

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

### Background

The development of student potential, keeping in mind the individual's current development (cognitive, physical, emotional and social), learning style, interests, multiple intelligences and attitude is central to an effective education. When considering whether a student will be promoted or retained, many questions need to be answered.

- Will the student benefit from spending another school term or year in a subject, grade, school or system?
- Are current interventions having the desired effect?

The following administrative procedure provides guidelines and considerations that may be helpful in deciding whether to promote or retain a student. When in doubt, students are to be promoted.

When social promotion or retention is being considered for a student, there is to be an accompanying plan for remediation using the Adaptive Dimension and/or Modifications where required. Retentions where identical programming is repeated in year two, has less opportunity for success.

### Procedures

#### 1. The Team

Decisions made on progress and placement are to be made by the classroom teacher(s), the special education teacher and the Principal in consultation with parents or guardians. Decisions made with parental support and input, have a much better opportunity for success. Other personnel that may be involved in the decision making process are superintendents, educational psychologists, speech and language pathologists, therapists, guidance counselors and/or other personnel who have assisted with the child's education and programming.

#### 2. Timelines

The parents (guardians) of students who are being considered for retention must be informed no later than the second reporting period. In a semestered situation parents are to be informed at the first reporting period. Interventions (adaptations, modifications and/or special programming) are to have been in place before retention is considered.

#### 3. Criteria

For purposes of determining what is best for the student – being socially promoted or retained, the team is to consider the following factors in arriving at a decision:

- 3.1 Day to day observation of the student.
- 3.2 Results on teacher made tests.
- 3.3 Results on standardized achievement tests.
- 3.4 Results of other diagnostic testing.
- 3.5 A review of the effectiveness of existing interventions.
- 3.6 Age of the student – students born late in the calendar year may be a more likely candidate for retention.
- 3.7 Maturity – socially mature students may be less of a candidate for retention.
- 3.8 Student’s background of experiences – students who have a rich background of experiences and opportunities may be less of a candidate for retention, especially in early grades.
- 3.9 Level of parental support and involvement – retentions or social promotions that do not have parental support have less of an opportunity for success.
- 3.10 Previous retentions – students who have repeated a previous grade are less likely to benefit from another retention.
- 3.11 Consideration of the students progress in previous grades – look for patterns/areas where the student has struggled in previous years.
- 3.12 School attendance – students whose attendance is poor/sporadic may be more of a candidate for retention due to missed exposure to skills/content. The reason for poor attendance must be carefully examined. Retaining a student, in hopes of increasing the student’s attendance is unlikely.
- 3.13 Transiency – students who have attended a school for a two to three year period may be a better candidate for retention than students who have moved from school to school.
- 3.14 Physical and mental health concerns – existing learning difficulties may be attributed to short term health related concerns and therefore a retention likely would not be warranted.
- 3.15 Physical size of the student – if a student is significantly larger than their classmates, this may be a factor towards social promotion.
- 3.16 Student’s cognitive ability and learning disabilities – with testing to verify. Students with lower cognitive ability may require special programming that is different from other students and therefore retention may not be the best option.
- 3.17 Social considerations – the impact of peer groups that the student might be placed with may be considered from both a negative and positive perspective.
- 3.18 Motivational level of the student – will retention or promotion be motivationally positive for the student?
- 3.19 Behavioural considerations – students are not be repeated solely for poor or anti-social behaviour.

- 3.20 English as a second language considerations – lack of English fluency is generally not a criteria for retention.
- 3.21 Siblings in adjacent grades – the positive or negative impact of this is to be considered.
- 3.22 Students who attended Pre-Kindergarten prior to Kindergarten are less likely to benefit from retention in the primary grades.
- 3.23 Length of school career – some special needs students may stay in school well past their eighteenth birthday. In these cases a planned retention schedule is to be considered for the student.

An instrument such as the “Lights Retention Scale” may assist in making decisions for retention or promotion.

#### 4. Retention Guidelines

- 4.1 Students are not to remain in a grade for more than two (2) years.
- 4.2 Students are not to remain longer than four (4) years in any consecutive three (3) grades.
- 4.3 The responsibility of determining the proper placement for students, rests with the teacher(s) and the Principal in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- 4.4 Individual schools are to provide documentation where retention or social promotion was recommended but was not agreed to by parents.
- 4.5 Where students are socially promoted, it must be indicated both on the report card and cumulative record file that a social promotion took place.
- 4.6 Where retention or social promotion is decided, schools are to enclose in the cumulative file, a brief overview of the recommendations for that student for the upcoming year.
- 4.7 A list of students who have been retained is to be given to the superintendent at the end of each school year with documentation of the considerations that were reviewed by using Administrative Procedure Form 361-1 Retention Considerations.

Reference: Sections 85, 87 175, 231 Education Act  
The School Division Administration Regulations 45, 49  
Board Policy 13

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