



## Manhattan Beach Unified School District

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### Report Card Guidelines Regarding Potential Student Retention

In general, retention is not a recommended practice as decades of research have found it an ineffective intervention.

- *Jimerson (2001) summarized the historical research and added a carefully culled set of studies conducted between 1990 and 1999, all of which included comparison groups of promoted students. Most of the comparisons showed no significant differences between promoted and retained students on measures of achievement or personal and social adjustment. In those studies that did show a difference, the results favored the promoted students, especially on measures of achievement.*
- *Roderick and Nagaoka (2005) studied the effects of the Chicago Public Schools policy that bases promotion in grades 3, 6, and 8 on standardized test scores. Using comparison groups of students who just missed the promotion cutoff, these researchers found that 3rd graders struggled during the repeated year, had higher rates of special education placement, and two years later showed no advantage over those who had been promoted. Retained 6th graders had lower achievement growth than similar students who were not retained.*
- *Retention can increase the likelihood that a student will drop out of school. Students who drop out are five times more likely to have been retained than those who graduate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).*
- *Studies with the strongest research methods compare students who were retained with similar students who were not retained. They ask whether repeating a grade makes a difference in achievement as well as personal and social adjustment over the short run and the long run. Although individual studies can be cited to support any conclusion, overall the preponderance of evidence argues that students who repeat a grade are no better off, and are sometimes worse off, than if they had been promoted with their classmates.*
- *Retention usually duplicates an entire year of schooling. Other options—such as summer school, before school and after-school programs, or extra help during the school day—could provide equivalent extra time in more instructionally effective ways. **Without early diagnosis and targeted intervention, struggling students are unlikely to catch up whether they are promoted or retained.***

In the rare case, through the SST process, that a student is recommended for retention the school must follow [Board Policy 5123](#). In particular, BP 5123 states: *The teacher has primary responsibility for notifying a student and parent(s)/guardian(s) that the student may not be promoted to the next grade level. This notification shall come **after** a decision has been made by the classroom teacher and the Student Study Team. Administrators and other support staff are expected to establish procedures that ensure participation of the teacher, parent(s)/guardian(s), principal and others, as needed, in the decision-making and notification process.*

If an SST has occurred and notification has taken place, the teacher may also use the following language in the student's report card:

- Semester I: *"During our SST on \_\_\_\_ (date) the team discussed your child's possible retention. Additionally, we discussed the following interventions \_\_\_\_ (list) and will meet on \_\_\_\_ (date) to review progress."*
- Semester II: *"During our SSTs on \_\_\_\_ (dates) the team identified your child at risk of retention. The team implemented the following interventions \_\_\_\_ (list), and reconvened on \_\_\_\_ (dates) to monitor progress. Data on your child's response to intervention were \_\_\_\_ (list). Based on our last SST \_\_\_\_ (date) we determined your child would be retained for the \_\_\_\_ (date) school year."*