

Promotion and Retention

Monte Vista School District C-8 shall attempt to provide each student with a grade /subject level placement which ensures the best possible opportunity for educational growth. In order to achieve such optimal placements, the decision-making principles and guidelines shall apply to the following placement options:

- Promotion
- Promotion with Intervention
- Acceleration
- Retention

This policy relates only to grades K-8. Policy, procedures and guidelines have been established under IKF, Graduation Requirements, for student progression through grades 9-12.

Student Placement Decision-Making Parameters

1. Placement decisions should be based on a body of evidence in which the student demonstrates his/her academic achievement and proficiency. The practice of “social promotion” without regard to standards of student achievement is not a sound basis for a decision regarding student placement.
2. A decision regarding student promotion, acceleration, or retention should be made based primarily on the long-range welfare of the student. Such decisions represent more than a simple placement decision and must take into consideration all of the circumstances surrounding the student in the school setting. However, in most cases, students should advance beyond the elementary level by age 12 and advance beyond middle school by age 15.
3. A team comprised of teacher(s), the building principal and the student’s parents/guardians will discuss recommendations to promote, promote with intervention, accelerate, or retain a student. Though every effort will be made to reach a collaborative decision, the final decision to will be made by the building principal.
4. Individualized plans containing intervention strategies and grade level placement WILL be required for the following students:
 - Students who, based on a body of evidence, are not proficient or above in reading, writing, and/or mathematics at the end of grade three through eight.
 - Students receiving educational services pursuant to individual READ plans (IRP)* in accordance with the Colorado READ Act.
 - Students identified as needing extra support as they transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. This group includes students identified as gifted and talented as well as those needing remediation. These students would enter 6th grade and 9th grade with an individualized program of study designed to maximize their benefit from courses offered at the middle and high school.
 - Students identified in English as a Second Language (ESL).**
 - Students with disabilities who are eligible for special education or related services pursuant to an Individual Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan.***

*IRP documents may serve as the individualized plan if the students only demonstrate non- proficiency in reading.

**ESL language plan documents may serve as the individualized plan for identified ESL students.

***IEP and 504 documents may serve as the individualized plan unless a student's needs are outside of their identified special education needs or identified disability.

5. Swift, strong and preventative intervention steps should begin as early in a student's career as possible. Intervention programs for students will be developed with the following guidelines in mind:
 - Interventions other than summer school will primarily be left to data informed decisions at the school level. Cluster and/or district-wide interventions may be developed as needed, but also should be based on current disaggregated student achievement data.
 - Interventions for individual students will be based on student needs as identified by a body of evidence and teacher judgment. (see below)
 - Interventions will be based on a core curriculum of high standards combined with opportunities for students to recover from failure. **Retention should be a last resort.**
 - Interventions will be primarily school-based and shall include but not be limited to smaller organizational structures (i.e. small groups within a school, Homework Help, Friday school, Jumpstart, etc.).
 - Interventions will disrupt a student's regular academic program as little as possible.
 - Intervention programs will include supports for teachers such as relevant data informed professional development.
 - Intervention programs will include personalized attention from adults.

6. It is necessary that continuous communication with parents/guardians regarding student progress and placement must take place throughout the school year. Methods of communication should include, but not be limited to:
 - Teacher /counselor conferences
 - Report cards/mid-terms
 - Telephone calls
 - Progress reports
 - Mailing of assessment data
 - E-mail/web pages
 - Home visits

7. Minimum Body of Evidence for grades pre-K – 8 shall include:
 - Available State assessments
 - Local assessments
 - Individual reading inventories (grades k-3)
 - Formative classroom assessments
 - Anecdotal classroom evidence
 - Report card
 - Social emotional developmental level is appropriate for next level students
 - Light's Retention Scale

A. Promotion

Promotion is defined as regular yearly advancement from one grade to the next higher level. Decisions about whether to promote a student will not be made on the basis of one test and not on a single administration of the test. Therefore, the decision to promote a student shall be based on a body of evidence (see paragraph 7 above) in which the student demonstrates his/her academic achievement and proficiency.

Students who are identified as needing extra support must have their academic and/or behavior program reviewed annually. This will include identified gifted and talented students as well as students requiring remediation. Teachers and principals, utilizing teacher judgment and the body of evidence described above, may prescribe an extension of the student's school year to a summer intervention. After the summer intervention is completed, a team including the parents/guardians of the student involved, teacher(s), and or counselor(s), as well as the building principal, will review the student's progress and plan appropriate next steps to support the student's learning needs. Additional staff may be included as needed. This team can choose from the following options:

1. **Promotion to the Next Grade.**
2. **Promotion To The Next Grade With Specific Support Interventions.** Promotion with intervention is defined as promotion with development and implementation of an intervention plan. Interventions shall be defined as short or long-term instructional strategies or educational placements that meet the academic needs, learning styles, and personal development of students. Interventions should be used when necessary to provide the student additional time and/or alternative instruction designed to increase academic growth, personal development and progress toward proficiencies. The recommendation for short or long-term intervention should be determined by the body of evidence described above.
 - a. **Short-term Interventions** may include, but not be limited to:
 - Classroom based instructional methods or strategies
 - School wide programs during, before, or after school.
 - b. **Long-term Interventions** may include, but not be limited to:
 - Alternative Placement/Programs; i.e. specialized programs removed from the traditional classroom setting that meet the unique physical, academic, or emotional needs and/or learning style of the student. Alternative Programs/placements may be provided at the school at which the student is enrolled or may involve provision of services at an alternative site.
3. **Repeat Of The Previous Grade Deficiencies With Specific Support Interventions.** (See "retention" below)

If A Family Chooses To Not Participate In The Prescribed Summer Intervention, The Student May Be Required By The Board Of Education To Repeat The Previous Grade Deficiencies Before Advancing To The Next Grade.

B. Acceleration

There are two types of acceleration:

1. Student learning can be accelerated through the use of differentiated instruction. This kind of acceleration can occur in any classroom and should be utilized whenever possible.
2. Grade skipping is defined as an **early** advancement to the next higher level to meet the unique needs of the student. Students who demonstrate outstanding or high achievement in any academic area at their present level may be considered for acceleration. Acceleration is not a good idea when one or more of the following critical factors are present:
 - Any child scoring less than the 90%ile on normed assessments (CMAS, Galileo, DIBELS, etc.)
 - When a child would be moved up into the same grade as an older sibling (sibling rivalry could worsen and self-esteem go down)
 - When the student is in the same grade as a sibling (for the same reasons given above)
 - When the student does not want to be grade-skipped, regardless of the reason (there is a lower chance of success if this is the case)

The decision for a student to skip a grade will be:

- Reviewed by a team comprised of the student's parents/guardians, teacher(s) and or counselors, as well as the building principal. Though every effort will be made to reach a collaborative decision, the final decision for a student to skip a grade will be made by the building principal.
- Based on a body of evidence in which the student demonstrates his/her academic achievement and proficiency (see "minimum body of evidence" described above) additional information should be considered if the student has qualified for the district's gifted and talented program.

C. Retention

Retention is defined as the repetition of a course, courses or a grade level. The decision to retain a student shall be based on a body of evidence in which a student demonstrates that his/her performance is below a proficient level in one or more core curricular areas. The intent of retention is to provide the student additional time and/or alternative or remedial instruction designed to increase academic growth and personal development. Research clearly demonstrates that:

- Simply repeating a course or grade without specific and ongoing monitoring and support is ineffective
- Careful planning and support is necessary beyond a sequence of retention, intervention and promotion
- Rarely should a student be retained more than once during the student's elementary experience

Therefore, a clearly articulated education plan will be developed for any student who is retained.

A recommendation for retention may originate with any professional staff member, student or parent/guardian. If such recommendation originates from a professional staff member, the recommendation shall be considered by a team, include the results from a research based measure (i.e. Light's Retention Scale). Steps should be taken to assist the student and parents in understanding the reason for such a recommendation. The final decision about retention will be made by the building principal.

Moreover, a student should not be retained unless:

1. There is an appropriate instructional alternative or intervention for the student, including but not limited to special and/or remedial help or an alternative placement, *and the District is able to provide such instructional alternative or intervention* should the student be retained.
2. Instructional alternatives or interventions not requiring retention have been explored, and have been determined to be inappropriate or impractical.

Adopted: 03/12/15