

Students

Promotion/Acceleration/Retention

**Student Achievement**

The Santa Ana Unified School District believes that every child can be successful in his/her educational endeavors. It is the expectation that students will acquire the skills and knowledge each year to progress to the next grade level. To meet this expectation, the District and schools shall provide a rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum, specified levels of performance, regular assessments, and interventions to support student achievement. The District's goal is to prevent retention through a sound educational program and academic supports as needed.

The District's academic standards define what students are expected to know and do to demonstrate grade level performance in each subject area. The District recognizes four levels of student performance:

- Below Basic - below grade level
- Basic - approaching grade level
- Proficient - at grade level
- Advanced - above grade level

Regular assessment of student performance level and progress towards meeting the standards must occur in order to determine which programs, services, and strategies are effective in helping students meet the standards and identify needed improvements. In order for each child to succeed, the District expects schools to provide the educational experiences and support services that children who fail, or are at risk of failure, need.

**Regular Promotion**

Students who have completed one year of Kindergarten through eighth grade shall be admitted to the following grade level based on demonstration of Basic, Proficient, or Advanced performance on two or more evaluation measures in the following subject areas:

- Grades K, 1, 2, and 3                      Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development
- Grades 4, 5, and 6                      Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development and Mathematics
- Grades 7 and 8                      Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Eighth Grade U.S. Constitution test, and credits earned in at least 10 of 14 semester classes or 16 of 21 trimester classes.

**Accelerated Promotion**

The kindergarten teacher, the principal, or the parents may request an evaluation of a student's present academic ability to determine his/her readiness for accelerated placement in the first grade.

The student must be at least five years old by December 2nd of the current school year.

The student must have been enrolled in kindergarten for a minimum of two weeks prior to the evaluation of his/her performance.

To assist in determining the student's potential for success in grade one, the following procedures may be utilized:

The student can be given a nondiscriminatory assessment test, an individualized mental ability test (if permissible), or other similar assessment battery and place in the upper quintile of his age group.

The student's physical development and social maturity should be consistent with his advanced mental ability.

When a student is recommended by the kindergarten teacher into placement in grade one and is approved by the school principal, the parent must file a written statement approving the advancement of the student to grade one.

Students in first through eighth grade may be considered for accelerated promotion beyond the normal grade level progression based on exceptionally advanced performance in three or more evaluation measures in the following subject areas: Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development, Mathematics, Science, Social Science.

Previously retained students may be accelerated to the age-appropriate grade upon successful completion of interventions and demonstration of Basic, Proficient, or Advanced performance in the designated subject(s) at the grade level the student would have been in if not retained.

**Retention**

Students in Kindergarten through eighth grade who are at risk of non-promotion shall be identified as early as possible in the school year and as early as possible in the student's school career based on Below Basic performance on two or more evaluation measures in the following subject areas:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Grades K, 1, 2, and 3 | Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development                 |
| Grades 4, 5, and 6    | Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development and Mathematics |

Grades 7 and 8

Reading/Language Arts, English Language Development, Mathematics, Science, History/Social Science, Eighth Grade U.S. Constitution test, and fewer than 10 of 14 semester or 16 of 21 trimester credits earned

Children five years old or older who have completed one year of kindergarten shall be promoted to first grade regardless of age unless the parent/guardian and the District agree that the child be retained in kindergarten for not more than one additional year.

**Performance Measures**

Specific measures of performance shall be aligned to the relevant District and State content standards and consistent with the learning objectives of the instructional program of the student (English Mainstream, Structured English Immersion, or Alternative Bilingual Education) and the student’s English language fluency level. Teacher judgment based on daily observations of student performance and progress shall also form an important part of the criteria for promotion and retention decisions.

Performance measures and levels for consideration for promotion, at-risk of retention, or retention are listed below by subject and grade:

READING/LANGUAGE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (ELD)

Performance Measure	Grade Level	Below Basic	Basic	Pro-ficient	Ad-vanced
Writing Proficiency	K-8	1	2	3	4
Class Reading/Language Arts/ ELD Assessments and Grades	K-8	F	D	C	A/B
California ELD Assessment	K-8	tbd	tbd	tbd	tbd
SAT 9/SABE Reading and Language Arts	3-8	1-21 npr	22-49 npr	50-69 npr	70+ npr
Teacher Judgment	K-8				

## MATHEMATICS

Performance Measure	Grade Level	Below Basic	Basic	Pro-ficient	Ad-vanced
Mathematics Proficiency	4-8	1	2	3	4
Class Mathematics Assessments and Grades	4-8	F	D	C	A/B
SAT 9/SABE Mathematics	4-8	1-21 npr	24-49 npr	50-69 npr	70+npr
Teacher Judgment	4-8				

## SCIENCE AND HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE

Performance Measure	Grade Level	Below Basic	Basic	Pro-ficient	Ad-vanced
Class Science Grade	6-8	F	D	C	A/B
Class History/Social Science Grade	6-8	F	D	C	A/B
U.S. Constitution Test	8	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass
Teacher Judgment					

**Parent Notification**

Parents must be provided written notification, included in Exhibit 5123, that their student is at risk of retention and a parent conference or Student Success Team meeting (SST) must be scheduled. Written notification to the parent shall be at the earliest grade possible and by the end of the first grading period.

An initial and at least one follow-up Teacher-Parent conference or SST meeting shall be held prior to referral to the Board of Review for final decision about retention.

Following the meeting of the Board of Review, the principal shall notify the parents of the final decision for promotion, additional interventions, or retention.

**Academic Improvement Plan**

An Academic Improvement Plan, included in Exhibit 5123, shall be jointly developed by the teacher and parent to identify the areas of low student performance and specify recommended interventions by the school and the parent.

Classroom and/or school interventions must be provided for least six months prior to retention and during the following year if the student is retained.

School interventions may include: specialized instruction, instructional assistance, student contracts, specialized homework, supplemental instruction before or after school, extended school year, or other interventions to support student academic improvement.

Home interventions may include: scheduling and monitoring study time, monitoring quality and completion of homework, help with reading and/or mathematics, ensuring regular attendance at school and interventions, monitoring student contract, or other interventions to support student academic improvement.

### **Progress Monitoring**

Formal parent conferences shall be held twice each year in the elementary schools and once each year in the intermediate schools to provide detailed information regarding student progress.

Performance and progress of students at risk of retention or previously retained shall be monitored by the teacher/designee on a regular basis. Written notification to parent of student progress must be provided at least every six weeks.

Students whose grade placement is already one year below age-appropriate and who fail to demonstrate academic progress shall be referred for an academic evaluation for an educational intervention plan, a 504 plan, or an Individual Education Plan.

### **Board of Review**

The Board of Review at each school shall consist of an administrator, the student's teacher (Language Arts and/or other content area), a counselor where available, and other appropriate personnel as determined by the principal, i.e., school psychologist, nurse, speech therapist. When students are to be considered for promotion to the sixth or ninth grade, the receiving school may have a representative present.

### **Administration Role**

1. Review student transcripts, test data, and assist staff in identifying students being considered for retention.
2. Assist staff in preparing the Student Profile for the Board of Review.
3. Request the support staff members to assist teachers in completing the Board of Review Report Form.
4. Schedule and chair the Board of Review meetings, including notification of parents of their right to be present.
5. Maintain written documentation of all parent contacts regarding retention.

**Teacher's/Counselor's Role**

1. Identify the students whose proficiency test results, academic grades and/or standardized test scores do not meet criteria for promotion as defined in BP 5123.
2. In the earliest grade possible and by the end of the first grading period, provide written notification to parents of students at risk of retention using the parent notification letter included in the exhibits.
3. Schedule a parent conference or SST meeting with parents of students at risk of retention and develop an Academic Improvement Plan, included in the exhibits, to initiate home- and school-based interventions and instructional goals.
4. Serve as a member of the Board of Review and make recommendations regarding his/her student being considered for retention.
5. Maintain written documentation of all parent contacts regarding retention.

**Responsibility of the Board of Review**

1. Use the Board of Review Form, included in the exhibits, to provide a consistent procedure upon which to base its recommendation.
2. Make recommendations on all students being considered for retention under BP 5123.
3. Assist in formulating plans for remediating the student's academic deficiencies.

**Retention Decision**

Placement decisions for students at risk of retention shall be determined by the teacher/designee as part of the school's Board of Review.

Whenever a student is retained in kindergarten for an additional year, the Superintendent or designee shall secure an agreement, signed by the parent/guardian, stating that the student shall be retained in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year.

When students are retained in kindergarten, the form in Exhibit 5123, which has been approved by the California Department of Education, shall be used to document parent agreement.

Students in first through eighth grade who do not progress or who do not participate in recommended interventions shall be retained.

The teacher/designee may overrule a decision to retain by providing written comments regarding why retention is not in the student's best interest and by recommending additional interventions.

Students may not be retained more than once in the elementary grades (K-5) and once in the intermediate grades (6-8).

**Exemption from Retention/Irregular Promotion**

The teacher/designee may exempt a student from retention by filing a written Student Exemption From Retention form, included in exhibits, and by recommending specific interventions to assist the student to make adequate progress toward grade level achievement.

**Parental Appeal**

Parents have the right to appeal by specifying in writing why they disagree with the decision to retain. Appeals will be reviewed at the school by the principal based on student achievement and progress indicators. If the parent is not satisfied with the decision of the principal, the District Board of Review consisting of the Area Administrator and the Chief Academic Officer shall hear the appeal. The decision to retain shall require the agreement of both the Area Administrator and the Chief Academic Officer and shall be final.

**Special Situations**

Students who enter during the school year shall be identified at risk of retention at the earliest reporting period based on record of achievement from the previous school and current performance.

English Learners shall not be recommended for retention based solely on current level of English proficiency and its relationship to test and course performance in English.

Placement decisions for students with an Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan shall be consistent with the specifications of such plan.

**Implementation Timeline**

1999 - 2000	Pilot school interventions
2000 - 2001	Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8
2001 - 2002	Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

**Reporting Promotion and Retention Decisions**

After all promotion and retention decisions have been made, the principal shall use forms provided by the District to report by grade level the names of all students retained and all students promoted after consideration by the Board of Review. This report shall be sent to the Chief Academic Officer.

The names of fifth grade students being retained or promoted after consideration by the Board of Review shall be sent by the principal to the receiving intermediate school.

The names of eighth grade students being retained or promoted after consideration by the Board of Review shall be sent by the principal to the receiving high school.

**Evaluation**

The District and schools shall conduct an annual evaluation of the retention policy and practices to determine both short-term and long-term effectiveness. The District shall modify the policy and administrative regulations, as needed, based on the results of the evaluation. Schools shall modify the instructional program, services, and grade placement of retained students, as needed, based on a review of their academic performance.