

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

It is essential that each child experience both productive struggle and success from school activities. To this end, the District will make every effort to place each student in the most appropriate learning environment for a successful educational experience and will ensure the student has access to high-quality, grade-level appropriate, tier-one instruction.

District curriculum guides indicate goals for achievement by the "average" student at each grade level. However, academic growth, like physical growth, does not take place at the same pace or time for all individuals. Certain students may achieve mastery in a shorter period, while others need additional time. Early identification and intervention, promotion, acceleration and retention are methods of meeting the needs of such children.

The following guidelines shall govern student progression:

Early Identification/Intervention

Educators across the Rochester City School District are expected to provide students with high-quality, grade-level appropriate, tier-one instruction, and support. Classroom teachers are expected to make every effort, consistent with the District's implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) through Response to Intervention (RTI), to identify early those students at risk of failing, with documentation of the support provided. The School Principal and the family must be notified by the start of marking period 3 if retention is anticipated, and a special support program shall be designed for each child identified as in danger of failing. Such support services may include, but are not limited to, individualized assistance before, during or after the school day; a change in instructional approach or remediation classes; and, where appropriate, referral to the school's problem-solving team, or ultimately the Committee on Special Education for evaluation. If the RTI process uncovers that a student needs acceleration, a special support plan shall also be designed.

Promotion/Retention

Elementary schools. At the elementary level, students who pass all subjects or have made one or more years of growth as identified by District-approved tools will be promoted. Students who do not make satisfactory progress in one or more core subjects – English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science - - shall have their cases considered on an individual basis and may be retained. The process for determining if a student is to be retained is outlined below. Retention shall be limited to those situations where the best interest of the child is reasonably assured. Diligent effort shall be made to use all available resources to determine the child's appropriate placement.

Middle schools. Students who pass all subjects, except one, shall have the failure evaluated and a determination made as to the reason for the failure. The student may be required to repeat the subject, but in typical cases shall be promoted with a recommendation for either summer school or assignment to a learning environment where additional support can be provided consistently. The decision shall be determined by consensus from a case conference approach involving the teacher, student, School Principal or designee, school counselor and parent or caregiver.

Students who fail two subjects shall have their cases considered on an individual basis through a case conference approach described above.

Students who fail more than two subjects should not be promoted for the year without a viable plan that shows the student can access and show they can meet grade-level standards.

High School. In general, promotion from one grade level to the next shall be contingent upon the passing of all required subjects and the accumulation of 4 or 5 units of credit at each grade level. Students that do not receive a passing score of 65% for a course shall be required to repeat the course or its equivalent, where appropriate. A student may not be considered for graduation until they have met the requirements that are identified in the Academic Standards and Assessment Procedures.

Academic standards. Teaching and Learning Content Directors shall be responsible for ensuring that written standards for student progress at each grade level, in each content area are available to families and others upon request. Such academic standards are to be maintained in the Academic Standards and Assessment Procedures.

Retention. A decision to retain shall be arrived at by consensus from a case conference approach involving the teacher, student School Principal, school psychologist, Associate Director of Special Education (when appropriate) and parents or caregivers. Factors to be considered include compiled artifacts of student performance (report card grades, student writing samples, projects, portfolios assessments, assignments, and other work chosen by the school); teacher recommendation, with data- driven rationale,; classroom achievement; standardized test scores; social and emotional development; results of the family conference; and, for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) recommendations by the Committee on Special Education, with rationale. Standardized test scores will not be the sole or primary factor in the decision. For any student considered for retention, effective intervention strategies must be in place and evidence must be obtained to demonstrate the efficacy of those interventions. If a consensus cannot be reached, the decision of the School Principal, with rationale with support by a School Chief shall be final.

No student will be retained without an appropriate educational plan defining what will occur that is instructionally sound and different for the student than what was provided during the school year. This education plan must identify interventions to be provided to the student to best ensure grade-level success. Once the educational plan has been implemented, the student will be monitored regularly. The educational plan will be revised until the student demonstrates acceptable performance. If a student successfully completes summer school programming (grades K-5) or successfully completes summer school coursework in the course they previously failed, then the student must be promoted.

In order to inform parents or caregivers about the District's approach to promotion and retention, this policy will be posted on the District website and included in student and/or family handbooks.

Promotion Process and Timeline for K-12

September: Using a triage of diagnostic information, students performing below benchmarks for their grade will be considered for interventions by the school's problem-solving team.

November - December: Schools identify students that are not on track to meeting promotion benchmarks or need acceleration based on quarter one grades. A promotion portfolio will begin. The portfolio will be a compilation of student work and assessments throughout the school year. Families of students whose promotion is in doubt after one marking period will receive notification through electronic and/or physical mail, and are offered an opportunity to meet with the teacher and other appropriate school staff]

Late January - February: Schools identify students who as of the second marking period are not on track to meeting promotion benchmarks, or are in need of acceleration at the end of the school year. Families of students whose promotion is in doubt, or those who are in need of acceleration will receive notification through electronic and/ or physical mail, and are offered an opportunity to meet with the teacher, School Principals or their designee, and other appropriate school staff.

May - June: Schools review promotion portfolios for students who may not be ready for the next grade level and/or students who are in need of acceleration. The portfolio is a compilation of student work and assessments from throughout the school year. A meeting is held with the school staff and family to review the portfolio and decide regarding promotion. Families of students are notified by their schools in writing.

July: Students who were not promoted in June must participate in summer learning. Families may appeal promotion decisions by submitting a written appeal to their student's School Principal. The appeal will be reviewed by the School Principal along with District level staff. Families will be notified of the review by the 15th of July

August: At the end of summer, School Principals make final promotion decisions based on students' portfolios and summer work. Families of students not promoted, and/or accelerated in June are notified.

Grade Acceleration

District curriculum guides indicate goals for achievement by the "average" student at each grade level. However, academic growth, like physical growth, does not take place at the same pace or time for all individuals. Certain students may achieve mastery in a shorter period, while others need additional time. The Superintendent, or their designee, shall create a process by which families can apply for students to be considered for grade promotion.

Cross-ref: Promotional Guidelines and Grade Designation Criteria (4000-R)
Pre-Referral Intervention Strategies in General Education (Prior to a Referral for Special Education (4205)
Response to Intervention (RTI) Process (4206)

Ref: Education Law §§305(47); 1709; 2503(4); 3202
8 NYCRR §§ 100.2(l); 100.3(b)(2); 100.4(b)(2),(e)
Isqwith v. Levitt, 285 App. Div. 833; 137 N.Y.S.2d 497 (1955)
Matter of Eckert, 13 EDR 270 (1979)
Op. Counsel, 1 EDR 775 (1952)

Notes: Adopted August 24, 2023 pursuant to Resolution No. 2023-24: 235a

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