

Student Acceleration or Retention in Springfield Schools

Accelerating Elementary and Middle School Students

Springfield School District recognizes that a small number of students may find that acceleration in school is more appropriate for their academic and social growth than advancing year by year with their peers. In determining when the student's best interests are met through acceleration, the ensuing guidelines will be followed.

Acceleration Beyond Kindergarten

Kindergarten is assumed to be the entry grade for children who have not yet started to school. However, if kindergarten does not appear to be appropriate for a student starting school, a parent may request that consideration be given to placing the child in first grade. It is the policy of Springfield School District to have students begin the year in a kindergarten class and be evaluated in that placement before they are considered for acceleration into first grade. The procedures for accelerating students are the same for each grade level, kindergarten through eight.

1. A parent initiates consideration for acceleration beyond the student's regular grade level assignment by contacting the principal of the school where the child is attending.
2. The principal acquires parent permission (district form #125) for an evaluation and to exchange confidential information (district #130) with any appropriate outside person(s) or agency (ies). The principal forwards the request to the certified teacher/counselor who serves as the building Case Manager.
3. An evaluation is conducted by appropriate specialists.
4. A Student Study Team, in accordance with standard district procedures, will meet to review the data collected through testing and observation. Members of the Student Study Team will include the parents, school psychologist, if appropriate, the classroom teacher, the principal and the school counselor. Additional team members may be included if appropriate.
5. The team makes a recommendation to the principal. The principal makes a final decision.
6. The decision made by the principal is forwarded to the appropriate director of education.
7. If the decision is unsatisfactory to the parents, they may appeal to the superintendent or designee for a review of the data.

The process for accelerating students beyond kindergarten is summarized in Figure 2 below:

FIGURE 2

ACCELERATION BEYOND KINDERGARTEN

- 1 Parent contacts school principal for testing, observations.
- 2 Team meets with parent, reviews data, and makes recommendation.
- 3 Principal makes final decision.
- 4 Recommendation forwarded to appropriate Director of Education.
- 5 Appeals may be made to the Superintendent or designee.

Retention of K- 5 Students

In general, students in Springfield schools are expected to advance through all of the grade levels with their peers. Occasionally, however, a student may lack the physical and social maturity, and the academic skills to be successful at the next grade level. For these students, an additional year in the same grade may be beneficial because the child would have the opportunity to mature in the areas of weakness.

Even so, research does not tend to support retention. Those instances that seem to have been most successful have involved younger students whose parents were positively oriented toward retention and the students themselves viewed the retention positively.

In determining whether a child is an appropriate candidate for retention, a teacher should ask her/himself these three questions before initiating a recommendation for retention:

1. What do I expect this child to accomplish next year that wasn't accomplished this year?
2. What conditions and curriculum will be different next year to allow that to happen?
3. What conditions will be the same that may prevent that accomplishment?

If convinced that retention will lead the child to a successful school career, the teacher should initiate the process for retention.

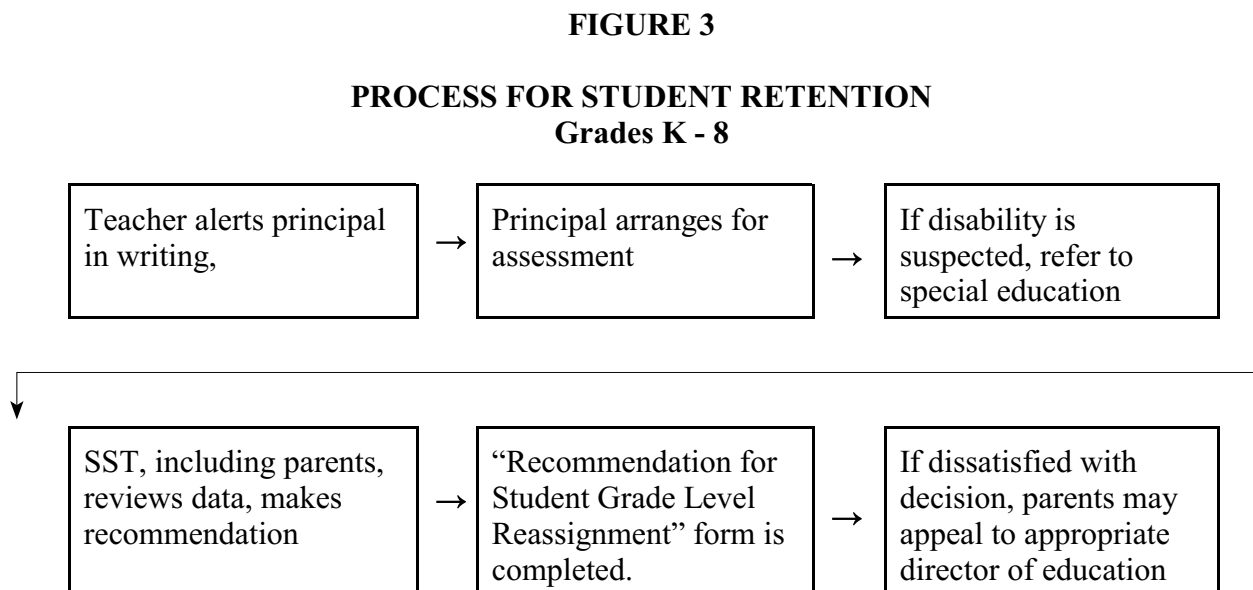
District procedures for student retention, grades K through 5, are as follows:

1. By the beginning of the last grading period the child's teacher will indicate in writing to the principal that the child is recommended for retention. The teacher will include a list of strategies that have been utilized to provide a successful experience for the child. (For example, how has the curriculum been modified? Has the student received supplementary services?)
2. The principal will arrange for an appropriate assessment of the child's academic ability as well as his/her social emotional maturity. (i.e., A Light's Retention Scale and/or classroom observations.)
3. If a disability is suspected as part of the child's failure to make adequate progress, a referral must be made to Special Education for an evaluation. Data from the evaluation will become part of the assessment information considered by the SST.
4. A team composed of the parent, child's teacher, the principal or representative, the school counselor and any other specialists who have been involved with the child will meet to review assessment results.
5. The team must provide evidence that:
 - a. The student has not been retained before.
 - b. No disability exists that, by itself, would account for the child's failure to make adequate progress.
 - c. Retention is not recommended solely on the basis of social immaturity.
 - d. It anticipates school success for the student the following year, if retention and if curriculum modifications occur and why.
6. The team may not make a recommendation for retention unless a majority of those present at the meeting agree that retention is the most effective method of helping the student to be successful the following school year.
7. Dissenting team members must indicate in writing why they disagree with the majority. Their written statement must be attached to the student reassignment form that is sent to the appropriate Director of Education.

If agreement is reached to retain the student, a Recommendation for Student Grade Level Reassignment is completed. One copy is given to the parents and a second copy is sent to the appropriate Director of Education. The original remains at the school for placement in the student's cumulative record folder.

8. If agreement cannot be reached the parents may appeal to the appropriate Director of Education.

Figure 3 summarizes the District process for student retention:



PROMOTION AND RETENTION PROCEDURES
MIDDLE SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

The following details accountability standards for middle school students. This procedure shall be followed when considering Springfield middle school students as candidates for promotion or retention.

These accountability standards are designed to assist in creating high performance schools that foster all students' academic achievement and healthy development. A committee of parents, administrators and teachers have reviewed and recommended these accountability standards.

1. Promotion/Retention

To be promoted to the next grade level, middle school students should:

- a. Meet or exceed standards on state and/or district tests or
- b. Pass all four core classes. Core subjects are Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts (reading, spelling, writing and speaking).

The following additional indicators may be considered as evidence to support promotion:

- a. Attendance
- b. Other test scores
- c. Work samples
- d. Developmental factors
- e. Teacher recommendations
- f. Study habits

Students not meeting the above accountability standards will be considered candidates for retention at their current grade level. Students considered candidates for retention must be reviewed and

recommended by the building SST team (Student Study Team) in accordance with present district procedures for K - 5 student retention.

If a student considered for retention is also a special education student, district, state and federal guidelines for developing an Individualized Education Program will be followed.

2. Interventions

The following interventions, which are dependent on funding availability, may be considered to assist students in meeting accountability standards:

- a. Remediation/tutorial classes during the school day;
- b. After school remediation/tutorial classes;
- c. Summer school;
- d. Placement in an alternative program;
- e. Saturday Academic School;
- f. Alternative schedule;
- g. Re-enrollment in classes in lieu of electives (referred to as double dosing; i.e., two core classes);
- h. Fourth quarter/second semester remediation.

Springfield School District
525 Mill Street
Springfield, Oregon

School _____

**Recommendation
for
Student Grade Level Reassignment**

Student: _____
Last Name First M.I. Age Birthdate Present Grade Assignment

Recommended reassignment to grade _____ for _____ (school year).

Supportive data:

Maturity: _____
Test information: _____
Academic program: _____
Student's attitude about reassignment: _____
Parent's attitude about reassignment: _____
Date of first parent consultation (re: reassignment): _____
Attendance: _____ Study Habits: _____

Participants in team (Signature)

Teacher(s) _____
Counselor _____
Principal _____
Psychologist _____
Parent _____
Student _____
Other _____

Recommendation:

Recommendation is Approved Denied

Approved reassignment must be recorded on student's permanent record form.

Signature of Principal Date

Signature of Parent Date

Address _____
Phone _____

Comments: _____

(Use other side for additional comments if necessary)

White: Student's Cumulative Folder Yellow: Parent Copy Pink: Elementary or Secondary Education Director
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