

Grade Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration

The Bismarck School District is committed to fostering the continuous educational and personal growth of its students. Student progress shall be continually evaluated based on state and local achievement standards, course content standards, and education goals and objectives as established by administration and the teaching staff.

Assignment of a student to a grade level shall be based on the best educational interest of the student, which shall be determined by using the criteria established below.

Procedure for Determining Promotion and Retention

Within established standards for any grade level, course or subject matter, it is the expectation that district staff will differentiate instruction to provide for a wide range of individual strengths and needs, rather than use retention as a solution for learning difficulties. Students will, under most circumstances, remain with their own age level. However, some students require more than one year to complete a grade level. These instances should be the exception, and it should not be necessary to retain a student more than one year during his/her school years.

When retention is considered, a team including at least three educators and the parents/guardians shall meet before a final decision is made. Parents of elementary students will be advised that retention at the earliest grade levels is more effective than in later ones. When a student is considered for retention by the team, the decision of the parents will prevail except as delineated below and a notation should be included in the child's record.

1. District education professionals have authority to retain a student who has been chronically absent in accordance with policy FFB. However, in cases where a student has a chronic illness or other extenuating circumstances resulting in chronic absences, concerns will be addressed in accordance with special provisions addressing this scenario as contained in policy FFB.
2. High school students who do not receive enough credits to advance to the next grade level shall be reclassified to their current grade level until they have received the minimum number of credits necessary to qualify for the next grade level. To be classified as a sophomore, students must have earned at least five (5) credits at the end of their freshman year. To be classified as a junior, students must have earned at least ten (10) credits at the end of their sophomore year. To be classified as a senior, students must have earned at least seventeen (17) credits at the end of their junior year.
3. The decision of whether or not to retain a student who is receiving special education services and supports will be made with input from the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the parents/guardians.

Acceleration

The Bismarck School Board is committed to the establishment of educational programs for all district students, including the gifted and talented students. The administration and professional staff shall consider acceleration of such students as one means of meeting this mission.

Students who excel in academic areas may be advanced to programs that provide opportunities for higher levels of achievement, if the acceleration does not cause the displacement of a similar opportunity for another student at the grade level normally appropriate for the program.

The acceleration process may be initiated by a teacher, a parent or guardian, the student, or a staff member, to the administrator of the building in which the student is currently enrolled.

The decision as to whether such acceleration is in the best interest of the student will be made by the building administrator in which the student is currently enrolled. The decision shall be made after a conference involving the student, the student's parents or guardians, teachers, staff members, and appropriate building administrators. Accelerated students may need to attend class at the next grade level. In cases where the next grade level is at a middle or high school, parents are responsible for transportation and will be advised of this during this conference.

The decision as to whether such acceleration is in the best interest may be appealed to the Superintendent, who shall review the decision to determine whether there has been an abuse of discretion on the part of the administrator involved.

The Superintendent is delegated authority to establish administrative rules to implement this policy, including the identification of appropriate academic areas to be included. The administrative rules shall also include criteria to be used in the identification of appropriate students to be accelerated and any district expectations of students and parents which would be necessary for successful acceleration, e.g. transportation and other extra costs.

Complementary Documents

- GCAA-AR, Grade Promotion, Retention and Acceleration Procedure