

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Background

The Division recognizes all students' diverse learning abilities, interests, and needs. The Division's goal is for all students to experience success to the maximum of their abilities while progressing in their educational programs.

Teachers assess student progress and collect data on which decisions about grade placement and grade advancement can be made. A balance of assessment of learning and assessment for learning is important to ensure a connection between instruction and assessment. The Division expects teachers to use evidence of learning to adapt instruction and adjust skill and process expectations to meet students' needs.

Educational research continues to reinforce that grade retention rarely improves long-term academic outcomes for students experiencing difficulties. Retention is strongly correlated with increased disengagement, lower self-esteem, and a higher likelihood of students leaving school prior to graduation. Conversely, promotion with targeted supports has been shown to improve student success, particularly when schools emphasize differentiated instruction, early intervention, responsive programming, and wrap-around supports.

Therefore, the Division affirms that promotion, with appropriate supports and differentiated instruction, is the preferred practice, while retention is considered only in exceptional circumstances and typically in the early years. It is expected that students will normally progress from one grade level to the next on an annual basis.

Procedures

1. The Principal and staff shall exercise their best professional judgment regarding academic performance, maturity, social factors and other factors considered to be relevant to individual students.
2. Teachers must be familiar with and understand the learner outcomes in the Alberta Education Program of Studies not only at the grade level they teach but also at the grade levels immediately above and below to ensure appropriate differentiation is taking place to meet the diverse needs of the student.
3. Required steps when a school or parent considers retention or acceleration:
 - 3.1. If a school or parent is considering retaining or accelerating a student, then the principal must:
 - 3.1.1. request the student's teachers to provide documentation of the student's

- progress and program adaptations the teachers have used or are using with the student; this includes assessments or information from previous schools or learning environments;
- 3.1.2. inform and consult with the Superintendent or designate about the possible retention;
 - 3.1.3. consult with the appropriate department to determine whether additional assessments are required;
 - 3.1.4. inform the parent or legal guardian about the implications of retention only after the processes are followed;
 - 3.1.5. document all communication with the parent or legal guardian about retention, and include a summary letter in the student's record.
4. The parent shall be invited to a conference with the Principal and staff to discuss a potential retention at least one (1) month prior to the end of the school year, or, for new students, at the beginning of the school year.
 5. The final decision for retention or promotion falls to the school principal who is responsible for student programming as stated in the Alberta Education Act and Guide to Education.
 6. A report on the conference shall be prepared and submitted to the Superintendent or designate and the parent indicating the nature and the outcome of the discussion.
 7. Parents have the right to appeal the decision of a Principal to the Superintendent of Schools or designate.
 8. When a student is retained, the Principal and staff shall ensure that differentiation continues.
 9. The principal must enter this data in PowerSchool and a summary letter document must be placed in PASI (Provincial Approach to Student Information).

Reference: *Education Act*, SA 2012, c E-0.3
Student Record Regulation AR 97/2-019
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
EICS Administrative Procedure 151 – Parent and Public Inquiries
EICS Administrative Procedure 390 – Student Appeals
EICS Board Policy 14 – Appeals And Hearings Regarding Student Matters