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Procedures for Consideration of Retention Appleton Community 4K

All grade advancement decisions shall be made in the context of the Mission Statement of the Appleton Area School District and the Guiding Principles of Appleton Community 4K. In addition, decisions regarding retention of children attending 4K will include consideration of current research and established best practice as identified by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Children enrolled in Appleton Community 4K attend for one year. A parent does not have the option of automatically enrolling a child for a second year. If a child is enrolled in Appleton Community 4K for a second year it would be considered retention at a grade level and would need to follow the procedures outlined below for consideration of student retention.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction encourages parents to send their children to kindergarten when they are age-eligible. The Department states that, "If parents have concerns about their child being among the youngest in the class or not socially mature enough for kindergarten, the parent should talk with the staff to learn more about the program and how they can work together for a quality experience for their child." DPI provides the following guidance:

There are several reasons why a child should attend kindergarten with children in their own age range:

- o All school districts are responsible for meeting the needs of all kindergarten students, regardless of their age or state of development. Kindergarten curriculum is designed to meet the wide variation in development levels of all children.
- o Children arrive in kindergarten with a wide variety of abilities, and that is perfectly normal. There will always be a child who is the youngest - or the oldest.
- o If a child is an English Language Learner, he or she receives support in kindergarten programs to learn English at an early age.
- o Staff are trained to identify problems that may affect a child's ability to learn and provide appropriate services. The earlier the problem is identified, the sooner the child can receive special services that may help overcome the problem and improve his or her ability to achieve throughout the school years.
- o Research indicates that keeping an age-eligible child out of kindergarten does not always result in any long term benefits.
- o Kindergarten is an important part of a school's educational program and is part of the overall developmental curriculum.
- o Kindergarten instruction promotes learning of many skills that are the foundation of the curriculum through Grade 12. For example, early reading instruction is especially important to all learners.

Additional information from DPI on this topic can be found on their website at http://ec.dpi.wi.gov/ec_ec-entr-admiss.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children provides additional guidance regarding the consideration of holding children out of kindergarten beyond their age of eligibility. Citing multiple research studies, NAEYC indicates that, "The vast majority of control-group studies, which are structured to measure this comparison, come down clearly on the side of promotion. Students recommended for retention but advanced to the next level end up doing as well as or better academically than non-promoted peers. Children who have been retained demonstrate more social regression, display more behavior problems, suffer stress in connection with being retained, and more frequently leave high school without graduating." STILL Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement: A position statement developed by the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, 2000.

If, after spring Parent/Teacher conferences, a parent of an Appleton Community 4K student wishes to have their child repeat four-year-old kindergarten, they should submit a letter to the Director of 4 Year Old Kindergarten stating the request for consideration of retention and the concerns leading to their request. **All requests must be received by April 15th**. Letters should be sent to:

Director of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten
Appleton Area School District
P.O. Box 2019
Appleton, WI 54912

The Director of 4 Year Old Kindergarten will schedule a student services team meeting for review of the request. The team shall be comprised of the current four-year-old kindergarten teacher, the 4K Site Director or Principal, the Director of 4 Year Old Kindergarten, the school psychologist, school social worker and other support personnel deemed appropriate to the needs of the child. The team will conduct observation of the student in the 4K classroom and review a number of background factors including:

- The student's progress in completing the board adopted 4K curriculum, based on observation and progress monitoring data.
- The student's age and any dual language, special education or health needs that may exist.
- The student's work habits and experiential background.

Decisions regarding retention will be made on an individual basis and will include consideration of the child's attainment of the essential learning objectives in the 4K curriculum, as well as consideration of the child's preparedness for the next level of education, kindergarten.