

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

~~Each student should learn the relevant grade level/course subject matter before promotion to the next grade. A set of multiple criteria will be used for determining the promotion or retention of students. The decision to retain a student in a grade rests with the principal and teacher(s), in consultation with the parent or guardian. Through grade eight, promotion and retention shall be based on an evaluation of the student's acquisition of skills and knowledge as well as other evidence of growth as determined by the student's teacher(s) and principal. Advancement to grades 10, 11 and 12 will be based on a specified number of credits earned. The decision on the number of credits qualifying students for promotion shall be made by the principal in consultation with the licensed staff.~~

It is the goal of Charlottesville City Schools to provide educational experiences that enable everyone to achieve their full potential. This includes providing the skills and knowledge students need to master grade-level standards for promotion to the next grade.

Promotion, retention, and administrative placement of a student are always based on what is in the student's best interest. The School Board recognizes that decisions regarding a student's grade-level assignment have significant and lasting impacts on academic success and well-being. Research indicates that grade retention is not an effective intervention alone for improving long-term academic outcomes and may increase the risk of disengagement and dropping out¹.

Therefore, the School Board emphasizes that early identification, targeted intervention, and instructional support are the primary strategies for accelerating progress toward grade-level expectations. Decisions regarding promotion, retention, or administrative placement shall be made through careful review of multiple data sources and in consultation with educators and families.

Promotion & Retention

Students are expected to make progress toward mastery of grade-level standards. When a student is not demonstrating adequate progress, the school will implement timely, targeted, and evidence-based interventions.

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¹ Allen, C. S., Chen, Q., Willson, V. L., & Hughes, J. N. (2009). Quality of research design moderates effects of grade retention on achievement: A meta-analytic, multilevel analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 480–499.

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Jimerson, S. R. (2001). Meta-analysis of grade retention research: Implications for practice in the 21st century. *School Psychology Review*, 30(3), 420–437.

Larsen, M. F., & Valant, J. (2024). The Long-Term Effects of Grade Retention: Evidence on Persistence through High School and College. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 17(4), 615–646.

Decisions regarding promotion or retention will be based on multiple criteria, including:

- Academic performance
- Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment results
- Attendance and developmental needs
- Teacher input and MTSS team recommendations
- Prior retentions

In accordance with 8VAC20-132-40, SOL assessment results shall be used as one of multiple criteria and shall not be the sole basis for retention decisions. These decisions must reflect a comprehensive review of the student's academic progress.

The principal has final authority regarding student retention after consultation with the student's teacher(s) and parent(s). Parents may request retention; however, the principal's decision is final.

Students identified as possible candidates for retention must receive instructional supports as set forth in the Standards of Accreditation. Instructional supports will be monitored and adjusted in response to student progress.

Elementary School (K–5):

Students with satisfactory performance in reading and mathematics, as determined by the teacher in accordance with grading practices outlined in Policy IK and Regulation IK-R, will be promoted.

For students not demonstrating adequate progress toward grade-level expectations, the school team will review the student's academic performance, standardized test scores, division-wide tests, growth assessments, remediation/intervention progress measures, and attendance to determine whether retention is in the student's best academic interest or if promotion with targeted supports is recommended.

If the student demonstrates sufficient progress toward grade-level expectations, as evidenced by approved progress measures, the principal may promote the student to the next grade, provided that targeted instructional supports are in place.

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Middle School (6–8):

Students with passing grades in language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies, in accordance with grading practices outlined in Policy IK and Regulation IK-R, will be promoted.

Before retaining a middle school student, the principal must consult with the student's teachers and parents. The team will review the student's academic performance, standardized test scores, division-wide tests, growth assessments, remediation/intervention progress measures, and attendance. Students who are retained must attend summer school or a pre-approved summer academic program. Upon successful completion of a summer program, the student shall be promoted to the next grade.

High School Credit Courses: Failing a high school credit-bearing course (e.g., Algebra I) in middle school does not prevent promotion if all other requirements are met.

High School Requirements (9–12):

For high school students, promotion is based on the successful completion of courses that satisfy graduation requirements. Advancement occurs on a course-by-course basis, with students earning credit for each course they successfully complete.

Grade-level classification reflects a student's progress toward graduation and indicates movement from one class designation to the next (ninth grade, tenth grade, eleventh grade, and twelfth grade). Classification as a ninth-, tenth-, or eleventh-grade student is determined by the number of credits earned. Classification as a twelfth-grade student is based on the number and type of credits earned, as well as the completion of additional graduation requirements. These criteria help ensure students remain on track for on-time graduation.

Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

Retention decisions for students with disabilities shall be made in accordance with applicable laws and shall consider the student's IEP or 504 Plan, including progress toward individualized goals.

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English Learners shall not be retained based solely on limited English proficiency. Decisions shall consider language development, instructional history, and input from ESL staff.

Notice Requirements of Possible Retention to Parents

To keep parents informed, instructional staff shall identify students at risk of retention or course failure early in the school year and consult with the principal or designee. Teachers will then notify parents or guardians, and if concerns persist, the principal or designee will provide written notice. A meeting will be held to share student work samples and the intervention strategies being employed.

At the elementary level, written notice will be provided by the end of the first semester. For middle and high school students, written notice will be provided as early as possible based on individual circumstances.

Administrative Placement

The decision to promote or retain rests with the principal. The principal may "administratively place" a student in the next grade even if they haven't met all requirements, based on a review of the student's best interests (e.g., age, social-emotional needs, or previous retentions).

Appeal

Promotion and retention decisions contested by the parents/guardians can be appealed to the Superintendent or designee, whose decision will be final.

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Legal References: (1994) § 22.1-253.13:4

8VAC 20-131-30
8VAC 20-131-270
8VAC 20-131-280
8VAC20-132-40

Cross Ref.:	IGBA	Programs for Students with Disabilities
	IK	Reporting Student Progress and Grades
	IKF	Standards of Learning, Graduation Requirements

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