

ALAMO HEIGHTS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



ELEMENTARY RETENTION GUIDELINES

Response to Intervention and Retention

Response To Intervention (RTI) is a general education initiative written into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) and provides a framework that promotes early intervention services to meet the academic needs of all students. The goal of RTI is to identify and serve struggling students **before** failure by merging evidence-based practice with tiered, coordinated, research-based interventions and monitoring student progress. Successful academic intervention depends on close examination of students' responses to tiered interventions and the consequential development of additional interventions necessary to meet the academic needs of all students.

Before grade retention is considered, a student must have been served in Tier 2 and /or Tier 3 and have at least six progress monitoring data points. Students must demonstrate a dual discrepancy with both their performance level and slope of progress when compared with their peers.

With a carefully articulated and executed RtI system in place, a student who might otherwise be a candidate for retention could more appropriately be considered for promotion with evidence based interventions in place at appropriate tier levels in the next grade level. For example, if a student is struggling at tier 2 or tier 3, automatic placement in the appropriate tier at the start of the school year (after validation with universal screener data) might serve the student better than retention. Therefore, a student would begin the year with an Individual Intervention Plan that will require immediate progress monitoring and support. All of this needs to be part of the careful conversations that take place in considering whether retention is the best placement for a child at the end of an academic school year.

There is one research strand in developmental psychology supporting the "gift of time," providing an additional year for students lagging behind for reasons of cognitive or social immaturity to catch up and master social skills. However, a preponderance of research indicates that gains associated with retention were short-term and not evident several years following the retention while the likelihood of dropping out of school increased significantly (Squires, 2015). Therefore, in alignment with current research and best practice, Alamo Heights **does not** support retention based on maturation and social factors alone. Retention decisions are based primarily on academic need.

Alamo Heights Independent School District Retention Guidelines for Elementary Students

AHISD recognizes that the personal, social, physical, and educational growth of children will vary and that they should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their developmental needs at the various stages of their growth.

AHISD is committed to educational practices that are effective in enhancing the educational attainment of all students. Numerous studies have demonstrated that retention does not improve students' chances for educational success. Therefore, the practice of retention will be used only when there is compelling evidence that the student is likely to benefit academically and socially.

Core Considerations

The following should be considered in making promotion and retention decisions:

1. Continuous progress and growth should always be the goal.
2. The rate of growth and the achievement levels will normally be different among students of the same grade level and age.
3. Research indicates greater gains for more students as a result of promotion than with retention.
4. Modifying a program should always be considered as an alternative to retention.
5. Only when careful assessment gives assurance that retention will result in significant benefits to the student can it be justified.

Basic Criteria

1. Each referral for retention shall be considered individually.
2. AHISD Board Policy EIE Local states that promotion in grades 1-8 shall be based on the student's mastery of curriculum. In grades 3-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level/grade-level standards for all subject areas.
3. Retention criteria for kindergarten- second grade students will parallel this guideline with an emphasis on the student mastery of 70% or greater of the language arts and mathematics TEKS. The checklist will serve as the major assessment tool.
4. A student who is developmentally young may be considered for retention if the "youngness" is combined with a lack of mastery of curriculum objectives for the grade level.
5. Excessive absences, combined with a lack of mastery of curriculum, may also prompt consideration for retention.
6. A teacher must provide evidence through RtI of ongoing conversations and interventions regarding any child being considered for retention. The frequency and duration of sessions, specific interventions used, as well as resultant data must be documented.

7. **Retention should not be used to supplant other educational services. Therefore, special populations students—Bilingual/ESL, Special Education, Title 1—may not be good candidates for retention. Retention of Special Education students must be approved by the Admission Review and Dismissal Committee (ARD). Likewise, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) must approve the retention of Bilingual and English as a Second Language Students.**

Process for Implementing Retention Recommendation

1. Rule out health-related issues as being a cause of lack of performance. Have a vision/hearing test completed by the nurse and inquire about the student's medical history.
2. Conduct a series of conferences with the parents (preferably both parents).
 - a. Preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of retention should be conducted as early in the spring semester as possible, usually in January or February. Provide the parent with specific concerns and characteristics they might observe.
 - b. All parent communication should be documented. This should involve documented meetings with parents, comments on report cards and checklists, and letters, emails or phone calls home.
 - c. Teachers/Counselors will provide parents with (1) a copy of the Board Policy regarding retention and promotion (EIE Local) and (2) research information regarding the effects of retention including the longitudinal statistics on the academic performance of students who are not promoted to the next grade level and information on the effect of retention on student's self-esteem and on the likelihood of a student dropping out of school.
 - d. Discuss the possibility of retention again during the spring conference. Point out changes observed since the last conference. *(This conversation must be documented on spring conference notes)*
3. Request a Gesell Development Assessment for kinder students.
4. Utilize a written instrument, such as the Light Retention Scale (Grades K-5), to aid in making a decision.
5. Make a joint decision—teacher, principal, parent and other professional staff—**no later than May 15.**
6. Complete retention requests forms and submit to the Assistant Superintendent **no later than May 15.**
7. Maintain campus file on referrals for retention.

Alamo Heights ISD Retention Checklist

Student Name							
Homeroom Teacher							
Student Address							
Phone Number							
Birthdate							
Special Ed	Y	N		LEP	Y	N	
Date				Campus			
Gender				Ethnicity			
Criteria							
		Satisfactory or at Grade Level Expectations	Unsatisfactory or Below Grade Level Expectations	Not Applicable at this Grade Level	Score/ Average Grade or Final Result		
Basic	Attendance > 95%						
	Hearing/Vision Assessment						
Rtl and Retention Assessments	Gesell Development Assessment (K Only)						
	Light Retention Scale- A low total sum (0-9) suggests retention of a student, whereas a high total sum (72 -92) suggests that a student should not be retained.						
	Istation ISIP (most recent)						
	ISIP Growth (average monthly growth)						
	TPRI (most recent) K-1						
	Aims Web M-COMP (2-5)						
	M-COMP-Ave. monthly growth (2-5)						
	Aims Web M-CAP (2-5)						
	M-COMP-Ave. monthly growth (2-5)						
	Aims Test of Early Numeracy (K-1)						
	Aims Web TEN- Benchmark Growth						
STAAR	STAAR Reading						
	STAAR Math						
	STAAR Writing						

		Satisfactory or at Grade Level Expectations	Unsatisfactory or Below Grade Level Expectations	Not Applicable at this Grade Level	Score/ Average Grade or Final Result
Grades	Reading				
	Writing				
	Math				
	Social Studies				
	Science				
Common Assessments	Math CBA First Nine Weeks				
	Math CBA Second Nine Weeks				
	Math CBA Third Nine Weeks				
	Math CBA Fourth Nine Weeks				
	Science CBA First Nine Weeks				
	Science CBA Second Nine Weeks				
	Science CBA Third Nine Weeks				
	Science CBA Fourth Nine Weeks				
	Language Arts CBA First Semester				
	Language Arts CBA Second Semester				

RtI Participation

Current RtI Tier Math		Current RtI Tier Reading	
Number of Weeks at Current Tier		Number of Weeks at Current Tier	
Number of Data Points		Number of Data Points	
Intervention Used		Intervention Used	
Core Interventionist		Core Interventionist	
Notes:			Notes:

Attached Documents

- _____ Current Report Card/Checklist
- _____ Conference Notes
- _____ Parent Approval
- _____ Teacher Approval
- _____ Special Program Approval (attach ARD or LPAC report)
- _____ Vision/Hearing Screening

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RETENTION RECOMMENDATION REQUEST

Student's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

Home Address: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Parent(s): _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Dates of conferences in which retention was discussed: _____

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the rationale for retaining this student?

2. How will retention help this student? In addition to RtI, what specific support will take place in the classroom that will target deficit areas?

Date

Signature of Person Making Recommendation

Date

Principal's Signature

PARENT RETENTION CONCURRENCE STATEMENT

I concur /do not concur with the recommendation that _____
Child's Name

would benefit from another year in grade _____.

Comments:

Date

Parent Signature

PRINCIPAL RETENTION CONCURRENCE STATEMENT

I concur /do not concur with the recommendation that _____
Child's Name

would benefit from another year in grade _____.

Comments:

Date

Principal Signature

TEACHER RETENTION CONCURRENCE STATEMENT

I concur /do not concur with the recommendation that _____
Child's Name

would benefit from another year in grade _____.

Comments:

Date

Teacher Signature