

RIVER VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

River Valley Charter School is responsible for the educational placement of all its students, including both classroom and grade level assignments. Every effort will be given to ensure that each child will be placed in the most effective and suitable learning environment, and will receive educational services in accordance with his/her academic, social and emotional development. Montessori education will be at the core of these environments and services, but the school provides and endorses a variety of educational services designed to promote success for all students.

Grade level retention at River Valley is seen as an option of last resort. Early identification of student learning struggles and active intervention and support on the part of River Valley staff will be employed to assure that every student is given the best opportunity for success each academic year. Every reasonable effort will be made by the school to support a student so that they are able to be promoted to the next grade level at the end of every academic year.

Promotion and retention decisions will be made on an individual case basis. Retention deliberations and recommendations will be a cooperative team effort involving: family, teacher, Academic Program Coordinator, Director, and, when applicable, other professional staff and student input. The school Director will make the final promotion/retention decision which may, if the family chooses, be appealed in writing to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

An array of educational interventions will be attempted and documented for any child before the option of retention is considered. These interventions will occur at the earliest possible level for children who have been identified as not making adequate academic progress and may be at-risk for academic failure.

Procedures and Timetable

1. If the student is failing to make normal academic or social/emotional progress, the parents must be notified by the November progress report conferences, so that the school and family may cooperate in helping him/her achieve greater success. This communication is not to discuss retention, but to facilitate working as a team to help the student succeed.

2. Prior to any student being considered for retention, the conditions and challenges faced by the student must be referred to the RVCS Student Support Team (SST) along with documentation supporting these concerns. This referral must be communicated to parents/guardians. The SST will develop a series of intervention strategies that will be implemented and documented by the teachers.

3. If retention is being considered after these interventions, parents will be so notified by the March progress report conferences. Documentation will be provided to parents/guardians of the interventions implemented by classroom teachers, support staff and the SST.

4. In the case that retention is being considered, the Director or his/her designee will direct that a student profile be developed. The profile will include at least the following:

- Student's age appropriate grade level
- Student's academic history (demonstrated through progress reports and/or other artifacts)
- Student's attendance record
- Student's conduct record
- Diagnostic, standardized and academic assessment record

- Parent, teacher and, if applicable, student comments outlining the primary reasons that retention is being considered.
- Intervention measures
- Brief history of home/school communications
- Other information as reasonably requested by the family, the Director or his/her designee.

5. After the March progress reports and prior to May 15th, a conference among teacher(s), Director and family will be scheduled. A draft recommendation about retention will be made at the conference.

6. The Director will notify the parents of his/her final retention decision in writing. This decision will be communicated to parents no later than June 1st. Written and electronic communication will be added to the student's record to document the decision-making process.

7. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal, in writing, the Director's retention decision to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) within thirty days of the Director's written notification date. Details of this process will be provided to the family should such an appeal be considered.

