INSTRUCTION

Promotion and Retention – Grades Kindergarten - 12

Elementary School

I. Promotion

A. Grade placement shall provide the best opportunity to make reasonable progress. It is essential to consider students’ abilities, their achievement, and the grade or section in which they can work most satisfactorily. Special attention shall be given to the needs of all students, whether gifted, average, or below average. Since our concern is for the growth of each student, regular progress through school is essential.

B. Every effort shall be made by the staff to make certain that every student understands that promotion is earned rather than automatic.

C. Reading and math skills and achievement of a passing score on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests shall be key factors in promotion and retention; also considered will be the student’s communication skills.

D. If the decision is made to promote a student to the next grade level and the student has failed the third-grade reading and math SOLs, then that student is required to participate in a program of additional instruction during the school day in the areas of weakness as deemed appropriate.

II. Retention

The principal and appropriate staff members shall make the decision as to whether students are retained in a grade. However, this should be done with the full understanding of students and parents and should always be done in the best interest of the students and their development. Students shall be considered for retention in grades kindergarten-five under the following conditions:

A. The student has not been previously retained more than one time in grades kindergarten-five.
B. The student is not able to retain and apply the basic academic skills that have been defined as the minimum expectations for that grade level, according to School Division expectations and basic learning skills.

C. The student has missed 10 or more days of school in which little or no make-up work was completed. An exception is granted if a physician’s certification of illness is provided to school staff.

D. Parents/guardians must be informed in writing (Attachment I) by the end of the first semester (18 weeks) that retention is a distinct possibility for their student. Notification in writing (Attachment II) shall again be sent to parents at the end of the third nine-week grading period (27 weeks). In addition, teachers are encouraged to arrange conferences with parents/guardians of these students. Students who transfer into a school after the end of the first semester may be considered for retention. Parents/guardians shall be notified in writing of possible retention within 15 days of the enrollment date, or as soon as it can reasonably be determined that retention is a possibility.

E. For each student in question, a retention advisory committee shall be established consisting of the individual's teacher(s), a principal or assistant principal, and a resource person, if applicable. This committee shall review all relevant data regarding the student in question and make a recommendation to the principal to pass or retain the student. Parents/guardians of the student shall be invited to attend the committee meeting.

F. When a student is being considered for retention, the teacher shall submit a cumulative folder of the student's daily work to the committee for review.

G. For grades in which SOL tests are given, achievement of a passing score on the SOL tests shall be one of the multiple factors considered.

H. Notification must be made in writing (Attachment III) to the parents at least 15 working days prior to the close of school.

I. Promotion and retention decisions which are contested by parents must be appealed in writing in accordance with Policy 731, “Appeal of Student Matters,” and as described in the third and final retention letter from the school.
III. Acceleration

The principal and appropriate staff members shall make the decision as to whether a student is accelerated (skipped) to the next highest grade level. However, this should be done with the full understanding of the student and parents/guardians and should always be done in the best interest of the student and the student’s development. Students shall be considered for acceleration after consideration of the following:

A. The student has been referred to or is receiving instruction from the Gifted Education Resource teacher or at a Gifted Center.

B. The student has already been enriched and there are no appropriate instructional groups at the present grade level.

C. The student is referred to the School-Based Intervention Team.

D. The School-Based Intervention Team may recommend a trial period in the accelerated grade level.

E. The test results and observation (maturity, work habits, independence) provide evidence that the student is ready for acceleration. Normally, the student is then accelerated for math and/or language arts on a trial basis. If the student is achieving satisfactorily, other content areas may be accelerated. Achievement of a passing score on SOL tests shall be considered in making promotion decisions.

F. The student is monitored to ensure that he/she possesses the maturity and socialization skills necessary to be fully accelerated into the next grade level. During this "trial" period, the parents/guardians shall be kept abreast of the progress and social adjustments of their student. After a period of nine weeks, the parents/guardians, teacher, and principal shall hold a conference to discuss the student's progress and to determine if the student should be fully accelerated in all subject areas.

G. Based upon staff's professional judgment and the School-Based Intervention Team’s recommendation, the principal shall make the decision on the question of acceleration.
Middle Schools

I. Promotion/Placement

A. Grade placement shall provide the best opportunity to make reasonable progress. It is essential to consider students' abilities, their achievement, and the grade or section in which they can work most satisfactorily. Special attention shall be given to the needs of all students. Since concern is for the growth of each student, regular progress through school is essential.

B. Every effort shall be made by the staff to make certain that every student understands that promotion is earned rather than automatic.

C. Achievement in language arts, mathematics, science, and history and social sciences shall be the key factors in promotion and retention. In determining the level of achievement, consideration shall be given to language arts and math skills as applied across all content areas, classroom performance, learning assessments, and standardized test results where appropriate. Achievement of a passing score on the SOL tests shall be considered in making promotion and retention decisions.

D. If the decision is made to promote a student to the next grade level and the student has failed the fifth-grade reading and math SOLs, then that student may participate in a program of additional instruction during the school day in the area(s) of weakness as deemed appropriate.

E. A student who is not successful in the four-core academic areas shall be considered for placement in the next grade level when the placement committee and/or the principal determines that this placement would be in the overall best interest of the student.

F. The placement committee may decide to retain and review cases in August if the student is successful in an appropriate educational experience during the summer. Updated testing may be required in August to determine skill level.

II. Placement Into Grade Nine

A. The middle school principal shall provide the high school principal with a list of students being placed in ninth grade who require special services.

B. Principals of sending and receiving schools shall confer and receive information on those students pending placement; however, this meeting shall not be for the
III. Retention

A. In all cases of retention, the teacher shall inform the parents/guardians in writing (Attachment IV) about the possibility of course failure in history and social sciences, mathematics, language arts, and science at the end of the first semester (18 weeks).

B. A committee appointed by the principal (made up of an administrator and appropriate staff) shall review each student's total performance. Parents/guardians of the student shall be involved in the placement process. Factors that must be considered by the reviewing committee are as follows:

1. The recommendation of the student's teachers;
2. Achievement of a passing score on SOL tests;
3. The student has not been able to retain and apply basic academic skills;
4. The student fails to complete assignments on a regular basis;
5. The student's physical, social, and/or emotional development is not consistent with expected behavior and development of his/her age level;
6. The student has missed 10 school days in which little or no make-up work was done. An exception is granted if a physician’s certification of illness is provided to school staff;
7. The student's previous number of retentions is a factor in the decision to promote, place, or retain. A full psycho- and socio-educational evaluation of the student shall be required if a previous retention has occurred at any time in grades one-eight; and
8. Whether the instructional program in which the retained student shall participate meets the identified needs of the student. After consideration of the above, the committee shall recommend to the principal to either place or retain the student.
C. The principal shall make the final decision regarding student retention and shall then inform the student's teachers and the student's parents/guardians (Attachment V).

D. Placement and retention decisions which are contested by parents may be appealed in writing in accordance with the appeal procedures as outlined in Policy 731, “Appeal of Student Matters.”

High School

I. Promotion/Retention

Students who are promoted to ninth grade who have not passed or not taken the eighth grade math and/or English SOL tests may have additional instruction in their areas of weakness.

Standard units of credit are earned through successful completion of course requirements. Verified units of credit are earned through successful completion of course requirements and achievement of a State Board of Education approved score on the End-of-Course (EOC) Standards of Learning (SOL) test or additional test for that course as approved by the State Board of Education.

The following criteria shall be used in determining promotion to the next grade.

A. Ninth Grade

Students shall be promoted to the ninth grade when they have successfully completed the eighth grade, as defined in the middle school section of this regulation.

B. 10th Grade

Students shall be promoted to the 10th grade when they have earned five standard units of credit; three of the five earned standard units of credit must come from the list of required courses.

C. 11th Grade

Students shall be promoted to the 11th grade when they have earned 11 standard units of credit; six of the 11 earned standard units of credit must come from the list of required courses.
D. 12th Grade

Students shall be promoted to the 12th grade when they have earned 16 standard units of credit; nine of the 16 earned standard units of credit must come from the list of required courses.

II. Educational Sequence in Grades nine-12

A. In sequential courses such as English, mathematics, and foreign language, students shall not be enrolled in a higher-level course until they have completed the lower level course, except with the permission of the principal.

B. Students who have been retained are not prevented from taking subjects in a grade in which they are not classified as long as they have met the course prerequisites.

III. Parent Notification

A. In addition to the report card, parents/guardians of students who are failing any high school course shall be notified in writing by the classroom teacher at the end of the first semester (Attachment VI). In addition, teachers are encouraged to arrange conferences with the parents/guardians of these students.

B. If a student continues to fail through the end of the third nine-week grading period, the parents/guardians shall again be notified in writing.

The Principal and the Appropriate Level Associate Superintendent (or designee) are responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.
Date: _____________________________

Dear ____________________________:

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is committed to the success of each student in our community. When students struggle to make adequate academic progress in a school year, we all must work together to help determine what actions we can take to ensure their success. Regulation 665-1 requires that we notify parents/guardians should there be a possibility that their student could be retained in his/her current grade for the next school year.

We have examined __________________________________________ progress in relationship to his/her potential and the School Division’s grade-level expectations and have determined that there is reason to be concerned. It may be in __________________________ best interest to remain in __________________ grade for another year.

It is the philosophy of PWCS schools that students are not to be automatically promoted from one grade to another. The student’s reading and math skills are key factors in making promotion or retention decisions. In addition, work habits, communication skills, and the student’s ability, and maturity levels are taken into consideration.

If sufficient progress is made during the next semester, the school retention committee will consider promoting ________________ to the next grade level.

Feel free to contact us if you would like to meet in person to discuss your student’s school performance.

Sincerely,

_________________________
Signature of Teacher

_________________________
Signature of Principal

_________________________
Name of School
Prince William County Public Schools
Manassas, Virginia

Notification from Elementary School Principal that Retention Continues to be a Possibility for Student

Date: _____________________________

Dear ____________________________:

Prince William County Public Schools is committed to the success of each student in our community. When students struggle to make adequate academic progress in a school year, we all must work together to help determine what actions we can take to ensure their success. According to Regulation 665-1, we are required to notify parents/guardians in writing if retention continues to be a possibility for their student at the end of the third grading period.

We have discussed __________________________ progress over the past nine weeks and, at this time, retention is one of the alternatives we continue to consider. A review committee will meet prior to the final decision on promotion/retention in May. This committee meeting is scheduled for ___________________, (Day), ____________________, (Month), ____________, (Year), at __________________, (Time). The meeting will be held at _________________________________.

Please let me know if you are able to attend this meeting.

If you have questions at this time, please contact me to arrange a personal or telephone conference.

Sincerely,

_________________________
Signature of Principal

_________________________
Name of School

_________________________
Telephone Number
Prince William County Public Schools  
Manassas, Virginia  

Notification from Elementary School Principal of Retention of Student  

Date: _____________________________  

Dear _____________________________:

Prince William County Public Schools is committed to the success of each student in our community. When students struggle to make adequate academic progress in a school year, we all must work together to help determine what actions we can take to ensure their success. This letter is to formally notify you that your student, ___________________________________, a student in grade _______ will be reassigned to grade _______ for the next school year.

I have met with our Retention Advisory Committee and evaluated all available information related to your student. After careful discussion about the academic progress of ___________over the course of this school year, the committee recommended that ___________ be retained in his/her current grade level. In reviewing the committee’s recommendation, I have determined that it would be in ___________ best academic interest to accept the recommendation of the committee and retain your student in his/her current grade level.

As the parent/guardian of ___________, if you wish to appeal this decision, please notify me in writing within three days after receipt of this letter and include the reasons why you feel your student should be promoted to the next grade level. I will respond in writing within five school days.

Sincerely,

__________________________
Signature of Principal

__________________________
Name of School

__________________________
Telephone Number
Prince William County Public Schools  
Manassas, Virginia  

Notification from Middle School Teacher of Possible Course Failure  

Date: _____________________________  
Dear _____________________________:  
Grade: First nine weeks: ____________________________ Second nine weeks: _______________  
Third nine weeks: _______________  

Prince William County Public Schools is committed to the success of each student in our community. When students struggle to make adequate academic progress in a school year, we all must work together to help determine what actions we can take to ensure their success. I am taking this opportunity to report that your student is struggling to make academic progress in my class, and the possibility does exist that your student may fail this course for the year. Below are some of the possible causes of this unsatisfactory progress:  

- Failure to attend school regularly  
- Failure to come to class with proper materials  
- Incomplete homework assignments  
- Work not turned in on time  
- Not adequately prepared for tests  
- Lack of class participation  
- Other: ____________________________________________________

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss your student’s progress to date.  

Sincerely,  

_____________________________________
Signature of Teacher  

_____________________________________
School Telephone Number
Prince William County Public Schools
Manassas, Virginia

Notification from Middle School Principal of Retention of Student

Date: _____________________________

Dear ___________________________

Prince William County Public Schools is committed to the success of each student in our community. When students struggle to make adequate academic progress in a school year, we all must work together to help determine what actions we can take to ensure their success. After careful discussion about the academic progress of ____________ over the course of this school year, the committee recommended that ____________ be retained in his/her current grade level. In reviewing the committee’s recommendation, I have determined that it would be in ____________ best academic interest to accept the recommendation of the committee and retain your student in his/her current grade level.

If you wish to appeal this decision, you must notify the Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools (703.791.8176), within three school days after receipt of this letter.

The address for the Associate Superintendent for Middle Schools is Prince William County Public Schools, P. O. Box 389, Manassas, Virginia 20108.

Sincerely,

____________________________
Signature of Principal

____________________________
Name of School

____________________________
Telephone Number
Notification from High School Teacher of Possible Course Failure

Date: __________________________

Dear: __________________________:

Prince William County Public Schools is committed to the success of each student in our community. When students struggle to make adequate academic progress in a school year, we all must work together to help determine what actions we can take to ensure their success. This letter is to inform you that your student is in danger of failing __________ due to the following reason(s):

________ Absences
________ Tardies
________ Low Test/Quiz Grades
________ Incomplete Assignments
________ Other

Your student can still receive credit for the year in this course provided he/she has regular attendance, completes all assigned work, and adequately prepares for quizzes and tests.

If you would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will be glad to confer with you by phone, email, or in person if you wish. I may be reached at ________ Monday through Friday. I can also be reached via email at__________.

The following step(s) would be most effective in enhancing your son's/daughter's performance:

________ Improve Attendance
________ Have all materials in class everyday
________ Come for assistance on ________________
________ Study for tests and quizzes
________ Work on assignments in class and ask for assistance if needed.

Sincerely,

Teacher Name