

## Administrative Procedure 363

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### GRADE ADVANCEMENT/RETENTION/ACCELERATION

#### Background

GYPSPD recognizes the diverse learning abilities, interests, and needs of all students. It is the goal of the district that all students progress in their educational programs to the maximum of their individual abilities through continuous progress while experiencing success. In order to maximize student success, the district supports differentiated instruction and programming, while accommodating the needs of students within the classroom as a preferred alternative to retention. A key component of supporting all learners is a comprehensive ongoing approach to student assessment and evaluation

#### DEFINITIONS:

**Advancement:** is the single grade step most students take from year to year with same-age peers.

**Retention:** allows a student to repeat a grade with explicit strategies focused on supporting student success that are different than ones used previously.

**Acceleration:** is progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than the average for one's age. Acceleration may be grade-based or subject-based.

In all cases, the Division expects that appropriate instructional programming is in place to support student success.

#### PROCEDURES:

1. The Principal approves, in consultation with the school learning team and the Director of Inclusive Education, the placement of students in grade, courses and classes.
2. The Principal approves, in consultation with the school learning team and the Director of Inclusive Education the promotion of students from one grade or course to another.
3. Information about the student's learning profile, evidence-based research articles about retention/acceleration, and current student performance will be considered by all professionals and parents/guardians.
4. If Retention or Acceleration is being considered by the school:
  - a. The student's School Learning Team (including teacher(s); principal and/or vice-principal; learning support teacher; Director of Inclusive Education and educational assistant where applicable) will be assembled to consider acceleration/retention for the upcoming school year by March 1<sup>st</sup>
  - b. Student performance data, specialized assessment information and research articles will be considered in this discussion. Additionally, the following information needs to be considered:
    - i. Documentation of the discussion regarding the possibility of retention or acceleration gathered throughout the school year.
    - ii. Light's Retention Scale results. The achieved score needs to be

considered as a guide in the decision making process for retention. This scale considers the student's age, physical size, knowledge of the English language, grade placement, emotional concerns, sibling, attendance, present level of academic achievement, motivation, history of a learning disability, and intelligence.

- iii. If Level C assessment information has not been gathered about the student, this data may need to be collected before further consideration can be made for retention or acceleration.
  - c. If retention or acceleration is still being considered after reviewing all relevant data (identified in guideline #3) and consulting with Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services; the teacher(s) and/or school administrator will contact the parent/guardian by April 1st to discuss the possibility of retention/acceleration.
5. If Retention or Acceleration is being considered/requested by a parent/guardian:
- a. The student's School Learning Team (including teacher(s); principal and/or vice-principal; learning support teacher; Director of Inclusive Education and educational assistant where applicable) will be assembled to consider acceleration/retention for the upcoming school year.
  - b. Student performance data, specialized assessment information and research articles will be considered in this discussion.
    - i. Light's Retention Scale results. The achieved score needs to be considered as a guide in the decision making process for retention. This scale considers the student's age, physical size, knowledge of the English language, grade placement, emotional concerns, sibling, attendance, present level of academic achievement, motivation, history of a learning disability, and intelligence.
    - ii. If Level C assessment information has not been gathered about the student, this data may need to be collected before further consideration can be made for retention or acceleration.
  - c. If retention or acceleration is still being considered after reviewing all relevant data and consulting with Associate Superintendent of Student Services; the teacher(s) and/or school administrator will contact the parent/guardian to discuss their recommendation.
6. If Retention or Acceleration is being considered/requested by a parent/guardian who is moving into the school community from another location during the school year:
- a. The principal and/or vice-principal will contact the school where the student previously attended and gather as much information possible about the student's learning performance. Including, but not exclusively, the following information:
    - i. Student performance data and related specialized assessment information (psychological and/or medical).
    - ii. Light's Retention Scale results. The achieved score needs to be considered as a guide in the decision making process for retention. This scale considers the student's age, physical size, knowledge of the English language, grade placement, emotional concerns, sibling, attendance, present level of academic achievement, motivation, history of a learning disability, and intelligence.
    - iii. If Level C assessment information has not been gathered about the student, this data may need to be collected before further consideration can be

made for retention or acceleration.

- b. If retention or acceleration is still being considered after reviewing all relevant data and consulting with Associate Superintendent of Student Services; the teacher(s) and/or school administrator will contact the parent/guardian to discuss their recommendation.
7. If parents/guardians do not agree with the school's recommendation, school administration can provide parents with information about the appeal process.
8. When there is a recommendation of retention or acceleration, the Superintendent or designate will be informed by May 1.
9. Regardless of the type of recommendation suggested, an intervention support plan will be designed and implemented in the upcoming school year to ensure the student experiences success.

## REFERENCES:

Alberta School Act (2012)

Collins, R. (2013). "The Research on Year Level Repetition: A Smart Idea or Holding Students Back?"

*Independent Schools Queensland Briefings*, 17(10), 1-6.

Effective Student Assessment and Evaluation in the Classroom (Alberta Education, 2006) Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12 (Alberta Education)

Hattie, J. (1999). Influences on student learning. *Inaugural lecture given on August, 2, 1999.*

Jimerson, S. R., Pletcher, S. M., Graydon, K., Schnurr, B. L., Nickerson, A. B., & Kundert, D. K. (2006). Beyond grade retention and social promotion: Promoting the social and academic competence of students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43(1), 85-97.

Jimerson, S. R. (2001). Meta-analysis of grade retention research: Implications for practice in the 21st century. *School Psychology Review*, 30(3), 420-437.

National Association of School Psychologists - online resources for educators and parents: Grade Retention and School Promotion

[http://www.nasponline.org/about\\_nasp/positionpapers/GradeRetentionandSocialPromotion.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/positionpapers/GradeRetentionandSocialPromotion.pdf)

Alternatives to Grade Retention

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/Retention%20WEB.pdf>

Grade Retention and Promotion: Information for Parents

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/revisedPDFs/graderetention.pdf>

Teaching Quality Standard (Alberta Education Policy 4.2.1, 2018)