

Zion Lutheran School Promotion and Retention Policy

Criteria for Promotion and Retention

Retention is used as a strategic support measure when a student is not developmentally or academically ready to succeed at the next grade level. It is not based on a single factor or assessment but a pattern of performance over time.

Promotion decisions are based on a **comprehensive review of each student's performance**, including:

- Academic achievement across core subjects
- Demonstrated progress toward grade-level standards
- Reading proficiency and documented growth
- Classroom behavior and academic work habits
- Social-emotional development and maturity
- Attendance patterns and student engagement
- **Teacher recommendation**
- **Light's Retention Scale** (as a supplemental decision-making tool)
- **Parent/guardian input**

Communication Timeline for At-Risk Students

Third Quarter (January–March)

- Teachers conduct a mid-year review of academic data, behavioral patterns, and intervention outcomes.
- Instructional teams identify students exhibiting significant academic concerns or lacking adequate progress toward grade-level standards.
- Formal written notification is provided to parents/guardians of students identified as being at risk of retention.
- A parent-teacher conference is held to discuss concerns; the **Light's Retention Scale** is completed and shared as supplemental decision-making data.

Fourth Quarter (March–May)

- Targeted support interventions continue and are monitored for effectiveness.
- A follow-up parent meeting is scheduled by mid-May to review the student's updated performance and progress.
- The **principal with guidance from the teacher and school board will make a final promotion or retention decision during the last quarter of the school year** and communicate the decision in writing to parents/guardians.

Parental partnership is essential, and communication will be clear, timely, and compassionate. However, final authority for promotion or retention decisions will be based on all academic, developmental, and behavioral data available.

Grade 3 to Grade 4 Promotion – Compliance with 2023 Wisconsin Act 20

Adopted: June 6, 2025 - Effective Date: September 1, 2027

In accordance with **Wisconsin Act 20**, any third-grade student who **scores below the proficient level** on the **Wisconsin Forward Exam or NWEA test in English Language Arts (ELA)** will be **retained in Grade 3**, unless they qualify for a **good cause exemption**.

Note: Wisconsin Forward Exam or NWEA test results may not be released until June/July. Therefore, retention decisions for Grade 3 students may be delayed until this data is available. Adjustments to the standard communication and decision timeline may be necessary to ensure compliance with state law and accurate student placement.

Required Actions for Students Scoring Below Proficient in Grade 3 Reading:

- The school will provide the student with **intensive instructional services and supports**, including:
 - Evidence-based reading interventions,
 - Frequent progress monitoring,
 - Individualized support focused on the student's reading deficiencies.
- A **written notification** will be provided to the student's parent/guardian, detailing:
 - The student's specific reading deficiency,
 - The planned interventions,
 - The potential consequences of continued deficiencies.
- The student will be required to attend an **intensive summer reading program**. This requirement will remain in place each summer until the student achieves proficiency on a summative assessment approved by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Good Cause Exemptions to Retention:

A student who does not achieve a proficient score on the Grade 3 ELA Forward Exam or NWEA test may still be promoted to Grade 4 if **any one** of the following exemptions apply:

1. The student is an **English Learner** with fewer than two years of English instruction.
2. The student is **assessed using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)** alternative assessment and demonstrates adequate progress.
3. The student is **exempt from the Forward Exam or NWEA test under their IEP**.

4. The student has an **IEP or Section 504 plan**, has received **two or more years of intensive reading intervention**, and has **previously been retained in any grade K–3**.
5. The student has received **two or more years of intensive reading intervention** and has **already been retained in any of grades K–3**.

Post-Retention Support

If a student is retained:

- A personalized academic improvement plan will be created.
- Specific goals, progress benchmarks, and instructional strategies will be defined.
- Summer programming or tutoring may be recommended or required.
- Continued progress will be monitored throughout the following school year.