

PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

Philosophy and Procedures

The Messalonskee School District is dedicated to helping each student experience continuous development and growth. Consistent with this goal, the professional staff is expected to place each student at the grade level most appropriate to his/her academic, social, and emotional needs. Parents have a responsibility to participate in this process to insure that each child is placed in a learning environment where success is possible.

The staff and administration, in cooperation with parents, are responsible for deciding which students are eligible for promotion to the next grade. In some cases, promotion would place a child in a situation where even minimal success is doubtful. In these instances, the following procedure will be implemented:

1. If a student's promotion to the next grade is in doubt, his/her parents will be notified as early as possible, but no later than the end of the second marking period. (Only in unusual circumstances will the initial notification be later than this date.) At this time, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the possibility of the child being retained. The parents will be given detailed information regarding the child's progress to date and the reasons for concern. Although no final decision will be made at this time, a corrective educational plan will be developed by the parents and the teacher.
2. Between the second and third marking periods, communication regarding the child's progress will be maintained between parents and the teacher. The principal will inform parents, in writing, of any recommendation regarding retention no later than May 15.
3. In the event there is a disagreement over the recommendation for retention, a Student Assistance Team will be formed to review the situation. This team will consist of a teacher from the next higher grade level, a guidance counselor, the building principal, the classroom teacher, and the parents. The team will review the situation and make one of the following recommendations:
 - a. To uphold the retention and make recommendations for a corrective course of action;
 - b. To promote the student to the next highest grade with reservation and include recommendations for a course of action;
 - c. To transfer the student due to extraordinary circumstances and provide a course of action.

4. If the Student Assistance Team is unable to reach an agreement, the Superintendent of Schools may attempt to effect a resolution. If no resolution is reached at the Superintendent's level, the administration will bring the matter to the Board of Directors, whose decision will be final.

Retention Indicators

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

The criteria for recommending retention of a child in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is the extent to which he/she is developmentally ready for the full day, formal educational program provided in Grade 1. Some of these indicators are:

1. motivation - the extent to which the child is willing to attend to formal academics;
2. attention - the extent to which the child is able to sustain attention for teacher-directed activities and independent tasks;
3. socialization - the extent to which the child interacts appropriately with peers and adults in a school setting;
4. cognitive development - the extent to which the child is ready to process abstract academic concepts;
5. academic readiness - the extent to which the child has mastered the skills and concepts prerequisite to success in Grade 1.
6. Other criteria may include the competency checklists, the Gesell Developmental Screening, report cards, teacher recommendation, age attendance, emotional and attitudinal factors.

Grades 1, 2, and 3

The criteria for recommending retention of a child in either first, second, or third grade is the extent to which he or she demonstrates mastery of the skills and concepts prerequisite for success in the next grade. Regular education students will be recommended for retention if they cannot demonstrate sufficient academic progress to ensure minimal success, with support services, in the next grade. Academic progress is defined as, but not limited to, the following indicators. These indicators are intended to be used to assess overall progress, not as a checklist.

1. The ability to identify independently 75% of the words listed in the Competency Checklist Report for that grade.
2. The ability to read orally with accuracy and fluency at the appropriate grade level indicated in the Competency Checklist Report.
3. The ability to demonstrate a literal understanding of sentences and paragraphs read silently or orally.
4. Mastery of the math objectives for that grade as indicated in the Competency Checklist Report.
5. The ability to write simple sentences or a basic paragraph with correct application of language mechanics, acceptable syntax, and coherent meaning.

may be retained in first, second, or third grade if it can be documented that such developmental delays are inhibiting a child's ability to perform at his/her potential for progress.

Grade 4, 5, and 6

The criteria for recommending retention of a child in grades 4, 5, and 6 will be failure to earn a grade of at least 70% in 4 or more academic subjects: reading; language arts; mathematics; social studies; and science. Mastery of these objectives is dependent upon such work habits as completion of homework, assigned class work, and attendance in class.

Other factors to be considered include teacher recommendations, competency check lists, results of school-wide and individual testing, and developmental delays as described in previous sections of this policy.

Grades 7 and 8 - Junior High School

The criteria for recommending retention of a child in grades 7 and 8 will be failure in two or more subjects. Notification shall be made to parents/guardians as soon as the possibility of retention exists. Conferences are to be scheduled with parents, teachers, guidance personnel, and the administration, to discuss the situation, its possible outcome, and to try to improve the student's chance for promotion.

Other factors to be considered shall include SRA test scores, competency checklists, teacher observation, attendance record, and Maine Educational Assessment test scores (grade 8). (See Policy File: IKFB-II, Graduation and Promotion Exercises.)

Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 - High School

Promotion to the next grade is based upon the earning of credits.

For promotion to the next grade, students must have earned the following number of credits:

- From Grade 9 to Grade 10.....4 credits
- From Grade 10 to Grade 11.....10 credits
- From Grade 11 to Grade 12.....15 credits
- For Graduation.....20 credits

(See Policy File: IKFB-II, Graduation and Promotion Exercises.)

Special Education Students (K-12)

Students for whom there is an approved Individual Education Plan (IEP) shall be promoted or retained consistent with such a plan.

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