

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: JEA-RC, JEC-RC, JEB, JEB-RB, JEB-EA, KLA-RA

Office: Deputy Superintendent for Instruction

Placement, Promotion, Acceleration, and Retention of Students

I. PURPOSE

To set forth the procedures for placing, promoting, accelerating, and retaining students in a Montgomery County public school

II. BACKGROUND

Although students of the same age share similarities as a group, they differ remarkably from one another. Family background, culture, gender, personality, learning style, interests, and abilities contribute to a student's individuality. Most children pass through the same sequence of developmental stages, but the pace of development varies from child to child. Moreover, development often does not proceed evenly; cognitive, physical, social, and emotional levels of maturity may vary within the individual.

Acknowledgment of developmental differences should be the basis for placement, promotion, acceleration, and retention decisions. Persons making these decisions must be guided by the belief that all students can learn, progress, and achieve when individual differences are recognized and addressed through adjustment in programming. Staff making these decisions also need to be sensitive to different cultural values.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Placement

1. The principal has final responsibility for grade and class placement of students. In determining placement, the principal should consult appropriate staff for their recommendations.

2. Placement of students in prekindergarten through first grade is governed by state laws and regulations. Also refer to:
 - JEB-EA: *Age for School Attendance*
 - JEB-RB: *Early Entrance to First Grade*
 - IEF: *Early Childhood Education*
3. Students in grades two through twelve who are new to MCPS and do not provide previous school records will be placed tentatively after consulting with the students and/or parent(s)/guardian(s). Final placement will be made by the principal when sufficient information about the student is available.
4. For international students, the principal should refer to MCPS Form 560-24: *New Student Information*, which is completed by the International Student Admissions Office. (See Administrative Regulation JEA-RC: *Enrollment and Placement of International Students*.)
5. Students with documented special education needs are placed through the Admission, Review, and Dismissal process. Refer to the EMT and ARD Procedures Manual.

B. Promotion

1. In prekindergarten through grade two, promotion should be based on age. Students who are not performing according to expectations are provided additional assistance. Teachers must base their expectations on a thorough understanding of the wide range of cognitive, physical, social and emotional developmental levels which is typical for this age group. (For students in kindergarten see MCPS Policy JEB: *Early Entrance to First Grade* and Administrative Regulation JEB-RB: *Early Entrance to First Grade*. For students in prekindergarten through grade two see MCPS Policy IEF: *Early Childhood Education*.)
2. In grades three through eight, promotion should be based on academic progress and the attainment of objectives assigned to the students. Other factors must be considered to meet the needs of the whole child.
3. For students in grades nine through twelve, the following should apply:
 - a) To be promoted to the tenth grade, a student should have a minimum of five units of credit

- b) To be promoted to the eleventh grade, a student should have a minimum of ten units of credit
 - c) To be promoted to the twelfth grade, a student should have a minimum of fifteen units of credit
4. The final responsibility for decisions rests with the principal except for students in special education programs, where promotion decisions are the responsibility of the school admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) team. The principal is responsible for monitoring the decision. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the ARD decision, he or she has the right to appeal the decision according to legally mandated due process procedures.

C. Acceleration

- 1. For students in kindergarten see MCPS Policy JEB: *Early Entrance to First Grade*, Administrative Regulation JEB-RB: *Early Entrance to First Grade*, and MCPS Policy IEF: *Early Childhood Education*.
- 2. Before a student in grades one through eight is considered for acceleration, the student's needs must be reviewed by the Educational Management Team including parents/guardians and, when appropriate, students.
- 3. Student needs should be met within the classroom or grade level through such program adjustments as flexible grouping, differentiated instruction, and enrichment. Other options may include partial or whole day advancement to the next grade level or program.
- 4. The final responsibility for the decision rests with the principal.

D. Intervention

When a student in grades prekindergarten through eight is not attaining assigned objectives, the staff will initiate intervention strategies. If the student does not respond to the strategies, the Educational Management Team will develop a plan for educational support. Use MCPS Form 272-4: *Educational Management Team Referral and Case Summary*. (Refer to the EMT and ARD Procedures Manual.) Parents/guardians and, when appropriate, students will be included in the development of the plan. The principal will monitor the implementation of this plan.

When a student in grades nine through twelve is not attaining the course objectives, staff will develop a plan of intervention strategies. If these strategies are not successful, the Educational Management Team will modify the plan to improve student performance. (See the EMT and ARD Procedures Manual.) Parents/ guardians and students will be included in the process. The principal or designee will monitor the implementation of the plan.

E. Retention

In prekindergarten through grade two, retention is not expected to occur. Students who are not performing according to expectations are provided additional assistance. In grades three through eight retention may only be considered when documented alternative educational strategies have not resulted in the expected student progress. In grades nine through twelve, retention should be based on the number of credits that the student has earned.

The final responsibility rests with the principal except for students in special education programs, where retention decisions are the responsibility of the school admission, review and dismissal (ARD) team. The principal is responsible for monitoring the decision. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the ARD decision, he or she has the right to appeal the decision according to legally mandated due process procedures.

Retention decisions are made together with parents/guardians and, when appropriate, with the student.

1. In prekindergarten through grade two, staff must base their expectations on a thorough understanding of the wide range of developmental levels which is typical for this age group. Students who are not performing according to expectations are provided special assistance. The first level of additional assistance should be in-class program adjustment, e.g. using alternative instructional approaches or adjusting performance objectives. For justifiable exceptions the principal will follow the guidelines specified below for grades three through eight.
2. In grades three through eight, retention is to be used only when efforts to assist the student in achieving the assigned objectives have been unsuccessful. When retention is considered, the Educational Management Team, together with parents/guardians and the student, develops a new plan for educational support, using MCPS Form 272-42: *Program Plan for Students Being Retained*, for the school year in which the retention is to occur. The outcomes of the previously implemented plan should be used as the basis for developing the program for the retention year. Such plans may include tutoring, mentoring, and other supports

determined by the Educational Management Team. The principal will monitor the implementation of this plan.

3. For elementary and mid-level school students, evaluation of progress should be based on the student's overall performance in the school program. The evaluation should not be based solely upon performance in individual courses.
4. Principals will submit the proposed plan of support for each retained student to the Associate Superintendent for Administration.

F. Appeals

In matters of disagreement with regard to placement, promotion, acceleration, and retention, the procedures specified in Administrative Regulation KLA-RA: *Responding to Citizen Inquiries and Complaints* will be followed.

Administrative History: Formerly Regulation 355-3, May 15, 1981; directory information updated; revised December 1986; revised and split into two regulations (this one and JEA -RB) August 26, 1987; revised April 1, 1992.