

Student Advancement and Retention Policy

Adopted: 09.18.2025



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish how Wallace Stegner Academy (the “School”) handles a request from a parent to advance or retain their student to/in a grade level different from the student’s cohort.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for purposes of this policy:

“Cohort” means:

- (a) for K-8 students, a group of students defined by the year in which the group enters kindergarten; and
- (b) for 9-12 students, a group of students defined by the year in which the group enters grade 9.

“Advance” or “advancement” means to move a student one or more grade levels higher than the student’s cohort.

“Retain” or “retention” means to move a student one or more grade levels lower than the student’s cohort.

“Reasonably accommodate,” per Utah Code 53G-6-801(2), means that an LEA shall make its best effort to enable a parent to exercise a parental right specified in Utah Code § 53G-6-803:

- (a) without substantial impact to staff and resources, including employee working conditions, safety and supervision on school premises and for school activities, and the efficient allocation of expenditures; and
- (b) while balancing:
 - (i) the parental rights of parents;
 - (ii) the educational needs of other students;
 - (iii) the academic and behavioral impacts to a classroom;
 - (iv) a teacher's workload; and
 - (v) the assurance of the safe and efficient operation of a school.

Policy

The School is committed to providing an educational program that offers opportunities for students to acquire skills for cognitive, academic, social, and emotional development. The School believes differentiated instruction provides for individual academic student needs as students remain with their own age peer group. However,

the School recognizes circumstances may exist where student advancement or retention may be in the best interests of an individual student.

The School supports and acknowledges that a student's parent is the primary person responsible for the education of the student and that the School is in a secondary and supportive role to the parent; and that as such, a student's parent has the right to reasonable academic accommodations from the School. See Utah Code § 53G-6-803(1)(a). The School also acknowledges that it shall reasonably accommodate a parent's written request to retain a student in kindergarten through grade 8 on grade level based on the student's academic ability or the student's social, emotional, or physical maturity. See Utah Code § 53G-6-803(2).

Therefore, when a parent makes an advancement or retention request (which constitutes a request for an academic accommodation), the School shall make a decision on the request only after a School team has assessed and reviewed the needs and abilities of the student and the School has determined whether the advancement or retention of the student, as applicable, can be reasonably accommodated by the School.

The School's Chief Executive Officer(s) shall establish administrative procedures to implement this policy in accordance with applicable law.