

Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students

It is the intent of the Fountain-Fort Carson School District to provide the most appropriate academic environment and to promote students annually. However, under certain circumstances a student may be retained or may be accelerated. Because each student brings a unique background to the school setting, the decision to retain or accelerate must reflect all of the circumstances surrounding the student's progress in school. Schools will provide reasonable student interventions and supports. As a matter of practice, students shall only be retained once during their school career. Additionally, acceleration shall be utilized in accordance to the student's needs. In all cases, placement of the student will be in the most appropriate academic environment.

Retention process and considerations

English Language Learners

Retention of English Language Learners may not occur based solely on language proficiency in English. Instructional strategies, materials and assessments must be differentiated to address the English Language Learners' needs prior to consideration of grade retention. Retention may not be used if instructional strategies, materials, assessments have not been differentiated to meet their linguistic needs. Decisions must include a collaborative approach/committee and it must include an English Language Development Teacher. English Language Learners who have been in an English language development program for fewer than two years should not be considered for retention. Parents/guardians must be informed in a language and format they can understand.

Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP)

An IEP team does not make a grade placement decision; rather, it is a general education decision made by following the procedures set out in this policy. Information about a student can and should be gathered from parents/guardians as well as any and all staff who support the student for the consideration of retention or acceleration. Special Education staff shall be a part of the conversations to share during the retention/acceleration determination process.

Elementary level

Retention of students in grades K-5 shall be used sparingly; therefore, a student will not be retained unless evidence clearly indicates that retention would be in the best interest of the student. Retention is defined as having a student repeat the same grade for a second year.

The decision is made as a result of a process that involves the collection and consideration of information regarding academic, cognitive, social/emotional, and physical development of the student. Consideration for retention may only occur after multiple efforts to intervene have proven ineffective. The recommendation to change the typical order of progress shall be made following consideration by a team that includes parents/guardians and school personnel, and the student when appropriate. After consulting with the student's parents/guardians, teacher and other professional staff, the principal, in consultation with the assistant superintendent or his/her designee, shall determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to be retained for such reasons. The principal shall communicate the recommendation to the assistant superintendent and together they determine whether to retain or promote the student.

The procedure to retain a student in kindergarten, first, second or third grade due to the student's significant reading deficiency shall be in accordance with the READ Act. It is the policy of the Fountain – Fort Carson School District that retention for any reason, including significant reading deficiency, is the decision of the school principal in consultation with the assistant superintendent of Student Achievement or his/her designee.

Middle school

The curriculum in middle schools is designed to permit students to proceed from year to year in classes developed to meet their needs and abilities. Upon the recommendation of the principal, a student will be promoted to the next grade in school at the end of the school year if he or she has not failed more than two academic subjects. Subjects failed must be made up through arrangements with the principal as appropriate (i.e., summer school, special programs, tutoring, etc.).

There are some conditions that may make it necessary for a student to remain in the middle school environment or to be placed in the high school environment. This may be done upon the recommendation of the middle school and high school principals and in consultation with the student's parents/guardians, teachers and other professional staff. The principal and the assistant superintendent of Student Achievement together shall determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to be retained for such reasons. The district will provide appropriate and reasonable supports to ensure student success in academic areas.

High school

All students must meet graduation requirements. In order to meet graduation requirements, students may make-up missing requirements through arrangements with the school counselor(s) and/or principal in consultation with the student's teacher(s). (See Graduation Requirements Policy IKF) Interventions will be applied as soon as possible to provide support for struggling students.

New student to the district

A new student to the district will be promoted based on a body of evidence and recommendations from the sending/previous school, however, final decision of promotion and/or retention shall be decided by the receiving school's principal.

Acceleration

Grade acceleration of students shall also be used sparingly; therefore, a student will not be accelerated past a grade level unless evidence clearly indicates that acceleration would be in the best interest of the student. A student who is accelerated will be one whose needs cannot be met in his or her present placement.

A student may be accelerated in subject area or grade placement when a preponderance of evidence indicates that his or her levels of academic achievement, social, emotional, physical, and /or cognitive development would indicate that a higher grade placement, either full or part time, would be more appropriate in order for the student to be successful. The process involves the principal, teacher(s), parent(s)/guardian(s), the Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement or his/her designee, and other school personnel as appropriate. A student may be accelerated in a subject area or grade placement at any time with consideration of the most appropriate transition time and when adequate supports are in place.

Many sources of information and data (also known as "a body of evidence") will be used for decision-making and may include an observation period, teacher-made and/or standardized assessments, input from the counselor, and/or interview(s) with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). A preponderance of evidence must indicate that the student has mastered current standards across content areas and the new placement is the most appropriate academic environment. In all cases, the Iowa Acceleration Scale process will be applied and the results will serve as the primary evidence when considering acceleration. The Office of Student Achievement may be a resource in assisting with assessments. The final decision will be made by the principal in collaboration with the assistant superintendent of Student Achievement or his/her designee.

Appeal process

If the parent/guardian disagrees with a decision regarding retention or acceleration of his/her student, then the parent/guardian may appeal the decision in writing to the Student Achievement Department. The Student Achievement Department decision shall be final.

Adopted: November 14, 2018

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 22-7-1207 (*Colorado READ Act*)

CROSS REFS: IGA, Curriculum Development
IKF, Graduation Requirements
AE, Accountability/Commitment to Accomplishment
IKA, Grading/Assessment Systems
IKAB, Report Cards/Progress Reports
JF, Admission and Denial of Admission

Fountain-Fort Carson School District #8, Fountain, Colorado