



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
<i>Approval Date</i> 2015	<i>Replacing</i> All previous procedures
<i>Review Date</i> 2020	<i>Page</i> 1 of 5
<i>Contact Person/Department</i> Superintendent of Elementary School Improvement	<i>Identification</i> ES-5570

PROMOTION, RETENTION OR ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

1.0 PURPOSE

This procedure provides a framework to be used by principals, school staff and parents when making decisions about the promotion, retention or acceleration of students.

It is the practice of Trillium Lakelands District School Board that students of the same age be grouped together in classrooms and are differentiated for, regardless of the grade level expectations within individual programs. It is intended in TLDSB that retention and acceleration shall only be used in rare cases.

2.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 The Education Act and Regulations, specifically Section 265:1:g of the Act
- 2.2 Growing Success, Ministry of Education 2010
- 2.3 The Ontario Curriculum: Secondary, Ministry of Education, www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary
- 2.4 Ontario Schools Kindergarten to 12, Ministry of Education 2011
- 2.5 Individual Education Plan (IEP), Ministry of Education 2004
- 2.6 Learning for All Kindergarten to 12, Ministry of Education, 2013
- 2.7 Special Education: A Guide for Educators, 2001
- 2.8 Creating Pathways to Success, Ministry of Education, 2013
- 2.9 Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting, TLDSB Procedure ES-5003
- 2.10 English Language Learners, TLDSB Procedure ES-5505
- 2.11 Special Education Advisory Committee, TLDSB Procedure ES-5560
- 2.12 Special Education Equipment, TLDSB Policy ES-5500

3.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Promotion** is the process of having a student move to the next grade level.
- 3.2 **Retention** is the process of having a student repeat a course or grade.

- 3.3 **Acceleration** is the process of having a student skip or jump a grade.
- 3.4 IEP: Individual Education Plan. An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.
- 3.5 ELL: English Language Learner. Students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is a language other than English or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used for instruction in Ontario's schools, and who may require focused education supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English.
- 3.6 OSR : Ontario Student Record. The OSR is the record of a student's educational progress through schools in Ontario.

4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

In every case where retention is being considered, the primary concern must be the best interests of the student (emotional, social and academic).

4.1 PROMOTION PROCEDURE

The section of the *Education Act* referenced above states that, subject to the approval of the superintendent for the school, one of the duties of principals is to “promote students” and to issue a statement to that effect.

4.1.1 For Learners without an Individual Education Plan:

- a) All learners who have achieved the grade level expectations will be promoted.
- b) In a situation where a learner is not achieving or significantly exceeding the grade level expectations the following steps are to be followed in consultation with parents, and school staff:
 - i) The classroom teacher must make necessary program accommodations (e.g. adjusting workload, time for learning and completion of activities, access to technology for tasks and independent study).

- ii) An adequate period of time is to be provided for the program accommodations to take effect. If the accommodations are effective, in consultation with parents, school staff and the Principal, an Individual Education Plan should be developed to document the accommodations.
- iii) If the accommodations do not enable the learner to achieve success, the teacher in collaboration with the School Based problem solving team, must investigate program modifications.
- iv) Parents must be informed that the accommodations are not sufficient in assisting the student to meet their learning needs. It must be made clear to the parents the subject(s) that are affected. The parents must also be informed that the teacher will modify the appropriate subject(s) expectations to enable the student to demonstrate success.
- v) For students performing below grade level, the classroom teacher will reduce the number and/or complexity of the grade level expectations. For students performing above grade level expectations, the teacher will increase the complexity of the expectations. If the modifications are successful the teacher will update the Individual Education Plan.
- vi) If the program modifications are unsuccessful, the teacher in collaboration with the School Based Problem Solving Team may recommend further modifications and a review of the Individual Education Plan. The student may be brought forward for consultation with the System Problem Solving Team.

4.1.2 For Learners with an Individual Education Plan:

- a) Students requiring ongoing accommodations and/or program modifications must have an IEP. The expectation is that the IEP will be reviewed on a regular basis. The IEP is a working document that is reviewed and revised based on student achievement. If the student is not successfully demonstrating achievement of the expectations as outlined in their IEP, the expectations may need to be changed (i.e. altering the strategies and resources used in instruction, breaking expectations down into smaller steps).

- b) If the learning expectations outlined in the IEP are appropriate for the student's instructional level, the promotion status of "progressing well" or "progressing very well" and their grades or percentages should reflect this success.

4.1.3 For English Language Learners:

- a) English Language Learners (ELL's) should be placed in the grade that is appropriate for their age.
- b) English Language Learners will require varying lengths of time and levels of support in ELL and classroom programs to acquire English language skills. Ongoing monitoring of student progress and a flexible approach are needed to ensure that students' ELL programs and classroom programs continue to be appropriate for them.

4.2 RETENTION PROCEDURE

- 4.2.1 In every case where retention is being considered, the primary concern must be the best interests of the pupil (emotional, social and academic).
- 4.2.2 If, after implementing accommodations and modifications, retention is being considered, parents must be fully informed and involved over a reasonable period of time (e.g. by the end of the first reporting period in January or within three months of the student arriving at the school). Having parents' support for the retention of a student is key to the success of the student.
- 4.2.3 Students should be retained no more than once in elementary school.

4.3 ACCELERATION PROCEDURE

- 4.3.1 While acceleration is defined in various ways, any modification of a regular program can be considered acceleration if it enables the student to progress more rapidly at an earlier age. Acceleration can be achieved through differentiation.
- 4.3.2 In all cases where consideration is being given to acceleration, the parent must play a major role by supporting the program.
- 4.3.3 Where appropriate, students in Grade 8 may take a credit at the Grade 9 level, subject to the regulations in *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12*. Principals need to reference this document when dealing with these requests.

4.4 PROMOTION/RETENTION GRADE 8 TO 9 PROCEDURE

- 4.4.1 Students who have successfully completed the Grade 8 expectations will be promoted from elementary school and admitted to a secondary school.
- 4.4.2 In addition to Individual Pathway Planning and Transition Planning, for those students with an IEP planning decisions will be formalized at the Grade 8 transition meeting or IPRC annual review. The students will be placed in an appropriate secondary school program. This will be a consultative process involving members from the elementary school, secondary school, the student and their parents.

4.5 GENERAL

- 4.5.1 All documentation, pertaining to the promotion, retention or acceleration of a student must be filed in the OSR.
- 4.5.2 Students entering the system from schools outside Ontario, private schools and home schooling programs will enter the grade corresponding to their age. If deemed appropriate, the retention or acceleration process will be initiated after a reasonable period of observation and assessment of the student's achievement has taken place (e.g. six months).
- 4.5.3 If a consensus about retention or acceleration of a student cannot be reached between the principal, school staff and the parents, a final decision will be sought in consultation with the appropriate school superintendent.