



JCS Promotion & Retention Policy 2020-2021

JCS Promotion Policy

This promotion policy is intended to provide a consistent organization-wide approach to promoting students in the following five (5) scenarios:

1. "Grade Level Promotion" for students who meet grade level academic expectations
2. "Accelerated Academic Placement" for students who perform above and beyond their age-appropriate grade level
3. "Early Start Promotion" for student entering Kindergarten who do not meet the age requirement, but meet the readiness requirements
4. "Overage for Grade Promotion" for students who do not meet grade level expectations and has multiple retentions
5. "Social Promotion" for students who do not meet grade level expectations

Note: For students with disabilities, the decision as to whether a special education student be retained or promoted should be determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) generally does not require an IEP team to make decisions regarding promotion or retention of a child with a disability. The IDEA, nonetheless, does not prevent an IEP team from making this decision. If JCS must make a decision regarding retention/promotion of a special education student, the IEP team should reconvene immediately and consider the following:

- Is the current IEP for the student's academic, functional, social, emotional and behavioral needs appropriate?
- Is the manner of assessment appropriate, including accommodations and modifications identified in the IEP?
- Were all the services required by the student to make progress in the general educational curriculum appropriately identified in the IEP?
- Did the student receive all the services identified in the IEP?
- Were the assessments conducted consistent with the IEP?
- What other services, including counseling and/or tutoring, should be added to the student's IEP in order to support the promotion?
- In sum, both retention and promotion should be an IEP team decision.

Promotion 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 promotion and/or 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 promotion.

Grade Level Promotion

Students who have accumulated less than 18 unexcused or excused absences and meet academic expectations in math and ELA ($\geq 70\%$) will be promoted to the next grade.

Third Grade Promotion

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, a student in the third grade shall not be promoted to the fourth grade unless the student has shown a basic understanding of the curriculum and the ability to perform the skills required in the subject of reading as demonstrated by the student's grades or standardized test results. The Student Support Team and principal will create a tailored [intervention plan](#) for the third grader. The student may be promoted if the student meets the terms of the intervention plan prior to the beginning of the next school year. This provision shall not apply to students who have IEPs pursuant to 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*

A copy of a student's intervention plan shall be provided to his or her parent or legal guardian by the Student Support Team and the school shall offer to hold a parent-teacher conference to discuss the plan.

Accelerated Academic Placement in Grade K

A student of kindergarten age must by state law have a kindergarten experience. However, a student who is advanced in ELA and/or mathematics may, with the recommendation of the school's Student Support Team (SST) and the principal, attend first (1st) grade classes for reading and/or math instruction. JCS Gifted Manager should be a part of this team to determine if a referral should be made for gifted consideration.

At the end of the kindergarten year, the support team must convene and recommend, based on informal and formal assessments, the educational placement for that kindergarten student. The support team and principal could consider first or second grade placement for the next school year. The Gifted Manager should be a part of this recommendation.

The support team and principal will take into consideration social and emotional readiness as well as academic performance. The recommendation and student data will be submitted to the Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for final review. *The* Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment has the final authority to change a student's grade placement. His/her decision will be based on the totality of the circumstances and will be final and binding.

The Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment will send a letter to the parent and teacher with his/her final decision. Signed documentation will be placed in the cumulative file verifying parental agreement or disagreement regarding the recommendation to accelerate.

***Note:** In the event of Accelerated Academic Placement is considered for a student with a disability, this recommendation should be addressed within the student's IEP meeting and the final decision will remain with the IEP team. The Managing Director of Special Populations & Student Services and the Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment should be a part of this IEP meeting.*

Accelerated Academic Placement in Grades 1-8

When high academic achievement is evident, the principal may recommend a student for placement into a higher grade level. The student's social and emotional growth shall be taken into consideration in making a determination to accelerate a student. Students may be accelerated one grade by completing the following steps:

Step 1: Recommendation

- Acceleration may be recommended by the Student Support Team (SST) if the student is in the upper five (5) percent of his/her age group in terms of general academic performance. The easyCBM benchmark assessment will be used to determine if a student is in the upper five (5) percent of his/her age group. JCS Gifted Manager should be a part of this team to determine if a referral should be made for gifted consideration.

OR

- Acceleration may also be recommended when, in the judgment of the teacher, parent and/or principal, the student will be able to perform with above average success at the grade level assigned and that this acceleration will not be detrimental to the growth and development of the child. A [letter of recommendation](#) should be submitted to the members of the school's SST Team for consideration by the teacher and parent. JCS Gifted Manager should be a part of this team to determine if a referral should be made for gifted consideration.

Step 2: Data

- The SST Team (including the JCS Gifted Manager) and principal will analyze the student's standardized test and JCS assessment results to supplement the student recommendation. Additional assessments may be given where necessary as determined by the SST team.

Step 3: Determination

- The recommendation and student data will be submitted to the Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for final review. The Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment has the final authority to change a student's grade placement. His/her decision will be based on the totality of the circumstances and will be final and binding.

Step 4: Documentation

- The Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment will send a letter to the parent and teacher with his/her final decision.
- Signed documentation will be placed in the cumulative file verifying parental agreement or disagreement regarding the recommendation to accelerate.

***Note:** In the event of Accelerated Academic Placement is considered for a student with a disability, this recommendation should be addressed within the student's IEP meeting and the final decision will remain with the IEP team. The Managing Director of Special Populations & Student Services and the Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment should be a part of this IEP meeting.*

Early Start Promotion

Early Start Promotion is to be considered for students entering Kindergarten who do not meet the age requirement, but meet readiness requirements. The Kindergarten age requirement of turning 5 on or before August 15 is set in state law, T.C.A. § 49-6-201. However, another law, T.C.A. § 49-6-3001(b)(2)(B), allows school districts some flexibility in allowing students who are close to the age cut-off to enroll in Kindergarten early:

Notwithstanding subdivision (b)(2)(A), if the director of schools finds through evaluation and testing, **at the request of the parent or legal guardian**, that a child who is five (5) years of age on or before September 30 is sufficiently mature emotionally and academically, then the child may be permitted to enter kindergarten (emphasis added). This option for early enrollment is completely under the jurisdiction of the JCS and the State Board does not have authority over that process. To consider a student for early promotion, the following steps must take place:

Step 1: Recommendation

- The parent or guardian requests early start for the Kindergarten scholar who does not meet the age requirement.

Step 2: Initial Data Gathering

- The principal has the parent/guardian complete the [Early Promotion Readiness form](#).
- The principal notifies via email the VP of schools, Managing Director of CIA, and Managing Director of SP/SS and attaches the Early Promotion Readiness form.
- The principal identifies a Kindergarten teacher to administer the universal screener or ERD assessment to the student.

Step 3: Data Analysis & Review

- After the student has been assessed, the team (principal, Kindergarten teacher, VP of Schools, Managing Director of CIA, and Managing Director of SP/SS), meets to discuss the student's data from the assessment as well as data from the Early Promotion Readiness form. The team makes a recommendation for early start.

Step 4: Recommendation

- The principal meets with the parent/guardian to share the team's decision regarding early start.

Over-Age for Grade Promotion

A student shall not be retained more than one (1) time in any given grade level. Students with multiple retentions or who are or will be over-age for grade during the next school year shall be discussed by the Student Support Team and principal.

The SST Team and principal will be responsible for providing the Managing Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment with a tailored [promotion plan](#) for approval. The plan must include a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) intervention plan to address deficits in student learning. Additionally, the team should discuss if they suspect this is a student with a disability. If the team suspects the student may have a disability, the school psychologist and Special Education manager should be a part of this meeting.

The plan may also include the following where applicable:

1. Modification and personalization of curriculum and instruction;
2. Extended learning time beyond the regular school day or school week;
3. Individual or small group tutoring; or
4. Other personalized programming to augment the individual student's classroom learning and instructional experiences.

A copy of a student's promotion plan shall be provided to his or her parent or legal guardian by the Student Support Team and the school shall offer to hold a student support team meeting with the parent to discuss the plan. **Note:** If the team suspects the student may have a disability, a formal meeting needs to be scheduled with the parent/guardian to discuss the need for a formal evaluation.

Social Promotion

A student shall be promoted to the next grade or course level upon demonstrating proficiency in the current grade or course level standards. The student's teacher and other school staff and leadership may participate in the decision to promote or retain a student. Special consideration for promotion and/or retention shall be given to students with special academic, social, and emotional needs.

JCS Retention Policy

At JCS, retention shall be considered only when it is in the best interest of the student. Students who have accumulated more than 18 unexcused or excused absences and do not meet academic expectations in math and ELA ($\geq 70\%$) may be retained to the current grade.

Retention decisions affecting a student receiving special education services shall be made in consultation with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and in accordance with the provisions of the IEP. (See page 12-15 of the [JCS Grading Policy](#) to learn about specific and required steps for students with disabilities.)

Retention decisions affecting a student receiving English Language services shall be made in consultation with the student's EL teacher in accordance with the provisions of the Title III. (See page 16-19 of the [JCS Grading Policy](#) to learn about specific and required steps for English Language Learners.)

1. Per state requirements, if a retention decision has been made for any student, then the school shall develop an [individualized academic remediation plan](#) for the **retained student** prior to the start of the next school year.
2. The academic remediation plan shall be developed in coordination with the student's teachers and may also include input from the student's parents, school counselor, or other appropriate school personnel.
 - a. The academic remediation plan shall be implemented to help the **retained** student attain and demonstrate learning proficiency and shall include **at least one (1)** of the following strategies:
 - i. Adjustment to the current instructional strategies or materials;
 - ii. Additional instructional time;
 - iii. Individual tutoring outside of school hours;
 - iv. Modification to the student's classroom assignment to ensure the student receives instruction from a qualified teacher
 - v. Attendance or truancy interventions
3. A copy of the academic remediation plan shall be provided to the student's parent or guardian **within ten (10) calendar days of development of such plan.**
4. A student shall **not be retained more than one (1) time in any given grade level.**
5. Retention shall **not**:
 - a. Be used without an academic remediation plan that includes strategies and enhancements that are different from the previous year;
 - b. Be used as a punitive or disciplinary measure;
 - c. Be based solely on English language proficiency, for students who are identified as English learners; or
 - d. Be based solely on a student's social and emotional maturity.

6. Per state requirements, the progress of a retained student shall be closely monitored and reported to parents a minimum of three (3) times during the school year in which the student is retained.
 - a. JCS teachers should discuss the progress of retained students quarterly. Any needed adjustments should be made to the student's academic intervention plan.
 7. Once the decision to retain has been made:
 - a. A report of each student retained shall be made to the VP of Schools, which includes a copy of the student's academic remediation plan;
 - b. The VP of Schools shall keep an annual record of each student who is retained;
 - c. Documentation verifying student deficiencies shall be placed in the student's permanent record;
 - d. Parents shall have the right to appeal any decision through [appeal procedures](#) established by board policy; and
 - e. The teacher shall be consulted at each level of the appeal procedure.
- Students not making adequate progress in meeting district-established criteria will be identified as early in the school year and in their school career as practicable but no later than second quarter and the school designee will need to hold a Student Success Team (SST) meeting to address concerns.
 - JCS leaders and teachers should follow the quarterly steps [here](#).
 - When a student is identified as being at risk of retention, parents will be notified ahead of the SST meeting. The team will hold the SST meeting and the student will be provided interventions.
 - The interventions prescribed will be designed to assist the students in reaching grade-level expectations in core academic areas and to motivate and connect students to school. Such opportunities may include but are not limited to tutorial programs, after-school programs, and/or summer school programs. On-going assessment of student progress will be a part of each intervention program at least quarterly.
 - A student in third grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student has shown a basic understanding of curriculum and ability to perform the skills required in the subject of reading as demonstrated by the student's grades or standardized test results. However, the student may be promoted if the student participates in an LEA approved research-based intervention prior to the beginning of the next school year.
 - The managing director for curriculum, instruction, and assessment shall report, at least annually, on any intervention programs available to students in the third grade and recommend any new programs or the modifications of any existing programs to better serve these students.
 - Before a student is retained, the parents shall be informed in writing and shall have the opportunity to participate in a conference **at least six (6) weeks before the end of the school year**.
 - If any student was in a classroom where the teacher wasn't present for the majority of the school year (**51% or more**), he/she will not be retained. The student will be referred for a SST meeting in the first month of school and immediately be provided interventions for the upcoming school year.

Over Age Criteria

- If a student has been retained 2 times previously and is now 2 years over age for his/her grade, the student should be promoted to the next grade. However, a SST meeting should be held **during the first month of the upcoming school year**. For 8th graders, who come to JCS overage, a SST meeting will be held within the first month of school or enrollment to outline interventions and any needed support for the student before he/she is promoted to the next grade.
- The student should receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 Interventions immediately and be given an intervention plan **prior to the second month of school** to address the needs limiting the student's academic success.
- If a student has repeated one grade previously and the school has implemented Tiered supports with fidelity, the student can be recommended for retention for a 2nd time. If the student is retained, the school must implement Tiered interventions immediately upon re-enrollment.

Parent/Guardian Request for Retention

If a parent/guardian requests retention, a consensus among the parent, teacher, and principal must be met:

- Threshold: Why are you requesting retention for your child?
 - a. Is the student failing academically in ELA and/or math? What multiple data points are we referring to?
 - b. Are the child's deficits the result of a lack of access to a highly-qualified teacher for the duration of the school year?
 - c. Does your child have attendance concerns, where he or she has 20 or more unexcused absences?
- The VP of Schools shall make the final decision, except in the case of students with disabilities and EL students. For students with disabilities, the decision for retention is determined by the IEP team. Retention decisions affecting a student receiving English Language services shall be made in consultation with the network EL director and student's EL teacher in accordance with the provisions of Title III.

Special Considerations Due to Impact of COVID-19 on Schools, Teaching & Learning, and Student Outcomes

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on schools, teaching and learning, and student outcomes, many students have been negatively impacted by many variables that are beyond their control. Some of these variables include home support and supervision, unstable and inconsistent access to technology and WiFi, etc. Additionally, because of virtual learning the scope and sequence of grade level standards has been reduced, whereby teachers are teaching fewer grade level standards in any given week.

Therefore, under these circumstances, retention will only be used as a practice by JCS in extenuating circumstances.

Retention will only be considered under the extenuating circumstances below and as determined by the VP of Schools.

- Students who are chronically absent with a working device and WiFi, who are also failing in ELA **and** Mathematics, **may** be considered for retention given the school has evidence of intervening with the students and their parents/guardians.
 - Teacher contact parent regarding attendance concerns that are impacting student performance
 - School counselor referral from teacher regarding attendance concerns and impact on grades
 - All [attendance procedures](#) are followed and documented to increase student attendance
- Students who are in attendance but are consistently not submitting work resulting in failing grades in ELA **and** Mathematics, may be considered for retention given the school has evidence of intervening with the student and their parents/guardians.
 - Teacher contact parent regarding academic performance concerns
 - Parent-teacher conference regarding academic performance concerns
 - SST meeting to put in place interventions to increase student academic performance (See *full steps in JCS Quarterly Retention Steps below.*)

Because this is a hold-harmless year, schools, in consultation with the JCS network, will document how they will address learning loss for all and individual students.

Other Pertinent Documents:

[TN Promotion and Retention Policy](#)

[SCS Promotion and Retention Policy](#)

[JCS Grading Policy 2020-2021](#)

[JCS Quarterly Steps for Potential Retention](#)

[TN Intellectually Gifted Process](#)

[ASD Family Handbook](#)

[ASD Overage Student Flow Chart](#)