



3.10 Grade Retention and Reporting Student Progress

RESEARCH

Research and professional practice clearly show consistent findings relative to long-term outcomes:

- Grade retention has been identified as the single most powerful predictor of students dropping out.
- In general, there is no evidence that early-grade retention brings benefits to the retainees' reading and math learning by the end of the elementary grades.
- Compared to similarly academically achieving non-retained peers, retained students had lower levels of academic adjustment at the end of grade 11 were less likely to receive a diploma by age 20, were less likely to be enrolled in a post-secondary education program, and received poorer employment competence ratings at age 20.
- There are negative short- and long-term effects on student self-esteem.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Teacher and parent/guardian discussion and monitoring of student not consistently achieving at expected level.
- Regular evaluation of learning strategies to ensure implementation of those that best meet student's needs.
- Evaluation of classroom interventions and decision on whether or not to access additional resources through school-based team (SBT) meetings.
- Evaluation of school interventions and decision on whether or not to access additional resources through district-based team (DBT) meetings.
- All decisions are made with the student's current and future best interests in mind.

BC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS: POLICY AND PRACTICE

- The achievement and adjustment of students who are retained tends 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 in the current grade often develop difficulties in the areas of personal adjustment and socialization.
- Students who have been retained in the current grade are more likely to drop out of school.
- Where students have been retained in the current grade and show significant increases in achievement, there have been marked changes in instructional strategies.

RESEARCH-BASED AND EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

- Engage positive teacher-parent collaboration.
- Adopt age-appropriate and culturally appropriate instructional practices.
- Establish inclusive groupings in classrooms with teachers trained in working with mixed ability students.
- Identify specific learning and/or behavioral challenges; targeting instruction and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of plans in order to adapt as needed to ensure greater success.
- Access and follow-up on effective social and emotional programs.
- Implement tutoring programs.
- Provide appropriate inclusive education services with trained staff.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) What research says about...grade retention March 2008, Volume 65, Number 6

[Canadian Journal of School Psychology](#)

[The Association of Chief Psychologists with Ontario School Boards](#)

[National Association for School Psychologists](#)

[Center for Development & Learning](#)