

## Promotion, Retention, Acceleration, and Grade Placement

### Retention, Grade Placement, and Acceleration

**A. Preamble:** The board recognizes that the rate of physical, social, emotional and academic growth will vary among individual students. Since each student grows at his/her own rate, these individual growth characteristics will be recognized in classroom programming. Typically, students will move to the next grade level at the end of a school year. However, individual student progress should be monitored carefully. As school staff and guardians monitor progress, there may be a need for the typical student progression to be slowed or accelerated to ensure the student is meeting academic standards and is being appropriately challenged.

**B. Retention:** Retention at the same grade may be beneficial to the student when he/she is not demonstrating minimum competency in basic skill subjects in relation to ability and grade level. School and family teams considering retention should use data on the student's academic progress and should consider the social and emotional impacts of retention. The school should involve parents in retention discussions at least one quarter in advance of any retention decisions being finalized. Final decisions around retention will be finalized during the last 20 days of the school year using all relevant data available about the student's academic progress.

**C. Acceleration:** Academic acceleration for a student can be addressed through classroom methods employed by a teacher, school methods (e.g. a student accelerating through math), and/or advancement through grades.

School and family teams considering skipping a student through a grade should use academic data from a highly capable assessment and should consider the social and emotional impacts of this decision. Decisions for skipping a grade for a student will typically be done at natural transitions (e.g. between school years); however, school and family teams should not be limited by strict time lines for these decisions if an earlier transition is in the student's best interest. Consideration for skipping a grade should consider the following criteria and recommendations:

- The child should have a measured IQ of 130 or higher or academic data indicating that they will have the academic potential to be successful with the acceleration. This could include standardized test results. Students who do not meet academic requirements should not be considered for grade skipping.
- No matter how far advanced the student may be, he or she should skip only one grade at a time. Further acceleration can be considered the following year.
- The child should be monitored for any skill gaps that may occur as a result of missing coursework and assisted to make up the material.
- Accelerations should be done on a trial basis, so that the child may move back to the lower grade without feeling like a failure.

**D. Grade Placement:** In rare circumstances when there are a lack of educational records, learning disabilities, and/or language barriers, initial placement of students in grades according to their chronological age is determined not to be the best placement. If parent/guardians and school personnel agree that the initial placement decision should be reconsidered and the student should be placed in a different grade is in the student's best interest, then it is permissible to move the student to the grade level the team determines is best.

## Promotion

**A. Elementary Promotion Criteria and Considerations:** School and family teams should examine student data on a regular basis to help make informed retention and/or acceleration decisions. As part of the regular cycle of student conferences, promotion, retention, and/or acceleration will be considered.

Because of the research on the importance of students having strong reading skills by the end of third grade, the state requires that parents will be notified when their children score below basic on the third grade statewide English language arts assessment. If the school principal and parent cannot agree on the appropriate grade placement and improvement strategies from the list of available options, the parent's request will be honored.

**B. Secondary Promotion Criteria and Considerations:** School and family teams will examine student data on a regular basis to help make informed retention and/or acceleration decisions. As part of the regular cycle of student conferences, promotion, retention, and/or acceleration will be considered. If the team cannot reach consensus in regards to placement, a parent's request will be honored. However, for retention in high school parents will be informed that laws around graduation dates and sports eligibility will still need to be applied as defined by state laws and regulations.

Due to academic acceleration, parents and students may also be interested in students being promoted to the next grade level earlier than the annual process. If a student has the credits outlined in the table below, then the request by a parent will be granted and the student will be placed in the grade level as appropriate. School staff will also inform parents that this may result in some communication from the school that may not match with their chronological grade and will encourage the parents and students to regularly communicate with school personnel if there are any questions about communication that is or is not received.

Grade Level	Promotion Criteria
Grade 9	Successful Promotion from 8 <sup>th</sup> 0.00-4.99 credits
Grade 10	5.0-9.99 credits or completion of one year of high school
Grade 11	10.0-14.99 credits or completion of two years of high school
Grade 12	15* credits or completion of three years of high school.

\*14 credit promotion applies for students in the classes of 2014-2015. For students in the class of 2016 and beyond, senior promotion will occur when 15 credits have been earned.

Being placed at a given grade level does not eliminate the need to complete all local and state graduation requirements if a student is attempting to earn a diploma through Spokane Public Schools. Students will be responsible for completing graduation requirements for the year they matriculated into high school regardless if they accelerate to a different graduation year.

Cross References:

Policy 2090                      Evaluation and Assessment

Legal References:

28A.655.230            Reading skills—Meeting for grade placement and strategies for  
student improvement—Exemptions

Adoption                09/02/1982  
Amended:                08/11/2010  
                                  12/02/2015  
                                  03/08/2017  
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