
GRADE RETENTION POLICY

Sage Oak Charter Schools (“SOCS” or the “Charter School”) adopt this Grade Retention Policy to apply to all students requesting grade retention. SOCS is committed to the success of each student. Retention is an academic intervention that has a student repeat a grade level that has already been completed. Retention of a student and the repeating of the academic content can happen naturally within an independent study model and doesn’t typically need to be formally reflected in the student’s assigned grade level. Therefore, a thorough evaluation of a request to retain will be conducted before approving a retention request.

Basis for Retention

Any decision regarding the retention of a student may be based on the following:

1. The results of the assessments administered as part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) and the State adopted minimum levels of proficiency/performance standards for CAASPP exams; and/or
2. Performance indicators for SOCS students, including grades, progress reports, or other indicators of academic achievement.

Identification of Students to be Retained Based on Grade Level

1. Between Second Grade and Third Grade, or Between Third and Fourth Grade
 - a. Retention decisions for students moving from second to third grade or from third to fourth grade shall be *primarily* based on the student’s reading proficiency
2. Between Fourth and Fifth Grade, Between Elementary Grades and Intermediate Grades, or Between Eighth and Ninth Grade
 - a. Retention decisions for students moving from fourth to fifth grade, from their final elementary grade to an intermediate grade, or from eighth to ninth grade shall be based on the student’s proficiency in reading, English language arts, and mathematics.

Early Identification of Student’s At-Risk of Being Retained

SOCS shall make all efforts to identify those students at-risk of being retained as early in the school year as practicable. In addition, SOCS shall seek to identify at-risk students as early in their school careers as possible.

Notification to Parents When Student At-Risk of Retention

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SOCS shall notify a student's parent/guardian whenever a student is identified as being at-risk for retention. This notice shall be provided as early in the school year as practicable to do so. The notice will inform the parent/guardian that they have the opportunity to consult with the student's teacher(s) responsible for making the decision to retain or promote the student. Parent and teacher shall discuss options for assisting the student in improving any academic deficiencies.

Decision to Retain

Any decision to retain a student in their current grade shall be made by the Director of Student Services on the bases set forth above. If either measure identified above (CAASP or SOCS's indicators) indicate that a student is performing below the minimum standard for promotion, the student shall be retained in their current grade unless the Director of Student Services makes a written determination as set forth in this policy.

Written Determination to Promote Student Not Meeting Minimum Standards

A student who has been identified for retention shall not be retained if the student's regular teacher makes a written determination, including each of the following:

1. Clear finding that retention is not the appropriate intervention for addressing the student's academic deficiencies;
2. Specify the reasons that retention is not appropriate for the student;
3. Recommend those alternatives to retention that the teacher believes are necessary to assist the student to attain acceptable levels of academic achievement; and

Opportunities for Remedial Instruction

If a student is identified as at-risk for retention and/or recommended for retention, SOCS shall provide remediation through the Sage Oak intervention program.

Chronic Absenteeism

In addition to any other grounds for retention identified in this policy, SOCS may choose to retain a student without parent/guardian approval if the student has been chronically absent. Chronically absent is defined in Education Codes section 60901(c)(1) as a pupil who is absent on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year when the total number of days a pupil is absent is divided by the total number of days the pupil is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular day schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays. For students identified as Title I students, chronically absent has been defined pursuant to section 203(c)(1) of the Department of Education Organization Act (20 U.S.C. 3413(c)(1)) for

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Title I schools. The federal definition for chronic absenteeism counts students who have missed 15 days of school for any reason during one school year, rather than students who have been absent 10 percent or more of the school days.

Parent Requests for Retention

Please note that TK students who were not eligible for kindergarten due to the legal age cut-off requirement must finish the two-year program by completing kindergarten before being considered for retention. All other grade levels may request a grade-level retention of their student.

SOCS only reviews retention requests at the end of each school year, after the student has been enrolled in the school for the majority of the current school year.

The parent/guardian must submit the following to the Student Services Department by the last day of learning period 7:

1. A written request by the parent/guardian for the retention of the student;
2. Explanation of why the request is being made;
3. List of all interventions and curriculums utilized during the school year to help the student meet grade-level standards; and
4. Evidence and documentation to show that the student has not yet met grade-level standards (this may include, but is not limited to assignment and work records, assessment scores, work samples, report cards). Please note the school may request additional documentation as needed.

Teachers of students for whom a grade retention request has been made must review the Retention Internal Talking Points with the parent prior to submitting the above documentation through the Retention Questionnaire found in the EA/Teacher manual. Kindergarten retention is documented with a CDE-approved form that requires parent/guardian and school representative signatures; this form is kept on file as required by Education Code (EC) Section 48011 and SOCS policies.

A retention meeting will be held during learning period 9 with the retention team. The parent/guardian is invited to attend the beginning of the meeting to personally present their request and explain any documentation provided, however, their attendance is not required. The team, minus the parent/guardian, will review the information and decide if retention is an appropriate determination. For students identified as English Language Learners or as students with disabilities supported through a Section 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP), additional consultation with the appropriate support teams is required prior to making

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any determination regarding grade retention. If the team cannot come to a consensus, then the Director of Student Services holds the responsibility of making the final decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified via email of the decision within two school days of the retention meeting.

If the request is denied, the parent/guardian has the right to appeal. If the retention request is approved, then the parent/guardian must sign the Parent/Guardian Retention Acknowledgement Form before the student's grade level will be changed in the school database.

Right to Appeal

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the school's decision to retain or not retain a student, they have the right to appeal to the school's Assistant Superintendent of Education Services.

1. A parent/guardian choosing to appeal a denial to retain a student shall submit a request to appeal the decision to the Assistant Superintendent of Education Services with a detailed explanation specifying the reasons why the decision should be overturned. The submission of the request to appeal must occur no later than five (5) school days following the date the parent/guardian was notified via email of the denial.
2. The Assistant Superintendent of Education Services shall review the appeal as well as the student's academic performance records on which the decision relied. The Director of Operations and Accountability shall be provided an opportunity to discuss records with the parent/guardian and team members if they deem it necessary.
3. The Assistant Superintendent of Education Services will notify the parent/guardian of their decision via email within seven (7) school days of receiving the appeal request.
4. The Assistant Superintendent of Education Services's decision is final.