



SF 265 – Repeat Grade Level, Parental Discretion (LSB1686SV)
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 Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

Senate File 265 temporarily provides for the 2021-2022 school year that if a parent submits a request prior to August 15, 2021, to a school district or a nonpublic school for the student to be retained at the student’s current grade level, the school district or nonpublic school will not promote the student to the next grade level if adequate academic progress was not made by the student in the 2020-2021 school year.

Background

There are a variety of approaches in determining grade promotion or retention of students, and policy making can take place through State legislation, by State education authorities, or by local education authorities. Examples of promotion and retention policies are as follows:

- Promotion gate policies, in which a student is expected to meet an established performance threshold before being promoted to the next grade.
- Use of an assessment to determine student eligibility for promotion or retention.
- The completion of remediation to meet proficiency levels.
- Requirement of a minimum number of attendance days.

In the State of Iowa, the determination to retain a student is a local decision and often involves decision making between the parent, teacher, and school administrators. For the history of recent State of Iowa legislation regarding grade retention, please read [here](#).

Table 1 shows recent year history of student retention history by grade level.

	2016-2017			2019-2020			2020-2021		
	Student Enrollment	Number of Retained Students	Retention Percentage	Student Enrollment	Number of Retained Students	Retention Percentage	Student Enrollment	Number of Retained Students	Retention Percentage
Kindergarten	38,196	3,589	9.4%	39,832	3,646	9.2%	37,746	3,719	9.9%
Grade 1	36,017	120	0.3%	35,894	90	0.3%	35,244	108	0.3%
Grade 2	36,599	61	0.2%	35,274	37	0.1%	34,985	48	0.1%
Grade 3	37,888	25	0.1%	35,253	34	0.1%	34,590	16	0.0%
Grade 4	37,860	26	0.1%	36,360	11	0.0%	34,796	22	0.1%
Grade 5	37,312	22	0.1%	37,185	13	0.0%	35,942	21	0.1%
Grade 6	36,761	17	0.0%	38,547	26	0.1%	36,850	10	0.0%
Grade 7	36,379	26	0.1%	38,823	45	0.1%	38,495	29	0.1%
Grade 8	36,576	39	0.1%	38,189	35	0.1%	38,587	19	0.0%
Grade 9	37,224	330	0.9%	38,725	355	0.9%	38,993	280	0.7%
Grade 10	37,056	292	0.8%	37,614	277	0.7%	38,197	232	0.6%
Grade 11	36,831	264	0.7%	37,145	267	0.7%	36,752	183	0.5%
Grade 12	36,889	2,035	5.5%	37,013	1,875	5.1%	37,280	1,832	4.9%
Total	481,588	6,846	1.4%	485,854	6,711	1.4%	478,457	6,519	1.4%

Fiscal Impact

[State Foundation School Aid](#) provides funding to local school districts and area education agencies and is based on a per pupil formula. For FY 2021, the [State cost per pupil](#) is \$7,048. Any resulting increase in enrollment from an additional year of schooling for a student will result in an additional cost per student through the school aid formula. The number of additional students being retained cannot be determined. However, there may be an increase as a result of changes in school settings resulting from COVID-19.

Sources

Department of Education
LSA calculations

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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