



Guidelines for Grade Retention and Acceleration of Students

#200.46

Adopted:	November, 2005
Last Reviewed/Revised:	December 2022, May 2013, September 2018
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	December 2025

PURPOSE:

This administrative procedure will provide administrators, educators, and support staff with direction regarding the grade retention and acceleration of students. The intention that it be used as a foundation in making sound decisions regarding placement of students.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

A comprehensive approach needs to be utilized throughout the decision-making process when considering the retention of a child. Factors to be considered include academic achievement, cognitive abilities, social and emotional development, as well as physical, medical, and other pertinent information. The following criteria are to be used as guides in the decision-making process:

1. Curriculum-Based Assessments/Academic Achievement
 - Early identification information
 - Report card marks
 - Educator assessments and observations, portfolios (Reading Assessments, Math/Numeracy Assessments, Phonemic/Phonological Awareness)
 - EQAO results
 - Standardized Assessments
 - Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (C.C.A.T.)
 - Testing information (if available and necessary) using various standardized measures, conducted by special education resource teachers and/or system special education resource teachers
 - Assessments by speech and language pathologists and/or Board consulting psychologist, or outside agency personnel
2. Emotional Maturity
 - Student's ability to regulate and show self-control of emotions and behaviour appropriate to age, attitude, motivation, and interests
3. Social
 - Student's ability to socialize and interact with peers, other students, and adults, as well as sibling issues (e.g., multiple births, close-in-age siblings)
4. Medical
 - Medical/psychiatric diagnoses which may have an impact on all factors and areas of development
5. Other
 - Extenuating circumstances which may have an impact on the student's learning
 - Parental support of the acceleration or retention of their child

REFERENCES:

- [Education Act and Regulations](#)
- [Guide to the Provincial Report Card Grades 1–8](#)
- AP 200.42 –Assessment, Evaluation, Grading & Reporting
- [The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1–8. English as a Second Language English](#)
- [Growing Success](#)
- [Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Teacher's Guide](#)
- [Guide to Effective Instruction in Math](#)



- Guide to Effective Instruction in Writing
- [Guide to Effective Instruction in Reading](#)
- Think Literacy
- [Ministry Guide for Special Education](#)

FORMS:

- STU 200.46.F01 – Retention Request Summary

APPENDICES:

- STU 200.46.XA – Interventions to Consider Prior to a Retention Decision

DEFINITIONS: N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board believes in the continuous progress of students throughout their elementary years and supports the placement of students with their age-appropriate peers.

- Research indicates that, in most cases, retention at grade level is not effective. Promotion with required remediation, enrichment or other intervention programs should be the norm in district schools.
- Retention and acceleration will be considered only in rare cases.
- Behavioural difficulties are insufficient in themselves to warrant consideration for retention.
- A student who is identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), or is in the process of being identified, should not be retained. For students with an IEP who are not meeting the expectations outlined, it is necessary to first revise the IEP to better meet the student's needs.
- Grade retention should not be considered during Year 1 and Year 2 Kindergarten. All Year 1 and Year 2 Kindergarten children will normally move into a grade one placement. If it is an extraordinary case, and after careful evaluation of the student's needs, it is considered necessary to extend the Year 1 and Year 2 experience for an additional school year, or part thereof, the appropriate superintendent shall be involved in the deliberation and subsequent decision.
- The retention of a student beyond the primary level is not deemed advisable, nor is retaining a student who is placed in a specialized class.
- Students who have successfully completed Grade 8 expectations will be promoted from elementary school and admitted to a secondary school.
- For those students with an IEP (is a grade 8 student of the Board) working on modified Grade 8 expectations planning decisions will be made at the Grade 8 transition meeting or IPRC Annual Review (if the student was IPRC'd in our Board). The student will be placed in an appropriate secondary school program. This will be a consultative process involving members from the elementary school, and/or secondary school, members of the special education team, the student, and their parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians must request a meeting in writing to the administrator, with reasons/evidence identified to indicate their request to discuss retention and/or acceleration or strategies for support and intervention.
- Clear and compelling reasons for retention or acceleration must be present. For retention, among these reasons is significant difficulty with the grade specific curriculum expectations and anticipated significant difficulty with the next grade's expectations, even with considerable supports in place (see "Considerations" section). (e.g., report cards, testing results, other documentation, or reports/diagnoses etc.)



- Final decisions regarding acceleration or retention will be made by the school team in consultation with parents/guardians, system team including the Family of Schools Superintendent and, where appropriate, the student.
- It is expected that a student will demonstrate consistent and repeated difficulty with mastering curriculum expectations despite attempts by school personnel, parents/guardians, and outside agencies to provide assistance for the student.
- It is expected that the student's skills and knowledge are assessed using a variety of assessment methods including observations, conversations, and demonstration of learning (products). As well, it is expected that evidence-based intervention and instructional strategies (including differentiated instruction and assistive technology), are considered, tried, and found not to be successful or sufficient to improve student achievement. [See Appendix A]

The superintendent, administrator, classroom educator(s), special education resource teacher (SERT), other school and system support staff, and parents/guardians must be involved in developing strategies for the success of all students. It is important that early and ongoing communication, through team meetings and regular case conferences, happen between all parties to ensure strategies are being monitored, success is being evaluated, and next steps are being determined.



Grade Retention Request Summary

Name of Student:	Grade:
School:	Date of Birth:

1. Sharing of Information

- a. Parent/Guardian(s) are satisfied that all appropriate information has been shared regarding the decision to retain or not to retain.
- b. Parent/Guardian(s) are not satisfied that all appropriate information has been shared regarding the decision to retain or not to retain.

2. Summary of School and System Level Retention Conference

- a. School and Parent/Guardian agree to retain
- b. School and Parent/Guardian agree not to retain

3. Summary of Student Placement

- a. Student to be placed in Grade ____ for the school year _____, effective _____
- b. Student progresses from Grade _____ to Grade ____ as of _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

The teacher and principal to retain copies on file.

Disclaimer

Notice of Collection: The personal information you have provided on this form and any other correspondence relating to your involvement in our programs is collected by the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board under the authority of the Education Act (R.S.O. 1990 c.E.2) ss. 58.5, 265 and 266 as amended and in accordance with Section 29(2) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, (R.S.O. 1990 c.M.56) The information will be used to register and place the student in a school, or for a consistent purpose such as the allocation of staff and resources and to give information to employees to carry out their job duties. In addition, the information may be used to deal with matters of health and safety or discipline and is required to be disclosed in compelling circumstances or for law enforcement matters or in accordance with any other Act. The information will be used in accordance with the Education Act, the regulations, and guidelines issued by the Minister of Education governing the establishment, maintenance, use, retention, transfer, and disposal of pupil records. If you have any questions, please contact the school principal and/or the Freedom of Information Officer, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, 322 Fairview Drive, Brantford, ON, N3T 5M8 (Telephone 519-756-6505, Ext. 11234)



Interventions To Consider Prior To a Retention Decision

NOTE: The following in no way reflects an exhaustive list

Suggested Intervention	Primary Division	Junior Division	Intermediate Division
INTERVENTIONS			
Use of targeted intervention programs for skill development in the area of need identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access checklists from SERT and Student Achievement that provide diagnostic data that will offer insight into the child's area of strength and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access checklists which provide insight into the student's learning style.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of assistive technology in the school, as a differentiated instruction strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of adult volunteers for review and reinforcement of a skill that is an area of need (e.g., Strong Start, Lexia).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange School Team Meetings early in the year to express concerns and develop intervention strategies. Meet at regular intervals throughout the year to evaluate success and determine next steps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrange access to peer tutors, if applicable, or other in-school supports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer opportunity for cognitive testing as needed, conducted by the Board or outside agency, to provide further key information on student's strengths, needs, and overall learning profile.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Suggested Intervention	Primary Division	Junior Division	Intermediate Division
HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTIONS			
Provide suggestions of support for parents/guardians (e.g., tutor, home books for parents/guardians to support practice, LEXIA for at home use, if appropriate, and supportive websites or resources).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home lists of high frequency words, word decoding strategies for at home practice/support.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider developing opportunities for learning for parents/guardians, so that they become familiar with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



teaching strategies to implement at home and that complement the school program.			
Develop and share guidelines for parents/guardians regarding homework skills (e.g., learning skills).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare a home reading and/or writing program developed by the educator, SERT, or student achievement team member, if appropriate, which includes careful instructions for the parent/guardian to assist their child in the use of reading and writing strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop communication with parents/guardians early to evaluate, share success, student's strengths and needs, and determine next steps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Suggested Intervention	Primary Division	Junior Division	Intermediate Division
TEACHING PRACTICE			
Develop literacy and numeracy skills using differentiated instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use Board and Ministry resources as recommended by Special Education and Student Achievement staff in order to facilitate high quality instruction that meets students' strengths and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enlist the support of Special Education team and Student Achievement team members for ideas, programs, and guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enlist the support from fellow staff members through sharing opportunities such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff should take advantage of all the professional learning opportunities. Consider current research on effective teaching pedagogy and strategies (see resource list included in policy).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider creative grade level groupings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>