development that will support a student’s progress toward maximum potential development. Student placements should maintain their age-appropriate peer contact.

Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development

Generally, students are placed with their age appropriate peers in an educational program appropriate to their academic, social and emotional development. The instructional program shall provide for the growth and development of each student from grade to grade.
Students who enter kindergarten typically turn five by January 1. It follows that students entering sixth grade should turn eleven by January 1, and students entering ninth grade should turn fourteen by January 1. There may be exceptions to these guidelines. However, of the student will turn thirteen during a particular school year, he/she shall be enrolled in middle school. Similarly, if a student will turn sixteen during a particular school year, he/she shall be enrolled in high school.

Placement of each student should be based upon the information generated from assessing a student’s current academic, social, and emotion states as well as longitudinal data. Assessments should provide information that demonstrates a student’s individual growth over time as well as information that compares the student’s current level of performance to his/her age-appropriate peers. Data analysis drives decision-making so that the instructional program supports each student’s growth toward or beyond grade level expectations.

It is the goal of New Britain School District that all students achieve grade level standards and demonstrate proficiency in academic performance as measured by the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) for grades 3-8 and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for grade 10.

Students enter school with varying levels of preparedness, have individual strengths and needs, and acquire knowledge and skills at different rates. Early identification of students’ exceptionalities supports the adaptation of curriculum, instruction, and the educational environment by teachers so that each student meets expectations and progresses toward maximum potential development. Objectives shall be determined for each student at the appropriate instructional level in all content areas. Ongoing formative assessments shall be used to monitor each student’s progress toward expectations.

At any time during the year when it is evident that the student is having unusual difficulty in any or all subjects, a request for assistance from the Early Intervention Team should be made. The special education pre-referral and referral processes are then put into motion and should include parent notification. When a student is in danger of not being promoted, the procedures which are part of the special education pre-referral and referral processes begin or are continued. These should include the following:

1. Conference with the teachers, parents, etc., to define the areas of concern
2. A review of the student’s educational records and any other pertinent information
3. Obtaining information on instructional levels, social/emotional development, etc. via curriculum-based assessment, structured observations, review of class work, and additional information available or obtainable.

Once the information gathering and problem defining portion of the special education pre-referral and referral processes are completed, all those concerned must develop supplemental and intervention strategies to address the problem areas. Supplemental support services, after school programs, and the services of teachers and specialists should all be considered for possible inclusion into the plan for remediation. The effectiveness of the plan is monitored
frequently, changed and modified when needed. This planned program, which is designed with input from the Early Intervention Team, is documented in the special education pre-referral and referral processes. Such documentation may be reviewed by the Director of Instruction.

Summer School

The New Britain School District may provide education programs beyond the regular school year to meet the needs of students and to comply with State Statutes. Generally, those students who perform at the “basic and below basic” levels of performance on Connecticut’s State Assessments (CMT/CAPT) are given priority for summer school programming.

Ninth grade students who are transitioning from the 8th grade to the 9th grade will earn ½ credit (NBHS elective credit) for successful completion of each summer school course. A maximum of 1 credit (NBHS elective credit) will be awarded to students who successfully complete two summer school courses. Credits earned by students during summer school will be documented on the high school transcript by course title and listed with other credits earned during the student’s 9th grade year.

Retention

Program adjustments are needed to support the wide range of student performance in each classroom and at each grade level. Retaining a student, having that student repeat a grade level, may be considered as a result of that student’s misalignment with grade level expectations and/or as required by State Statute. The school principal, in consultation with the student’s teachers and parents, will make a decision leading to a student’s retention or promotion. It is inappropriate to require an underperforming student to repeat a grade level or advance to the next grade level without making the program adjustments needed to support success. The effectiveness of program adjustments needs to be frequently monitored.