

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

Philosophy

Alder Grove Charter School (“Alder Grove” or the “Charter School”) is committed to the success of each student. Alder Grove has adopted and follows a Student Success Team (“SST”) Policy to establish and implement student achievement and intervention strategies in a timely manner. Despite the implementation of such strategies it may be necessary to retain a student in the prior grade level or promote a student above their grade level for the following school year. In implementing this policy, the Alder Grove Board of Directors (“Board”) is guided by the following principles:

1. Retention and promotion criteria will be objectively based on a student’s ability or inability to meet the grade level Alder Grove standards of expected student achievement in language arts, mathematics, science, or social science, for students in grades kindergarten (k) through twelfth (12), as determined by the Alder Grove staff as articulated in its California standards-based report card or performance on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”). (See Criteria for Retention or Promotion, attached as Exhibit A).
2. For English Learners, retention cannot be based on the student’s lack of English fluency as related to meeting English standards.
3. Decisions about retention or promotion will not be based on requests for a student to be placed with or avoid a specific teacher or other students.

Retention

A. Required Steps Preceding Retention Decision

Before retaining a student, Alder Grove will follow the following steps:

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will receive notice of progress or lack of progress in target areas through informal progress reports and semester report cards. Parents will be notified by the teacher of areas of academic concerns in parent teacher meetings or in writing on progress reports or semester report card. Student achievement will be determined “at risk” as defined by Alder Grove “Specific Grade Level Criteria for Promotion or Retention” for one or more semesters. (Criteria for Promotion or Retention, attached as Exhibit A).
2. Alder Grove will hold an SST meeting for Student.¹ Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be invited to the SST meeting to discuss concerns and proposed interventions. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will receive a copy of the SST meeting notes which will serve as notice of proposed interventions and student achievement strategies.

¹ For students qualified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), any decisions regarding retention will be made by the Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) team in an IEP meeting. For Students with a Section 504 Plan, any decisions will be made by the Section 504 team in a 504 meeting.

1. Research based interventions suggested at the SST meeting will be implemented and documented in an ongoing and consistent manner. A recommended interval of six (6) weeks of academic interventions should occur before the initial SST and the recommendation for retention.
2. Following the above interventions, a teacher may make a recommendation for retention. Once made, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be invited to conference with the teacher(s), a designated administrator, and other staff members as deemed necessary (“Retention Team”). Retention Team Conference invitation will be via telephone or email by the school designee to the phone number or email address Parent(s)/Guardian(s) provided to the Charter School, followed up by a written confirmation sent via US Mail to the address Parent(s)/Guardian(s) provided to the Charter School. Teacher will log all attempts to contact Parent(s)/Guardian(s). If after two (2) documented attempts to schedule a conference by phone, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) do not respond or attend the Retention Team Conference, the conference will be held without their presence.
3. The Retention Team Conference will include:
 - a. Review of previous SST notes;
 - b. Discussion of previous/current/ongoing interventions, review of intervention logs;
 - c. Review of current work and available assessments;
 - d. Development of a plan for support for the following academic year;
 - e. Determination of student’s grade level for the following academic year; and
 - f. If the decision is to retain the Student, appropriate instruction and interventions are targeted for the following year so the student will be supported in meeting the standards the following year in the retained grade.
4. If there is disagreement among the Retention Team, the Director will make the determination based upon all information discussed at the meeting.
5. When a final decision is made, Alder Grove will send the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) notes from the meeting, a copy of this policy, and the decision of the Retention Team in writing within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting at the address provided by Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to the Charter School via registered mail unless otherwise agreed to in writing.

B. Right to Appeal

If the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) disagree with the decision, they have the right to appeal to the Alder Grove Board through the following steps:

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) choosing to appeal a decision to retain a student shall submit a completed Promotion or Retention Appeal Request Form (attached as Exhibit B) to the Director specifying the reasons why the decision should be overturned. The submission of the Retention Appeal

Request Form must occur no later than ten (10) school days following the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receipt of the determination of retention.

2. The Board shall review the appeal as well as the student's academic performance records on which the Retention Team relied. The Director shall be provided an opportunity to state orally and/or in writing the criteria on which the Retention Team or Director's decision was based. The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will also be given an opportunity to state orally and/or in writing their reason for appeal. The Appeal will be held in a closed session of the Board to maintain student confidentiality. The Board will prepare a written decision which summarizes findings and conclusions.
3. The Board shall notify the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Director of its decision in writing within seven (7) school days of the Appeal via registered mail at the address provided by Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to the Charter School unless otherwise agreed to in writing.
4. The Board's decision is final.

C. Supplemental Instruction

The Director or designee may require recommended students to participate in supplemental instructional programs. Parents who exclude their students from supplemental instructional programs will be notified in writing by Alder Grove of their risk of retention for the student's failure to access supplemental instruction.

Promotion

A. Required Steps Preceding Promotion Decision

Before promoting a student, Alder Grove will follow the following steps:

1. If Alder Grove receives a promotion request from a student's Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Alder Grove will schedule and hold an SST meeting for Student.² Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be invited to the SST meeting to discuss student progress on grade level benchmarks and other considerations/concerns for promotion. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will receive a copy of the SST meeting notes which will serve as notice of proposed student achievement strategies (and interventions, where applicable).
2. If there is disagreement among the SST, the Director will make the determination whether to recommend the student for promotion based upon all information discussed at the meeting. The Director will send notice of this decision within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting at the address provided by Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to the Charter School via registered mail unless otherwise agreed to in writing.

B. Right to Appeal

² For students qualified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), any decisions regarding promotion will be made by the Individualized Education Program ("IEP") team in an IEP meeting. For Students with a Section 504 Plan, any decisions will be made by the Section 504 team in a 504 meeting.

If the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) disagree with the decision, they have the right to appeal to the Alder Grove Board through the following steps:

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) choosing to appeal a decision to promote a student shall submit a completed Promotion or Retention Appeal Request Form (attached as Exhibit B) to the Director specifying the reasons why the decision should be overturned. The submission of the Retention Appeal Request Form must occur no later than ten (10) school days following the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receipt of the determination of promotion.
2. The Board shall review the appeal as well as the student's academic performance records on which the SST relied. The Director shall be provided an opportunity to state orally and/or in writing the criteria on which the SST or Director's decision was based. The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will also be given an opportunity to state orally and/or in writing their reason for appeal. The Appeal will be held in a closed session of the Board to maintain student confidentiality. The Board will prepare a written decision which summarizes findings and conclusions.
3. The Board shall notify the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Director of its decision in writing within seven (7) school days of the Appeal via registered mail at the address provided by Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to the Charter School unless otherwise agreed in writing.
4. The Board's decision is final.

Exhibit A

Alder Grove Charter School Criteria for Promotion or Retention

PROMOTION/RETENTION PHILOSOPHY

Grade retention in U.S. schools has a long history characterized by fluctuations in the frequency and application of this educational practice. The majority of studies conducted over the past four decades on the effectiveness of grade retention fail to support its efficacy in remediating academic deficits (e.g., Jimerson, 2001). However, because students are not randomly assigned to this intervention, a failure to adequately control for pre-existing differences between retained and promoted students that may affect students' academic and social-emotional trajectories leave open the possibility that pre-existing vulnerabilities rather than retention per se may be the cause of poor post-retention outcomes. Consistent with this possibility, recent studies utilizing more rigorous methods to control for selection effects are less likely to report negative effects (e.g., Hong & Yu, 2008; Wu, West, & Hughes, 2008; Hughes, Chen, Thoemmes, & Kwok, 2010). Retention effects also vary depending on whether retained and promoted students are compared at the same grade or the same age. When retained and promoted peers are compared at the same age, retained students achieve at a slower rate. When retained and promoted peers are compared in the same grade, retained students experience a short-term boost that dissipates within 4 years (Wu et al., 2008). When the measure of achievement is closely aligned with the curriculum, as in the case of state accountability testing, retention bestows short-term benefits (Hughes et al., 2010) but there is no evidence of long-term benefits for students. [National Association of School Psychologists. (2011). Bethesda, MD: Author.]

The social promotion/retention legislation (AB1626 and 1639) indicates clearly that a school's job is to identify students who are low in skills and lack the understanding of basic concepts in reading, writing, and mathematics by helping them become competent, but not to hold students back as a primary focus. Therefore, in Alder Grove Charter School, our intent is to identify students who may be at-risk of retention many months before considering such an event and give them as much support and intervention as possible so that they can truly become successful. We recognize that an underachieving student, significantly below grade level, may not become grade level proficient in a single year; however, if we intervene early with these students and implement alternative teaching strategies, and academic supports and interventions, then these students will not become victims of retention. Initial determination that a student is at-risk of being retained shall be based on school benchmarks and assessments.

The performance of these students will be further studied through the Student Study Team (SST) or other school-site processes to develop interim teaching strategies, interventions, and/ or other assistance for the student and their families.

It is expected that interventions will occur for students at risk of retention prior to retention being considered, including:

- Multi-tiered problem-solving models to provide early and intensive evidence-based instruction and intervention to meet the needs of all students across academic, behavioral, and social–emotional domains
- Equitable opportunities to learn for students from diverse backgrounds
- Universal screening for academic, behavioral, and social–emotional difficulties
- Frequent progress monitoring and evaluation of interventions

Students whose performance still does not improve to grade-level either in the school year or during summer, as seen in classwork or the state/school assessment test in the current year, may be considered for retention. Parents will have the right to appeal any decision made in regards to retention or promotion.

It is also our policy that English Language Learners not be designated as being at-risk for retention solely as a result of their language abilities. Rather, they are to be given the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of grade level content in other subject areas. During this interim period, their progress on the English Language Development (ELD) must be monitored closely. Finally, it is the intent of the School policy that any decisions regarding the retention of Special Education students be based in consideration of their Individual Education Plans (IEP).

Assessment

Regular assessment is important in order to guide the provision of academic services, enhance school and classroom instructional strategies, and measure student learning and students' progress toward meeting the school's academic achievement standards. Therefore, the school shall continue to employ a comprehensive student assessment system to help ensure that students remain on course to meet the academic achievement standards of the school and on target to meet the grade level standards recognized by state and federal governments.

Promotion and Retention Decisions

Promotion and retention decisions shall consider what is best for the student and should include consideration of the following: 1. ability to perform at the expectations of the current grade-level standards; 2. the student's age; 3. overall academic achievement level/potential; 4. previous performance;

5. evaluative data; 6. chances for success with more difficult material if promoted to the next grade or when current skills are inadequate; 7. number of absences/attendance record; 8. previous retention; 9. social and emotional maturity level; 10. The results of local assessments, screening, or monitoring tools and, if applicable, state assessments and standardized tests; and 11. what benefits can be accomplished by retention.

English Learners (EL)

English Learners shall meet the same standards as all students. However, in accordance with federal law, English language proficiency shall not be the sole factor in determining that a student has not met performance standards for promotion. If a student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), this shall be considered in determining promotion/retention decisions for English Learners.

Intervention strategies shall include, where appropriate, assistance in the development of English language proficiency.

Students with Disabilities

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities shall be governed by Alder Grove student standards established for students without disabilities. Students with disabilities who meet the requirements established by the California Department of Education shall earn regular diplomas. All enrichment, interventions/remediation, opportunities, benefits and resources made available to students without disabilities shall be made available to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities may be exempt from promotion/retention standards if an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student does not have the ability to successfully meet general curricular standards.

Parent Concerns

Parents who disagree with the decision of the teacher(s) and/or final decision of the Director (or designee) regarding the promotion or retention of a student may appeal the decision to the Director (or designee). The decision of the Director (or designee) shall be final.

Acceleration from Kindergarten to First Grade

Any student who meets the age eligibility requirement and has completed one year of kindergarten shall be admitted to first grade unless the parent/guardian and the Director or designee agree that the student shall continue in kindergarten. (Education Code 48010, 48011)

A student who does not meet the age eligibility requirement may be admitted to first grade at the discretion of the Director or designee and with the consent of the parent/guardian upon determination that the student is ready for first-grade work, subject to the following minimum criteria: (Education Code 48011; 5 CCR 200)

- The student is at least five years of age.
- The student has attended a public school kindergarten for a long enough time to enable school personnel to evaluate his/her ability.
- The student is in the upper five percent of his/her age group in terms of general mental ability.
- The physical development and social maturity of the student are consistent with his/her advanced mental ability.

- The parent/guardian of the student has filed a written statement with the school approving the placement in first grade.

Continuation in Kindergarten/Retention

The following factors will be considered when retention has been proposed: assessment data considered indicates that the student is achieving in the bottom 10% of kindergarten students. Data also indicates that student is socially and behaviorally delayed. Special considerations shall be given to attendance concerns, students designated ELL, and for students with disabilities.

Whenever the Director or designee and the parents/guardians agree that a student shall continue in kindergarten for an additional year, the Director or designee shall secure an agreement, signed by the parent/guardian, stating that the student shall continue in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year. (Education Code 46300, 48011)

Retention at Other Grade Levels

When a student is identified as being at risk of retention, the Director or designee shall so notify the student's parent/guardian as early in the school year as practicable. The student's parent/guardian shall be provided an opportunity to consult with the teacher(s) responsible for the decision to promote or retain the student. (Education Code 48070.5)

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

The Director or designee shall also provide a copy of the school's promotion/retention policy and administrative regulation to those parent/guardians who have been notified that their child is at risk of retention.

No child may be retained more than once during grades K-5.

Retention Policy at the Middle School and High School Levels

Retention at the Middle School Level

The retention policy at the middle school level has been developed within the limits established by the school. Failure to complete one or more of the requirements below may result in a student not being promoted.

Student success in the required course content during any semester in grades 6-8 or its equivalent as measured by teacher evaluation.

Student progress in emotional, physical, and intellectual growth; exploration experiences; assimilation and application of skills; and socialization.

The designated administrator of the middle school may advance a failing student because of over age.

Retention at the High School Level

High School students who fall behind grade level credit requirements are provided opportunities to remediate with independent study coursework and other class opportunities within the school year.

A student may become ineligible for such privileges as participation in extra/co-curricular activities.

Retention of Special Education Students

Retention or acceleration of special students is the decision of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team. Such decisions must be made in an IEP Team meeting and recorded on the IEP document, with respect to the Promotion and Retention Policy and Criteria for Retention and Promotion.

Social Promotion/Acceleration Criteria (AKA “Skipping a grade” or portion of a grade)

Students may be considered for social promotion if they have demonstrated the mental and learning ability to be successful in the grade level in question, have good attendance, have passed all courses and shown the ability to master academic content, and have evidenced social, emotional maturity and skills that would allow them to be successful with a social promotion.

A teacher or parent may request that a student be socially promoted to the next grade level in writing. The Director will have 30 days to respond to the request. The request should include the following documentation:

- The date at which the social promotion is requested to occur (e.g. “at the start of the 6th grade year”) and grade level being requested
- Data, including academic achievement assessment results, supporting the appropriateness of social promotion both academically and socially
- A letter outlining why the request is being made with relevant information that should be considered by the Director, or designee

Social promotion/acceleration of students in special education should be determined alongside the IEP Team. Such decisions must also be documented in an IEP Team meeting and recorded on the IEP document, with respect to the Promotion and Retention Policy.

Appeal Process

Whenever a student's parent/guardian appeals the teacher's decision to promote or retain a student, the burden shall be on the parent/guardian to show why the teacher's decision should be overruled. (Education Code 48070.5)

To appeal a teacher's decision, the parent/guardian shall submit a written request to the Director or designee specifying the reasons that the teacher's decision should be overruled. The appeal must be initiated within 10 school days of the determination of retention or promotion.

The teacher shall be provided an opportunity to state orally and/or in writing the criteria on which his/her decision was based.

Within 30 days of receiving the request, the Director or designee shall determine whether or not to overrule the teacher's decision. Prior to making this determination, the Director or designee may meet with the

parent/guardian and the teacher. If the Director or designee determines that the parent/guardian has overwhelmingly proven that the teacher's decision should be overruled, he/she shall overrule the teacher's decisions.

The Director or designee's determination may be appealed by submitting a written appeal to the Governing Board within 15 school days. Within 30 days of receipt of a written appeal, the Board shall meet in closed session to decide the appeal. The Board's decision may be made on the basis of documentation prepared as part of the appeal process or, at the discretion of the Board, the Board may also meet with the parent/guardian, the teacher, and the Director or designee to decide the appeal. The decision of the Board shall be final.

If the final decision is unfavorable to the parent/guardian, he/she shall have the right to submit a written statement of objections which shall become part of the student's record.

REQUIRED ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS

Academic interventions shall be required for the following students:

- Students who are not making satisfactory progress toward academic benchmarks;
- Students who have not met promotional standards by the end of the school year/ (retained students)
- Students who are one or more years behind grade level in a course or grade
- Students not performing at the level to meet the College Readiness Benchmarks
- Students required to received intervention based on state or federal law, regulations, guidelines/guidance, and/or policies or school policies

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

Because parental involvement contributes greatly to student achievement and conduct, the Governing Board encourages frequent communication between parents/guardians and teachers by means of parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, email, telephone, and school visits by parents/guardians.

As part of this communication, teachers shall send progress reports to parents/guardians at regular intervals and shall encourage parents/ guardians to communicate any concerns to the teacher. Communication to parents/guardians shall be both in English and in the family's primary language when so required by law. Whenever a teacher learns that student's parent/guardian is for any reason unable to understand the school's English communication, the designated administrator or designee may assist the parent/guardian in establishing appropriate means of communication.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

49067 - Mandated regulations regarding pupil's achievement

49069 - Absolute right to access (parents' right of access to student records)

51216 - Pupil proficiency; assessment; conference to further pupil's progress; instruction in basic skill for pupil not demonstrating sufficient progress

Regulation Alder Grove Charter School

Adopted: August, 2022

Revised: May, 2022

Exhibit B

Alder Grove Charter School
Promotion or Retention Appeal Request Form

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

Appealing the decision for (please circle one): Retention Promotion

As outlined in the Alder Grove Charter School (“Alder Grove”) Promotion and Retention Policy, my child was recommended for retention/promotion by the Alder Grove Retention Team or promotion by the SST. I do not agree with this recommendation and wish to appeal this decision to the Alder Grove Board of Directors.

Please explain your disagreement: _____

I am aware that this appeal must be made within ten (10) school days of my receipt of the recommendation to retain or promote my child and should be submitted to the Director. This appeal will go before the Alder Grove Board of Directors, and it will make a final determination regarding retention or promotion.

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date