

PROMOTION/ACCELERATION/RETENTION

Acceleration from Kindergarten to First Grade

A student enrolled in kindergarten may be admitted to the first grade at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee and with the consent of the parent/guardian, upon determination that the child is ready for first grade work. (Education Code 48011) Admission shall be subject to the following criteria:

- The student is at least five years of age.
- The student has attended a public school kindergarten for a long enough time to enable school personnel to evaluate his/her ability.
- The student is in the upper five percent of his/her age group in terms of general mental ability.
- The physical development and social maturity of the student are consistent with his/her advanced mental ability.
- The parent/guardian of the student has filed a written statement with the school district approving the placement in first grade.

Acceleration at Other Grade Levels

District policy and regulations provide principals with direction when considering acceleration of students to the next grade level. Acceleration is appropriate when the decision is in the best interest of the student. The principal's decision to accelerate may include information about why the current grade level does not meet the student's needs for optimal mental, emotional, social, and physical growth; academic grades; achievement test scores; the teacher's opinion; and/or the parent/guardian's preference.

Promotion

Decisions to promote students shall be made on the basis of achievement of grade level standards, grades, and other indicators of academic achievement designated by the Board. (Education Code 48070.5 (b))

In general, a student will be promoted when there is evidence that he/she is reasonably close to "meeting grade level standards," as defined by this section.

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District staff and parents recognize that decisions to promote at intermediate and middle school grades are based on completion of course requirements as well as on evaluation of proficiency in reading, language arts, and math. Tying passing grades to completion of course requirements emphasizes the role of personal effort, initiative, and personal responsibility. Each middle and high school annually publishes the details of retention policy in its student handbook.

At high school the grade level designation (9-12) indicates a student's progress towards high school graduation, which typically takes four years. Eligibility for graduation is determined by the passing of subjects and electives necessary to earn the required number of credits and by meeting the required proficiency standards, including passage of the California High School Exit Exam. Students and their parents are provided with the details of the requirements during counseling appointments.

Retention - Continuation in Kindergarten

Students who have completed one year in kindergarten shall be admitted to first grade unless the parent/guardian and the district agree that the student shall continue in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year. (Education Code 48011)

Whenever a student continues in kindergarten for an additional year, the Superintendent or designee shall secure an agreement, signed by the parent/guardian, stating that the student shall continue in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year. (Education Code 46300)

Retention at Other Grade Levels

The Superintendent or designee shall identify students who (1) shall be retained or (2) who are at risk of being retained at the following grade levels, at a minimum: (Education Code 48070.5 (a))

- Between grades 2 and 3
- Between grades 3 and 4
- Between grades 4 and 5
- Between the end of the intermediate grades and the beginning of the middle school grades
- Between the end of the middle school grades and the beginning of the high school grades

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Students may also be retained at the end of grade 1, at the discretion of the principal and teacher, and with the consent of the parent/guardian. Determination will be based primarily on the child's proficiency in reading.

In addition, students may be retained at the end of grade 5 at the elementary school and at the end of grade 7 at the middle school.

Skill Area Proficiencies to be Considered When Deciding to Retain:

- Between grades 2 and 3: Reading
- Between grades 3 and 4: Reading
- Between grades 4 and 5: Reading, Language Arts, and Math
- At the end of intermediate grades: Reading, Language Arts, and Math
- Between grades 8 and 9: Reading, Language Arts, and Math (Education Code 48070.5 (c))

The district has added the following grade levels and designated areas:

- Between Kindergarten and grade 1: Content standards for Reading/Language Arts for Kindergarten upon teacher and parent/guardian agreement.
- Between grades 1 and 2: Reading
- Between grades 5 and 6 at elementary: Reading, Language Arts, and Math.
- Between grades 7 and 8: Reading, Language Arts, and Math. (Education Code 48070.5 (j))

Course Completion Requirements

In addition to achievement of proficiencies in the designated skill areas, a student's completion of course requirements may be considered when deciding to retain at grades 4 through 8. High school students' grade level designation is the result of earned credits, and students who fall behind in the number of credits expected for the year in school will be recommended for supplemental instruction, including summer school, and may choose to transfer to an alternative program to complete high school graduation requirements. (Education Code 48070.5 (j))

PROMOTION/ACCELERATION/RETENTION (continued)**Two Types of Recommendation**

Teachers will determine which students must be retained and which students are to be considered at risk of retention. (Education Code 48070.5) Students who are at risk of retention are those who have exceptions or whose teachers have determined that retention is not the appropriate intervention. This group may also include others who, in the teacher's opinion, would strengthen skill area proficiencies in reading, language arts, or math in a supplemental instruction program.

Exceptions for Certain Groups of Students

- A student whose Individual Education Plan specifies goals related to the grade level standards will not be retained when the student has achieved those goals, or when his/her IEP Team has identified other compelling reasons for promotion to the next grade.
- English learners will be retained only after they demonstrate that they possess the English language fluency to understand written English and to produce responses in English (i.e., redesignated to "fluent" status), or after they have been in English-based instruction for 5 years, whichever occurs first. During the first five years, English learners may be considered to be "at risk of retention." English Language Development standards include the following levels or their equivalents for grade spans K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

Beginning	Year 1
Early Intermediate	Year 2
Intermediate	Year 3
Early Advanced	Years 4-5
Advanced	Year 6+ (equivalent to "regular" standards in English/Language Arts)

Reasons That Retention May Not be Appropriate

If students are identified as not meeting the minimum standard for promotion, the student shall be retained in his/her current grade level unless the student's regular classroom teacher determines, in writing, that retention is not the appropriate intervention for the student's academic deficiencies. (Education Code 48070.5 (d) (1))

The teacher's determination that a student shall be promoted despite not meeting grade level standards shall specify the reasons that retention is not appropriate for the student and shall include recommendations for interventions other than retention that, in the opinion of the teacher, are necessary to assist the student in attaining grade-level academic achievement.

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The determination may include identification of the specific grade level standards that the student has yet to master, rated in order of importance to future grade level achievement.

Reasons that a teacher may decide that retention is not appropriate include the following:

- The student has made more than year-for-year growth, and the teacher feels the rate of growth will enable him/her to meet standards prior to completion of elementary or middle school.
- A student study team has identified a compelling reason why the student should be promoted. At a minimum, the student study team shall include the classroom teacher, the principal or designee, and parent/guardian.
- Student has been previously retained, and it is the teacher's and parents' determination that further retention will be counterproductive.
- Student health problems this year have impeded full progress; the teacher and parent anticipate that by the end of the next school year, the grade level standards will be met.
- The student has enrolled within eight weeks of the last day of school, and has no records that document achievement of grade level standards comparable to those of this district or of performance on a nationally-normed test within the past three months that indicates a rank within the limits set by the Promotion Criteria table below.

Minimum Standards for Promotion

Achievement of grade level standards may be determined by different methods. The general criteria are listed on the attached Minimum Standards for Promotion matrix (Education Code 48070.5). Specific methods will be defined separately and will be updated annually until there is a statewide method for timely assessment of grade level standards' achievement.

“Early Warning” of Risk of Retention: District Multiple Measures

The district combines data from various sources into a combined rating score for each student. The minimum standard for promotion is set annually. The multiples measure score for reading, language arts, and math for the prior year will be available to teachers before the end of the first trimester for discussion with parent/guardians. Students who are at risk of retention will be identified at this time, parents/guardians notified, supplemental instruction programs offered. Students' risk will be re-evaluated each trimester, and final determination will be made so that parents/guardians can be notified at the end of the school year, in time for a summer school program.

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Conditional Promotion

If the teacher's recommendation to promote is contingent on the student's participation in a summer school or other supplemental instruction programs, the decision to retain or promote the student shall be reevaluated at that time, but no later than 1 week after the end of summer school. This evaluation shall be provided to and discussed with the student's parents/guardians and the principal or summer school principal before any final determination of retention or promotion is made.

More Than One Teacher

If the student has more than one assigned regular classroom teacher, the principal or designee shall specify the teacher(s) responsible for the decision to promote or retain the student. (Education Code 48070.5 (d) (2))

Notice to Parents/Guardians

When a student is identified as being at risk of retention, the Superintendent or designee shall so notify the student's parents/guardians in writing as early in the school year and as early in the school career as practicable, and no later than four weeks prior to the last day of the school year. The student's parent/guardian shall be provided an opportunity to consult with the teacher(s) responsible for the decision to promote or retain the student. (Education Code 48070.5 (e), (g))

The Superintendent/designee shall also provide a copy of the district's promotion/retention policy and administrative regulation to those parents/guardians who have been notified that their child is at risk of retention. Parents/guardians shall receive concise and clear description of the grade level standards and the minimum criteria for promotion to the next grade. Where practicable, the parent shall be provided with information or training about proven at-home strategies that will accelerate the student's mastery of grade level standards.

Appeal Process

The decision to retain a student may be appealed consistent with Board policy, administrative regulation, and law. The burden shall be on the appealing party to show why the decision to retain should be overruled.

To appeal a decision to retain, the appealing party shall submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons why the decision to retain should be overruled. The appeal must be dated within 10 school days of the date of notice of decision to retain. The teacher shall be provided an opportunity to state orally and/or in writing the criteria on which his/her decision was based.

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Within 30 calendar days of receiving the request, the principal shall determine whether or not to overrule the decision to retain. Prior to making this determination, the principal may meet with the appealing party and the teacher/counselor. If the principal determines that the appealing party has overwhelmingly proven that the decision to retain should be overruled, he/she shall overrule the decision to retain.

The principal's determination may be appealed by submitting a written appeal to the Superintendent or designee within 15 school days. Within 30 calendar days of receipt of a written appeal, the Superintendent or designee makes a decision to uphold or overrule the decision to retain. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

If the decision of the Superintendent is unfavorable to the appealing party, he/she shall have the right to submit a written statement of objections, which shall become part of the student's record. (Education Code 48070.5 (f))

Supplemental Instruction Programs

With the parent/guardian's consent, the Superintendent or designee may require a student who has been recommended for retention or has been identified as at risk of retention to participate in a supplemental instructional program. Such programs of direct, systematic, and intensive supplemental instruction to assist the student in mastering grade level standards shall be offered during the summer, after school, on Saturdays, and/or during intersessions. These programs will provide a "clinic" for remediating or learning specific skills necessary for mastering grade level standards. Services shall not be provided during the regular instructional day if it would result in the student being removed from classroom instruction in the core curriculum. (Education Code 48070.5 (h), 37252.5, 42239)

These services shall be provided to students in the following priority order:

1. Students who have been recommended for retention or who have been identified as being at risk of retention pursuant to Education Code 48070.5.
2. Students who have been identified as having a deficiency in mathematics, reading, or written expression based on the results of the tests administered under the STAR program.

This supplemental instruction program shall be developed in accordance with the requirements of Education Code 37252.5.