

## **GUIDELINES FOR RETENTION/ACCELERATION**

### **RETENTION - ELEMENTARY GRADES - K-6**

Cambridge Elementary school will utilize the following procedures in deciding the retention of a student:

1. Any student achieving substantially below the appropriate grade level will be considered for retention through the building level staffing process. Students will not be considered for retention for non-academic reasons such as behavior management difficulties, lack of motivation, punishment, etc
2. It is strongly recommended that whenever possible retention is limited to kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 with other interventions used to address lack of progress at higher grade levels. When lack of progress continues, retention may be considered at the higher grade levels.
3. A child may not be retained more than once without approval from the Superintendent/designee.
4. The academic progress of students with special education or 504 plans will be addressed in the respective educational plans.
5. The following procedures will be used when a student is being considered for retention:
  1. During or after the first marking period or as soon as evident, each teacher will bring forth to the Education Support Team (EST) the names of students whose academic progress warrants an EST meeting to determine early intervention approaches to be instituted. An EST meeting, with parent notification and involvement, will be arranged for all referred students. Relevant data such as the following is to be presented at the EST meeting:
    - Specific skill deficits and strengths in subject areas and interventions utilized by the classroom teacher,
    - Interventions utilized by other staff,
    - Test results and progress grades for current and previous year, assessment results from in-class learning activities including a portfolio of student class work,
    - Summary of parent-teacher contacts regarding student's academic progress, and
    - Health records and attendance records wherever relevant.
  - b. Based on the EST meeting, a written plan will be developed to address the student's lack of achievement. Such a plan will include recommendations for intervention considerations, i.e., school resources, special tutoring, tutorials, summer school attendance, etc. The plan will be monitored by the teacher and principal with a review meeting held with the parent by the end of the third marking period. This meeting will include an analysis of the student's progress as well as a discussion of the available assessment data.
  - c. At the end of the third marking period teachers will submit to the principal a list of students who will be considered for retention. At this time the parent/guardian will be notified in writing that retention is being seriously considered and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled.

d. Prior to the end of the school year a final EST meeting will be held to determine whether the child is to be retained. The “Light Retention Scale” or a similar instrument may be administered before a final decision is made regarding retention.

If retention is recommended at the EST meeting, the school will submit their recommendation to the parents in writing and such letter will be discussed with the parent/guardian prior to the end of the school year. An additional copy of the recommendation will be placed in the student’s cumulative folder. Any conditions regarding the retention such as reconsideration after summer school or during the next school year will be noted in the letter.

6. Parent/guardian approval for retention will generally be considered necessary for successful implementation of the retention.

7. If retention is recommended without parent/guardian approval, the parent/guardian will have the right to appeal that recommendation to the Superintendent/designee.

8. Retention will be noted on the student’s report card. Summaries of all EST meetings will be placed in the student’s record folder.

## **ACCELERATION – GRADES K – 6**

The Cambridge School District recognizes a need for educational alternatives for students who demonstrate advanced intellectual and academic achievement. The purpose of acceleration is to place students at the level of their demonstrated competence. There are two types of acceleration that may be appropriate for academically talented students. One is vertical acceleration in which a student moves through the regular curriculum sequence at an advanced pace. The second is horizontal acceleration in which the depth and breadth of a curricular area is explored in more detail.

CES will utilize the following procedures in deciding either the grade or subject acceleration of a student:

1. A student may be referred for grade, subject, or course sequence acceleration by a teacher, any other school district professional, or parent(s)/guardian(s) by using the District acceleration form. This includes requests for early entrance to Kindergarten and First Grade\*.

2. Decisions regarding acceleration of students will be handled through the building level Education Support Team (EST) process.

3. Appropriate challenges within the classroom structure and gifted and talented program will be used as the first alternative in the development of a student’s acceleration plan.

4. An evaluation of the student’s potential to benefit from subject acceleration or advanced grade placement shall be required. Pertinent data, staff observations, and documented academic performance will be considered in the decision concerning acceleration. To be considered for acceleration (this includes early entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade), the student should meet the following criteria:

1. Based on an evaluation by the school counselor or other appropriate staff, the student indicates a desire to be accelerated.

2. Based on the building EST meeting discussion and observation of the child, it is concluded that the socio-emotional maturity of the student is at a level where acceleration is desirable.

3. Demonstrated exceptional achievement levels in class work as evidenced by at least one of the following:

- 95th percentile on a scholastic aptitude test,
- Academic performance level which is two to four years above current grade level on standardized achievement tests,
- Above average performance on end of course or grade tests administered by a teacher of the current grade or subject in which the student is enrolled.

If needed, the recommendation will be referred to the appropriate staff (gifted and talented teacher, counselor) for additional evaluation.

5. A conference will be held with all involved personnel including the student's parents/guardians, the student, teacher(s) and the gifted and talented program coordinator to recommend appropriate placement. The building principal will decide if the placement decision is appropriate. The principal's decision may be appealed to the Superintendent/designee.

6. If the student will be advancing to a different level from one school to another, i.e., elementary to middle school, administration and counseling staff of both schools will be involved in the planning process. The receiving teacher will conduct an ongoing evaluation.

7. All grade, subject, or course acceleration decisions shall be made on a trial basis based on the report card grading schedule. In the case of grade acceleration, an EST meeting will be held to review the student's progress. At the end of a three month trial period, the receiving teacher will assess the student's progress to ensure that the proper placement has been made. If academic or adjustment difficulties occur, the committee will reconvene to determine appropriate placement.

### **\*Requests for Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade**

The process for requesting early entrance to Kindergarten (child is not five on or before 8/31) at Cambridge Elementary School is as follows:

1. Parents must send the "Request for acceleration" form to CES principal no later than May 15 of preceding school year.
2. As part of the acceleration procedures listed above, the student will participate in all portions of the annual Kindergarten screening process held in June which includes assessments of both academic and social-emotional skills. The student will also be required to participate in end of the year Kindergarten assessments.
3. CES Staff will conduct on-site observation of student if enrolled in CES or private preschool program.\*\*
4. Students being considered for early entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade are subject to the same criteria for acceleration as all other grades – see criteria listed above.
5. Findings of the EST may be submitted to the Superintendent for review.

6. Parents will be notified of school's decision by June 30 of the year preceding enrollment. Findings can be appealed to the CES Board no later than July 15 of the school year preceding enrollment.

The process for requesting early entrance to First Grade (child is not six on or before 8/31) at Cambridge Elementary School is as follows:

1. Parents must send the "Request for acceleration" form to CES principal no later than May 15 of preceding school year.
2. The student will be required to participate in first grade assessments administered at the end of the school year.
3. CES Staff will conduct on-site observation of student if enrolled in CES or private program.\*\*
4. Students being considered for early entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade are subject to the same criteria for acceleration as all other grades – see criteria listed above.
5. Findings of the EST may be submitted to the Superintendent for review.
6. Parents will be notified of school's decision by June 30 of the year preceding enrollment. Findings can be appealed to the CES Board no later than July 15 of the school year preceding enrollment.

\*\*Cost of substitute coverage (half day) will be at the expense of the parent. Please contact the school if you are unable to afford this expense.