

Policies

Westerly Public Schools K-8 Promotion and Retention Policy

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Rationale

The school district is responsible for the educational placement of all its students. The goal of this policy is to ensure that all kindergarten through grade eight students are provided with equitable opportunities to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Promotion and retention decisions will be made in the best interests of the student, with an emphasis on supporting their long-term academic success and personal growth.

This policy outlines the criteria, procedures, and interventions for promoting or retaining school students. Decisions will be made on an individual case basis. Retention recommendations will be a cooperative team effort involving family, teachers, principal, and when applicable, other professional staff. The decision-making process will involve the promotion/retention team. The building principal will make the final promotion/retention decision, which may, if the family chooses, be appealed in writing to the superintendent and ultimately to the school committee.

An array of educational interventions will be attempted and documented for each child before the option of retention is considered. These interventions will occur at the earliest possible level for children who may be at risk for academic failure.

Grades K-5

When considering the retention of an elementary age student who is struggling to make adequate academic progress, there are several important factors to keep in mind:

- Students instructional level: consider this as compared to their grade level peers as well as their progress toward grade level end of year standards.
- Social and Emotional Development: evaluate the child's social skills, emotional maturity, and ability to interact with peers (peer relationships).
- Physical Development: consider the child's physical development and overall health. A younger or smaller child may face challenges in keeping up with classmates in terms of motor skills or stamina, which can impact their performance.
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Intervention
- Teacher Observations
- Age and Developmental Appropriateness of the student: children develop at different rates. Retention might be considered for children who are academically behind, but it is also important to consider whether repeating a grade might address developmental gaps.
- Alternate supports: Consider whether other strategies or supports, such as intervention or other programs might be beneficial, rather than retention.

Procedure and Timetable Initial Identification:

- Teachers will identify students at risk of not making adequate progress by the midpoint of the academic year and again at the end of the third quarter. Informal, on-going home-school communication and efforts will be made to remediate the problem. Communication must be documented. A parent/guardian may recommend retention.

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Intervention Period:

- Implement and document efforts or interventions (MTSS) over a designated period. When it is determined that efforts or interventions are failing, the teacher and/or parents/guardians will identify and refer any child who is potentially at risk and consequently, retention/non-promotion to the principal. If the referral is made by school personnel, the school will notify the parents/guardians and inform them of the retention procedure. If a parent or guardian requests that their child be retained, the request must be submitted in writing to the principal. This will be done on forms set by the assistant superintendent of schools.
- Information may include, but is not limited to the following: student's academic history, attendance records, codes of behavior records, assessment data, MTSS data, history of home-school communication

Review Committee:

- A committee consisting of the principal, teachers, mental health professionals, and other relevant staff will review each case individually during the fourth quarter.

Parent/Guardian Involvement:

- Parents/guardians will be invited to participate in discussions regarding their child's progress and potential outcomes throughout the process.

Final Decision:

- The school principal will meet with the assistant superintendent who will make the final decision based on the committee's recommendations and all relevant documentation. The assistant superintendent will notify the parents/guardians in writing via letter whether or not the student will be retained or promoted.

Appeals Process:

- Parents/guardians may appeal a retention decision by submitting a written request to the superintendent of schools within ten days of notification. The superintendent will review the case and make a final decision within five days of receiving the written appeal.

Grades 6-8

Promotion Requirements: Students will be promoted to the next grade level if they meet the following requirements:

Academic Achievement:

- Earn a passing grade (defined as 65% or higher) in core subjects: English/Language Arts and Math and at least one of the following:
 - i. Science
 - ii. Social Studies

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Students who fail one core academic class will be reviewed by a school-based committee to determine if summer school is required in order to be promoted to the next grade level. If the school-based committee determines that summer school is not necessary, then the student will be promoted to the next grade level.

Students who fail two or more core academic classes are required to attend summer school. Promotion to the next grade level is contingent upon successful completion of the summer school program.

Procedure and Timetable Initial Identification:

- School Counselors will identify students at risk of not meeting promotion criteria by the midpoint of the academic year and again at the end of the third quarter. Informal, on-going school-home communication and efforts will be made to remediate the problem

Intervention Period:

- Implement and document efforts or interventions over a designated period. When it is determined that efforts or interventions are failing, the teacher and/or parents/guardians will identify and refer any child who is potentially at risk of school failure and consequently, retention/non-promotion to the principal and review committee. If the referral is made by school personnel, the school will notify the parents/guardians and inform them of the retention procedure. This will be done in a format or on forms set by the assistant superintendent of schools.
- Information may include, but is not limited to the following: student's academic history, attendance records, codes of behavior records, assessment data, MTSS data, history of home-school communication

Review Committee:

- A committee consisting of the principal, teachers, school counselor, and other relevant staff will review each case individually during the fourth quarter.

Parent/Guardian Involvement:

- Parents/guardians will be invited to participate in discussions regarding their child's progress and potential outcomes throughout the process.

Final Decision:

- The school principal will meet with the assistant superintendent who will make the final decision based on the committee's recommendations and all relevant documentation. The assistant superintendent will notify the parents/guardians in writing via letter, whether or not the student will be retained or promoted.

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Appeals Process:

- Parents/guardians may appeal a retention decision by submitting a written request to the superintendent of schools within ten days of notification. The superintendent will review the case and make a final decision within five days of receiving the written appeal.

Credit Recovery:

- Students in grades 6-8 will have the opportunity to attend summer school. If the student passes, retention will be waived.

Policy Review:

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and aligns with current educational standards and other district policies.

Adopted: June 4, 2025

Effective Date: July 1, 2025