

Students

Progress

Procedures for Retention of Students Through the 8th Grade

The following procedures apply to end-of-year, grade-to-grade promotion and retention decisions that are made at any point prior to a student's attendance in any high school program, excluding grade acceleration decisions.

A. Pre-Retention Screening and Pre-Decision Meeting

1. A screening process, which shall permit direct teacher referrals, shall be applied to initially identify students who are at risk of possible retention. The screening process, at a minimum, will take into account:
 - a. The student's pre-literacy skills and reading proficiency for promotion decisions applied to the completion of the 1st grade and 2nd grade.
 - b. The student's proficiency in reading, English-language arts, and mathematics for promotion decisions applied to the completion of grades 3 through 8.
2. Prior to deciding to retain a student, the District shall:
 - a. Inform the student's parent or guardian that the District is evaluating the possibility of retention prior to March 1st of the school year in which the decision will be made.
 - b. Formulate an intervention-based plan that could be implemented in the following school year as a possible alternative to retention, as well as an intervention strategy that could be implemented if the student is retained.
 - c. Hold at least one meeting involving District staff and, if reasonably available, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), at which the following shall be discussed:
 1. The student and his/her academic progress to date.
 2. Interventions that have been implemented to date.
 3. The criteria that apply to the promotion/retention decision, including, if applicable, the District's mandatory criteria for promotion from kindergarten, 4th grade, or 8th grade.
 4. The results of a Light's Retention Scale or other tool that will inform a team's decisions.
 5. Other factors that tend to support either retention or promotion for the student in question (i.e. research-based findings, the relative viability of possible alternatives to retention, etc.)

B. Involuntary Retention (Repetition of a grade without Parental or Guardian Support)

1. The District shall not involuntarily retain a 4-year old kindergarten student who will be 5 years old on or before September 1st of the next school year.
2. Involuntary retention may be considered for a student who has completed a 5-year old kindergarten but who has not satisfied the District's assessment participation criteria. However, if the District determines that such a student meets any of the criteria that the District applies for granting an exemption from the 5-year old kindergarten completion requirement, or that promotion to 1st grade with heightened monitoring or literacy support services would be an academically appropriate placement, then the student shall not be retained.

3. In the case of any involuntary retention in grades 1 through 8, the criteria that the District's instructional staff relies on to retain a student shall relate exclusively to a student's academic performance and progress. Examples of relevant academic measures and assessments include the results of state-mandated assessments (if taken and available), the results of District-level assessments (including testing), summative grades, teachers' classroom-level assessments and recommendations regarding the student's academic skills and progress, samples of the student's work, other demonstrated progress relative to grade-level standards, and demonstrated progress relative to any individualized learning goals.
 - a. Involuntary retention in 4th grade and 8th grade shall be required in the event a student is unable to meet the District's established academic criteria for promotion from those grades.
 - b. In grades 1 through 3 and 5 through 7, involuntary retention may occur where the District's instructional staff determines, to the best of their professional judgment and using multiple academic measures and assessments, that all of the following apply to the student:
 1. The student's academic progress in reading comprehension/language arts; and mathematics.
 2. It is likely that the student, if retained, could make substantial progress in reducing the gap(s) that exist between the student's present-level of academic achievement and the academic goals and standards that have been established for his/her applicable grade-level placement.
 3. If the student were promoted and provided with available supports and interventions, the student would still be unlikely to be able to participate in and benefit from the next grade's curriculum in a meaningful manner; and make substantial progress in reducing the gap(s) that exists between the student's present-level of academic achievement and the applicable grade-level standards.
 4. No other exceptional circumstances exist which cause the District's professional staff to conclude that promotion to the next grade would better serve the student's overall academic and developmental interests than retention in the current grade. The building principal shall directly review and approve any staff recommendation to promote a student to the next grade that relies on such exceptional circumstances.
 4. The Director of Teaching and Learning shall review and approve all staff recommendations to retain a student involuntarily.
 5. A final decision need not be made until after the end of the normal school term, or, if the student is participating in summer school in an effort to become eligible for promotion, until after the completion of the student's summer school program.
 6. If the District decides to involuntarily retain a student, a District staff member will promptly notify the student's parent or guardian of the decision (see below).
- C. Retention with the Voluntary Support of the Student's Parent(s) or Guardian(s)
1. In any situation in which there may be mutual District and family agreement to retain a student at any grade level, the Director of Teaching and Learning shall have the authority, in consultation with classroom teachers and other relevant staff, to determine on behalf of the District that the weight of the relevant and available information suggests that the student's overall welfare is likely to be better served by retention than by promotion.

2. The District's independent support for any retention decision that is also supported by the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be based primarily on academic factors, although non-academic factors may also be considered.
3. The District shall document the parent(s) or guardian(s) voluntary support for a decision to retain the student in the student's records.

D. Appeals of Promotion/Retention Decisions

If a parent or guardian believes that the District has not followed its policies or procedures related to promotion and retention decisions, or that the District has made an incorrect decision in regard to the promotion or retention of a student, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. Such appeals should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent after the parent or guardian is informed of the District's decision, but no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of the school term to which the decision applies.

Policy Approved: May 28, 1998

Policy Revised: December 15, 2014