Promotion, Acceleration and Retention Policy

Blue Ridge Academy is committed to making individual decisions on grade level acceleration based on the long-term, best interest of the individual student. Staff is committed to helping all students realize their fullest potential, when high academic achievement is evident, staff may request a student for acceleration into higher grade level. The student's maturity level shall be taken into consideration in making a determination to accelerate a student.

The purpose of the Blue Ridge Academy Governing Board approving this Promotion, Acceleration and Retention Policy is to accomplish the following:

1. Outline the Promotion Policy
2. Outline the Acceleration Policy
3. Outline the Retention Policy
4. Outline the Appeals Process for Parents
5. Establish the Process for IDEA/504 Students
6. Outline the Charter School Rights

1. **Promotion Policy:** *K-8:* Each K-8 student will be enrolled in four core subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and include enrichment opportunities like art, music, athletics, world languages, technology, field trips, and virtual and in-person community and social experiences, providing a well-rounded education. Students shall progress through the grade levels by demonstrating growth in learning and meeting grade level standards.

   High School: High school students can select courses from a variety of a learning programs. Students will be enrolled in a minimum of 20 credits per semester (4 classes) unless considered a fifth-year senior. If the student is taking courses at a community college, he/she must meet with his/her counselor to obtain approval prior to enrolling in the community college courses.

   Required Courses for All High School Grade Levels*:
   - English-Language Arts
   - Mathematics
   - Science
   - Social Studies/History

   *This depends on the student's individual graduation plan and course progression.

   Four-Year Plan for High School Students: Supervising Teachers develop a four-year individual graduation plan (IGP) for each high school student. The IGP will be reviewed by the Guidance Counselor and/or Regional Administrator and revisited annually (unless necessary due to mid-year course changes). The four-year individual graduation plan will include:

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- Learning Program
- Student's intended courses
- Courses completed
- Course of Study
- College and/or Career path

2. **Acceleration Policy:** When high academic achievement is evident, a teacher and/or parent may recommend a student for acceleration of courses. The student's social and emotional growth shall be taken into consideration in making a determination to accelerate a student.

   Mid-Year Grade Level Acceleration Requests: The decision to promote a student mid-year will be made only after careful consideration has been given with regards to serving the academic best interests of the student. Mid-year promotions are approved or denied at the end of the first semester. If a student is promoted at the end of the first semester, he/she should be on target to complete all courses at his/her promoted grade level by the end of the school year. 8th to 9th grade acceleration requests are only considered in the fall semester before the high school add/drop date.

   A child who was *not age-eligible* for kindergarten (that is, the child turned five after September 1 in the 2014-15 school year or thereafter) and who attended a California private school kindergarten for a year is viewed by the CDE as *not legally enrolled* in kindergarten, pursuant to *EC* Section 48000 requirements. Therefore, this child, upon enrollment in public school, is enrolled in kindergarten, assessed, and may (but is not required to) be immediately promoted to first grade if the child meets the following State Board of Education criteria, pursuant to Title 5, Section 200:

   - *The child is at least five years of age.*
   - *The child has attended a public school kindergarten for a long enough time to enable school personnel to evaluate the child's ability.*
   - *The child is in the upper 5 percent of the child's age group in terms of general mental ability.*
   - *The physical development and social maturity of the child are consistent with the child's advanced mental ability.*
   - *The parent or guardian has filed a written statement with the district that approves placement in first grade.*

   A statement, signed by the district and parent/guardian, is placed in the official school records for these five-year-olds who have been advanced to first grade (EC Section 48011). This action prevents a subsequent audit exception for first grade placement of an *age-ineligible* student.

   Procedure: In order for the school to make sound academic decisions regarding mid-year grade level promotions, the following process will be followed:

   Parent:

   - Parent Request: Parents may request that the teacher promote their child one grade level at the end of the 1st semester.

   Teacher:

   If the student's teacher agrees that a review for mid-year grade level promotion is appropriate, the teacher will complete a request for acceleration into a higher grade level and take the

student's maturity level into consideration. The request should be sent to gradelevelhelp@inspireschools.org. Requests must be received by email prior to Winter Break.

- If the student's assessment results are not above grade level, the teacher needs to provide documentation with a written request regarding why promotion is in the student's best interest.
- If the student is not on track to complete all courses at the grade level he/she would be promoted to, the teacher will need to explain in the written request why a promotion would be in the student's best interest.
- Information regarding prior grade retention and the circumstances of such

Student Assessment Records (a combination of the following may be used to assess the student's readiness to promote):

- ***Teachers must meet and evaluate student in person.***
  - *Under no circumstance shall the parent or Learning Coach assist student with assessments when the assessment is being used to promote a student mid-year.*
- Bader Reading Assessment indicates student is performing above current grade level
- Writing Sample showing proficiency above grade level standards
- Benchmark Data indicates student has mastered current grade level content/state standards
- Benchmark results in Mathematics and ELA indicate student is advanced at current grade level content/state standards
- SBAC results (if available) indicate student has met or exceeded standards
- Student work samples, demonstrating proficiency above current grade level standards.

3. **Retention Policy:** The Charter School is committed to making individual decisions on grade retention based on the long-term, best interest of the individual student. Staff is committed to helping all students realize their fullest potential, including remediation for students that are experiencing difficulty. To that end, retention may be appropriate for a student experiencing extreme academic difficulty or serious health or family emergencies. Typically, retention is considered after various other remediation steps have been employed by student's teacher(s) and academic team with insufficient success. Special consideration will be given to students with limited English proficiency and those with a special education IEP. Students may be retained only once in their K-8 school career. After careful analysis of evidenced based instruction and intervention, retention is considered for the next school year.

Kindergarten Retention Criteria:
Students can also be retained in grade K based upon current law. Kindergarten students who have completed one year of kindergarten shall be admitted to first grade unless the parent/guardian and the district agree that the student shall continue in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year based on student progress on the Individualized Learning Plan. (Ed Code 48011). Whenever a student continues in kindergarten for an additional year, the School Staff shall secure an agreement, signed by the parent/ guardian, stating that the student shall continue in kindergarten for not more than one additional school year. (Ed Code 46300)

Grades 9-12 Retention Criteria:
The state does not require school districts to have student retention criteria beyond the last year of middle school to the first year of high school. Progress toward high school graduation shall

be based on the student's ability to pass the subjects and electives necessary to earn the required number of credits.

Grades 1-8 Retention Criteria:
If a student is identified as performing below the minimum standard for promotion based on their progress on the Individualized Learning Plan, the student may be retained in his/her current grade level. Both the parent and teacher must determine, in writing, if retention is the appropriate intervention for the student's academic deficiencies. This determination shall specify the reasons that retention is appropriate for the student and shall include recommendations for interventions necessary to assist the student in attaining acceptable levels of academic achievement. If the teacher and parent are not in agreement with the recommendation of retention, please see below for the appeal process. The burden of proof for the appeal rests with the appealing party. (Ed Code 48070.5)

Grades 1-8 Retention Timeline: Parents will request student retention in writing following the timeline explained below.

Step	**Timeline**
1. Teacher or parent recommends retention consideration for student.	Teacher – By the last day of fall semester Parent – By the last day of fall semester
2. Remediation steps occur, including, but not limited to: **SST meeting **Academic screenings **Multi-tiered Systems of Supports, includes Tier, 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 intervention **Curriculum intervention	Teacher – September-April 15th
3.~~4.~~ Team meets to make recommendations regarding grade placement of student for the next school year. Factors: **Teacher Recommendation **Parent analysis **Grades **Test Data – Benchmark, SBAC, assessments **Cumulative Record	Teacher/Academic Team-May
5. School Administrator makes decision and informs parent or guardian.	School Administrator, Before the school year has ended.

4. **Appeals and Parent Rights:** Parents have the right to appeal a decision made by the Academic Team. If a parent wishes to appeal, they would complete the following steps:
   - Appeal to School Administrator in writing.
   - School Administrator responds within two (2) weeks.
   - If not resolved, parents may appeal to the School Board at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

- The School Board meets in a closed session and will send the parent or guardian a response in writing

5. **IDEA/504 Students:** Students who participate in special education/504 plans have their education program and decision making process affected by state and federal regulations; therefore, decision-making in the area of grade promotion/retention is first governed by state and federal requirements.

6. **The Charter School Rights:** The policy adopted pursuant to this section shall be adopted at a public meeting of the Governing Board of The Charter School. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the retention, promotion or acceleration of a pupil not included in grade levels identified in this policy, or for reasons other than those specified for pupils at risk for retention, if such retention is determined to be appropriate for that pupil. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Governing Board from adopting promotion, acceleration and retention policies that exceed the criteria established in the California Ed. Code 48070.5, Promotion or Retention of Pupils.

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