

# **FRANKLIN CENTRAL SUPERVISORY UNION AND ITS MEMBER SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

## **COMMON PROCEDURE FOR POLICY ON GRADE ADVANCEMENT: RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS G9**

### **Background**

The Board believes that the primary goal of the education system is to educate all students. Since each child develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially at an individual rate, every student will not complete twelve grade levels of work at the same time. Some students will need more than twelve years, while others may need less.

The Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities and Grade Expectations define what students should know and be able to do at various stages of their school careers. Schools are responsible for adopting curricula that provide students with opportunities to make adequate progress toward the standards. Promotion from grade to grade as well as retention and acceleration should be based on a student's progress toward the standards over time.

Analysis of multiple studies of retention indicate students experience lower self esteem and lower rates of school attendance, relative to promoted peers (Jimerson, 2001). Both of these factors are further predictive of dropping out of school. Indirectly, low self esteem and poor school attendance influence adult outcomes. Students who ultimately drop out of school without a diploma face considerable difficulty finding and maintaining employment for self-sufficiency and experience higher rates of mental health problems, chemical abuse, and criminal activities than do high school graduates. (National Association of School Psychologists)

### **Implementation**

Classroom educators are responsible for assessing student progress and recommending the promotion of students or credit accrual each year. Educators will assess academic readiness to advance to the next grade using a thorough evaluation process that will include but not be limited to standardized testing - those offered by the State as well as others chosen by the District - classroom-based testing, portfolios, and teacher observation. The evaluation will also take into account social, emotional, physical, and mental growth; past academic performance; and behavior, motivation, attendance, and other pertinent circumstances.

The Principal/Director/Designee will develop rules to implement this policy that will specify a process for the consideration of retention or acceleration that will seek the involvement of parents/guardians in a highly collaborative working relationship. The following guidelines will be used when considering retention:

- 1) Retention should be used as a last resort. The following alternative actions should be used instead:
  - a) Early identification (through assessment) for prevention and intervention should be implemented.

- b) School-based supports should be accessed whenever available: reading programs, summer school, and supplemental instruction. Tutoring, well-designed homework activities, and after-school programs can also be beneficial.
- c) When weighing the pros and cons of a decision to retain or promote a student, it is critical to emphasize to educators and parents that a century of research has failed to demonstrate the benefits of grade retention over promotion to the next grade for any group of students. Instead, we must focus on implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies to promote social and cognitive competence and facilitate the academic success of all students.

The following guidelines will be used when considering acceleration:

- 2) Before considering acceleration:
  - a) actions such as differentiation and enrichment in the classroom or other advanced courses through correspondence, distance learning, or through other institutions should be examined.
  - b) Acceleration should be considered in rare cases after all enrichment opportunities have been thoroughly explored.

The final decision will be made by the Principal/Director/Designee after consultation with parents/guardians, classroom teacher, and other professional staff.

Parents may appeal a decision of the Principal/Director/Designee to the Superintendent.