

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS THROUGH 8TH GRADE

345.4

This policy addresses end-of-year, grade-to-grade promotion and retention decisions that are made at any point prior to a student's attendance in any high school program in the District (i.e., prior to the start of 9th grade or any program-specific equivalent to 9th grade). This policy does not address grade-level acceleration decisions or any decision to adjust the initial grade-level placement of a newly-enrolled student during the student's first school year of attendance in a District school or program.

Building administration is expected to implement this policy and, in conjunction with other instructional staff members, make the promotion and retention decisions for individual students. If a student's parent or guardian disagrees with a District decision regarding promotion or retention, the parent or guardian may submit a written request for reconsideration to the Director of Student Services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the decision of the Director of Student Service, the parent or guardian may submit a written request to the Superintendent. Except as otherwise required by law, the decision of the Superintendent following such a request shall be final.

For students in grades 1 through 8, the District will develop and implement a process for annual promotion and retention decisions that initially identifies students who are at risk of possible retention.

When a student is having very significant academic difficulty in one or more areas and is at risk of possible retention, no single measure or description of the student's academic progress, knowledge, and skills is sufficient to determine whether the student should be retained or promoted. Accordingly, before making a final decision to promote or retain a student whom the District has identified as being at risk of retention, the administration and instructional staff will use a team-based approach to review and consider, at a minimum, the following information about the student's academic progress in relation to established promotion and retention criteria:

1. The two most recent state assessment results (or results from an alternate assessment, if applicable) that are available for the student;
2. The results of available District-provided academic assessments (including standardized tests other than the state assessments);

3. The student's summative grades and teachers' summative evaluations of the student's academic skills (generally as reflected on report cards and formal progress reports); and
4. Evidence indicating the extent to which the student has made progress with respect to individual goals that the District established for the student.

Additional information about the student's academic progress may also be considered if the team considers it helpful in making the promotion/retention decision. For example, the team could consider information from a relevant out-of-district source, the results from specific classroom assignments, projects or tests, specific samples of the student's work, and/or other teacher recommendations relating to the student's skills and progress that add greater overall context to the team's decision-making process.

For each student identified as being at risk of retention, the team shall recommend, with final decision-making authority resting with the building principal or his/her designee, either that:

1. the student should be promoted in combination with the identification of individualized goals and the use of available intervention strategies that are intended to enhance the student's overall development, alleviate an identified barrier that may be inhibiting the student's learning, improve the student's level of engagement with school, and/or provide the student with opportunities to reduce observed gaps in the student's learning relative to grade-level standards; or
2. the student should be retained in combination with the identification of individualized goals and the use of appropriate intervention strategies.

The District's specific grade-level promotion criteria and other procedures related to promotion and retention decisions will be defined by rule. The rule and criteria shall strongly disfavor any use of retention in kindergarten.

Nothing in this policy or in the related criteria and procedures shall be interpreted in a manner that would interfere with or detract from a student's or parent's rights under any applicable state or federal law. For example, in regard to any student who has been referred for a special education evaluation or who is receiving special education and/or related services under an individualized

education program (IEP), nothing in this policy or in its implementation shall detract from the authority of the student's IEP team.

Legal References:

Wisconsin Statutes

- [Section 118.24\(2\)\(a\)](#) [district administrator authority to manage the promotion of students]
- [Section 118.33\(6\)\(a\)](#) [policy requirement for 4th and 8th grade promotion criteria]
- [Section 118.33\(6\)\(cm\)](#) [policy requirement for kindergarten to 1st grade promotion criteria]

Adopted: 07/18/05

Amended: 08/15/22