

DATE: December 13, 2011
TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Trustee Ken Shipka
SUBJECT: Motion re Development of a Policy re Student Placement and Retention
REFERENCE: N/A

ISSUE – N/A

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board develop a policy related to student placement and retention that is in accordance with the legislation under the *School Act* and recognizes parental involvement in the placement of their child.

BACKGROUND

Notice of motion was served at the October 25, 2011 board meeting.

RELATED FACTS – N/A

OPTIONS CONSIDERED – N/A

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS – N/A

NEXT STEPS – N/A

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I October 22, 2010 - Response to Service Request #685 (Trustee Ripley)
Student Placement and Retention: District Policy Summary and
Comparison to Other Jurisdictions

KS:mmf

RESPONSE TO SERVICE REQUEST #685 (TRUSTEE RIPLEY) STUDENT PLACEMENT AND RETENTION: DISTRICT POLICY SUMMARY AND COMPARISON TO OTHER JURISDICTIONS. The majority of elementary and junior high students on a graded curriculum and attending schools in Alberta will demonstrate a year's worth of academic progress, and in the case of senior high, the majority of students will meet course completion requirements. Up to Grade 12, student promotion will be based on teacher judgments of student attainment of a broad range of curriculum-specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. Decisions about promotion and future placement for these students are easy to justify by school principals.

However, there will be students on graded curriculum or enrolled in senior high courses who do not successfully demonstrate a sufficient degree of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a given school year or term for a course. Decisions about promotion and future placement for these students may require additional considerations by school principals.

Regardless of the principal's decision, for elementary or junior high students who might be described as "failing" a grade, repeating the same grade is a poor remediation strategy. In a synthesis of 207 research studies on grade retention, educator and researcher John Hattie, states that, "Retention has been found to have a negative effect on academic achievement in language arts, reading, mathematics, work-study skills, social studies, and grade point average. Promoted students score better than retained students on social and emotional adjustment, and behaviour, self concept, and attitude towards school." (*Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, Routledge, 2009, p.97.)

At the end of the school year, some district elementary and junior high students on a graded curriculum may not have demonstrated adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes to proceed to the next grade level. The recommended practice in Edmonton Public is to place those students in the next grade level and to adapt the student's programming. District regulations require that the placement is accompanied by clear communication of the student's actual Grade Level of Achievement (GLA), the student's performance relative to GLA. An Individual Program Plan (IPP) may be created to support the student's academic needs.

When District principals make decisions about future placement, promotion or retention, those decisions are subject to the *School Act*, the *Guide to Education* and district regulation IB.AR – Student Placement (attached). Ultimately, "Placement and promotion of a student from one grade or course to another is determined by the school principal, in accordance with policies of the school authority and the provisions in the Guide" (*Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12*, 2010, p.91).

Comparisons of placement and retention regulations and policies from five other districts within the province (attached) reveal the following common themes:

- student placement, promotion, or retention is determined by the school principal
- parents are to be informed or consulted about the decision in a timely fashion and informed of their right to appeal the decision
- principals shall consider the academic and social and emotional needs of the student as well as multiple measures of academic achievement and performance

Comparisons to other jurisdictions in Canada (attached) reinforce that retention is “not recommended”; instead it is recommended that an Individual Program Plan (IPP) is created for a student that has “not met the majority of expected learning outcomes with his/her grade, level, course or program of learning.” (Annapolis Valley Regional School Board: *Guide to Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures*, Ref: BP 402.6/AP 402.6 Revised 2005.) It is often assumed that students will “usually proceed through school with their peer group” and “be provided with enrichment, remediation, program accommodations and adaptations when required to facilitate learning” (Peel School District, Grade Placement Framework).

Edmonton Public Schools

Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: IB.AR
TOPIC: Student Placement

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02-06-1997
ISSUE DATE: 19-09-1997
REVIEW DATE: 06-2002

1. Decisions regarding placement within the school and within the district shall involve the parents, and student when appropriate, and shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. schooling needs of the student,
 - b. programming options available, and
 - c. student and parent preferences.
2. If parents request an alternative placement, the principal shall assist them to find a suitable alternative within the district.
3. If the principal is considering a change of placement for a student which involves a change of school or program, the principal shall ensure:
 - a. that discussions are held with the parents, and student where appropriate, regarding the rationale for the change and the placement options which are available, prior to making a decision; and
 - b. that when a change of placement is being considered for the subsequent school year, these discussions shall be held as soon as possible, but no later than the second Friday in May.
4. Relevant educational, psychological and medical documentation will be used in a determination of the schooling needs of the student. The school may, with the parents' approval, obtain an independent assessment of a student's medical, psychiatric or psychological status; and will consider any additional relevant educational, psychological and medical documentation obtained by the parent.
5. The principal shall locate an alternative placement if the student cannot be provided with programming in the school, and shall provide the student with access to schooling while placement alternatives are being considered.
6. If there is disagreement among school staff and parents regarding the suitability of placement, the principal or parent may request a review by an individual external to the school to identify suitable options and assist in resolving the dispute.

7. If unable to resolve the dispute, the principal shall direct the student to a placement; advise the parents, in writing, of the placement and of their right to appeal the placement and provide information on the process to be followed; and furnish the superintendent with a written record of information pertinent to the decision and the disagreement.
8. If the district does not offer programming which the district deems necessary to meet a student's learning requirements, the district shall sponsor the student in an out-of-district placement.
 1. Prior to a decision for out-of-district placement there shall be a review of:
 - i) the student's schooling needs, and
 - ii) placement options available in the district.
 2. The principal of the school who is responsible for the student shall be responsible for approving an out-of-district placement which involves sponsorship by Edmonton Public Schools. Requests for out-of-district placement initiated by the parent shall be directed, in writing, to the school principal.
 3. Decisions relating to a request will be made as soon as possible but within forty school days of receipt of the request.
 4. Out-of-district placements shall be reviewed and approved on an annual basis. Programming and placement decisions for the subsequent school year for a student placed out-of-district shall be communicated to parents by the principal no later than May 31.
9. Where a requested out-of-district placement is not approved, the principal shall direct the student to a placement in a district school, and advise the parents of appeal procedures.

Reference(s):

AB.AR - Appeal Processes

IC.BP - Student Accommodation

IC.AR - Student Accommodation

IEC.BR - Student Admission to the District



CALGARY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Administrative Regulation 3018 - Student Placement and Promotion

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Preamble The Board believes that every student has the right to experience success and, therefore, expects that everything possible will be done, within the limits set by class size, varying organizational structures, and program availability, to ensure the placement of each student in a program best approximating the student's needs. In the event of disagreement on the promotion or placement of a student, an appropriate avenue of appeal will be available.

Responsibility of the principal for placement or promotion decisions 1(1) Student placement and promotion decisions except special education placement decisions are made by the school principal in consultation with the student's parent or the independent student and staff.

(2) Special education placements are made in accordance with Administrative Regulation 3003 - Special Education.

New students 2 The principal will make a provisional placement for a student new to a Calgary Board of Education school at a level, which in the opinion of the principal reflects the student's general achievement.

Placement or promotion factors 3(1) Notwithstanding the philosophy of continuous progress, decisions with respect to student promotion or placement must:

(a) be demonstrated to be in the best interest of the student,

- (b) consider the following factors:
 - (i) age,
 - (ii) achievement,
 - (iii) general ability,
 - (iv) social and emotional adjustment,
 - (v) social and emotional adjustment, and
 - (vi) program continuity/availability.
- (2) Student assessment must be continuous, fair and just, and involve such processes as:
 - (a) teacher observation,
 - (b) teacher evaluation and testing,
 - (c) approved system testing
 - (d) individual referral to Student Services Support.

Parents

- 4 The principal must ensure that parents and independent students are
 - (a) consulted about student placement
 - (b) consulted whenever a change of placement or progress is contemplated; and
 - (c) are promptly provided with written advice of the proposed placement or promotion, the rationale for the placement or promotion, and are informed about appeal procedures.

Placement or promotion appeals

- 5(1) Within 20 school days of receipt of the written placement or promotion decision, the parent or independent student may appeal the decision of the principal by writing to the Area Director responsible for that school.
- (2) Within 20 school days of receipt of the notice of appeal of the placement or promotion recommendation, the Area Director must
 - (a) meet with the parent or independent student;

- (b) may meet with the principal;
 - (c) may meet with such other person(s), if in the opinion of the Area Director, it may be useful for the purpose of considering the appropriateness of the decision;
- (3) Within the 10 school days of the meeting with the parent or independent student to review the placement or promotion decision, the Area Director must
- (a) provide the parent or independent student with a brief written decision, with reasons, either confirming the placement or promotion decision or proposing an alternative recommendation; and
 - (b) advise the parent or independent student that the decision of the Area Director is the final decision of the Calgary Board of Education and may be a matter reviewable by the Minister under section 124 of the School Act.
- (4) If, in the opinion of the Area Director, it is not possible to schedule a meeting with the parent or independent student within the 20 school days, the Area Director may schedule the meeting at a mutually convenient time and in a manner that in the opinion of the Area Director addresses the concerns raised in the appeal.

**School-based
mark appeals**

- 6(1)** A student may appeal a school-based mark by following the school's school-based marks appeal procedures.
- (2) The decision of the principal regarding school-based marks is deemed to be the final decision of the Calgary Board of Education.
- (3) Parents and independent students must be advised that the decision of the principal may be a matter reviewable by the Minister under section 124 of the School Act.

Effective date

- 7** This regulation becomes effective on December 19, 2005.

Review date

- 8** This regulation must be reviewed by February 1, 2010.

Approved: May 13, 2003
1st Amendment: December 19, 2005
2nd Amendment: December 13, 2007
Review date: February 1, 2010

References

- Legal References:**
- School Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. S-3, section 124.
- Administrative Regulation References:**
- 3003 - Special Education
 - 6000 - Independent Students

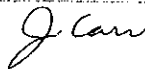
Promotions and Student Placement



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Administrative Regulation 107

1. The principal determines the placement of students in grades, courses and classes.
2. The principal determines the promotion of students from one grade or course to another.
3. The placement of any student shall be determined after careful consideration of many factors, including the following: academic achievement and skill, age, social adjustment, health and general intelligence.
4. Placements in a regular classroom with the same-age peers is usually the most appropriate. Care must be taken to ensure that students do not differ significantly in age from their classmates. Students may spend no more than two years in one grade and no more than four years in one division.
5. Parents shall be consulted as early as possible in the school year if any placement, other than the usual placement, is being considered. There must be ongoing consultation between the school and the parents.
6. Parents shall be informed of their right to appeal decisions regarding the placement or promotion of students.

Reference: School Act Section 45(1),45(2),47	Approved: 
	Date Approved: April 3, 2000
Cross-reference: AP 111, 305	Date(s) Revised: June 12, 2002

Policy and Regulation

3.02.04 - Student Grade Level/Course Assignment

Policy Approved: 2010.06.09

POLICY

Students shall be assigned to grade levels or courses which are best suited to meeting their educational needs. The primary objective underlying student grade level or course assignment shall be to ensure the maximum gain for each student each year.

REGULATION

1. The grade level/course assignments of a student shall be the responsibility of the school principal, after consultation with the student's teachers and parents.
 - a. Elementary and Middle Schools

In elementary and middle schools, assignment of students to a particular grade level shall be based on the following criteria, understandings, and research findings:

 - i. satisfactory achievement of learner expectations at the current grade level.
 - ii. age-appropriateness for the grade level under consideration.
 - iii. an acknowledgement that promotion generally results in equivalent or greater student academic gain than does retention at grade level.
 - iv. the value and availability of special interventions (such as the following, but also including others) to assist students with unique learning needs:
 - special assistance (eg remediation, resource room, gifted and talented program)
 - individual education plans
 - parental involvement
 - tutoring
 - attention to a child's learning styles
 - collaboration between sending and receiving teachers in developing an instructional plan for students
 - b. High Schools

In high schools promotion is by successful completion of courses not grades. Course selections shall be made by the parents and students, with the principal bearing the final responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of Alberta Education are met.
2. The principal's decision regarding student grade level or course assignment may be appealed to the superintendent.



LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 51

Approved: September 28, 1999; Amended: May 11, 2004; Amended June 24, 2008

609.3 Placement, Promotion, and Retention

Policy

Student placement, promotion, and retention decisions shall be made in the best educational interests of the student, in a fair and just manner, and in accordance with the following regulations:

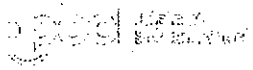
Regulations

1. Promotion shall be based on performance as measured against established standards.
 - 1.1 Achievement of the minimum acceptable standard shall normally be required to gain promotion to the next grade or course.
 - 1.2 Placement, promotion and retention decisions shall be communicated in writing and recorded in the Student Record.
2. At elementary and middle schools, decisions related to student placement, promotion and retention shall rest with the Principal in consultation with the student's teacher(s) and parent(s).
 - 2.1 Promotion and retention shall be on a grade by grade basis.
 - 2.2 No student shall be retained more than once per division.
 - 2.3 Wherever possible, students and parents shall be apprised of the potential for retention well in advance of the end of the school year.
3. At the senior high level, placement, promotion and retention decisions shall be made on a grade basis for grade 9 students (as in elementary and middle schools), and on a course basis for students in grades 10-12.
 - 3.1 Responsibility and authority for decisions with respect to repetition of a course or transfer to a less difficult course sequence shall rest with the student/parent.
4. Program modification is preferable to repetition of an entire grade.
5. Teachers who work with the student on a regular basis are in the best position to determine the appropriate placement for that student, however, consultation with the student's parents with respect to placement, promotion, or retention is essential.
6. Placement, promotion and retention decisions may be appealed in accordance with District policy.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to develop the procedures necessary to implement this policy.

References

Alberta School Act:	18, 20
District Policies:	609.1 Assessment of Student Achievement, 609.2 Progress Reports, 505.9 Appeals



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Policies

- [Quick Reference](#)
- [Environmental Health](#)
- [Glossary](#)

STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND GRADE PLACEMENT* (Elementary)

PROG

SCHOOL POLICY

All Peel schools shall maintain a written policy regarding student assessment, evaluation and grade placement practices. This policy shall be communicated to staff, parent(s) or guardian(s) and students annually at the beginning of each academic year.

The school policy shall:

- adhere to the policies and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training;
- contain a statement of the relationship amongst curriculum expectations, Ministry standards, instructional practices and the methods assessment and evaluation used by the school;
- reference the existence and use of Provincial and Board wide testing in the assessment of students;
- reference the availability of program accommodations and adaptations for students;
- outline procedures for grade placement of students;
- specify the procedures for communicating student assessment and grade placement decisions in consultation with parent(s) / guardian(s);
- specify the timelines for the reporting process.

The school policy shall be reviewed by the principal and the Superintendent of Schools and shall be made available to the School Council community.

GRADE PLACEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Board recognizes the unique and individual nature of each learner and supports a learning climate and program that encourages continuing with this philosophy and with the intentions of the Ministry of Education and Training as stated in the *Guide to the Provincial Report* students will:

- usually proceed through school with their peer group;

- be provided with enrichment, remediation, program accommodations and adaptations when required to facilitate learning;
- be provided with a special education placement if deemed exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee.

Decisions regarding the grade placement of a student shall be made in accordance with The Education Act by the principal after consultation with the parent(s) or guardian(s). School staff will discuss grade placement and program accommodations and adaptations with the parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to the implementation of the placement or accommodations.

The principal will ensure that information regarding grade placement decisions are communicated to students, parent(s) or guardian(s) and school. This information will be recorded on the report card and in the Ontario Student Record. Grade placement decisions, where a change of location is involved, shall be made after consultation between the sending and receiving principal.

REPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Schools will assess and evaluate student achievement and share this information with parent(s) or guardian(s), the student and with the teacher. The staff of the school will ensure that students and parent(s) or guardian(s) have access to the information regarding the overall achievement of the student in each program or course at the beginning of each academic year.

Schools will formally report student progress to parent(s) or guardian(s) at least three times per academic year. Interim reports may be issued in addition to the school student assessment, evaluation and grade placement policy.

Schools will use a report format approved by the Ministry of Education and Training. An Individual Education Plan may be used as a report in addition to the provincial report.

REFERENCES

[Board Policy #14](#)
[Program Services 10](#)
[Program Services 11](#)
[School Services and Staff Development 8](#)

* In this document, the term "placement" refers to placement in a specific grade rather than placement offered by Identification, Placement and Review Committees.

97 03 31
Revised 99 02 28

§4 Promotion, Placement, Retention, and Acceleration

4.1 Preamble

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.

Fundamental beliefs centered on promotion, placement, retention, and acceleration follow:

- The Annapolis Valley Regional School Board and its schools subscribe to the belief that, in conformity with The Education Act and the Public School Program, AVRSB schools are expected to implement assessment policies and practices that encourage each student to make maximum progress according to his/her abilities.
- School assessment policies must align with Department of Education and AVRSB requirements and recommendations.
- The AVRSB and its schools are committed to communicating and effecting practices and procedures that encourage every student to make maximum progress in school according to his/her needs and abilities.
- Learners exhibit a variety of intelligences, and they learn in a variety of ways; consequently, rates of learning vary from learner to learner.
- The evaluation of student progress is based on the assessment of achievement carried out in a manner that is congruent with teaching and learning experiences designed by the teacher, clearly communicated school and school board policies, and Department of Education programs and expected outcomes.
- Students are expected to demonstrate a willingness to
 - learn,
 - achieve, and
 - make an individual effort to succeed.
- The Public School Program mandates what courses/subjects students must take, grades primary to 9. The PSP does not state what courses/subjects students must “pass” in order to be promoted.
- Students in grades 10 through 12 must successfully complete all mandated requirements in order to achieve a High School Graduation Certificate.
- Some students may be eligible to apply for “Challenge for Credit,” “Independent Study,” and similar alternatives under terms and criteria established by the Public School Program; for additional suggestions, see Appendix I, herein.
- It is recognized that student success is related to student development and maturation.
- Students for whom placement or retention is being considered will not be placed or retained without a Program Plan being developed and put into effect.
- **The decision to place, retain, or accelerate a student is not recommended by the AVRSB; instead, an Individual Program Plan is recommended for the student. In those rare instances when such a decision is made, the decision rests with the**

school/site; in the case of students proceeding from one site to another (for example from grade 6 in one school to grade 7 in the next school), the decision rests with the originating school.

4.2 Promotion

Student success is tied to the idea and experience of promotion from one level of learning to the next. Promotion occurs when learners meet or exceed explicitly stated learning outcomes associated within a certain grade, level, course, or program of learning. As a result of meeting or exceeding expected learning outcomes, learners proceed to the next grade, level, course, or program of learning. For students who regularly meet or exceed outcomes, promotion becomes part of a cycle in which learning successfully motivates them to continue to experience new learning and achievement – this results in a cycle of life-long learning. Typically, promotion takes place at the end of one grade, level, course, or program with the student advancing to the next grade, level, course, or program.

4.3 Placement

A student's teachers and principal may decide to "place" a student in next grade, level, course, or program when that student has not met the majority of the expected learning outcomes associated with his/her grade, level, course, or program of learning. In such an instance, the student nevertheless is placed with his or her age-appropriate peers because circumstances indicate, and the student's teachers and principal determine, that it is in the best interests of the student for such a decision to be taken. Such a decision is accompanied by a number of factors:

- When a student's teachers and principal decide to place the student, they are required to support the student with the development and implementation of a Program Plan.
- Placement involves clear, ongoing communication with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- As soon as it is recognized that a student is in jeopardy of not successfully completing a program of study, a program planning team to support the student will be organized. This will occur early in the school year.
- The program planning team will consist of the student's teachers, principal or vice-principal or designate, and, where appropriate, the student's resource teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The program planning team will develop a Program Plan to support the student in those areas where the student is in jeopardy of not meeting the expected learning outcomes for the course/program of study. For a template that outlines the Program Plan timeline, see Appendix R, herein.
- The Program Plan will be monitored on a regular basis and the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive frequent feedback with regard to his/her success.

- In conjunction with cognitive aspects of learning, the AVRSB recognizes the importance of the emotional, social, and physical components of the well-being and development of all students. All of these factors contribute to the continual assessment of learners and play a role in the decision-making process when consideration is being given to developing the student's Program Plan and placement.

4.4 Retention

The AVRSB and the Department of Education believe that most students in grades P-6 and most middle level/junior high students (grades 6-9) benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. Retention, therefore, is a rare exception.

In the context of available assets, the AVRSB 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.

With regard to students who are at risk of not meeting expected outcomes, the AVRSB expects that teachers and school administrators will:

- encourage all students to make maximum progress in school according to students' strengths, abilities, learnings, levels of maturity and efforts,
- take action during the first four weeks of the school year, or as soon as possible thereafter, to address the needs of students who are identified as struggling with the expected learning outcomes of the Public School Program.
- make arrangements to coordinate the creation of, and meet with, a student's Program Plan Team,
- participate in the development of a plan for the student's success, including the preparation of the learner's profile (see Appendix S, herein),
- take into account the cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and environmental dimensions that are documented in/conveyed by the learner's profile,
- communicate regularly and clearly with the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and other members of the student's Program Plan Team, and
- within the scope of resources available from the AVRSB, utilize staff, support, pedagogical resources, and organizational structures that are effective in helping students reach their full potential.

In those rare cases where retention is viewed as an option for the student, full and comprehensive communication with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must be an integral part of the process. The AVRSB expects, in those rare instances when it is

considered to be an option, that retention will be experienced by a student no more than once during grades primary to nine.

When a student is proceeding from one school in the AVRSB to another, the originating school has the responsibility of providing the receiving school with a framework for the student's Program Plan.