

GRADE ADVANCEMENT: RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

Policy

It is the policy of The St. Johnsbury School District to insure that all students are progressing in their educational program, and have reached a standard of achievement necessary for satisfactory progress in the next grade.

Special education students who are working under an Individual Education Plan are excluded from this policy, and will be promoted or retained in accordance with their IEP.

Background

The board believes that the primary goal of the education system is to educate all students. Since each child develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially at an individual rate, every student will not complete 12 grade levels of work at the same time. Some students will need more than 12 years, while others may need less.

The Vermont *Grade Level Expectations* (GLE) define what students should know and be able to do at various stages of their school careers. Schools are responsible for aligning curricula that provide students with opportunities to master the standards. Promotion from grade to grade as well as retention and acceleration should be based on a student's ability to meet these standards over time.

Definitions

1. **Acceleration** is the advancement of a student by all and/or part of one grade beyond the current grade level.
2. **Promotion** is the single grade step most students take from year to year.
3. **Retention** allows a student to repeat all or part of a grade in order to more fully prepare for the work of the next grade.

Implementation

Classroom educators are responsible for assessing student progress and recommending the promotion of students each year. Educators will assess academic readiness to advance to the next grade using a thorough evaluation process that will include, but not be limited to, standardized testing (both state and local), classroom-based testing, portfolios, and teacher observation. The evaluation will also take into account social, emotional, physical and mental growth, past academic performance and behavior, motivation, attendance, and other pertinent contingencies.

The Principal will develop rules to implement this policy, which will specify a process for the consideration of retention or acceleration and will include the following characteristics:

- ✓ Seeking the involvement of parents/guardians in a highly collaborative working relationship,

- ✓ the use of retention in the early primary grades at which time research indicates it is most effective,
- ✓ the consideration of the student's social, emotional, and academic needs,
- ✓ outlining steps and time frames that provide for a great deal of interaction with parents/guardians,
- ✓ that the final decision will be made by the administration after consultation with parents/guardians, classroom teachers, and other professional staff.

Parents may appeal a decision of the Principal to the Superintendent.

Legal Reference(s): VT State Board of Education Manual of Rules & Practices: §2120.2.2 (b)

Cross Reference: Student Attendance

DATE WARNED: OCTOBER 8, 2004

DATE ADOPTED: OCTOBER 18, 2004