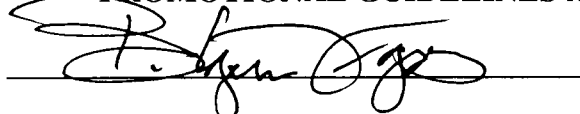


Superintendent's Regulation 4000-R

PROMOTIONAL GUIDELINES AND GRADE DESIGNATION CRITERIA



Approved upon Superintendent's Initials

7/20/12

Date

I. INTRODUCTION

Rochester City School District is committed to providing a quality education that ensures that every student graduates with the skills to be successful in the global economy. Through a laser-like focus on teaching, equitable distribution of resources, and data-driven decision-making processes, we believe that every child can succeed. It is this philosophy that guides our development of a multi-tiered framework for quality instruction and increasingly intensive interventions to support the whole child -- academics, behavior, social-emotional learning, wellness, and community connectedness—through a Response to Intervention Framework. It is this philosophy that frames decisions regarding promotion of students from grade to grade.

Educational research fails to support grade retention as an effective intervention. Additionally, grade retention has been associated with a variety of negative outcomes for children, disproportionately affecting children of color, children living in poverty, and boys. Retention, at any grade level, is identified as one of the most powerful predictors of high school dropout, with retained students 2 to 11 times more likely to drop out of high school (Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002). Neither repeating a grade nor merely moving to the next grade provides students with the supports they need to improve academic and social skills. Schools must consider effective intervention strategies to support educational opportunities and promote the social and cognitive development of students before considering retention.

Strategies for promotion with intensive support may include:

- Increasingly intensive interventions through utilization of Building-Based Problem-Solving Team/RtI Team
- Alternative scheduling and Academic Intervention Services
- Multi-age groupings
- Looping
- Curricular Differentiation
- Flexible Groupings
- Extended Learning Opportunities (before, after school, Saturdays, school recess, summer sessions)
- Promotion to Transitional Grade Levels at Grades 2, 5, and 8. Transition Classrooms with lower student to teacher ratios, research-based differentiated core instruction, evidence-based interventions, and diagnostic assessments

School Instructional Leadership Teams should examine trends in data regarding decisions regarding grade-level promotion with special attention to the following areas:

- grading policies
- student attendance / seat time
- suspension / disciplinary referrals
- student skill deficit(s) – level of responsiveness to interventions
- teacher effectiveness
- course / grade level rigor
- disproportionality among students with IEPs and ELLs
- specialized programs (LEAP, Bilingual, WEP, MYP, IB, etc.)
- student mobility between schools and programs

II. PROMOTIONAL GUIDELINES FOR GRADES K-8

It is the intent of the Rochester City School District to provide the curriculum, instruction and additional support needed so students will be successful in their classes. Retention shall be limited to those situations where, after all factors are taken into consideration, it is the option deemed in the best interest of the student.

A. Early Identification/Intervention

It is the responsibility of the school to identify students who are not making expected rates of progress so that well-matched interventions will occur.

Schools must:

- Identify students who are at risk of not meeting the promotional criteria and provide intervention services by the end of the 1st quarter (for grades 1-6) or by the end of the 2nd marking period (for grades 7 and 8).
- Document interventions in place with supporting data (i.e. RtI/AIS) beginning shortly after the student has been identified for intervention services.
- Document parent-teacher and principal communication in addition to report cards, throughout the school year.

By the end of February of each academic year, each school principal shall provide to the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent for Teaching & Learning and the school's Zone Chief a preliminary list of students who are not progressing at a grade-appropriate rate. Periodic reviews of the school's data regarding intervention, provision and students' responsiveness will be conducted by the RCSD Academic Team.

In addition, by the end of February of each academic year, each principal will be required to notify parents/guardians in writing of the potential retention of their child and the contributing factors including the school's documentation of intervention efforts.

B. Elementary/Middle School Age Restrictions

A school year is defined as the period of time between July 1 and June 30 of the subsequent calendar year. With regard to the age at which students must be moved from one school organizational unit to the next, the following is the practice of the District:

- No student is allowed to start the school year in a K-6 school if he/she will turn 14 years of age during that school year. No student is allowed to start the school year in a K-8 school if he/she will turn 16 years of age during that school year. Even if the ending age 14 or 16 will be reached late in the school year (or even after schools have closed for students that year, for example June 30), the student would not be allowed to remain in that school and must be moved to the next grade level at the age appropriate school organization unit and must have a plan for intensive intervention. This intervention plan must be developed by the school the student is transferring from.
- Age restrictions do not apply in K-12, 7-12 and 9-12 schools.

C. Grade Level Promotion Criteria

Kindergarten

No student shall be retained at the kindergarten level.

Grades 1-6:

Consideration may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Student's performance towards Common Core Learning Standards.
- Student's performance on Reading Level assessments.
- Student's performance on Math assessments.
- Student's performance on NYS grade-level ELA and Math assessments.
- Student's response to documented research-based interventions.
- Student's social and emotional developmental level.
- Student's progress towards IEP goals.
- Student's attendance and tardiness.
- Student's age.
- Data linking teacher and student performance in accordance with 3012-c regulations.

Grades 7-8:

Consideration may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Student's performance towards Common Core Learning Standards.
- Student's performance on Reading Level assessments.
- Student's performance on Math assessments.
- Student's performance on NYS grade-level ELA and Math assessments.
- Student's response to documented research-based interventions.
- Student's social and emotional developmental level.
- Student's progress towards IEP goals.
- Student's attendance and tardiness during the school year.
- Student's final report card.
- Student's performance and attendance in Summer School.
- Student's age.
- Data linking teacher and student performance in accordance with 3012-c regulations.

An intensive intervention plan must be developed for all students who do not meet some or all grade level promotional criteria.

D. Decision-Making Process for Students not Meeting Promotional Criteria

If a student is not meeting the promotional criteria despite receiving interventions, the building-based problem solving team will review grade-level promotional criteria to determine the basis for the child's promotion utilizing a response to intervention framework.

The building-based problem solving team in the decision making process includes:

- Principal
- Parents/Guardians
- General, Special Education, ELL and Bilingual Teachers
- Other Support Staff, when applicable (i.e. Social Workers, Psychologists, Counselors, Intervention Specialists, Related Service Providers, etc.)
- Other Community Based Service Providers

Pursuant to State Education Law, if a consensus cannot be reached by the building-based problem solving team, the decision of the Building Principal shall be final.

E. Parent Notification of Retention

If retention in grades 1-8 is a likely recommendation, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing. Whenever and wherever possible, translations of parent/guardian notification letters will be available.

F. Monitoring the Promotional Process at the 1-8 Level

The promotional guidelines for 1-8 students will be monitored at the school-level by the school principal and the building-based problem solving team. School leadership will verify that the following processes are being followed: 1. early identification of students for intervention services; 2. documentation of providing intervention that is appropriate for the students; and 3. documentation of multiple instances of communication with parents/guardians regarding the status of the child. Additionally, the principal shall provide an end-of-the-year report to the Superintendent and the Chief of Schools prior to June 30 of each academic year.

Sample Letter Notifying Parents of Retention at Grades 1-8

Date: _____

Dear _____,

Throughout the year we have discussed the possibility of _____
needing an additional year in the _____ grade.

Parent Contact Log:

Date	Type of Contact (call, conference, etc.)	Outcome/Notes/Discussion

After carefully considering the evidence provided by your child's performance in the classroom, your child's performance on various reading and math assessments, your child's response to interventions, and other grade-level promotional considerations, we have decided that _____ would benefit from another year at the present instructional level. This additional year should give your child a better foundation for his/her school experience.

Sincerely,

Principal

III. GRADE DESIGNATION CRITERIA FOR GRADES 9-12

A. Introduction

Given the current climate of New York State Accountability and the measures used to track student graduation, the focus of high schools has shifted from traditional grade levels to student cohorts which are defined by the year a student enters 9th grade. Thus, high school grade levels are designated by a student's progress toward graduation, rather than by a student's age or social/emotional development.

Since 2005, RCSD has developed many credit recovery opportunities for students. Saturday/After School classes, Evening School and On-line Credit Recovery courses are some of the programs available to schools which were not available to students in 2005. Combine these with opportunities that existed in 2005, such as doubling of courses and Summer School, and the potential for students to keep pace with their graduating cohort has improved. Given the increased availability of credit recovery programs and the understanding that retaining a student negatively impacts that student's success (especially in 9th grade), the District has determined that some flexibility regarding the criteria for grade designation would enhance the prospects for a student's success.

B. High School Grade Designations Criteria

Except those students deemed eligible for alternative assessment as indicated in Part 200 regulations, all students in secondary schools will have a grade designation in accordance with the following criteria:

- To be designated Grade 10, a student must have earned 5 credits toward graduation.
- To be designated Grade 11, a student must have earned 11 credits toward graduation. Of these 11 credits, 5 credits must have come from the successful completion of core classes (i.e. English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Other Than English ("LOTE"), Art, Music, Physical Education, and/or Health).

To be designated Grade 12, a student must have earned 16 credits toward graduation, and that student must have a class schedule that will allow them to graduate in June of that school year. This class schedule may include credit recovery classes that are scheduled beyond the normal school schedule.

In order to earn credit toward graduation, a student must have received at least a final grade of "D" in an approved high school level course.