

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, ACCELERATION, RETENTION

GOVERNANCE POLICY

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1.0 PRINCIPLES

- 1.1. The South Shore Regional School Board (SSRSB) believes that the promotion, placement, retention, and acceleration of students are actions that are directly related to the assessment of students' success in achieving expected learning outcomes.
 - 1.1.1. Policies and practices will be in place at the Board, school, and classroom levels to encourage students to make maximum progress according to his/her needs, abilities, and strengths.
 - 1.1.2. Practices from elementary through senior high school will be adapted to meet the varying rates and patterns of learning of all students and satisfy students' individual needs, abilities, and strengths.
 - 1.1.3. Assessment of progress should be based on course descriptions and statements of expected learning outcomes.
 - 1.1.4. When placement, retention, and acceleration decisions are made, formal and informal assessments and a comprehensive file review should be completed. The final decision should include considerations of emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development.

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. This policy complies with the Education Act and other related provincial acts and policies.
 - 2.1.1. SSRSB Policy 201: Student Services
 - 2.1.2. Nova Scotia Department of Education Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Resource Guide

3.0 AUTHORIZATION

The Superintendent is authorized to issue procedures in support of this policy.

PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, ACCELERATION, RETENTION

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1.0 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **Promotion** to the next grade occurs when a student meets or exceeds explicitly stated learning outcomes associated within a certain grade, level, course, or program of learning.
- 1.2. **Placement** in the next grade occurs when a student has not met the majority of expected learning outcomes associated with his/her grade, level, course, or program of learning.
- 1.3. **Acceleration** occurs when a student has progressed beyond age appropriate course work and/or grade level groupings. The student's program planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student for acceleration to occur and recommends the appropriate type of program.
- 1.4. **Retention** occurs when a student does not meet the required outcomes associated with his/her grade level, course, or program of learning. The student's program planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be retained at the grade level.

2.0 PROCEDURES

- 2.1. Students will not be placed, retained, or accelerated without a plan being developed by an individual program planning team. (Please refer to Appendices "G" and "H" for a list of questions to be answered prior to retaining or accelerating a student.) The plan will include the adaptations, supports, and/or interventions required based on the needs, abilities, and strengths of the student that will assist the student to meet the prescribed curriculum (PSP) or individualized curriculum outcomes. Transition team meetings are required to share the plan for student success. Monitoring of the plan will be the responsibility of the program planning team.
 - 2.1.1. **Placement**
 - 2.1.1.1. When a student's teachers and principal decide to place the student, they are required to support the student with development and implementation of a plan.
 - 2.1.1.2. Placement involves clear, ongoing communication with the student's family.
 - 2.1.1.3. When it is recognized that a student is in jeopardy of not successfully meeting the majority of program outcomes, a program planning team to support the student will be organized and communication with the family will be made by April, using the Placement Information Template (Appendix "A").
 - 2.1.1.4. The program planning team will develop a plan to support the student in those areas where the student is in jeopardy of not meeting the expected

learning outcomes for the course or program of study. For Timelines, refer to Appendix “F”.

- 2.1.1.5. The Plan will be monitored on a regular basis and the student and his/her family will receive frequent feedback.

2.1.2. **Retention**

- 2.1.2.1. The SSRSB and educational research supports the belief that most students in grades P-9 benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. Retention will occur as outlined in the policy.

- 2.1.2.2. When it is recognized that a student is in jeopardy of not successfully meeting the majority of program outcomes, a program planning team to support the student will be organized. In those instances when retention is being considered, a comprehensive file review will be completed. Communication with the family will be made by April, using the Retention Information Template (Appendix “B”).

- 2.1.2.3. Retention will only occur when the advantages to the student clearly outweigh the known disadvantages. In those cases when retention is being considered for a student, full and comprehensive communication with the student’s family must be an integral part of the process.

- 2.1.2.4. A copy of the completed Retention Notification Letter (Appendix “C”) sent to the family is to be forwarded to the Coordinator of Student Services.

2.1.3. **Acceleration**

- 2.1.3.1. The SSRSB and educational research supports the belief that most students in grades P-9 benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. Acceleration will occur as outlined in the policy.

- 2.1.3.2. When it is recognized that a student is capable of exceeding program outcomes, a program planning team to support the student will be organized.

- 2.1.3.3. When acceleration within a grade is decided, a program planning team will develop an individual program plan. For suggestions and assistance to providing enrichment, refer to the Department of Education’s “Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Resource Guide”.

- 2.1.3.4. In those instances when acceleration to another grade level is recommended, a comprehensive file review will be completed. Social and emotional maturity, as well as intellectual ability, must be considered. Communication with the family will be made by April, using the Acceleration Information Template (Appendix “D”).

- 2.1.3.5. A copy of the completed Acceleration Notification Letter (Appendix “E”) sent to the family is to be forwarded to the Coordinator of Student Services. In the context of available assets, the SSRSB will provide staff, support, pedagogical resources, and planning opportunities required to assist schools to be effective in helping students reach their full potential as learners.

3.0 **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

- 3.1. Students and their families have three business days from the date of notification of promotion, retention, placement, or acceleration to contact the school principal to initiate the review at the school level.

- 3.2. The decision will be reviewed at the school level and the student and his/her family will be notified, in writing, within three business days of the decision being made.
- 3.3. Within three business days of receiving the written notification, the student and his/her family may request a review of the school's decision to the Director of Programs and Student Services.
- 3.4. The Director of Programs and Students Services will chair a review committee consisting of a School Board representative and an appropriate coordinator.
- 3.5. The decision of this review committee is final, as outlined in the Education Act, section 6 (Placement of Students).

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to ensure these administrative procedures are followed.

Appendix "A"

Placement Information Template

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School Year: _____

School: _____

Definitions:

Placement in the next grade occurs when a student has not met the majority of expected learning outcomes associated with his/her grade, level, course, or program of learning. The student's program planning team determines that it is in the best interests of the student for such a placement to occur.

In an effort to continue high levels of communication, this letter is to notify you that your child may be placed rather than promoted to the next grade level. At the present time, your child is at risk of not meeting all the outcomes for their current grade level as required by the Department of Education.

The decision to place or promote will be determined at the end of the year by our Program Planning Team.

Area(s) of Difficulty: _____

We will be attempting to help your child meet the outcomes by: _____

You can help your child by: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix "B"

Retention Information Template

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School Year: _____

School: _____

Definition:

Retention occurs when a student does not meet the required outcomes associated with his/her grade level, course, or program of learning. The student's program planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be retained at the grade level.

In an effort to continue high levels of communication, this letter is to notify you that your child may be retained rather than promoted to the next grade level. At the present time, your child is at risk of not meeting all the outcomes for their current grade level as required by the Department of Education.

The decision to retain, place or promote will be determined at the end of the year by our Program Planning Team.

Area(s) of Difficulty: _____

We will be attempting to help your child meet the outcomes by: _____

You can help your child by: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix "C"

Retention Notification Letter

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School Year: _____

School: _____

Dear _____:

This letter is to inform you that (*student's name and D.O.B.*) has not met the outcomes for his/her grade level. Through the program planning process, the decision has been made to retain (*student's name*) at grade ____.

As per SSRSB Policy 216: Promotion, Placement, Acceleration, Retention, the following Appeal Procedure is in place:

1. Students and their families have three business days from the date of notification of promotion, retention, placement, or acceleration to contact the school principal to initiate the review at the school level.
2. The decision will be reviewed at the school level and the student and his/her family will be notified, in writing, within three business days of the decision being made.
3. Within three business days of receiving the written notification, the student and his/her family may request a review of the school's decision to the Director of Programs and Student Services.
4. The Director of Programs and Students Services will chair a review committee consisting of a School Board representative and an appropriate coordinator.
5. The decision of this review committee is final, as outlined in the Education Act, section 6 (Placement of Students).

We appreciate your commitment to your child's education and look forward to working together in the next school year to support your child.

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Coordinator of Student Services
 Cumulative Record

Appendix "D"

Acceleration Information Template

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School Year: _____

School: _____

Definition:

Acceleration occurs when a student has progressed beyond age appropriate course work and/or grade level groupings. The student's program planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student for acceleration to occur and recommends the appropriate type of program.

In an effort to continue high levels of communication, this letter is to notify you that your child may be accelerated. At the present time, your child is exceeding the outcomes as required by the Department of Education in the areas outlined.

Area(s) of Acceleration: _____

We will be attempting to help your child meet their learning needs by: _____

You can help your child by: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix "E"

Acceleration Notification Letter

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ School Year: _____

School: _____

Dear _____:

This letter is to inform you that (*student's name and D.O.B.*) is exceeding all outcomes for his/her grade level. Through the program planning process, the decision has been made to accelerate (*student's name*) to grade _____.

As per SSRSB Policy 216: Promotion, Placement, Acceleration, Retention, the following Appeal Procedure is in place:

1. Students and their families have three business days from the date of notification of promotion, retention, placement, or acceleration to contact the school principal to initiate the review at the school level.
2. The decision will be reviewed at the school level and the student and his/her family will be notified, in writing, within three business days of the decision being made.
3. Within three business days of receiving the written notification, the student and his/her family may request a review of the school's decision to the Director of Programs and Student Services.
4. The Director of Programs and Students Services will chair a review committee consisting of a School Board representative and an appropriate coordinator.
5. The decision of this review committee is final, as outlined in the Education Act, section 6 (Placement of Students).

We appreciate your commitment to your child's education and look forward to working together in the next school year to support your child.

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Coordinator of Student Services
 Cumulative Record

Appendix “F”

Timelines

These timelines are suggestions and may be adapted to meet the needs of the student.

TIME	ACTION(S)
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After review of the academic records of all students, Program Planning Team (PPT) meets to develop a Plan Outline, identify students for whom evidence indicates specific academic needs.• Meet with colleagues to identify required curriculum adaptations.• Identify PPT members who will work with the student who has given indication of being unable to meet the expected learning outcomes.
Late September to Mid-October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PPT meets to develop a Plan Outline.
November-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers monitor students’ progress and communicate to appropriate staff and family.
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers monitor students’ progress and report to Program Planning Team.
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placement and/or Promotion information to be discussed with families.
May-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PPT reviews student progress in the context of the Plan.• PPT makes recommendations for the following school year.• Teachers and PPT review progress and recommendations and provide a transition plan for the following school year.• Plan is forwarded to next year’s teacher(s).

Appendix “G”

Retention: Factors to Consider

Here are some questions to answer prior to retaining a student:

Academic

- In what area(s) is the student struggling the most – reading, writing, math, science, social studies, social skills, other? Is it just one subject or most of them?
- What have you and the student’s family done this year to help the child develop necessary skills?
- What has worked and helped the student learn this year? What hasn’t worked?
- If the student were to spend another year in the same grade, what type of instruction would s/he receive in the areas s/he finds most difficult? Would a new teaching approach or new materials be used? How do you know that "doing it over again" would make a difference?
- What level of performance would you set for the student to achieve if s/he were retained?
- What changes would you need to see to be satisfied that retention was effective?
- Realistically, will the student be able to meet the required standards to be promoted next year? What kind of change are you expecting in one year? Is that enough to make the retention worthwhile?

Social/Emotional

- How will the student feel about being retained? Will s/he be more motivated to learn and try, or will s/he be embarrassed and further withdraw from learning?
- What will happen to the student’s peer supports and friendships? How will they be affected by retention?
- Will the student benefit socially, emotionally, and physically with the gift of time?

Appendix “H”

Acceleration: Factors to Consider

Here are some questions to answer prior to accelerating a student:

Academic:

- In what area(s) is the student excelling the most – reading, writing, math, science, social studies, social skills, other? Is it just one subject or most of them?
- What have you and the family done this year to help the child enhance their skills?
- What has worked and helped the student this year? What hasn’t worked?
- What level of performance would you set for the student to achieve if s/he were accelerated?
- What formal/informal assessments have been completed that would indicate that acceleration is an option?

Social/Emotional:

- What will happen to the student’s peer supports and friendships? How will they be affected by acceleration?
- Will the student benefit socially and/or emotionally from acceleration?

Types of Acceleration:

1. Grade-Skipping

The student is considered to have grade-skipped if s/he is given a grade-level placement ahead of chronological-age peers. Grade-skipping may be done at the beginning of or during the school year.

2. Continuous Progress

The student is given content progressively as prior content is completed and mastered. The practice is accelerative when the student's progress exceeds the performance of chronological peers in rate and level. Provision for providing sequenced materials may or may not be with the discretion of the teacher or within the control of the student.

3. Self-Paced Instruction

The student proceeds through learning and instructional activities at a self-selected pace. Self-paced instruction is a sub-type of continuous progress acceleration. Self-paced instruction is distinguishable from the more general continuous progress in that the student has control over all pacing decisions.

4. Subject-Matter/Partial

The student is placed in classes with older peers for a part of the day (or with materials from higher grade placements) in one or more content areas. This may be accomplished by the student either physically moving to a higher-level class for instruction (e.g.: a second-grade student going to a fifth-grade reading group) or using higher-level curricular or study materials. Subject-Matter/Partial acceleration may also be accomplished outside of the general instructional schedule (e.g.: after school) or by using higher-level instructional activities on a

Appendix “H”

continuous progress basis without leaving the student with chronological-age peers.

5. Combined Classes

While not, in and of itself, a practice designed for acceleration, in some instances (e.g.: a fourth- and fifth-grade split room), this placement can allow younger students to interact academically and socially with older peers. It may or may not result in an advanced grade placement later.

6. Curriculum Compacting

The student's instruction entails reduced amounts of introductory activities, drill, and practice. Instructional experiences may also be based on relatively fewer instructional objectives compared to the general curriculum. The time gained may be used for more advanced content instruction or to participate in enrichment activities. Instructional goals should be selected on the basis of careful analyses for their roles in the content and hierarchies of curricula. The parsing of activities and goals should be based on pre-instructional assessment.

7. Telescoping Curriculum

The student is provided instruction that entails less time than is usual (e.g.: completing a one-year course in one semester, or three years of middle school in two). Telescoping differs from curriculum compacting in that time saved from telescoping always results in advanced grade placement. It is planned to fit a precise time schedule. Curriculum compacting, on the other hand, does not necessarily advance grade placement.

8. Mentoring

The student is paired with a mentor or expert tutor who provides advanced or more rapid pacing of instruction.

9. Extra-Curricular Programs

The student enrolls in coursework or after school or summer programs that confer advanced instruction and/or credit.