

Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students

The District believes that early identification of students who are not making adequate progress toward achieving standards and effective intervention are crucial. In accordance with the Board's policy on grading and assessment systems, teachers shall assess the teaching and learning process on a continual basis. Teachers shall identify students early in the school year who are not making adequate progress toward achieving state and district content standards.

The philosophy of the Eagle County Schools is to be sensitive to individual student needs, to identify deficiencies early, to effect corrective actions, to enlist parental support, to help students learn to be responsible and accountable, and to retain students only in appropriate instances. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that steps are taken early to correct the student's educational difficulties.

Retention **or acceleration** of students should be made only when it will benefit the student.

If retention is to occur, it should occur early in the student's educational career. Retention at grade levels past the first grade should be done only when there is clear evidence that the additional year at the present grade level will benefit the student.

Consideration for retention should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Instances where the student evidences below average maturity in the physical, emotional, and/or cognitive areas of development. (These should be used on a very limited basis.)
2. Instances where the student is younger than the average age of his/her classmates.
3. Instances where the student evidences below average acquisition of skills, attention span, and/or related time on task; cooperativeness in acceptance of and completion of tasks may also be considered.
4. Instances where the student evidences excessive absences from school - 20 or more cumulative days during a school year. Current state law (C.R.S. 22-33-104) states the requirement of the minimum hours of school attendance. The general health of the student should be considered in relation to the absenteeism.
5. Instances where there is parental support for the decision to retain the student.

REGULATIONS REGARDING RETENTION:

Elementary School

1. The elementary schools will adopt a decision making model that will provide an objective standard to aid the school professionals in determining whether a student would benefit from grade retention. This standard will help ensure that the decision will be made in accordance with the intent of this policy and in accordance with the timelines delineated in the succeeding regulations of this policy.

By the first week of December, teachers will make the building administrator aware of any student(s) that they are considering for retention.

2. After notifying the principal of the possibility of retention, teachers will make arrangements with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student to discuss the educational alternatives for the student. The building administrator should make every effort to attend this meeting which should be held before the end of January.
3. Before the end of the second trimester, the progress of the child should be reviewed again and if there is reason for further consideration of retention, parents/guardians of the student should be notified and a conference scheduled to discuss alternatives available for the child, including retention.
4. No later than thirty days prior to the end of the school year, a conference will be scheduled involving the parents/guardians and teacher(s) of the student and the building principal for the purpose of making a final decision regarding the retention of the student.
5. The teacher(s) or principal shall document in writing all decisions made at meetings with parents/guardians regarding the retention of a student.
6. No conditional retentions or promotions will be made.
7. The building principal will arrange a conference with the receiving teacher(s) to discuss in detail the needs of the retained student. This conference will be held prior to the beginning of the following school year.
8. Maximum emphasis should be placed on conferencing with parents/guardians about the possible retention of a student. It is important that parents/guardians have an understanding of the student's educational problems and agree to the retention decision. Parents/guardians should be fully aware of the decision regarding retention before the student begins the summer break.
9. Prior to the end of the school year, the middle schools should be made aware of all fifth grade students who will not be enrolled in the sixth grade due to retention.
10. After the school presents its case for retention, the final decision regarding retention of a student will normally rest with the school's principal.

Middle Schools

1. The middle schools will adopt a decision making model that can provide an objective standard that will aid the school professionals in determining whether a student would benefit from grade retention. This standard will help ensure that the decisions will be made in accordance with the intent of this policy and in accordance with the timelines delineated in the succeeding regulations of this policy.

2. If a teacher forms a professional opinion that a student should possibly be retained, the teacher should make that possibility known to the counselor and the building principal by the first week in December. The counselor shall, at this time, initiate a contact with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the student's educational difficulties.
3. Within the month of December, the counselor will have contacted the parents/guardians of the student considered for retention to make the parents/guardians aware of the student's educational problems and the possible consideration of retention. Specific reasons for the concern should be given to the parents/guardians.
4. Students will not be retained for reasons of behavior or conduct.
5. All students considered for retention will be discussed at a team meeting attended by the teacher(s), the principal, the counselor, and other appropriate personnel. A list of students who might possibly be retained will be prepared, based on a minimum of failing and near failing grades from the first trimester and the objective standards that were adopted by the professional staff. Teachers may add other names to this list as it seems appropriate. The list of students considered for retention may be revised at these meetings to become a finalized list.
6. The principal must approve the final list of possible retainees.
7. A staffing for each potential retaineer will be held no later than the end of the second trimester. The parents or guardian and the student must be present, with the appropriate staff members. At this staffing, an educational plan will be formulated detailing if and how the student may eliminate the need for retention. A team or teacher and the principal will monitor the progress of each student considered for retention. The staffing will be held even if the parents/guardians decline to attend.
8. If a student is not successful in meeting the goals of the educational plan, a conference will be held with the student, parents/guardians, staff advisor, and principal, for making a final decision regarding retention. This meeting will be held during the last two weeks of school.
9. There will be no conditional retentions or promotions.
10. After the school presents its case for retention, the final decision regarding the retention of a student will normally rest with the school's principal of that student.

Grade acceleration shall be considered only in rare and extreme cases. Teachers are urged to utilize methods and materials of instruction which broaden the interests and achievements of those students who are academically superior and use acceleration only in an extraordinary situation. Students in grade K-8 may be accelerated to another grade if the following conditions are met:

1. Classroom performance indicates mastery of the material to be skipped.
2. Standardized test results indicate outstanding performance.

3. Social and emotional development of the student would not be harmed by the acceleration.

4. The parents or guardians desire acceleration.

REGULATIONS REGARDING ACCELERATION:

1. Parents/guardians of the child are to write a letter requesting grade acceleration and outlining the reasons of the request.

2. The principal and teacher will use a six week period of time to observe the student and to gather data (see attached form) for the decision. Areas for consideration will include:
 - physical characteristics
 - peer relationships
 - academic performance
 - intellectual ability
 - special needs of student
 - special talents and interest
 - student's comfort with the idea

In addition to collecting data, an interview with the student by the school psychologist will take place.

3. After all data has been collected, a staffing will be arranged to review all data and to make a decision. Staffing participants will include: parents, principal, school psychologist, current teacher, and receiving teacher.

4. When a decision has been made, a detailed plan will be developed by the professional staff and parents/guardians to outline how the student's needs will best be met.

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(hh)

CROSS REF.: AE, Accountability/Commitment to Accomplishment
AEA, Standards Based Education
IA, Instructional Goals and Learning Objectives
IK, Academic Achievement
IKA, Grading Assessment Systems
ILBA, District Program Assessments
ILBB, State Program Assessments
ILBC, Literacy and Reading Comprehension Assessments