

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS REGULATIONS

These rules as approved by the Goffstown School Board shall be published yearly in the Parent-Student Handbooks for each school.

Based on extensive research and current data, retention has been shown to have adverse effects on the social, emotional and intellectual development of children. It may place the child at risk for dropping out of school, and adversely affects the child's level of confidence. A decision to retain a student must be weighed carefully and thoroughly. All promotions/retentions must adhere to District guidelines and must be based on classroom and identified grade level assessments that determine the degree to which the student does or does not meet the grade level standard for academic performance. If retention is being considered for a child, parents will be notified at the beginning of the process (no later than January). Ongoing communication between parent/family and teacher is essential throughout the school year as promotion/retention recommendations are considered. The purpose of retention will be to prescribe an academic course of study that will prepare the child to meet the curriculum standards for that grade level. Specific learning strategies will be documented and employed based on diagnostic assessments focused on accelerating the child's rate of learning to meet identified standards.

SAU #19 supports the judicious use of retention. All students are expected to meet or exceed grade level competencies. For those students who are significantly failing to meet such standards, after multiple intervention teaching strategies have been tried, retention should only be used when there is compelling evidence that the student is likely to benefit socially and/or academically. Successful retentions have been based on extended student illnesses, repeated family moves which result in missed instruction, and when the entire family will treat it as a positive choice, not a punitive measure. The following rules are intended to guide educators and parents in identifying those children who are most likely to benefit from retention and those who may not.

1. Retention must be the result of an extended conversation between the student's family and the school that defines an academic plan that will remediate learning issues.
2. Retention should never be used as a punishment.
3. Retention is never used to supplant other educational services (e.g. remedial instruction or special education).
4. Retention decisions will be formed by team discussion (including the parent) guided by an objective process that considers a variety of relevant factors.
5. Parents or guardians must be notified and included, as early as possible, (no later than January) in the discussion about retention.
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General Procedures

Retention is used and considered only after multiple strategies have been employed to remediate the child's learning difficulty. Alternative interventions must be considered, incorporated and documented before retention can even be considered. The parent/family shall be alerted immediately if retention is considered.

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All teachers will be provided with an understanding of the purpose of retention and when it is appropriate to consider such action. Every Goffstown School will review the purpose of retention and alternatives to it. The mission of the Goffstown School District is to *advance student learning* and when that does not occur, it is the responsibility of the school and family to determine what action steps can be taken cooperatively to intervene so that academic progress is restored.

Special Procedures

1. Intervention discussions on students who are not achieving success should start during the first quarter of a school year. Parents (students, if appropriate) shall be invited to meet with the teacher or teaching team to strategize home and school solutions.
2. The rate of development among young children varies greatly and can change rapidly within a short period of time. Discussions about retention must take into consideration the rate at which the child is developing academically, socially, and emotionally.
3. If providing a student with another year in the same grade appears to be a beneficial academic intervention, parents should be notified and included in team discussions immediately.
4. The final team decision to recommend retention should be made during the fourth quarter after all alternative interventions have been put in place and documented.
5. When all other possibilities have been tried and the team recommends retention, after ongoing consultation with the parents, an academic plan shall be written indicating what is to be accomplished during the year of retention and what measures will be initiated to assure academic progress is in place.
6. If a student is retained, a team, which includes the parents, shall meet to monitor the effectiveness of the retention toward achievement of the academic competencies specified for that grade level.
7. If a student has been retained, and if, during the first marking period, significant emotional or academic issues are identified for the student, consideration must be given to placing the student in the class that she or he would have been in without retention. An intense process for remediation must be instituted for the child in cooperation with the family.
8. English as a Second Language (ESL) services, serious health problems resulting in numerous absences from school, or frequent moves from one school to another, are factors that will be taken into consideration when making retention decisions.

Reference: IKE