



# Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.

## The Parent Training and Information Center for the District of Columbia

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3912 Georgia Avenue NW  
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**Children with  
Special Needs,  
need Parents  
with Special  
Skills!**

July 29, 2025

Eboni Govan  
Attorney Advisor and FOIA Officer  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
1200 First Street, NE  
Washington, D.C., 20002

*Courtesy Copy sent via email. Also submitted via DC FOIA Portal*

Dear Ms. Govan,

As the federally designated Parent Training Information Center for the District of Columbia, Advocates for Justice and Education seeks to better understand how student promotion and retention policies are implemented so we can provide appropriate advice to families who contact us. Through our work with families, we have learned that the District of Columbia Public Schools is moving to more strictly enforce the grade promotion and retention policy, especially in early developmental stages of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. AJE and the greater community have been concerned about this change in policy enforcement. We have reviewed parent calls and concerns<sup>1</sup>, current available materials<sup>2</sup>, seven SBOE meeting notes<sup>3</sup>, media articles<sup>4</sup>, and proposed legislation<sup>5</sup> concerning this issue. Due to this change happening

1

Frumin, Matthew, Phil Mendelson, and Brooke Pinto. *Letter to Chancellor Lewis Ferebee on Grade Placement*. District of Columbia Public Schools, 8 July 2025.

<https://wila.com/resources/pdf/1445c284-07fb-4441-ad49-5a37562848ee-LettertoDCPSonGradePlacement003.pdf>.

2

DCPS Student Promotion Policy. District of Columbia Public Schools, 13 August 2018.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/18MASWig2ncnu2PyZ-rq8Ty0C8P\\_XBS22/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/18MASWig2ncnu2PyZ-rq8Ty0C8P_XBS22/view).

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Enrollment, Promotions, and Retentions Frequently Asked Questions. District of Columbia Public Schools, 6 December 2022. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19wlcK7eq003hYWrgeV39zzbAYwMU2ika/view>.

Extended IFSP Option For Children Age 3 To Age 4 Policies and Procedures. Office of the State of Superintendent, 15 April 2014.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8\\_dZz-AO7OqbxfX053SE9oenM/view?ts=687811a2&resourcekey=0-aNkrzoUufoQr3xcu4DwJUG](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8_dZz-AO7OqbxfX053SE9oenM/view?ts=687811a2&resourcekey=0-aNkrzoUufoQr3xcu4DwJUG).

3

D.C. State Board of Education Meeting Notes. Dropbox, 2025.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/ipgkuivzostn3p6sx1phw/AILbX1kSHx9my-tSd6b80mk/2025?rlkey=6qa05ai16c0iu6smvhsnh3ue&e=1&dl=0>

4

Gonzalez, John, and Lianna Golden. "DC Public Schools to Enforce Kindergarten Cutoff Date to Prevent 'Academic Redshirting.'" *WJLA*, 14 July 2025.

<https://wila.com/news/local/dc-public-schools-to-enforce-kindergarten-cutoff-date-to-prevent-academic-redshirting-washington-d-c-education-classrooms-birthday-september-cut-off-day-prek-1st-grade-held-back-students-mental-health>.

Dil, Cuneyt. "D.C. Officially Ends Redshirting for Kindergartners." *Axios*, 1 July 2025.

<https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2025/07/01/dcps-kindergarten-redshirting-rules>.

5

District of Columbia Council. *Let Students Attend Kindergarten Emergency Amendment Act of 2025*. PDF hosted on Dropbox, 18 June 2025.

[https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/2x8qmxlex8ji0w3qtahqdk/AC4avNyr4FJ2ISzbF2Eki\\_g?e=2&preview=2025-06-18-FINAL-Let+Students+Attend+Kindergarten+Emergency+Amendment+Act+of+2025.pdf&rlkey=bcnhgicymjt9fan1rc9c78ex2&st=ez8s2wbm&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sc/fo/2x8qmxlex8ji0w3qtahqdk/AC4avNyr4FJ2ISzbF2Eki_g?e=2&preview=2025-06-18-FINAL-Let+Students+Attend+Kindergarten+Emergency+Amendment+Act+of+2025.pdf&rlkey=bcnhgicymjt9fan1rc9c78ex2&st=ez8s2wbm&dl=0).

very recently, we do not currently have enough information to answer parents' questions regarding student retention.

Therefore, pursuant to D.C. Code § 2-531, *et seq.* (1977) we submit the following FOIA request, asking that the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) produce all:

- (1) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff, including training materials and communications/emails to DCPS school level administrators (principals, vice principals, and registrars) and other school staff regarding how they are to implement grade placement policies and other matters referred to in this policy since January 1st, 2023.
- (2) Guidance and instruction provided to DCPS school level administrators and other school staff on factors and criteria to consider when determining a student's grade placement needs.
- (3) Interpretations of policy, acts, rubrics, and rules that have been adopted by DCPS in relation to grade placement and student promotion since January 1st, 2023;
- (4) Correspondence and materials referred to therein, by and with DCPS, OSSE, or MSDC
  - 1) Relating to any grade placement regulation, supervision, or enforcement responsibilities of DCPS;
  - 2) Relating to participation in the school lottery system for parents, families, and students
- (5) To the extent that you regard them as outside the scope of D.C. Code § 2-536, we also request the following:
  - (a) All staff manuals, guidebooks, guidelines, policies and handbooks currently in use related to how the grade placement policy is implemented;
  - (b) All policies, guidelines, handbooks, manuals or other documents used to adjudicate or determine grade placement policy implementation filed since January 1, 2023:

We request a waiver of all fees associated with this request. The disclosure of the requested manuals, instructions, opinions, orders, statements of policy, rules, determinations, and guidelines are mandated by statute. Access to these documents is in AJE's interest because this information will contribute to AJE's understanding of the educational policies and procedures of DCPS. The requested documents directly impact the children and parents of the District of Columbia. The requested documents also inform AJE's ability, as the federally mandated parent training and Information center for the District of Columbia, to assist parents with understanding their educational rights, the educational processes that their children are subjected to, and their ability to make the most informed educational decisions for their children.

We, Advocates for Justice in Education, are a non-profit organization that provides training, workshops, and support to DC families to advocate for appropriate education for their children. We are seeking this information to support our organization's mission to provide direct services to families, children, youth, and particularly those who have disabilities, special health care needs, or are facing school exclusion. This request is not for commercial use.

Pursuant to D.C. Code § 2-532 (c)(1), *et seq.*, your response to this request is due on or before 20 days after the receipt of this request.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this request you can contact Nadiya Pope (nadiya.pope@aje-dc.org).

Sincerely,

*/s/ Nadiya Pope*

Nadiya Pope, Esq.  
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CC: Rochanda Hiligh-Thomas, Executive Director