

**PROMOTION/ACCELERATION/RETENTION****Definitions**

*Accelerated program:* An intensive program of study designed to accelerate the pace of student learning.

*At-risk student:* Students identified as at risk of not meeting grade-level standards, either through district-designated assessments or teacher judgment. Grade 1 students who do not meet promotion criteria will be retained. Grades 2-6 students who do not meet promotion criteria and do not participate in required supports and interventions may be retained.

*Home/School Compact:* Documentation that delineates the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the learning process (teacher, principal, school board, parent/guardian and student).

*Individualized Education Program (IEP):* A written statement developed by a team that delineates and ensures appropriate instruction and services for students with disabilities.

*Individual Service Plan (ISP):* A written statement developed by a team that delineates the aids, accommodations and services to be provided to children with disabilities who qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

*Learning Contract:* Documentation that serves as an agreement among classroom teachers, parents/guardians, and student outlining the responsibilities of each stakeholder in the intervention process. Documentation includes student academic performance, required interventions, and potential consequences. Contract attests to the school site's provision of, and the student's participation in, the identified interventions.

*Monitoring:* Ongoing evaluation of student's academic progress as outlined in the student's Learning Contract.

*Promotion:* Placement in the next higher grade at the end of a school year.

*Retention in grade:* Placing a student in the same grade as the prior school year.

*Placement:* Assignment of a student to a specific grade and class.

*Promotion criteria:* Performance levels required for entering the next academic grade.

**Identification and Monitoring of At-Risk Students**

This administrative procedure applies only to diploma-bound students.

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1. Identification/notification. Identification of at-risk students is based on student academic performance as demonstrated by reading/language arts and mathematics assessment results or teacher judgment. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of at-risk students must receive written notification as early as possible, and no later than the tenth week of enrollment for grades 1-6 students, or the twentieth week of enrollment for kindergarten students. (The report card or learning contract may serve as the written notification if completed by the tenth week, or twentieth week for kindergarten.)
2. Learning Contract. A learning contract must be developed for each at-risk student. A student's IEP will serve as the learning contract for students with disabilities. The teacher will convene and conduct a conference with the parent/ guardian to document student's at-risk status and develop the learning contract. The contract will include the intervention programs and strategies that the teacher(s) and school will provide to help the student succeed, what the child and parent/guardian will work on at home, and how the teacher will keep the parent/guardian informed about the child's progress. The parent/guardian, student and teacher(s) shall sign the contract, indicating their understanding of each party's responsibilities and potential outcomes.
  - a. Timeline for grades 1-6. The learning contract will be developed no later than four weeks following the end of the first grading cycle or within four weeks following identification for students who enroll after the first grading period.
  - b. Timeline for grade K. The learning contract will be developed no later than four weeks following the end of the second grading cycle, or within four weeks following identification for students who enroll following the second grading period.
3. School site monitoring of at-risk students.
  - a. Principal or designee:
    - (1) Monitor development of learning contracts and communication with parents/guardians.
    - (2) Monitor student participation in intervention programs.
    - (3) Monitor students' academic progress by reviewing student achievement results and meeting with teachers during the year to discuss specific plans for instruction.
    - (4) Coordinate compliance with the guidelines and timelines outlined in this procedure.

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- b. Classroom teachers will monitor the academic progress of students throughout the school year, base their instruction on student needs, implement appropriate interventions, and communicate student progress to parent(s)/guardian(s).
- c. Area Superintendent. During school visits, the area superintendent shall discuss with the principal the progress of at-risk students and monitor the overall improvement of achievement at the school site.

**Performance Criteria and Guidelines**

Student performance criteria have been defined based on common, districtwide assessment measures in literacy and mathematics. Cut-points have been set which identify student performance as above/at/close to, below, or significantly below grade level. An annual circular will be distributed to school sites delineating the performance cut-points to identify students for support/intervention and promotion/retention.

**Promotion/Retention Guidelines**

- 1. Established retention grade. The established retention grade for students significantly below grade level is grade 1 at the elementary level. Students retained at this grade level will be placed in an accelerated instructional program.
- 2. Retention at other grade levels. Retention may be considered at any grade, 1-6, if the student has not met the criteria and has not participated in required support and intervention opportunities. Retention at kindergarten can only occur with parent/guardian permission.
  - a. Retention should occur early in a school level, rather than at an exit grade.
  - b. Students will ordinarily be retained only once in kindergarten through grade 8.

**Promotion/Retention Decision**

As specified by Education Code Section 48070.5, the assigned classroom teacher makes the final decision concerning promotion/retention of grade 1-6 students.

- 1. Year-end reevaluation. During the last six weeks of instruction, each student identified as at-risk must be reevaluated by the assigned classroom teacher to determine if the student meets the specified promotion criteria (as provided in the annual circular).

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2. Discussion with parent/guardian. As specified by Education Code Section 48070.5, the teacher's evaluation concerning the student's progress shall be discussed with the parent/guardian before the teacher makes the final determination of pupil retention or promotion. The discussion may occur via a teacher/parent/student conference (preferred), telephone call, a general parent/guardian meeting, or home visitation. When possible, the discussion is to be conducted in the primary language of the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians of students at the exit grade (5/6) who have questions regarding course placement decisions for the ensuing year should be referred to the receiving middle level school.

3. Decision and placement.

The teacher may determine that the student is:

- a. Above/at/close to grade level, and promote the student to the next grade.
- b. Below grade level, and promote the student to the next grade level with recommended interventions as specified by the teacher.
- c. Significantly below grade level, and retain the student in the current grade with promotion contingent upon successful completion of summer school. If sufficient progress has been made and the student meets the promotion criteria at the end of summer school, the student will be promoted with recommended interventions as specified by the teacher.
- d. Significantly below grade level and retain the student with recommended support as specified by the teacher.

For special education students who are being considered for retention, an IEP meeting must be held to discuss decisions affecting student placement. For students with Individual Service (504) Plans, the SST/504 team must be reconvened.

4. Documentation and communication of the final decision.
  - a. Within the last six weeks of instruction, the teacher will indicate the final decision regarding student placement on the "Teacher Decision to Promote or Retain: Grades K-6" form, and submit the form to the principal for signature. The teacher will indicate the decision on the Elementary Progress Report Collection Form (report card scan sheet).

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- b. The principal will sign the "Teacher Decision to Promote or Retain: Grades K-6" form and provide the parent/guardian a copy at least three weeks prior to the last day of instruction. For students recommended for retention, the form should be discussed with the parent/guardian during a conference. Copies of the form are distributed among the student's cumulative file; the parent/guardian; the principal; and the appropriate district department.
  - c. The notification will inform the parent/guardian that he/she may request a conference regarding the child's academic program in the coming school year. Should the parent/guardian wish a conference, the assigned classroom teacher will coordinate and convene the meeting.
  - d. The notification will inform the parent/guardian of the appeal process.
5. Parent/guardian appeal process.

School sites shall provide parent(s)/ guardian(s) an opportunity to appeal the decision of the assigned classroom teacher.

- a. The appeal shall occur prior to the end of the school year.
- b. Upon receipt of the appeal, the principal or designee shall review all related evidence and convene a hearing with the assigned classroom teacher, parent/guardian, and student (if appropriate).
- c. The hearing discussion will include the student's progress, assessment results, participation in prescribed intervention programs, and overall readiness for promotion. When possible, the proceedings are to be conducted in the primary language of the parent/guardian.
- d. Following the proceedings, the teacher will make the final promotion/ retention decision.
- e. The principal or designee shall contact the parent/guardian regarding the disposition of the appeal; a written notification using a second "Teacher Decision to Promote or Retain: Grades K-6" form shall be provided shortly thereafter.
- f. A decision by the assigned classroom teacher to promote or retain a student cannot be overturned unless "determined to be a direct result of clerical or mechanical mistake, fraud, bad faith or incompetency."

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6. Placement modification due to summer school results. Following completion of summer school, the teacher and principal will review student assessment results and modify the promotion/retention decision if necessary. The teacher will complete, and the principal will sign, a new "Teacher Decision to Promote or Retain: Grades K-6" form and mail a copy to the parent/guardian at the end of summer school.

### **Articulation Between Elementary and Middle-Level Schools**

At the end of each academic year, the elementary school principal will notify the receiving middle-level school of students promoted with recommended interventions. This notification will include student academic achievement results and the interventions specified by the elementary teacher on the "Teacher Decision to Promote or Retain: Grades K-6" form. The principal will ensure that the student's "Teacher's Decision to Promote or Retain: Grades K-6" form is filed in the student's cumulative record.