

Middle School Student Accountability Worksheet 4

GROUP: _____

Middle school preparation plays a role in high school performance. Idaho's State Board of Education has forwarded a recommendation to its legislature that will be considered in the 2010 session. Idaho is recommending that middle schools be required to implement a credit system no later than 7th grade. Students will be required to attain a minimum of 80 percent of credits to advance grade levels. Students will not be allowed to lose a full year of credit in one area (i.e. a student would not be able to fail a full year of math) and automatically move on to the next grade level. Students not meeting (or in jeopardy of not meeting) credit requirements will be given an opportunity to recover credits or complete an alternate mechanism (e.g., end-of-course assessment, achievement tests) in order to be eligible for promotion to the next grade level. Districts can establish attendance policies that can be factored into the attainment of credit.

At our last meeting, the ITF considered this policy briefly and identified the following advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

- Provide accountability for meeting grade level standards in middle school
- Reduces need for some remediation at high school
- Begins credit concept at early age
- Moves the freshman struggle (this is real) earlier (could also be a disadvantage)
- Gives students and parents more of an awareness of importance of school
- Adds more buy-in

Disadvantages:

- Goes against research about student retention
- De-motivational effect
- Facilities issue
- We lack wrap-around support for middle level kids who struggle
- We don't have a differentiated second year of similar curriculum (definition of insanity...expect a different result)
- Forces growing up earlier—do we want this?
- Age—developmental levels

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Discussion:

1. Based on the additional information provided by Idaho at this meeting, and your further thought on this issue, would you recommend a policy like this for Washington? Why or why not? (Please amend the advantages and disadvantages, as needed).

No, we would not recommend pursuing a policy like this in Washington

Yes, we would recommend exploring a policy like this further.

Rationale:

2. What state policies are needed to help assure that middle school students are prepared for high school level work?