

Book	School Board Policies
Section	300 Series: Instruction
Title	Promotion and Retention of Students Through 8th Grade
Code	345.4
Status	Draft

PROMOTION AND RETENTION (inc. kindergarten promotion)

The Board of Education recognizes that the personal, social, physical, and educational growth of children will vary and that they should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their growth.

It shall be the policy of the Board that each student be moved forward in a continuous pattern of achievement and growth that is in harmony with his/her own development.

Promotion from Grade 4 and Grade 8

The Board directs the District Administrator to prepare a list of specific criteria for promoting students from the 4th and 8th grades. The criteria shall include the student's score on the 4th and 8th grade examination, unless the student has been excused from taking the examination; the student's academic performance; the recommendations of teachers which shall be based solely on the student's academic performance; and any other academic criteria recommended for Board consideration.

Recommendations for Board

This policy addresses 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 in the District (i.e., prior to the start of 9th grade or any program-specific equivalent to 9th grade). This policy does not address grade-level acceleration decisions or any decision to adjust the initial grade-level placement of a newly-enrolled student during the student's first school year of attendance in a District school or program.

The administration is expected to implement this policy and, in conjunction with other instructional staff members, make the promotion and retention decisions for individual students. If a student's parent or guardian disagrees with a District decision regarding promotion or retention, the parent or guardian may submit a written request for reconsideration to the District Administrator. Except as otherwise required by law, the decision of the District Administrator following such a request shall be final.

For students through grade 8, the School Board directs the administration to develop and implement a process for annual promotion and retention decisions that initially identifies students who are at risk of possible retention. When a student is having very significant academic difficulty in one or more areas and is at risk of possible retention, it is the Board's judgment that no single measure or description of the student's academic progress, knowledge, and skills is sufficient to determine whether the student should be retained or promoted.

The District shall not use retention as a punishment for misconduct, or as a substitute in lieu of services, programs, or accommodations which the student is entitled to receive or participate in under any applicable law.

The District's specific grade-level promotion criteria and other procedures related to promotion and retention decisions will be defined by rule.

Nothing in this policy or in the related criteria and procedures shall be interpreted in a manner that would interfere with or detract from a student's or parent's rights under any applicable state or federal law. For example, in regard to any student who has been referred for a special education evaluation or who is receiving special education and/or related services under an individualized education program (IEP), nothing in this policy or in its implementation shall detract from the authority of the student's IEP team.

Legal:

[Section 118.24\(2\)\(a\)](#)

[Section 118.33\(6\)\(a\)](#)

[Section 118.33\(6\)\(cm\)](#)

Book	Administrative Rules
Section	300 Series: Instruction
Title	345.4 - Rule
Code	Procedures for Promotion and Retention of Students Through the 8th Grade
Status	Draft

Before making a final decision to promote or retain a student who the District has identified as being at risk of retention, the administration and instructional staff will use a team-based approach to review and consider, at a minimum, the following information about the student's academic progress in relation to established promotion and retention criteria:

1. The two most recent state assessment results (or results from an alternate assessment, if applicable) that are available for the student, although the team need not consider an assessment taken prior to November 1 of the previous school year.
2. The results of available District-provided academic assessments (including standardized tests other than the state assessments), although the team need not consider an assessment taken prior to November 1 of the previous school year.
3. The student's summative grades and teachers' summative evaluations of the student's academic skills (generally as reflected on report cards and formal progress reports); and
4. Evidence indicating the extent to which the student has made progress with respect to individual goals that the District established for the student.

Additional information about the student's academic progress may also be considered if the team considers it helpful in making the promotion/retention decision. For example, the team could consider information from a relevant out-of-district source, the results from specific classroom assignments, projects or tests, specific samples of the student's work, and/or other teacher recommendations relating to the student's skills and progress that add greater overall context to the team's decision-making process.

For each student identified as being at risk of retention, the team shall recommend, with final decision-making authority resting with the building principal or his/her designee, either that:

1. the student should be promoted in combination with the identification of individualized goals and the use of available intervention strategies that are intended to enhance the student's overall development, alleviate an identified barrier that may be inhibiting the student's learning, improve the student's level of engagement with school, and/or provide the student with opportunities to reduce observed gaps in the student's learning relative to grade-level standards; or
2. the student should be retained in combination with the identification of individualized goals and the use of appropriate intervention strategies.

The rule and criteria shall strongly disfavor any use of retention in PK and kindergarten.

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 also permit direct teacher referrals, shall be applied to initially identify students through grade 8 who are at risk of possible retention.
 - a. The screening mechanism that is used to identify students who are at risk of retention will also be structured to attempt to identify a minimum group of approximately 10% of students in each grade, even though not all students identified as being "at risk" will necessarily be retained. In other words, the screening mechanism used to identify students who are at risk of retention will be over-inclusive relative to the final criteria that are applied to determine that a student is minimally eligible for promotion.
 - b. The screening process, at a minimum, will take into account the student's proficiency in the areas of reading comprehension/language arts and mathematics.

- c. The group of students identified as being at risk of retention shall always include all students in grades 5 through 8 who, based in part on any academic factor, have been identified by the District as being at risk of not graduating from high school.
 - d. The screening process shall generally be completed prior to February 28th of each school year.
2. Following the completion of the screening process and prior to making any final decision to retain a student who is determined to be at risk of retention, the District shall:
- a. Inform the student's parent or guardian that the District has identified the student as being at risk of retention. Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide this information to the parent or guardian prior to March 31st.
 - b. Use a team-based approach to review and/or define goals and interventions for the student that will be pursued during the remainder of the school year (which may include summer school if the student will be attending summer school); and
 - c. Hold a meeting involving District staff and, if reasonably available, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), at which the following shall be discussed:
 - the student and his/her academic progress to date;
 - interventions that have been implemented to date;
 - an intervention strategy 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;
 - 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; and
 - other factors that tend to support either retention or promotion for the student in question (e.g., research-based findings, the relative viability of possible alternatives to retention, etc.).

B. Promotion and Retention Decisions and Criteria

1. A final decision regarding promotion or retention 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.
2. When a student has been enrolled in District schools for less than the entire school term prior to an applicable promotion decision for the next school term, the administration shall use its discretion to identify and apply relevant academic criteria that are reasonably available for the student in question and use decision-making procedures and timelines for promotion and retention decisions that are practical in light of the student's actual date of enrollment.
3. Kindergarten promotion:
 - a. The District shall not retain a 4-year-old kindergarten student who will be 5 years old on or before September 1st of the next school year.
 - b. The District shall not involuntarily retain (i.e., retain without the voluntary support of the student's parent or guardian) any 5-year-old kindergarten student who has satisfied the statutory kindergarten completion requirement, or any exception made thereto under state law or District policy.
4. In the 4th and 8th grades, a student is not eligible for promotion and shall be retained if the District determines that ALL of the following apply (to the extent applicable to an individual student):
 - a. there is clear evidence that the student's current level of academic progress in the areas of both math and reading/language arts is in excess of a full grade level behind his/her current grade level placement; or, in the alternative, there is clear evidence that the student is in excess of two full grade levels behind his/her current placement in either math and reading/language arts.
 - b. provided that the student had a realistic opportunity to demonstrate such progress, the student has not made adequate progress on individualized academic goals that were established for the student after the student was first identified as being at risk of retention;

c. the building principal or his/her administrative-level designee, using his/her informed professional judgment and upon consultation with the instructional staff who participated on the retention evaluation team, has concluded that:

- there are no exceptional academic circumstances present in the individual situation which lead the administrator to conclude that the student, if promoted, is likely to have a realistic opportunity to participate in the curriculum of the next grade in a meaningful manner and make more than negligible progress in reducing the gap(s) that exist between the student's present-level of academic achievement and the applicable grade-level standards; AND
- for a student who is currently in the 8th grade, it is unlikely that the District would be able to provide the student with a realistic opportunity to earn credit toward high school graduation in the core academic areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies while the student is in the 9th grade.

5. A student who is in 1st grade through 3rd grade or in 5th grade through 7th grade may be involuntarily retained without the support of the student's parent or guardian if:

- a. The student does not meet any of the academic criteria listed above for 4th and 8th grade promotion (as adjusted to the appropriate grade level); and
- b. No other exceptional circumstances are present which cause the building principal or his/her administrative-level designee to conclude, upon consultation with the instructional staff who participated on the retention evaluation team, that the student's overall academic and other developmental interests would be better served by promotion than by retention.

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 in grade 1 through 8, the building principal or another academic administrator serving as his/her designee, in consultation with classroom teachers and other relevant staff, must conclude 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 at least as equally well-served by retention as compared to promotion. With respect to any staff recommendation to voluntarily retain a 5-year-old kindergarten student, the administrator acting on behalf of the District must conclude that exceptional circumstances exist which overcome a very strong presumption in favor of promotion from kindergarten with a student's same-age cohort such that the administrator concludes that retention is a better option for the student than promotion.
2. For students in the 1st grade through 8th grade, the District Administrator must personally approve any staff recommendation to consider retaining a student (with family support for the decision) who the District has not otherwise identified as being at risk of retention.
3. 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. The administrator acting on behalf of the District shall not simply defer to a parent's or guardian's stated preference.
4. Even where the administrator acting on behalf of the District agrees that the District would be willing to support the student's retention, the administrator shall verify that the student's parents or guardians have been presented with information about (1) the available alternatives to retention (e.g., promotion with monitoring and interventions); and (2) the possible disadvantages of retention.
5. 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. Parent Notification and Appeals of Promotion/Retention Decisions

1. 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.
2. 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 or guardian may appeal the decision to the District Administrator. Such appeals should be submitted in writing to the Office of the District Administrator as soon as reasonably possible 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.