

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Pupil Promotion and Retention*

### **Retention Policies and Criteria**

**1. On what criteria should school districts base pupil promotion and retention decisions?**

State law requires every school district to have a written Pupil Promotion and Retention (PPR) policy approved by the district's governing board. The Chino Valley Unified School District Board of Education's Policy includes the criteria required by the California State Department of Education which includes students' grades as well as other indicators of academic achievement. Students' results on the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program may be included as one indicator of academic achievement. However, STAR results may not be the exclusive criterion for promotion or retention.

**2. At what grade levels and for what subject areas must the district PPR policy have promotion and retention criteria?**

Students who do not demonstrate expected growth in learning and/or do not meet grade level standards of expected student achievement may be considered for retention at any grade level.

The identification of students who should be retained or who are at risk of being retained should be based primarily on proficiency in reading between Kindergarten and first, first and second, second and third grade, and between the third and fourth grades. For the remaining grade levels, identification should be based on proficiency in reading, English-language arts, and mathematics.

**3. May a school retain or promote a student without parent or guardian approval?**

Yes, a school can retain or promote a student without parent or guardian approval. However, the district PPR policy approved by the district's school board must provide an appeal process for parents who disagree with a principal's promotion or retention decision for their student.

**4. Do parents have any right to retain their children for lack of academic progress when the school continues to promote the child to the next grade, especially at the middle grade level?**

A parent has a right to appeal the decision to promote or retain a child. To appeal a retention decision, the appealing party must submit a written request to the Superintendent or designee specifying the reasons why the decision should be overruled. The appeal must be initiated within ten school days of receipt of the notice of the retention. Within thirty working days of receiving a request to appeal, the Superintendent or designee shall determine whether or not to overrule the decision to retain.

*Note that the burden is on the parent as the appealing party to show why the promotion or retention decision should be overruled.*

5. **Even though our son was promoted to high school, we would like him to *repeat* the eighth grade because we feel that he is lacking understanding in many of the core subjects. What are my options as a parent at this point?**

The decision to retain or promote a student from the eighth grade should be made by the eighth-grade teachers, based on the school district's criteria in its PPR policy. If the parent or guardian feels the student does not meet these criteria, the parent or guardian can appeal the decision by following the appeal process set forth in the same PPR policy.

The appeal must be initiated within ten school days of receipt of the notice of the retention. Within thirty working days of receiving a request to appeal, the Superintendent or designee shall determine whether or not to overrule the decision to retain. The burden is on the parent as the appealing party to show why the promotion or retention decision should be overruled.

7. **Is there a law or policy regarding the number of times a student can be retained?**

There is nothing in the *education code* that prohibits school districts from retaining a child in more than one grade. However, in CVUSD, students may be retained one time in first through third grades and one time in grades 4 through 8.

8. **Is there a high school promotion and retention process?**

The state does not require school districts to have student promotion and retention criteria beyond the last year of middle school to the first year of high school. However, the California State Department of Education allows districts to set criteria for promotion for successive grades in high school. CVUSD has established the promotion criteria for high school.

Designation as a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior is based upon the number of credits completed at the end of each semester as follows:

Freshman: 0-55 credits

Sophomore: 55-110 credits

Junior: 110-165 credits

Senior: 165-225 credits

9. **Are there state-approved forms for notifying students and parents when students are identified as at risk of retention, recommended for retention, or retained in grades one through eight?**

There are no state-approved forms for notifying parents when a student has been identified as at risk of retention, recommended for retention, or retained. Each school district is responsible for creating its own forms in accordance with its PPR policy. CVUSD has created a form which is utilized district-wide and adheres to this requirement.

10. **What steps do I need to take to advance my child a grade level beyond her or his current grade level in the same school year?**

First, speak to the child's teacher. If the teacher agrees that the child needs to be challenged more academically, then a Student Study Team meeting will be scheduled to discuss the child's placement.

11. **Is there a test that a child can take for promotion from fifth grade to sixth grade toward the end of the school year but about a month before fifth grade will end? Or must the child complete the entire school year in order to promote to the next year?**

No such exam or use of exams is required or encouraged by the state. It would be up to your child's teacher, school principal and Student Study Team to determine the appropriateness of the placement for the child.

## **Data and Research**

1. **Where can I obtain definitive research on retention?**

For an excellent and concise summary of the research on the impact of student retention practices and its policy implications, see ED449241 2000-12-00 Retention and Social Promotion: Research and Implications for Policy.