Acceleration and Retention Policy

Acceleration Policy

"Acceleration is the practice of placing students at a higher than normal level of instruction to meet their learning needs. It occurs when a teacher provides the student with advanced curriculum, when a student skips a grade, or when a student takes a specific course at a higher level.

Students can be accelerated by grade when they are advanced in all areas, or by subject. In the latter case a student in Grade 6 may be doing math at an advanced level and language arts at his age level.
The BC Ministry of Education's policy on Acceleration is that 'while many educators resist acceleration as a strategy, research overwhelmingly supports it. Acceleration has been shown to be positive for both achieving and underachieving gifted learners in the majority of documented cases." (Benbow & Stanley, 1983; Kulik & Kulik, 1992 qtd. in Gifted Education.pdf p. 14).

HCOS supports acceleration as a strategy in the support of gifted students.

Research on Promotion vs. Retention

The B.C. Ministry of Education's March 2009 document entitled "Reporting Student Progress: Policy and Practice" states:

"Research generally supports promotion with intervention over retention. The following is a synopsis of research on promotion and retention.

- The achievement and adjustment of retained students tend to be no better than those of comparable children who are promoted.
- Repeating a grade does not ensure that children will overcome the areas of deficiency.
- Students who repeat the same material without new instructional strategies tend not to attain the same levels of competence as students who are promoted.
- Retained students tend to have a more negative attitude toward school.
- Students who are retained often develop problems in the areas of personal adjustment and socialization.
- Students who have been retained are more likely to drop out of school.
- Where students have been retained and show significant increases in achievement, there have been marked changes in instructional strategies.
- Retention affects students socially, emotionally and educationally."

Additionally, students who are retained but not designated or put on an Individual Education Plan (IEP), may not have the additional "grade 13" year to complete Grad (Grades 10-12) requirements. This additional year can enable struggling students to slow their course load and gain the additional support they need in what is presumably the most challenging part of their K-12 education.

Retention Policy

HCOS prefers promotion with interventions and adaptations over retaining students. These supports should be managed in collaboration with LSCs; Regional Administrators (RAs) and Academic Advisors (AAs) should identify at-risk students and funnel them toward our RTI process.

> Students cannot be retained without approval from the Head of Schools.

Exceptions

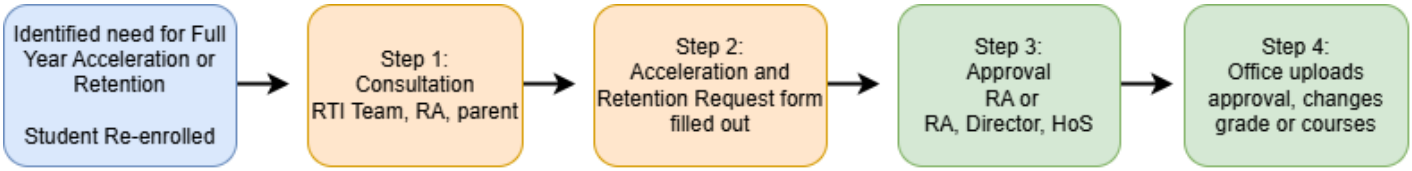
In recognition that December 31st is an arbitrary line that divides one grade from another and that philosophically, parents may wish their "young for their age" student to be held back or their "bright for their age" student to be accelerated, the following exceptions can be made to the above policy.

- If a student is born in November or December, they may be held back a year, at the parent's request, provided that request is made in their grade K/1 years and the teacher and RA are in agreement.
- If a student is born in January or February, they may work ahead and be accelerated into grade 2 after their kindergarten year, provided their teacher and RA are in agreement.
- These accelerations and retentions still need to be:
  - noted by the office upon completion of the **Acceleration or Retention Request** form
  - brought forward to the RTI team for discussion

When re-enrolling, Encom allows parents to select the next higher grade for their child. Only Office Admin have permission to select an alternate grade when acceleration or retention has been approved. Parents should re-enroll the student in their next grade and the office will make the change upon Head of Schools approval.

Process of Approval for Acceleration or Retention

Full-Year Acceleration or Retention

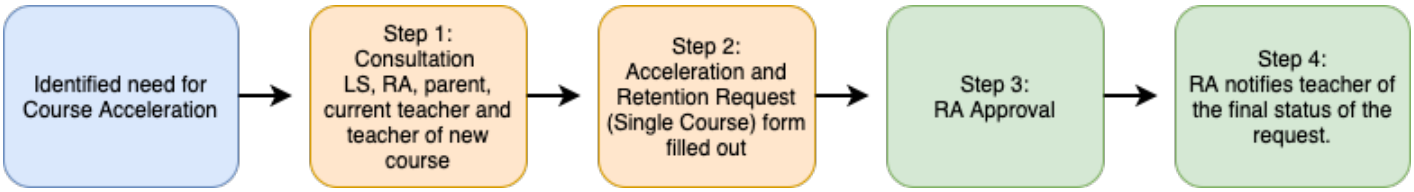


Teachers who identify students who would benefit from this strategy should:

Step 1: Consultation: teachers speak with their RA and the RA brings the request forward to the RTI team. Online assessments, discussion with parents, teachers, LSCs, and RAs in Foundations and Inclusive Education may be part of the process of deciding and using a full-year acceleration or retention strategy.

Step 2: Forms and Approvals: Acceleration and Retention form is filled out by the teacher or LSC. All final full-year acceleration decisions are made by the Head of Schools and will be noted as a pinned log entry in the student's Communications & Notes in Encom.

Course Acceleration or Retention



Working Ahead: In grades K-9, students who are "working ahead" and are meeting grade-level competencies at a quicker rate may be moved ahead as they finish their current course work, with approval from their teacher and input from the RA. See the Foundations Courses: Working Ahead page for more information.

Skipping Grades K-9: Acceleration by "skipping" a course or two in a year must have the support of the current teacher, approval of the new course teacher (if different from the current teacher) and approval of the Regional Administrator (RA). It is similar to a course challenge in Grad and should be based upon the student's demonstrated ability in that subject area. Online assessment may be required. The RA should note approval in a pinned log entry in the student's Communications & Notes in their Encom profile.

Course Challenge: Grades 10 - 12: In Grad, courses may not be skipped, they must submit to a course challenge process.

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