

University of the Virgin Islands

Graduate Program

**An Investigation into the Views of Parents and Teachers on the  
Concept of Retention**

A Thesis Submitted to

The Graduate Studies Council

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of

Master of Arts in Education

by

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Facing educators, teachers, and parents is the dilemma of what to do with the socially immature child or the child who exhibits diminished academic achievement. Hence, the idea of retention arose. The act of retention in grade is by no means a new practice in the field of education. Bryan (1997) has found that it has been prominent since the “days of graded instruction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (p. 1). Grade repetition has persisted and has been widely implemented over the years. At times it has decreased significantly. Presently, it has increased dramatically. Bryan (1997) states that approximately 2.6 million children are retained each year and further notes that the practice of retention is growing by about 20% each year. Its usage and implementation has been in response to demands of stricter standards of student performance and renewed emphasis on competency-based education. Schools are once again pressured to set higher standards for student performance.

Additionally, in early 1999, then President Bill Clinton demanded an end to the practice of social promotion whereby students were promoted to the next grade regardless of academic achievement. Since then, educators, policymakers, and legislators alike see retention as a renewed end to an age-old dilemma. Unequivocally, the stakeholders in the dilemma of retention are the classroom teachers who typically initiate the retention process and are central to the decision of retaining a child, the parents of at-risk children and the affected children. Are parents and teachers knowledgeable of what educational research says historically about the effects of grade retention? Are parents and teachers aware of the advantages and disadvantages of retention in grade?



Extensive research has been conducted on the effects of retention. Kelly (1999) notes that the majority of studies conducted over the last few decades suggests that the retention practice does more harm than good. Meisels and Liaw (1993) contend that grade retention is one of the clearest examples of noncommunication between research and practice. Despite what research has proven, retention is widely practiced by teachers and decided as best for at-risk children and allowed and agreed to by many parents to prevent further school failure.

Holmes and Matthews (1984) conducted a meta-analysis of the effects of retention. The conclusion was that retention consistently affects retained students negatively in measures of academic achievement, personal adjustment, self-concept, and attitude toward school. Holmes (1989) later updated his review of related studies with the inclusion of an additional 19 studies. Of 63 empirical studies, 54 demonstrated negative outcomes and 9 demonstrated positive outcomes.

Mantzicopolous and Morrison (1992) examined the effects of the practice of retention at kindergarten on academic achievement and behavior. In their study, retained and promoted kindergarteners were compared using same-age comparisons and same-grade comparisons. They found that the advantage exhibited by the retained children during the second year in kindergarten was not maintained past the kindergarten. However, behavioral outcomes of retention were not as clear and concise as the academic effects of retention.

In terms of teachers' attitudes toward retention, research is not clear about the basis on which teachers make retention judgments. However, Tanner and Combs (1993) believe that teachers interact daily with their students and thus hold a significant role in the retention decision. Their study questioned first- and fifth- grade teachers about their attitudes toward

retention and related issues. They concluded that teachers maintain an unwritten policy that says that retention of students is beneficial.

Tomchin and Impara (1992) conducted another relative study. Utilization of a multimethod approach resulted in three conclusions: teachers believed that retention in the primary grades was not harmful; disagreement was evident among the teachers on the impact of retention on students in grades 4-7, and retention was overwhelmingly acceptable.

Anderson (1998) cites the work of Smith (1989) in which forty teachers were interviewed. These teachers viewed retention as a beneficial and positive experience. At least half of the teachers who were interviewed felt that children were retained because they were socially and academically immature. It was agreed that perceived benefits for retained children were leadership qualities, better social behavior, improved self-confidence, and academic success.

In the Virgin Islands, retention in the elementary grades has been widely practiced to “benefit” low achieving students and socially immature students. The unspoken policy seems to be the younger they are, the better. However, since 1996, the Virgin Islands Board of Education, which makes educational policies locally, has implemented a no retention policy in the primary grades. This policy states that failure shall be nonexistent in primary classrooms. It further states that innovative techniques practiced by classroom teachers will help address the unique learning styles and varying abilities of all students and ensure daily success.

In consideration of retention in the primary grades, the policy of the Virgin Islands Board of Education (1996) has been guided by several principles:

1. Each child shall be placed in the group where he/she can do the best work and receive the most benefit- socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.
2. Each child progresses at a different rate according to ability, and no child shall attempt work for which he is not ready.
3. The question of the promotion or retention of each child is a unique problem. Grades shall not be the only criteria for promotion. Such factors as the child's age, social development, physical maturity, cognitive ability, work habits, and emotional behavior shall be considered in determining promotion.
4. Each child has possibilities for growth and development. He/she must experience success. Encouragement from an understanding teacher can be a great incentive for him/her to achieve to the fullest potential.
5. The greatest responsibility of the teacher is to the individual child and his/her needs.
6. When a child is promoted, the new teacher shall accept the child as he/she is. The teacher shall find out all the facts to determine the child's present level of development. The teacher shall work with the child at that level and stimulate his/her growth to higher levels.
7. If after all factors of the child's development are considered, and it is determined that it would be unwise for the child to be promoted to the next grade, the child and his/he family should be prepared in such a way that no feeling of shame or punishment is felt. All concerned should be helped to

realize that, for well-established reasons, the child might be a happier and more efficient worker if he/she spends a longer time in reaching certain grade standards.

8. Teachers are responsible for the progress of the children. Therefore, teachers shall stress the concepts set forth in the Virgin Islands curriculum guides and curriculum supplements.

Interventional measures have been identified to meet the needs of at-risk students such as transitional settings, developmental settings, and multiage settings. It has been the researcher's observation though that discrepancy exists as to what the Board of Education means precisely. Discrepancies also exist from school to school. Some schools adamantly maintain a no retention policy in the primary grades. In some schools, some primary students are still retained as long as teacher documentation warrants and supports the decision. Some students are retained with parental agreement by written means. In addition, a difference of opinion exists among parents and teachers. To the contrary, many educators express displeasure at being forced to make decisions in opposition to what they believe and feel is right for the children left in their academic and social care.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many students in the United States Virgin Islands have been identified as academically unready for the next grade's curriculum or socially immature. For many students, retention has been identified as the remedy. However, despite the Board of Education's policy about retention, discrepancies across public elementary schools still exist as to what is beneficial for these students. Two significant decision makers in the retention issue are parents and teachers. This research design sought to investigate the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the concept of retention.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine what the views and beliefs of parents and teachers were concerning the concept of retention. In addition, the study attempts to answer the following questions.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the views of parents on the issue of retention?
2. What are the views of teachers on the issue of retention?
3. Are there differences between the views of parents and teachers on the issue of retention?

### Definitions of Terms

The Dictionary of Education (1973) has set forth the following educational terms.

**Academic achievement** – knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or by both

**Promotion** – the act of shifting a pupil's placement from a lower to a higher grade

**Nonpromotion** – failure of a pupil to be promoted to the next higher grade at a regular promotion period

**Repeater** – a pupil who has repeated or is currently repeating the work of a grade or part of a subject at some designated level of difficulty

When considering this study, readers are encouraged to apply these definitions that were taken from the Dictionary of Education (1973) where necessary.

### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the parents and teachers of students who attend one particular elementary school on the island of St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands. It does not generalize to all parents and teachers of other public elementary schools on the island of St. Croix or throughout the United States.

### Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the views of parents and teachers on the concept of retention. It is hoped that the results of this study may provide information that

may help educators and parents to see how their decisions to retain actually compare to the results of retention research. The results of this investigation may also help educators and parents to investigate possible alternative and intervention strategies for those children exhibiting at-risk behaviors.

## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

This school policy has been called many things: grade retention, nonpromotion, flunking, holding back, *a year to grow*, repeating a grade, and even staying back. What it simply equates to is children repeating a second year in a given grade for reasons such as being socially immature and/or being academically incompetent. Its history is long and controversial. Advocates and opponents have argued extensively in support of or against the practice of retention. Meisels and Liaw (1993) state that grade retention is “one of the clearest examples of noncommunication between research and practice” (p. 69).

This review of the literature will examine the historical perspective of grade retention. Studies on the effects of retention in all grades, teachers’ beliefs about retention, and parents’ beliefs about retention will also be examined.

#### Historical Perspective

Graded instruction has been a reality in the history of education since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Prior to this, students worked at individual paces and progress was simply determined by the completion of school-selected texts. Graded instruction proposed “students were placed in classes on the basis of their achievement and all students were expected to pursue the same subjects at the same time” (Lehr, 1992, p. 235). Thus, teachers were able to concentrate on students of relatively similar chronological age and experiential levels. To ensure the success of graded instruction, retention was practiced when a quota of content was not mastered.



In the 1930's, due to economic depression and modifications in attitudes about children's emotional and social development, such as age, achievement, and social maturity, retention was denounced as harmful. Hence, the policy of social promotion was implemented to fight the ills of grade retention. Social promotion was a policy whereby students were allowed to advance to the next grade level with their peers without mastering academic skills and standards. Again, due to modifications in attitudes of people such as psychologists and educators about lowered academic standards and concerns about a decline in the quality of American education, the practice of retention was renewed during the 1970's.

In the discussion of statistics, Smith and Shepard (1987) concluded that the increased practice of retention is poorly documented. However, a close examination of United States Census Bureau data on the percentage of children who are in a grade below the modal grade for their age roughly shows what retention rates look like in the United States. Both researchers estimate an overall retention rate of 15% to 19% comparable to countries such as Haiti and Sierra Leone and incomparable to Japan's retention rate of less than 1%. Doyle (1989) stated that the "impetus for higher rates comes from officials attuned to the conventional wisdom not to research findings" (p. 217). The rise of grade retention was further promoted with the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report published by the National Consensus on Excellence in Education. Additionally, Shepard and Smith (1990) also note it has been estimated that 2.4 million students are retained in the United States every year.

### **Studies on the Effects of Grade Retention**

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the effects of grade retention. These studies have revealed positive benefits, negative benefits, and in some instances mixed reviews. As a result, these studies have been categorized accordingly.

### Negative Benefits

Thompson (1999) warned that some of the differences in findings across studies could be attributed to differences in the meaning of retention and the way the retained students were treated. Were they simply retaught old material or were they taught using innovative ways? Considerable and extensive research has been done on the outcomes of retention in the kindergarten through twelfth grades. Goodlad (1954) synthesized research findings between 1924 and 1948 related to retention. His study sought to determine whether or not discrepancies existed in the social and personal adjustment of promoted and retained students in the elementary grades. He concluded that retention was an “invalid school practice” and “detrimental to the social and personal development of boys and girls” (p. 327).

Jackson (1975) reviewed 40 studies that examined the benefits of grade retention versus grade promotion for academically at-risk students. He renounced the lack of and the need for experimental design studies. He also concluded that the use of retention held no positive benefits.

Meisels and Liaw (1993) conducted a study that provided a national picture of retention and also confirmed its negative impact on nonpromoted students. They both concluded that despite the popularity of retention, it is “apparently unhelpful to students” (p.76). “In summary, retention is an educational treatment with substantially more negative than positive associations” (p.76). This study was unlike many others conducted before because the sample was the largest ever done. It also demonstrated that many children were retained dependent on reasons that were nonacademic such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Roderick's (1994) study emphasized that grade retention directly impacted on school dropout rates because it made students overage for the grade they were enrolled in. Bocks (1977) cites a seven-year study conducted by Charles Henry Keyes in a school district of about 5,000 students. The finding showed that 40% of the retained students did worse academically and socially, 39% showed no change, and 20% did better.

Pomplun's two-year study (1988) compared retained students of all grade levels with borderline and regular students. He found that retained primary students' self-concepts appeared stable over a two-year period but intermediate and secondary students' self-concepts showed significant decreases in self-esteem. Retention lost its effectiveness as the grade level increased.

Mantzicopolous and Morrison (1992) researched whether grade retention in the kindergarten impacted academic achievement and behavior. The sample was 53 retained students in the kindergarten who were matched to a group of 53 promoted peers. The academic gains shown by the retainees were not maintained past the kindergarten. This study did not support the idea that retention is an effective policy for the young at-risk child.

Holmes and Matthews (1984) in a meta-analysis of the effects of retention sampled elementary and junior high school students. On both academic and social emotional measures, the outcomes for promoted students were more positive than for retained students. Negative effects were also noted for retained students.

Owings and Magliaro (1998) cited the work of Holmes (1989) that analyzed 63 empirical studies in which 54 resulted in overall negative effects on children's achievement, attendance record, and attitude toward school. Retained students were matched to equally low-performing peers who were promoted. In terms of academic achievement, retained

students were about one third standard deviation less than similar children who were promoted.

Shepard and Smith (1986) summarized relevant research on retention and the implication of early grade retention policies. They believed that despite the projected attractiveness of an extra year, the child develops negative feelings about school and pays an emotional cost.

### Positive Benefits

Lehr (1982) cited a two-year study completed by Finlayson in 1977. Self-concepts of 75 promoted, retained, and borderline-promoted first-grade students were examined and several conclusions drawn. The self-concept scores of the retained students increased while those of the promoted and borderline-promoted dropped slightly. Additionally, parents and teachers felt that there were beneficial effects rather than harmful effects on retained students. Also, retention did not promote any self-concept problems.

Lehr (1982) also cites a 1977 study conducted by Owen and Ranick that compared the performance of students in Greenville County, Virginia, before and after they were retained. At the start of the 1973-1974 school year, the school district of Greenville did not promote students until expected skills at a given grade level were mastered. Students were given a standardized achievement test twice a year. Findings suggested increased achievement and IQ scores as well as decreased dropout and retention rates.

Gottfredson, Fink, and Graham (1994) explored the causal relationship of grade retention and late adolescent problems such as drug use and delinquency. The subjects were mostly African-American sixth- and seventh-graders in two urban middle schools in the spring of 1988. This study compared retained students with promoted students. The findings

suggested that there were no negative effects of grade retention on the prediction on problem behaviors that were examined.

Bryan (1997) sought to investigate the effect of retention on the academic performance on retained fourth-grade students at a public school locally. She concluded that retention showed a positive impact on these students during the second year. However, these students would have made similar gains if they were promoted.

### Mixed Reviews

Mantzicopolous et al. (1989) also conducted a study in which the sample was 34 promoted kindergarten students and 34 nonpromoted kindergarten student in a suburban area of Northern California. Conclusions suggest that retainees were more likely to be male, of younger age and of lower socioeconomic status (SES). "Students retained at kindergarten appear to be different from their promoted peers in demographic, behavioral, cognitive, achievement, perceptual and visual-motor factors" (p. 117). This clearly suggested the possibility that retained kindergarten students might be at risk of continued learning problems beyond the kindergarten grade.

Peterson, DeGracie and Ayabe (1987) conducted another longitudinal study, which examined the long-term impact of retention. First-, second-, and third-grade retained students were matched with same age promoted students. They failed to find "convincing evidence that retention is beneficial, in terms of same year comparisons"..." nor "that retention is harmful academically as other studies have found" (p. 117).

Kelly (1999) also cited the longitudinal study of Alexander et al. (1992) that closely examined 775 students in Baltimore over a period of eight years. Their findings asserted that retention was harmful and at times offered small benefits. Professor Lorrie Shepard later

challenged this study. She argued that the high test scores could be attributed to the many retainees who were placed in special education settings and thus excused from standardized testing.

### **Teachers' Beliefs about Retention**

Tanner and Combs (1993) cited the works of Biegler and Gillis (1985), which proposed that limited knowledge of teachers' attitudes toward retention exists. They found that teachers did not endorse retention for academic purposes. Smith and Shepard (1987) conducted a project consisting of several case studies including one that examined teachers' beliefs about retention. They proposed a theory that clearly distinguishes a teacher's "tacit knowledge-what they know about instruction, discipline, and the like that allows them to make many decisions every day" and "propositional knowledge" which is "based on an accumulation of experience with real children in actual classrooms" (p.131). They have theorized that teachers' tacit knowledge misleads them when it comes to grade retention. They explain the following:

A teacher may observe that Johnny is struggling in kindergarten and decide to retain him.

The following year - his second year in kindergarten - Johnny shines. He stays on-task, pays attention, and learns his sounds and letters. He is a "leader." The teacher absorbs this information and concludes that retention is beneficial. In this case, tacit knowledge coincides with propositional knowledge from research: that is, the child who is retained often makes achievement gains during the second year in kindergarten. But the information to which the teachers have personal access is

incomplete and misleading. Jimmy, alike in many respects to Johnny, is promoted. Perhaps, he struggles a little, but he makes it. By the time the two boys are halfway through elementary school, their performance and adjustment are indistinguishable. Unfortunately, Jimmy is only an abstraction to the teachers: he is what Johnny would have been had he been promoted. This what a control group demonstrates: the typical outcome if a subject remains untreated. Since both Johnny and Jimmy progressed to the same degree, the comparative study shows that retention is ineffective. Since the teachers lack this abstraction they rely on their direct, but inadequate, experience. (p. 131)

Smith and Shepard contended that teachers exaggerate the perceived positive outcomes of grade retention. Tanner and Combs (1993) investigated a national sample of first- and fifth-grade teachers. The intent was to determine the teachers' perceptions and understandings about retention through the use of a questionnaire. A total of 892 surveys representing 59% were returned. The findings showed that teachers agreed that retention helped students improve academically. They also noted teachers' beliefs about retention were not related to what the research and literature said about retention. They, like Meisels and Liaw (1993), believed that a gap between research and practice existed: either teachers were not knowledgeable of the research findings or they simply didn't believe them.

Bergin, Osburn and Cryan (1996) investigated other reasons besides academic achievement or competence that might influence teachers' decisions to promote or retain students. Two hundred fifty-two kindergarten teachers throughout the state of Ohio responded to hypothetical student profiles. Teachers had to make a placement decision for the profile given. The selections were to retain, to promote or to place in a transitional

setting. They were to also give reasons for the chosen placement. Demographic information was also requested such as age, gender, the number of years teaching, and the number of years teaching kindergarten. Conclusions were that teachers were more likely to recommend retention for younger children, immature and dependent children, and that older teachers were more likely to recommend retention or transition.

Tomchin and Impara (1992) examined teachers' beliefs about retention in grades K-7 through the implementation of two quantitative instruments. A large number of teachers of all grade levels accepted retention as a school practice. Almost 98% of the teachers disagreed with the statement, "Children should never be retained." The majority of the teachers indicated that retention in grades K-3 was beneficial. Many felt that children needed more time and retention made that possible. Discrepancy was evident in the retention of students in grades 4-7.

### **Parents' Beliefs about Retention**

Little research has been found that examines parental perceptions about the advantages and disadvantages of retention. However, Smith and Shepard (1988) conducted a qualitative study that included parental beliefs. The study also examined issues concerning teachers' beliefs about retention and its utility through the use of interviews, participant observation in kindergarten classes and decision-making events, analysis of documents, and semi-structured interviews with parents. Teachers' beliefs were characterized as *nativists*, *remediationists*, *diagnostic prescriptive*, or *interactionists*. A high number of teachers' beliefs were found to be nativists. In other words, it was believed that each child has a unique physiological clock, which does not move until the child is developmentally ready. Not one



teacher thought that social promotion was desirable. Many teachers believed that few risks or costs were associated with the act of retention. If any risks existed, they were thought to be inconsequential. Teachers quickly noted that the decision to retain was ultimately the parents' decision. However, "teachers underestimated the degree of conflict with parents over the decision and the extent of frustration, shame, and confusion the children felt (as reported by the parents)." (p.323) In some instances, parents agreed with teachers that some advantages existed such as improved self-confidence.

Smith and Shepard (1987) both professors of higher education also called the present kindergarten grade a "fast-paced academic experience" rather than an "idyllic time for coloring, singing, reciting numbers and letters, and learning to cope with one's mittens and the class bully." (p. 132) Shepard and Smith (1988) note that kindergarten retention has increased dramatically due to what they term an "escalating kindergarten curriculum" (p.1). Kindergarten classrooms are now mini-academic first grades where what was expected in first grade is now the province of kindergarten. Their findings have led them to the conclusion that grade retention in the kindergarten is traumatic and disruptive based on interviews held with parents of retained students. Moreover, they note "pupils who are retained pay with a year of their lives" and "add a year to their career in school."(p.130)

Discussion on the historical perspective of grade retention has been examined. Additionally, studies on the effects of grade retention, teachers' beliefs about retention, and parents' beliefs on the concept of retention have also been reviewed. Due to the minimal number of studies on parental and teacher views, it appeared that this research study was therefore of a seminal nature. It was a first-time research study that examined both the perceptions of parents and teachers about grade retention in the elementary grades.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### Participants

The purpose of this study was to determine the views and attitudes of both parents and teachers on the advantages and disadvantages of nonpromotion in the elementary grades. Participants were chosen from the professional staff and from the parents of students who are presently enrolled at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School, St. Croix. The Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School is a relatively large school.

The entire teaching staff was given the Teacher Retention Views Questionnaire. The teaching staff included 1 counselor, 1 librarian, 2 special education teachers, 10 special area teachers, and 26 regular classroom teachers. In all, forty questionnaires were distributed. Thirty questionnaires representing 73% were completed and returned. The sample size of the teachers adhered well to the required guidelines.

The universe of parents and guardians was also given the Parent Retention Views Questionnaire via their children. Four hundred sixty-six (466) questionnaires were distributed. One hundred eighty-four questionnaires representing 39% were returned. The sample size of parent respondents (184) was not the recommended size(210). However, according to descriptive research, it is common to sample 10 to 20% of the population. Therefore, it was a fairly good sample for a school population. All respondents were asked to return the questionnaires to the school's office. School wide intercom announcements urging students to return questionnaires were done daily.

### **Setting**

At that time, the staff at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School was composed of 2 administrators, 38 teachers, paraprofessionals, one nurse, one counselor, one librarian, and support staff that made the total adult body to be approximately 75 adults. The student body, which consisted of both males and females, was approximately 612 in number and ranged in ages 4 1/2 to 13 years. A majority of students were of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity. English was the primary language. Varying forms of dialect were used in many homes. Spanish was the primary language of approximately 1/6 of the student population. Arabic and other African languages were spoken in a very small number of homes.

According to school records, the students who attended Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School were primarily living in single-family dwellings, apartments, or government owned housing communities. The students were bused from areas such as Watergut Homes, Gallows Bay, John F. Kennedy Housing Community, Catherine's Rest, Work & Rest, Estate Welcome, Christiansted, and East End.

### **Instrumentation**

This was a descriptive research study. To determine the views and attitudes of parents and teachers on the concept of retention, two quantitative instruments were developed. A Teacher Retention Views Questionnaire (TRVQ) and a Parent Retention Views Questionnaire (PRVQ) in both English and Spanish were designed (See Appendix B). The TRVQ consisted of two parts. Part I asked for demographic information, including years of teaching experience. Part II included 14 five-choice Likert-scaled items. The PRVQ consisted of 14 five-choice Likert-scaled items. Every questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter that explained what was being asked of the respondent and why.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

In order to collect the data for this study, two original instruments were used and distributed simultaneously. TRVQs were distributed to the professional staff members. PRVQs were sent home to all parents via their children. Since this study was conducted in a public school, permission was sought from the Virgin Islands Department of Education to conduct this study.

### **Data Analysis**

The results obtained were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the views of parents and the views of teachers. Items in the questionnaire were categorized. Items on both questionnaires were essentially the same or comparative. The percentage and number responses of parents and teachers to each item were calculated and presented in tables, charts, and narrative form. Descriptive statistics were also used to determine any differences between the views of teachers and parents. These results were presented in narrative, tabular, and graphic forms.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the views of parents and teachers on the concept of retention. To accomplish this purpose, two questionnaires were prepared and administered to all involved. The Teacher Retention Views Questionnaire (TRVQ) consisted of two parts. Part I required personal and professional information. Part II consisted of 14 five-choice Likert-type items dealing with attitudes towards retention. The Parent Retention Views Questionnaire (PRVQ) also consisted of 14 five-choice Likert-type items dealing with views on retention.

Items on both questionnaires were comparable and in some instances exactly the same. At times, some items were not responded to. These incidences have been categorized under the heading "no responses" in the presentation of results. In other instances, respondents selected more than one response or wrote in question marks and/or comments instead of marking with checks as instructed. These specific incidences were placed under the heading "other." A number of respondents also gave additional comments that have been delineated.

#### **Teacher Retention Views Questionnaire**

Forty questionnaires were distributed among the teaching personnel as follows:

Counselor	1
Librarian	1
Special Education Teachers	2

Special Area Teachers*	10
Regular Classroom Teachers	26
Total	<u>30</u>

\*Special Area Teachers: Art, Music, Physical Education, Language Arts Resource, Spanish, Math/Science, ESL, and Computer

Thirty (30) questionnaires were completed and returned (73%).

The TRVQ consisted of two parts. Part I concerned demographic as well as personal information about each respondent. Part II consisted of the teachers' responses.

### Part I

#### 1. Distribution by gender

Females	26	86.7%
Males	2	6.7%
Not Indicated	2	6.7%
Total	<u>30</u>	<u>100%</u>

#### 2. Distribution by age

20-29	4	13.3%
30-39	6	20%
40-49	9	30%
50-59	5	16.7%
Not Indicated	6	20%
Total	<u>30</u>	<u>100%</u>

3. Distribution by grade level or position

Kindergarten	2	Sixth	4
First	3	Librarian	1
Second	2	Special Ed	2
Third	3	Special Area	4
Fourth	3	Not Indicated	2
Fifth	4		
		Total	<u>30</u>
			====

4. Years of teaching experience

0-9	10	33.3%
10-19	5	16.7%
20-29	9	30%
30-39	3	10%
40 and over	1	3.3%
Not Indicated	2	6.7%
Total	<u>30</u>	<u>100%</u>
		=====

5. Response to "have you ever previously retained students"

Yes	21	70%
No	6	20%
Not Indicated	3	10%
Total	<u>30</u>	<u>100%</u>

The profile of the teacher participants in this study indicates that the majority are females (86.7%) between the ages of 30 to 49 (50%). A majority of the teachers (70%) cited that they had previously retained students in grade. Results also showed that half of the respondents (50%) had at least 20 years of teaching experience.

## Part II

This part of the questionnaire consisted of 14 five-choice Likert-type items on the issue of retention. All items were answered using a scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. All results are presented in terms of percentage as well as number figures.

Table 1

## Teacher Responses in %

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
1. If a student were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	50%	33%	10%	0%	0%	7%	0%
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	30%	40%	3%	7%	3%	10%	7%
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	27%	23%	7%	20%	20%	3%	0%
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	20%	13.3%	43.3%	13.3%	6.7%	3.3%	0%
5. If a child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	53.3%	26.7%	13.3%	3.3%	0%	3.3%	0%
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.	50%	30%	7%	7%	3%	3%	0%
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.	0%	0%	3%	47%	47%	3%	0%
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	10%	7%	10%	47%	23%	3%	0%
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	13.3%	30%	13.3%	33.3%	6.7%	0%	3.3%



10. Children should never be retained.	7%	0%	0%	30%	60%	3%	0%
11. Children should be retained if they are socially immature.	0%	10%	16.7%	46.7%	26.7%	0%	0%
12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	3%	3%	0%	47%	47%	0%	0%
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.	6.6%	36.6%	30%	16.6%	10%	0%	0%
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students catch up.	10%	33%	27%	20%	7%	0%	3%

Table 2

Teacher Responses in #s

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
1. If a student were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	15	10	3	0	0	2	0
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	9	12	1	2	1	3	2
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	8	7	2	6	6	1	0
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	6	4	13	4	2	1	0
5. If a child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	16	8	4	1	0	1	0
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.	15	9	2	2	1	1	0
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.	0	0	1	14	14	1	0
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	3	2	3	14	7	1	0
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	4	9	4	10	2	0	1
10. Children should never be retained.	2	0	0	9	18	1	0
11. Children should be retained if they							

immature.	0	3	5	14	8	0	0
12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	1	1	0	14	14	0	0
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.	2	11	9	5	3	0	0
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students catch up.	3	10	8	6	2	0	1

Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 11 dealt specifically with the decision of retention: the conditions and timing for it. Item 2 dealt with the teachers' knowledge of current educational research on the issue of retention. Items 6, 7, and 8 dealt with who the key decision makers of retention should be. Item 9 dealt with consequences of retention. Item 12 dealt with alternatives to grade retention. Item 13 explored gender issues in retention. Item 14 dealt with the idea of retention as an appropriate way for students to catch up.

The teacher respondents believed that students should be retained if the required competencies for the next grade were not accomplished (50% strongly agreed, 33% agreed) and if the child was not ready for the next grade (53.3% strongly agreed, 26.7% agreed). They also agreed that they were aware of the current educational research on retention (30% strongly agreed, 40% agreed). Participants also believed that retention in the kindergarten was preferable to retention in grades 1-6 (27% strongly agreed, 23% agreed, 7% undecided, 20% disagreed, 20% strongly disagree, and 3% did not respond). There was no consensus concerning student retention due to too many school absences (20% strongly agreed, 13.3% agreed, 43.3% were undecided, 13.3% disagreed, 6.7% strongly agreed, 3.3% did not respond).

A combined number of the teachers also felt that both parents and teachers should be the key decision makers in the retention of a child (50% strongly agreed, 30% agreed). Likewise, a majority felt that parents should not be the sole decision maker (47% strongly disagreed, 47% disagreed) and neither should teachers (47% disagreed, 23% strongly disagreed).

When exploring negative consequences of retention, respondents were divided in their support. Some felt that students were treated negatively by their peers (13.3% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 13.3% were undecided, 33.3% disagreed, 6.7% strongly disagreed, 3.3% were "other"). A majority disagreed with the idea that children should never be retained (30% disagreed, 60% strongly disagreed). The practice of retention for socially immature students was viewed unfavorably (46.7% disagreed, 26.7 strongly disagreed). Additionally, the idea of social promotion being a better alternative than grade retention was also viewed unfavorably (47% disagreed, 47% strongly disagreed).

Many teachers also believed that boys were more likely to be retained than girls (6.6% agreed, 36.6% strongly agreed). Others were undecided about this issue (30%). Others also felt that retention was a means of helping students "catch up" (10% strongly agreed, 33% agreed)

In some instances, respondents wrote in comments:

Table 3

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>WRITTEN RESPONSES</b>
1. If a student were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	depends on degree of failure and maturity
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	no no
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	opinion primary
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	what's many
5. If a child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	depending on conditions
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	sometimes
12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	if the child has already been retained
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students <i>catch up</i> .	sometimes in our current system

In response to item 14, one teacher circled *great* and elaborated further with a question mark. Another respondent wrote the following comments at the bottom of the page: Unless an acceptable comprehensive plan or program is put in place to deal with students who show the need for retention, I strongly believe in retention.

### Parent Retention Views Questionnaire

What follows are the views of parents on the issue of retention. This questionnaire consisted of 14 five-choice Likert-type items. These items were comparable or in some

instances exactly the same as items in the TRVQ. “If a student” was replaced with “if my own child.” Spanish was the primary language of approximately 1/6 of the student population. To meet this need, a Spanish version of the PRVQ was formulated and distributed simultaneously with the other questionnaires. Responses to the Spanish PRVQs were tabulated along with the responses of the English version of the PRVQs.

Table 4 **Parent Responses in %**

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
1. If my own child were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	31%	43%	13%	7%	4%	2%	0%
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	7%	43%	23%	14%	3%	8%	2%
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	15%	23%	14%	31%	13%	3%	1%
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	6.5%	16.8%	16.8%	37%	20.7%	1.6%	.5%
5. If my own child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	27%	52%	11%	5%	3%	1%	1%
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.	54%	37%	3%	4%	2%	0%	0%
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.	6%	8.7%	7.1%	51.6%	25.5%	.5%	.5%
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	10%	17%	8%	42%	21%	2%	0%
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	18%	38%	18%	16%	7%	2%	1%
10. Children should never be retained.	4%	2%	10%	52%	29%	3%	0%
11. Children should be retained if they are socially immature.	4.9%	6.5%	15.2%	51.6%	19.6%	2.2%	0%

12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	5%	15%	21%	35%	19%	3%	2%
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.	3.8%	23.9%	22.8%	32.6%	13.6%	3.3%	0%
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students catch up.	10.9%	37.5%	19.6%	19.6%	9.8%	2.2%	.5%

Table 5

### Parent Responses in #s

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE	OTHER
1. If my own child were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	<b>57</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	<b>12</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	<b>12</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
5. If my own child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	<b>49</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.	<b>99</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	<b>34</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
10. Children should never be retained.	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
11. Children should be retained if they are socially immature.	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.	<b>7</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students <i>catch up</i> .	<b>20</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

Items 1, 3 4, 5, 10, and 11 dealt specifically with the decision of retention and the conditions and timing for it. Item 2 dealt with the parents' knowledge of current educational research on the issue of retention. Items 6, 7, and 8 dealt with who the key decision makers of retention should be. Item 9 dealt with consequences of retention. Item 12 dealt with alternatives to grade retention. Item 13 explored gender issues in retention. Item 14 dealt with the idea of retention as an appropriate way for students to catch up.

A majority of parents felt that if their own child were not to accomplish the prerequisite competencies for the next grade, they would choose to have him or her retained (31% strongly agree, 43% agree). Ambivalence was evident on the issue of retention in kindergarten versus retention in grades 1-6 (15% strongly agreed, 23% agreed, 14% were undecided, 31% disagreed, 13% strongly disagreed, 3% did not respond, and 1% said "other"). Half of the parents pledged awareness of the current educational research on retention (7% strongly agreed, 43% agreed).

Many believed that excessive student absences should not be grounds for retention (37.7% disagreed, 20.7% strongly disagreed). A majority also agreed that retention should be considered if the child was not ready for the next grade (27% strongly agreed, 52% agreed).

In the discussion of the key decision makers of retention, a vast majority agreed that both parents and teachers should both be involved (54% strongly agreed, 37% agreed).

Likewise, a majority disagreed that parents should solely decide on retention (51.6% disagreed, 25.5 strongly disagreed). A majority also disagreed that teachers should solely decide on retention (42% disagreed, 21% strongly disagreed). Many expressed that there were negative consequences of retention felt by the victims (18% strongly agreed, 38% strongly agreed). A majority also disagreed that children should never be retained (52% disagreed, 29% strongly disagreed).

In the minds of parents, social immaturity was definitely not for retention (51.6% disagreed, 19.6% strongly disagreed). More than half of the respondents did not view social promotion over grade retention (35% disagreed, 19% strongly disagreed). Parents were divided in their support of boys being retained more than girls (23.9 agreed, 3.8% strongly agreed, 22.8 were undecided, 32.6 disagreed, 13.6 strongly disagreed and 3% did not respond). In regards to the benefits of retention parents expressed that retention was an appropriate way to help students catch up (10.9% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed, 19.6% were undecided, 19.6 disagreed, 9.8 strongly disagreed, and 2.2 did not respond).



Written comments expressed were:

Table 6

STATEMENTS	WRITTEN COMMENTS
1. If my own child were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	I strongly agree because I would want my child to be prepared. summer school I feel that before the 3rd marking period I should be informed before I make that choice.
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	no never saw it if it is done in a positive way for the betterment of students
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	Every child has different learning abilities, some slow, some fast. opinion 1-3
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	If there is a valid reason (sickness) and student behavior is up to par- then no. Children deserve a chance to get their education. Depends on situation
5. If my own child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	No Repeat the classes needed I feel that the child should be given a chance. Then if he/she can't perform to grade level then.
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.	When both work together rewards are produced for that individual.
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.	No A round table discussion needs to be done not by parents only.
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	It will be wrong for that to take place by a teacher alone. Parents need to be involved.
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	Sometimes it does happen, but if the child has been prepared early that child will handle his or her peers.
10. Children should never be retained.	Sometimes it is better to retain a child than promote them.
11. Children should be retained if they are socially immature.	That does not mean they are not academically inclined.
12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	Summer school and tutoring I need to learn more facts about this first.
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.	Facts need to be presented first.
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students catch up.	Which can be true If a child is retained how can she/he ever catch up with the students that went on leaving him behind?

Written comments expressed were:

Table 6

STATEMENTS	WRITTEN COMMENTS
1. If my own child were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.	I strongly agree because I would want my child to be prepared. summer school I feel that before the 3rd marking period I should be informed before I make that choice.
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	no never saw it if it is done in a positive way for the betterment of students
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	Every child has different learning abilities, some slow, some fast. opinion 1-3
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.	If there is a valid reason (sickness) and student behavior is up to par- then no. Children deserve a chance to get their education. Depends on situation
5. If my own child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.	No Repeat the classes needed I feel that the child should be given a chance. Then if he/she can't perform to grade level then.
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.	When both work together rewards are produced for that individual.
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.	No A round table discussion needs to be done not by parents only.
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	It will be wrong for that to take place by a teacher alone. Parents need to be involved.
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.	Sometimes it does happen, but if the child has been prepared early that child will handle his or her peers.
10. Children should never be retained.	Sometimes it is better to retain a child than promote them.
11. Children should be retained if they are socially immature.	That does not mean they are not academically inclined.
12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	Summer school and tutoring I need to learn more facts about this first.
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.	Facts need to be presented first.
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students <i>catch up</i> .	Which can be true If a child is retained how can she/he ever catch up with the students that went on leaving him behind?

Additional comments written at the bottom of the page were: “Grades should decide if child should be retained.” and “Parents need more after school for children to catch up. Teachers need to give parents good alternatives to enhance the learning of the children instead of trying to cripple the child.”

### **Comparison of Teacher and Parent Responses**

Figures 1 through 14- Appendix G, graphically illustrate the relative outcome of the Parent/Teacher Retention View Questionnaires. The graphs indicate that both the majority of the teachers and the majority of parents had opinions that were either in agreement or disagreement with the position prorogated by the survey items. The opinions of both the teacher and parent populations were each divided into seven (7) categories, namely: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *undecided*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*, *no response* and *other*. Invariably, there was only one scenario in which a majority view was clearly in the undecided category. In particular, a majority of teachers were undecided regarding whether or not school absences should be used to retain students. To the contrary, in each of the other 97 of 98 probable scenarios, the majority views were either in some form of agreement or disagreement.

Given the above and in order to adequately facilitate the analysis of parent and teacher views, the categories of *agree* and *strongly agree* were combined into one agreement category. Likewise, the *disagree* and *strongly disagree* categories were lumped together. The outcome of this regrouping is represented by figures 15 and 16. Figure 15 compares the respective proportions of teachers and parents who agreed with the variables being assessed.

Figure 16, on the other hand, compares the respective proportions of teachers and parents who disagreed on each of the fourteen situations.

Table 7

Consolidated Parent / Teacher majority view summary (%)				
Item #	Agree / Strongly Agree		Disagree / Strongly Disagree	
	Parents	Teachers	Teachers	Parents
1	83	74	0	11
2	70	50	10	17
3	50	38	40	44
4	33	23	20	58
5	80	79	3	8
6	80	91	10	6
7	0	15	94	77
8	17	27	70	63
9	43	56	40	23
10	7	6	90	81
11	10	11	73	71
12	6	20	94	54
13	43	28	27	46
14	43	48	27	29

Fig.#15: Majority Agreement % for teachers and parents on survey items

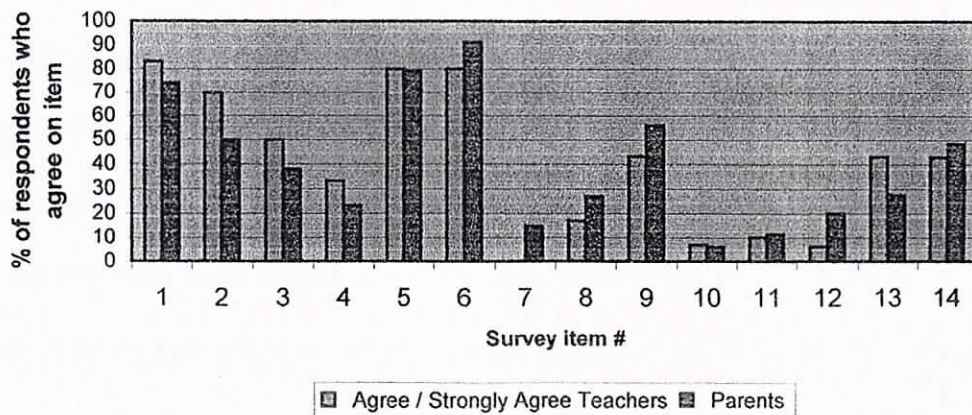
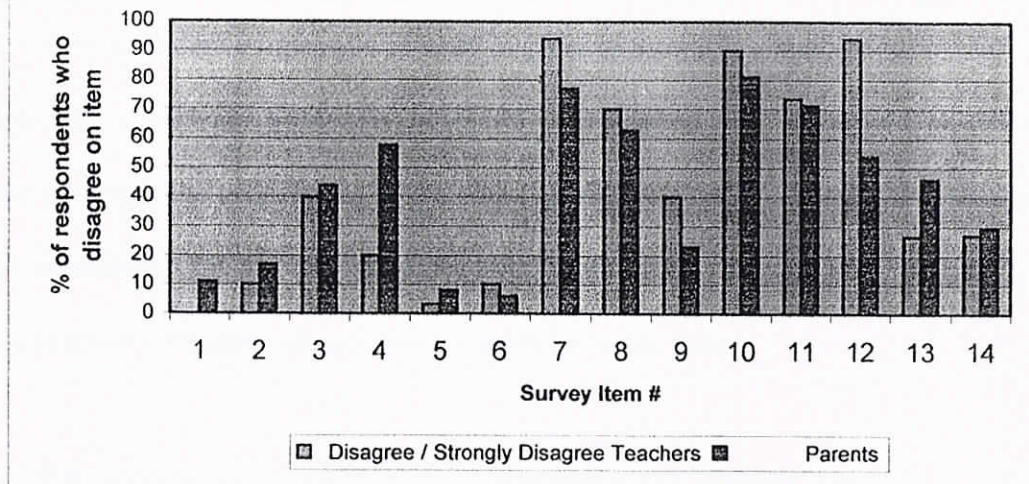


Fig. 16: % of Disagreements on parent / teacher view survey



This realignment of the data indicated that both a majority of teachers and a majority of parents were in agreement on a number of issues. Those issues were as follows:

- Children should be retained if they do not meet the required competencies (Item #1).
- Individual awareness of current educational research on retention (Item #2).
- Students should be retained if they were not ready for the next grade (Item #5).
- Both parents and teachers should be involved in the decision to retain (Item #6).
- Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers (Item #9).
- Retention is a good way to help students catch up (Item #14).

In so much as the majority of parents and teachers appear to have identical views on the issues listed above, the researcher sought to determine whether the proportion of parents who were in agreement with the aforementioned issues were any different from the proportion of teachers who were also in agreement with the said issues. A statistical analysis ( $z^*$ - $z$  distribution-for two proportions) concerning the difference between the two observed proportions,  $P't - P'p$ , was performed on each of the 14 issues surveyed. Throughout the

analysis, a 95% confidence interval was used in order to establish a maximum error of estimate and the confidence limits that, ultimately, determined whether or not a significant difference existed in the proportions of the majority views of the said parents and teachers. Figure 17 summarizes the differences in observed proportions, the maximum errors of estimate and the error ranges obtained in the analysis of the data.

Table 8

Differences in proportions of parent/teacher views		Difference in highest proportion		Maximum error	Error range	Significant difference
#	Item Description	Teachers	Parents			
		P't-P'p	P'p-P't			
		%	%	+E		Yes or No
1	If... were not to accomplish required competencies, I would choose for him or her to be retained	8.9		14.7	-5.9 to 23.6	No
2	I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.	20.0		17.9	2.1 to 37.9	Yes
3	It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.	11.4		19.2	-7.8 to 30.6	No
4	Students should be retained due to too many absences. ( <i>parents agree/teachers disagree</i> )		24.3	18.3	6 to 42.6	Yes
5	If... were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained	1.2		15.5	-14.3 to 16.7	No
6	Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.		10.8	14.9	-4.2 to 25.7	No
7	Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain	19.5		8.8	10.7 to 28.3	Yes
8	Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.	7.0		17.8	-10.9 to 24.8	No
9	Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.		12.6	19.1	-6.5 to 31.8	No
10	Children should never be retained.	9.0		12.1	-3.1 to 26.2	No
11	Children should be retained if they are socially immature ( <i>teachers agree/parents disagree</i> )	2.1		17.1	-15 to 19.3	No
12	Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.	39.0		11.5	27.5 to 50.5	Yes
13	Boys are more likely to be retained than girls ( <i>teachers disagree/parents agree</i> )		2.9	19.1	-16.3 to 22	No
14	The policy of retention is a great way to help students <i>catch up</i> .		5.0	19.1	-14.1 to 24.2	No

In 6 out of 14 - of the situations, both a majority of parents and a majority of teachers were in agreement with the researcher's postulate. Notably, according to analysis, it was only possible to infer in one of the said 6 situations that there was a significant difference in the proportions of parent and teacher view. In other words, in 5 of the 6 scenarios, the maximum error of estimate exceeded the actual error in the respective proportionate views. Thereby,

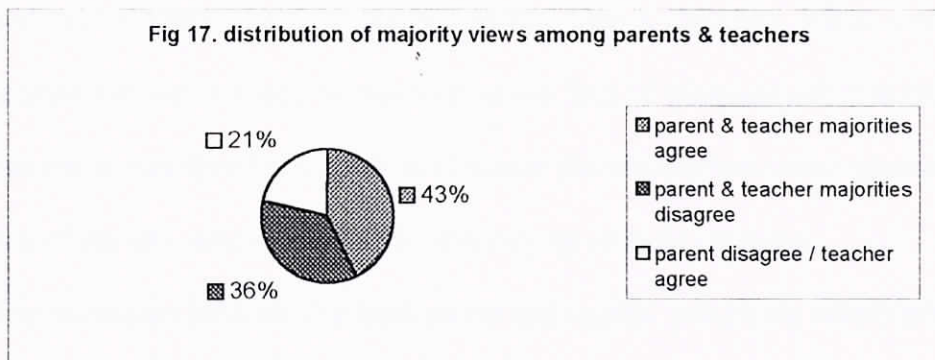
suggesting that the proportions of parents and teachers views were identical in 5 of 6 situations in which they agreed. In a nutshell, there is little evidence to suggest that the parent and teacher populations have views that are any different from each other.

Of course, there were also a number of situations in which the majority of parents and teachers both disagreed with the statement posed by the researcher. The following are the relevant five-(5)- scenarios:

- Parents should be the sole decision - maker with regards to retention (Item #7).
- Teachers should be the sole decision-maker with regards to retention (Item #8).
- Children should never be retained (Item #10).
- Children should be retained if socially immature (Item #11).
- Social promotion is a better alternative to retaining students (Item #12).

Once again the views of the majority of parents and teachers were similar. An inferential analysis was also performed on the difference between the proportionate views of the two independent populations. In 60% - 3 out of 5 – of the situations, difference in the proportion of the majority views were less than the maximum error of estimate. This in effect, nullifies any distinctions between the views of the two populations. Notably, in each of the five situations when both majority populations were commonly in disagreement with the postulates of the researcher, the teacher majority was more solidly in disagreement than their corresponding parent majority. This does suggest that while both parent and teacher majorities did view the said issues similarly, the teachers were clearly more certain about their disagreement than the parents. In actuality, on 40 % of the items - 2 out of 5 – the corresponding proportionate differences between the two population views easily exceeded the maximum error ranges for the relevant issue. Ironically, the two issues about which the teachers were so resolutely opposed to were the suggestion that social promotion was a better alternative than retention and that parents should be the sole decision makers in the retention issue.

Fig 17. distribution of majority views among parents & teachers



As indicated by the pie chart above, the majority parents and teachers groups had similar views on 79% of the opinions surveyed. On 21% - 3 of 14 - of the survey items, however, the teacher views were diametrically opposed to each other. The issues about which the parent and teacher majority views were in opposition were as follows:

- It was better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1 – 6 (Item 3).
- Retention should be based on the number of absences (Item #4).
- Boys were more likely to be retained than girls (Item #13).

In each of the situations above, the teacher majorities agreed while the parent majorities disagreed. With respect to the basing of retention on absences, the inferential analysis revealed that the difference in the two proportions was significantly larger in the case of the parents than that of the teachers. Hence, parents were clearly more certain in their belief than the teachers. In the other two situations, the relative strengths of conviction of the two populations were not sufficiently different to be considered important.

In summary, it must be noted that the issues about which parent and teacher majority populations had opposing positions were all policy issues. Thus, they are, in the most, outside the influence realm of the parent and teachers. As indicated in figure 17, there



was a 79% coincidence of opinion between the two groups. One is, therefore, left to conclude that the differing positions may actually be due to an actual lack of adequate information on the part of the parents. It may then be possible to conclude that the teachers were reporting their interpretation of the law, while the parents were relying on their emotions.

The researcher believes that both parent and teacher groups are united in their assertions that students should be promoted based upon their productivity; and that the process must refrain from promoting children based on extraneous reasons.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Discussion**

The present study has determined the views of parents and teachers on the concept of retention. Teachers' views or perceptions about particular educational issues such as retention significantly affect the way they teach, the decisions they make, and the overall quality of professional services provided. Parents' views also play a dramatic role in the way they raise their children, the partnership between home and school, their role in the education of their child/children, and the assistance given to their children in the realm of schoolwork. The attitudes and views of parents and teachers on the concept of retention impacts students' self perceptions and future success.

#### **Important Findings**

Two questionnaires based on a Likert-type scale were administered to the parents and teachers of students at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School. The results of the study indicated that the majority of parents and teachers were in concert that students should be retained if the required competencies were not met and if the child was not ready for the next grade. Teachers seemed to be more aware about current educational research on retention. Both groups were divided in their support of retention in kindergarten rather than in grades 1-6. This squashed any notion of overwhelming support of "the younger, the better."

Responses to the idea of retaining students due to excessive absences surprisingly met disfavor with parents. Parents apparently felt that their decisions to keep their child at home should not negatively impact their child's promotion to the next grade. A majority of teachers on the other hand, were undecided in this respect.

Parents and teachers clearly agreed that both should play a decisive role in a child's retention. Teachers showed division in their support of peers' negative treatment of retainees. On the other hand, a majority of parents supported this issue. Surprisingly, both groups (with teachers leading in their support) did not agree with the impossibility of retention. Both groups agreed on not retaining students due to social immaturity.

Teachers were critical of the notion of social retention being preferable to grade retention. Parents also showed disagreement but less so. At least one-fifth of the parents showed indecision on this issue. Comparable disagreement between parents and teachers existed about boys being retained more than girls and the notion of retention aiding students to catch up. Almost half of the parents believed that retention was an appropriate way to help at-risk students.

The Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School is a relatively large school. The sample size of parent respondents was not the recommended size. However, it is the general feeling by this researcher that it was a fairly good sample for a school population. The sample size of the teachers adhered well to the required guidelines. As such, it is a measure for the islands' teacher attitudes and parent attitudes on the concept of retention.

When comparing the rates of "no response" on all items on both questionnaires, item #2 received the highest percentage. The wording may have been inconcise and unclear. One can conclude that some attitude items and/or terminology may have been misinterpreted or misunderstood. Attitudes expressed in a questionnaire are not necessarily what one carries out in reality. Lack of interest and a busy schedule may have been valid factors for parents not completing the questionnaires. Additionally, if one is a parent of a child who has started out well academically, revealing your attitudes on the concept of retention may have been

unimportant. In addition to these limitations, the researcher realized that there is a possibility that both questionnaires did not include other relevant information about retention that others may have felt were more important.

The need for more research is evident in light of this present study. A study of this type alone may not provide all the necessary information to accurately state all attitudes of parents and teachers on the concept of retention.

Survey results suggest that more teachers than parents have some awareness of current educational research on retention. Both believed that retention is necessary though for different reasons. For example, parents felt excessive school absences were not grounds for retention. In their opinion, it was not a serious problem. This view differed greatly with teachers where a majority was undecided about this issue. In informal discussions, many teachers felt that a small number of children could do their schoolwork well despite lengthy absences. Others expressed "if you don't work, you don't get paid." The same should apply to children. If you don't come to school and work, you cannot be promoted.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The following recommendations stem from the participants' comments and the researcher's careful analysis of the findings of this study:

1. Literature on current educational research on retention should be readily available to all involved.

2. The Promotion and Retention Policy of the Virgin Islands Board of Education should be carefully reviewed.
3. Alternative programs should be implemented especially in the primary grades to assist children who exhibit at-risk behaviors at an early age.
4. A transitional classroom setting should be implemented.
5. All stakeholders should meet to discuss any retention issues to help when student success is in jeopardy.
6. Pre-service and in-service training programs for parents, teachers, and administrators should be organized and implemented.
7. Consideration should be given to adopting or adapting one of the model programs proven to help at-risk students.

### **Final Conclusion**

The problem of retention does exist at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School. There is absolutely no retention in grades K-3 for any reasons. Teachers feel powerless when they must promote students despite lack of preparation for the next grade, excessive absences, and situations where required competencies are not met. Yearly, more and more students are being promoted in the primary grades who are at risk without corrective measures to address it. Even parents can't recommend their child's retention in grade. Serious consideration must be given to the results of this study. It is clear that teachers and parents, because of their serious commitment to their students and children, are concerned as to how they can meet the needs of at-risk children. To this end, all stakeholders should channel all efforts and resources to address the issue of retention.

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## **APPENDIX A**

**Dear Parent:**

**My name is Lisa Magras. I am presently conducting a research study as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Education at the University of the Virgin Islands. The study will help to determine the views of parents at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School on the issue of retention.**

**Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire will be greatly appreciated. Your answers will be strictly confidential. The results of the survey will be available upon request.**

**Thanking you in advance,**

---

**Lisa Magras**

**Teacher**

**UVI Student**

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**Instrucciones:** A continuacion le presento algunas aseveraciones sobre retencion escolar. Lea cada una cuidadosamente y haga una marca en la columna que mejor refleje su sentir sobre la misma.

<b>ASEVERACIONES</b>	<b>MUY DE ACUERDO</b>	<b>DE ACUERDO</b>	<b>INDECISO</b>	<b>EN DESACUERDO</b>	<b>MUY EN DESACUERDO</b>
1. Si mi hijo/a no completara los requisitos para el proximo grado, preferiria que fuera retenido/a.					
2. Estoy al tanto de las ultimas investigaciones educativas en torno al tema de la retencion escolar.					
3. Es preferible retener estudiantes en Kindergarten que en los grados 1-6.					
4. Los estudiantes con excesivas ausencias escolares deben ser retenidos.					
5. Si mi propio hijo/a no estuviera listo/a para el proximo grado, debe ser retenido/a.					
6. Tanto los padres como los maestros deben estar envueltos en la decision de si retener un estudiante o no.					
7. Los padres deben ser los unicos que deben tomar la decision de si retener un estudiante o no.					
8. Los maestros deben ser los unicos que denben tomar la decision de si retener un estudiante o no.					
9. Los estudiantes retenidos tienden a ser tratados negativamente por sus companeros.					
10. Los estudiantes no deben ser retenidos nunca.					
11. Los estudiantes deben ser retenidos si estan inmaduros socialmente.					
12. La promocion social es mejor alternativa que la retencion.					
13. Los varones tienen mayor tendencia a ser retenidos que las ninas.					
14. La politica de retencion es una excelente manera de ayudar a los estudiantes a ponerse al dia.					

## APPENDIX B

**Dear Teacher:**

**My name is Lisa Magras. I am presently conducting a research study as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Education at the University of the Virgin Islands. The study will help to determine the views of teachers at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School on the issue of retention.**

**Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire will be greatly appreciated.**

**Your answers will be strictly confidential. The results of the survey will be available upon request.**

**Thanking you in advance,**

---

**Lisa Magras**

**Teacher**

**UVI Student**

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### **PART I                      Important Demographic Information**

**Instructions: Please respond to the following questions with a check or a few words.**

**SEX :    M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_                      AGE: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total years of teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_**

**Grade level you teach now \_\_\_\_\_**

**Have you ever retained student(s) in grade? \_\_\_\_\_**

## Part II

**Instructions:** Here are some statements about retention. Read each statement carefully and then check the column that best reflects how you feel about the statement.

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>UNDECIDED</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
1. If a student were not to accomplish the required competencies for the next grade, I would choose for him or her to be retained.					
2. I am aware of current educational research on the issue of retention.					
3. It is better to retain children in kindergarten than in grades 1-6.					
4. Students should be retained due to too many school absences.					
5. If a child were not ready for the next grade, he/she should be retained.					
6. Parents and teachers should both be involved in the decision to retain a child or not.					
7. Parents should be the sole decision-makers in the decision to retain.					
8. Teachers should solely decide if a child should be retained or not.					
9. Children who are retained are treated negatively by their peers.					
10. Children should never be retained.					
11. Children should be retained if they are socially immature.					
12. Social promotion is a better alternative than retaining a student.					
13. Boys are more likely to be retained than girls.					
14. The policy of retention is a great way to help students <i>catch up</i> .					

## APPENDIX C

**VIRGIN ISLANDS  
PROMOTION AND RETENTION  
OF STUDENTS  
AND  
GRADING SYSTEM  
FOR GRADES K - 6**



# **VIRGIN ISLANDS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS AND GRADING SYSTEM FOR GRADES K - 6**

### **PERTINENT LAW AND INFORMATION**

Virgin Islands Code Title 17 Section 21, authorizes the Virgin Islands Board of Education to prescribe general regulations and orders and in general to do anything necessary for the proper establishment, maintenance and operation of the public schools of the Virgin Islands.

Virgin Islands Code Title 3 Section 912, states that each regulation adopted, to be effective, must be within the scope of authority conferred and in accordance with standards prescribed by other provisions of law. Title 17, Section 21, confers the authority and jurisdiction on the Virgin Islands Board of Education to prescribe these rules and regulations as hereby set forth.

In compliance with Virgin Islands Code Title 3 Section 933, an original and two duplicates of these regulations are filed with the Lieutenant Governor for publication in the Virgin Islands Rules and Regulations.

The promotional policies of the Public Schools of the Virgin Islands were developed on the premise that students shall be engaged in instruction for a minimum of 180 days as mandated in the Virgin Islands Code Title 17 Section 61. A school calendar reflective of a minimum of 180 days of instruction is mandatory for promotion of students from one grade to the other.

The promotional policies of the Public Schools of the Virgin Islands are based as closely as possible on the philosophy of education of the Virgin Islands Department of Education. Since the philosophy of Education is democratic, the promotional policies must serve democratic purposes.

### **1.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In considering the question of promotion and retention, the following guiding principles shall be considered (in each individual case) to determine which will be best for the child, for the group of which he is a member, and for the community in which he lives.

1.1 Each child shall be placed in the group where he/she can do the best work and receive the most benefit - socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively.

## Promotion Policies 1.1 Continued

1.2 Each child progresses at a different rate according to ability.

1.3 The question of the promotion or retention of each child is a unique problem. Grades shall not be the only criteria for promotion. Such factors as the child's age, English language fluency, social development, physical maturity, cognitive ability, work habits and emotional behavior shall be considered in determining promotion.

1.4 Each child has possibilities for growth and development. He/she must experience success. Encouragement from an understanding teacher can be a great incentive for him/her to achieve to the fullest potential.

1.5 Teachers are responsible for the progress of the students. The greatest responsibility of the teacher is to the individual child and his/her needs. Therefore, teachers must provide instruction which incorporates a child's learning styles and interdisciplinary teaching of the concepts in the Virgin Islands curriculum guides and curriculum supplements.

1.6 Parents are also responsible for the progress of their children and are encouraged to attend conferences, contact teachers, and/or request information about their children's academic and social development.

1.7 When a child is promoted, the new teacher shall accept the child as he/she is. The teacher shall find out all the facts to determine the child's present level of development. The teacher shall work with the child at that level and stimulate his/her growth to higher levels.

1.8 For students in grades 4 through 6, if, after all factors of the child's development are considered, and it is determined that it would be unwise for the child to be promoted to the next grade, the child and his/her family should be prepared in such a way that no feeling of shame or punishment is felt. All concerned should be helped to realize that, for well established reasons, the child may be a happier and more efficient worker if he/she spends a longer time in reaching certain grade standards.

1.9 Promotion or retention shall not be based on a child's race, sex, or national origin or because he/she comes from a home that uses or speaks another language other than English.

## Promotional Policies Continued

### 2.0 PROMOTIONAL POLICIES

#### 2.1 PROMOTION FROM KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE

Early childhood education classrooms - kindergarten through third grade shall follow the developmentally appropriate design including hands on learning centers developed to enhance independent learning skills. Failure shall be non-existent in these classrooms. Each child must experience daily success even though individual children may require an additional variety of innovative teaching techniques and strategies to address their unique learning styles.

A child, who is unable to achieve success by the end of the second marking period shall have a meeting of the basic child team to discuss his/her progress. The team shall include the school administrator (s), classroom teachers, guidance counselor, parent and a special subject teacher. A complete program shall be developed for the child which includes:

a) identifying his/her learning style, b) listing strengths and weaknesses in all academic areas, c) multiple assessments, and d) enrichment and after school assistance.

A child who cannot successfully complete the required skills for each grade level by the end of each school year, inspite of documented extra efforts of the teacher, shall be placed in a developmentally appropriate primary transitional class setting. The emphasis and focus of this class will be specialized instruction in a small setting (class size shall not exceed 16). If a student shows considerable progress during the year, he/she shall be returned to the regular class placement.

A checklist of skills (developed from the content and performance standards) mastered for each grade level shall be completed and maintained for each child. This checklist shall be turned over to the next teacher, who in turn will plan a developmental program to address and correct deficiencies and build on strengths. The checklists shall be completed based upon:

1. anecdotal records of the child's activities
2. a cumulative writing folder with a minimum of 10 samples of varied writings of stories, recipes, poems, paragraphs, lab experiments, letters, journal entries etc.)
3. pictures, diagrams etc. of the child's work
4. projects completed by the child
5. other assessments

## Promotional Policies Continued

Demonstration of skill mastery may be unique to each child and shall not be results of tests completed at the same date and time for each child.

Except in the case of children who must be placed in the primary transitional class, each student must complete at least 70% of the checklist of skills for each grade level to be promoted. By the end of the third grade, each child shall complete at least 70% of the early childhood checklist of skills which includes all skills from kindergarten to third grade covering reading, mathematics, language arts, science and social studies.

A child who has completed 70% of the early childhood checklist of skills and successfully completed the Competency Readiness Exam with a minimum score of 70% in the basic areas - reading, language arts and mathematics, science and social studies shall be promoted to the fourth grade.

### 2.2 PROMOTION FROM PRIMARY DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASS

A child who has made significant progress and can adequately function at grade, shall be placed in the regular developmentally appropriate grade level classroom provided that he/she is not returned to the grade level from which he/she was previously removed.

A child who has completed 70% of the early childhood checklist of skills, successfully completed the Competency Readiness Exam with a minimum score of 70% in the five basic subject areas - reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and can function in a regular classroom, shall be promoted to the fourth grade.

### 2.3 PROMOTION FROM FOURTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADE

Promotion from grade to grade shall be based on completion of at least 70% of the skills checklist for each grade level and a minimum score of 70% on the competency readiness exam for each grade level.

### 2.4 PROMOTION FROM SIXTH GRADE TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Promotion from sixth grade shall be based on the completion of at least 70% of the skills checklist for sixth grade in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health and computer, and a minimum score of 70% on the Exit Examination which covers reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies and Spanish.

### 2.5 PROMOTION FROM AN INTERMEDIATE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASS TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Promotion from an intermediate developmentally appropriate class to junior high school shall be based on the same criteria as promotion from the sixth grade to junior high school.

## Promotional Policies Continued

**NOTE:** Limited English Proficiency modifications as specified in the (PIALEP) policy manual Procedures for Identification, Assessment and placement of LEP (Limited English Proficient) students shall apply. In the case of the LEP students, any test administered should be in the home language of the student, and interpretations should take into consideration cultural factors that influence the student's responses.

### 3.0 RETENTION AND ACCELERATION

3.1 A child shall be retained for one year only from grades 4 to 6 except in cases of prolonged unexcused absences. A retaineer who, during his second year does not show progress by the end of the first marking period shall be administered an assessment battery and appropriate placement determined. The child shall be placed in a developmentally appropriate transitional class setting on the intermediate level if he/she does not require placement under Special Education.

3.2 Should it be necessary to retain or accelerate a child in a grade, the final decision shall be made by the Basic Child Study Team and the parent shall be consulted as part of the decision making process. They shall determine whether retention or promotion is in the best interest of the child. The following procedure shall be followed:

1. The teacher advises the principal in writing by the middle of the second marking period of the possible retention of the child.
2. The principal arranges a conference with the Basic Child Study Team and parent to discuss the child's work.
3. Parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be notified in the home language of the child's possible retention by the end of the second marking period.
4. A child who has been identified as a possible retaineer, shall be provided with a comprehensive assistance plan which includes a minimum of three (3) days of after school assistance by the teacher. All efforts to assist each possible retaineer shall be documented, reviewed and approved by the principal at the beginning of the third marking period. However, if there is noticeable improvement or lack thereof in the child's performance, the parent or guardian(s) shall be informed of the committee's decision to promote or retain the child by the middle of the fourth marking period. The check list of skills for the grade level, cumulative writing folder, anecdotal records, examples of the child's work - pictures, diagrams, and projects completed by the child shall be available to the parent/guardian when discussing the final decision.

## Promotional Policies Continued

5. A child who excels above grade level in all subject areas shall be accelerated upon the recommendation of the teacher, guidance counselor, supervisors and principal. A complete assessment battery that measures all aspects of development shall be administered for proper placement within the elementary system. The principal shall arrange for a Basic Child Study Team conference with the parent(s) or guardian(s) to discuss their child's proposed placement.

Provisions shall be made for children who are performing above grade level through such programs as the School Wide Enrichment Model, individual tutoring, talent pool, research projects, curriculum compacting and advancing to higher grade level (s).

### 3.3 TRANSITION TO REGULAR CLASSES FROM CLASSES OFFERED UNDER SPECIAL EDUCATION

A handicapped child shall be assigned to a special education program according to indications of how he/she can best achieve success in learning.

Whenever possible, a handicapped child shall be grouped with and/or participate with nonhandicapped children in activities that are part of the child's educational program. This grouping and/or participation will be programmed so as to allow the child to spend as much of the school day as is feasible for the child within the regular classroom. This does not apply, for example, to trainable mentally retarded, certain educable mentally retarded, severely emotionally disturbed or any other handicapped child established by medical, psychological, social (adaptive behavior) and other educational data as not being able to function outside of a self contained classroom.

3.31 A handicapped or exceptional child shall be returned to an appropriate regular class on a trial and/or part time basis, if, after evaluation, it is the opinion of the Basic Child Study Team that the child can function adequately with support from the special teacher to meet the grade level requirements. The trial period shall be six to eight weeks.

3.32 Promotion of special education elementary students within special classes is based primarily on chronological age.

3.33 A child in a special education class at the end of the sixth grade (or 12 to 13 years of age) will be reevaluated by the Basic Child Study Team. If, after evaluation, it is decided that the child must remain in a special class, he will proceed to a secondary level special education class and be enrolled in a prevocational core-study type program.

## Promotional Policies Continued

If, in the opinion of the Child Study Team, the child is able to reenter a regular class or special core class on a trial and/or part time basis, the child will go into that seventh grade class and continue to receive the support from the seventh grade special education teacher.

A checklist of skills mastered for the elementary program shall be presented for certification by the Insular Superintendent and the Division of Special Education indicating that a handicapped child has completed the offerings of the elementary special education programs. The child's program then becomes the responsibility of the secondary school (seventh to twelfth). Transition from the elementary to the secondary shall be determined by many factors including years in school, social and vocational development, chronological age, mental age, need for social, vocational and varied instructional opportunities of the secondary school and achievement in keeping with the child's abilities and needs.

No LEP student should be placed in special education without a specific referral from the CIP committee as required in the PIALEP policy manual.

### 3.4 DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL CLASSES

A child shall be admitted to a developmentally appropriate class if he/she is failing and after testing, results indicate that his/her cognitive ability is below average and serious perceptual problems exist.

No LEP student should be placed in these classes without specific referral from the CIP committee as required in the PIALEP policy manual. Testing must be in accordance with the policy manual and tests should be normed for children from other languages and cultural backgrounds.

## 4.0 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Every teacher shall keep a record indicating concepts and/or skills for each child. Each teacher will utilize a variety of assessment tools and will use an appropriate code to indicate the type of assessment tool; for example, E for essay, T/F for true and false, MC for multiple choice, PR for project, RES for research, EX for experiment etc.

On these check lists of skills and/or concepts the teacher shall indicate the skills and/or concepts each child mastered during the school year. This checklist shall be turned over to the next teacher who shall utilize the information to plan a successful program for each child.

4.2 An LEP child shall receive grades with a special notation.

Promotional Policies Continued

4.3 Additional courses - Physical Education including Cultural Dance, Art, Music, shall be graded as:

- A - Outstanding
- B - Good
- C - Satisfactory
- F - Unsatisfactory

4.3 In recording grades the following grading system shall be used:

LETTER	NUMERICAL VALUE
A +	98 - 100 (98 to 100% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
A	94 - 97 (94 to 97% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
A-	90 - 93 (90 to 93% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
B+	87 - 89 (87 to 89% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
B	84 - 86 (84 to 86% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
B-	80 - 83 (80 to 83% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
C+	77 - 79 (77 to 79% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
C	74 - 76 (74 to 76% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
C-	73 - 70 (73 to 70% of Checklist of Skills mastered)
FAILURE	Below 70

APPROVED

*May 14, 1998*  
Date

*Charles W. Turnbull*

Chairman

Virgin Islands Board of Education



## APPENDIX D

Lisa Magras  
P.O. Box 333  
Christiansted, St. Croix 00821  
January 23, 2003

Ms. Janis Esannason  
Principal  
Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School  
St. Croix, Virgin Islands

Dear Ms. Esannason:

Please find enclosed documents regarding my request for approval of a research study on the attitudes of parents and teachers on the concept of retention. This study is being conducted as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Education (Reading Concentration) at the University of the Virgin Islands.

This survey will be conducted during the Spring Semester, 2003. A brief questionnaire will be distributed to all parents and all teachers for completion. All responses will be given utmost ethical considerations.

I am requesting your assistance in conducting this study by allowing teachers' participation, as their cooperation is essential to the implementation of this study.

Please return the enclosed letter, bearing your signature as Principal of the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School, granting permission to conduct this study.

Your timely approval and assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

---

Lisa Magras  
School Teacher  
UVI Student

Approved

Disapproved

Janis Esannason  
Principal

## APPENDIX E

Lisa Magras  
P.O. Box 333  
Christiansted, St. Croix 00821  
January 23, 2003

Dr. Noreen Michael  
Commissioner of Education  
44-46 Kongens Gade  
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., 00802

Dear Dr. Michael:

The Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School has been selected to participate in a research study. The study will assist in determining the similarities of the attitudes of parents and teachers regarding the concept of retention. This study will also allow the Department of Education to determine how informed teachers and parents are about the current research on retention.

The survey will be conducted during the Spring Semester, 2003. A brief questionnaire will be distributed to all teachers and all parents for completion. All responses will be given utmost ethical consideration.

I am writing to request your approval of this research study being conducted as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Education (Reading Concentration) at the University of the Virgin Islands. I am asking you, as Commissioner, to support this research study by encouraging the school principal to grant her approval for the execution of this study.

Please return the enclosed letter, bearing your signature as Commissioner, granting permission to conduct this research at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School.

Your timely approval and assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

---

Lisa Magras  
Teacher  
UVI Student

Approved

Disapproved

---

Dr. Noreen Michael  
Commissioner of Education

cc:  
Mr. Terrence Joseph  
Insular Superintendent  
St. Croix

# APPENDIX F

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

APPLICANT'S NAME Lisa Magras DATE OF SUBMISSION 1-23-03

### 1. TITLE OF THE RESEARCH

An Investigation into the Views of Parents and Teachers on the Concept of Retention

### 2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research is to determine what the views and beliefs of parents and teachers are concerning the concept of retention.

### 3. BENEFITS TO THE VI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This research study will allow the V.I. Department of Education to determine if parents and teachers are informed about what the current research says about the advantages/disadvantages of retention. The results of this study might determine if parents and teachers have similar views about retention as they work cooperatively to meet the educational needs of all students. Additionally, existing policies can be reevaluated if necessary.

### 4. STUDY FRAMEWORK

Proposed starting date 3-01-03 Proposed completion date 3-31-03

       Area of research

       Special Education

       School Climate

Instructional Personnel

       Drug Education

       Multicultural Education

       Adolescent pregnancy

       Student Achievement

Other Parents

#### Hypothesis and/or Research Question(s)

There is no significant difference between the views of parents and teachers on the issue of retention.

What are the views of parents on the issue of retention?

What are the views of teachers on the issue of retention?

#### Type of school/research site(s) required

       Intact classrooms

       central office(s)

       Other N/A

Please specify

**5. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT SUBJECTS**

Will pupils be required as subjects for this study?

Yes (If yes, answer parts "a", "b", "c" and "d" of this question.)

No (If no, skip to question "6".)

a) Enter grade(s) and number of students requested.

Grade(s) \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Students \_\_\_\_\_

b) Check and describe any specific criteria for selection of students to take part in the study.

- Ability level (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Socioeconomic level(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Ethnic, racial background \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical characteristics \_\_\_\_\_
- Clinically identified conditions \_\_\_\_\_
- History of personal problems \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

c) Procedures which will be used to gather data from students:

- Group testing
  - Individual testing
  - Interviews-face to face
  - Interviews-telephone
  - Questionnaires
  - Observations
  - Inventories
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- (Specify)

d) Are file data on students required?

Yes  No

If yes, specify tests, scores, type(s) of other information and the period for which data are needed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBJECTS OTHER THAN STUDENTS**

Will VI Department of Education personnel, parents, or former students be subjects in the study?

Yes (If yes, answer parts "a", "b", and "c" of this question)

No (If no, skip to question "7")

a) Indicate category by number requested

<input type="checkbox"/> # Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> # Counselors
<input type="checkbox"/> # School-Based Administrators	<input type="checkbox"/> # Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> # Central Office Administrators	<input type="checkbox"/> # Other _____ specify

b) Are file data on staff requested?

Yes  No

If yes, specify and discuss how data will be used

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---

---

c) Are file data on parents requested?

Yes  No

If yes, specify and discuss how data will be used

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**7. REQUIREMENTS FOR ARCHIVAL DATA**

Will archival data on students and staff be in the study?

Yes  No

If yes, check sources requested

<input type="checkbox"/> Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Research Studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Charts/Graphs/Tables
<input type="checkbox"/> Handbooks	<input type="checkbox"/> Policies	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

8. **INTRUMENTS, EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**  
what tests, observation guides, questionnaires, attitude scales, interest inventories, and other typed or printed instruments will be used? Specify below **and enclose copies.**

Group Test (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Individual test \_\_\_\_\_  
 Questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_ Researcher- Developed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interview Protocol \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attitude/Interest Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What instructional materials will be used for research purposes?  
(Specify or indicate "None".)

None

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. **DESCRIBE THE DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION FEATURES OF THE RESEARCH (Include description of statistical tests, quantitative/qualitative factors, correlation factors – where applicable)**

**Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize and evaluate the results of the study. The data will be presented in graphic form, using tables, charts, and descriptive narrative. A *statistical analysis* will be used to determine if any difference exists between the views of parents and teachers on the concept of retention.**



# RESEARCH APPLICATION

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation  
Department of Education  
44-46 Kongens Gade  
St. Thomas, USVI 00802

NAME Lisa Magras DATE OF SUBMISSION 2/21/03

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 333, Christiansted, St. Croix 00821

PHONE: Home 773-2030 Office 773-3070 FAX

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Type requested information in the spaces provided. Enter check marks in appropriate blocks where answer options are provided. All requests to conduct research must be accompanied by one complete **Research Proposal** including a description of a) the purpose, b) benefits to the VI Department of Education, c) the study framework, d) requirements for subjects and/or archival data, e) instruments, equipment and instructional materials, and f) data analysis and interpretation features.

Research requests must also be accompanied by a) copies of **Proposed Instruments** (if applicable), b) **Signature of Approval Sheet**, c) **Statement of Confidentiality and Safety**, and d) **Statement of Non-Disclosure of Release of Education Record Information** (if applicable).

## A. IDENTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

1. Your Professional Position (check one)

Graduate Student     Professor     Teacher     Project Director  
 School/Central Office Administrator     Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please specify)

2. Are you employed by the VI Department of Education?  Yes     No

**Pearl B. Larsen School**  
If yes, indicate your job title and work site Gifted and Talented Teacher

3. Indicate whether you are proposing this study as:

A VI Department of Education project  
 In response to a request for proposals (RFP) or grant announcement  
 An individual researcher  
 An external research organization

4. Are you proposing this study in connection with the degree requirements of a college or a university, for your self or any other person(s)?

Yes (If yes, answer parts "a", "b", "c", and "d" of this question)

No (If no, skip to question "5".)

a) Which degree requirements?

Masters  Doctoral  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please specify)

b) Who is your advisor or committee chairperson?

Name Dr. Joy Jeannette Lovern Telephone Number 778-1620

Institution University of the Virgin Islands Department in Institution Education Division

c) Indicate your current degree status:

Non-degree  Baccalaureate  Master's  Doctoral

d) If you are applying as an individual, briefly describe your area of research specialization and your credentials.

I am a graduate student presently fulfilling requirements for a  
master's degree in education. The purpose of the research is to  
determine what the views and beliefs of parents and teachers are  
concerning the concept of retention.

5. How are the costs of this proposed study being financed?

By applicant

By government foundation, or other research grant

(Identify source): N/A

6. List the name(s), position(s) related to this study, institutional affiliations and of all persons who will (to the best of your knowledge) use the data generated by this study for higher education degrees, grant applications, or publication purposes: (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

N/A

# APPENDIX G

Figure 1

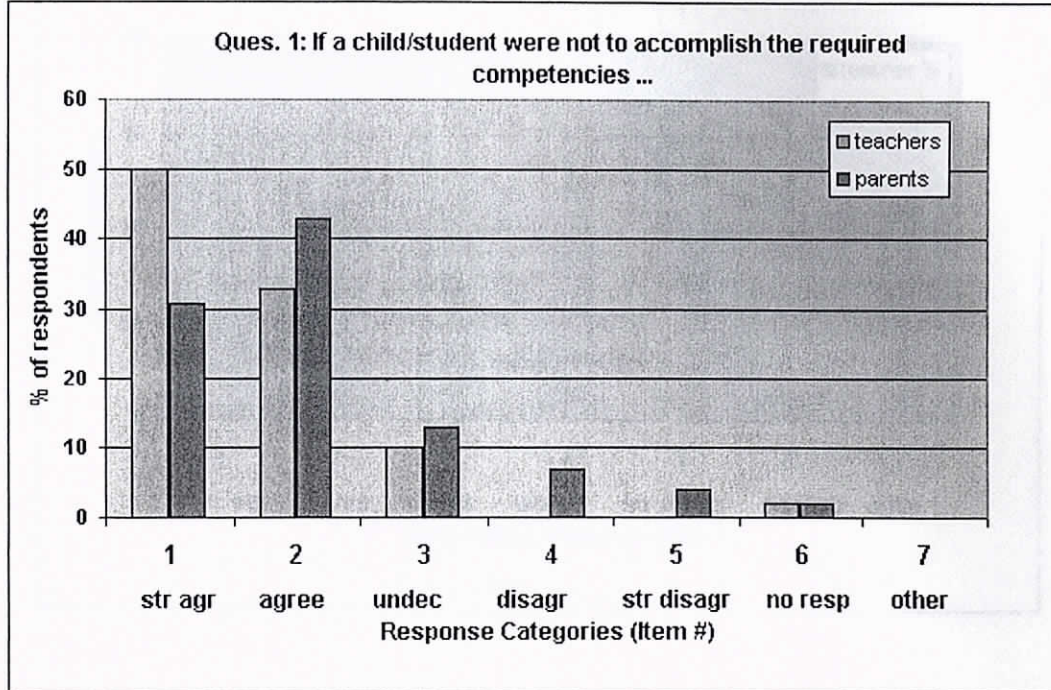


Figure 2

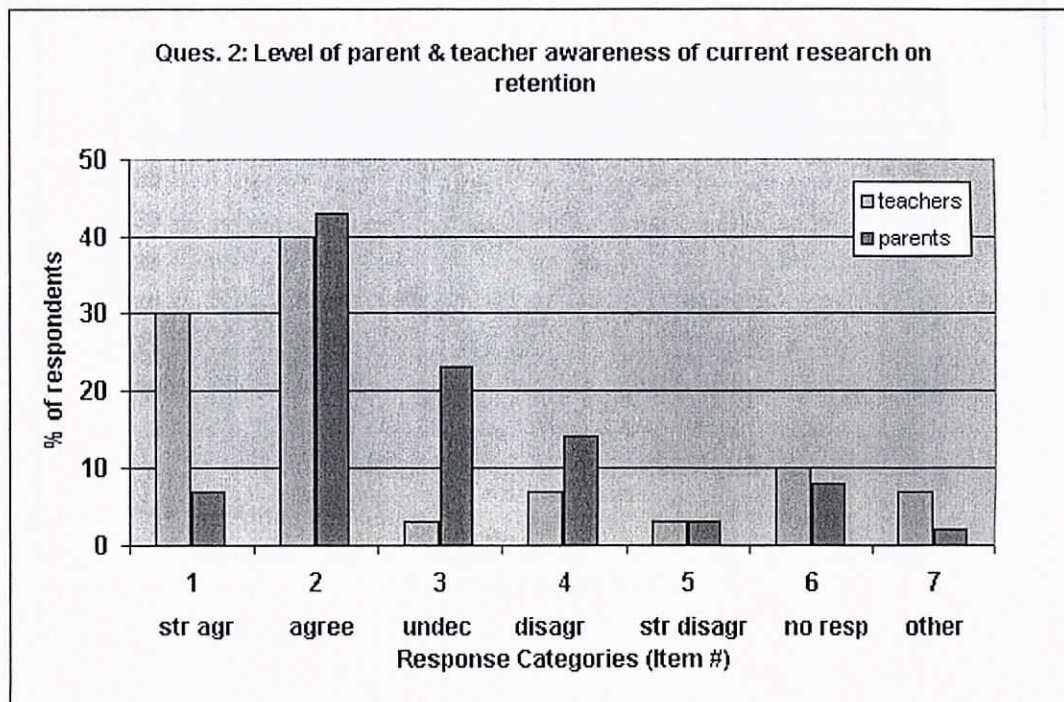


Figure 3

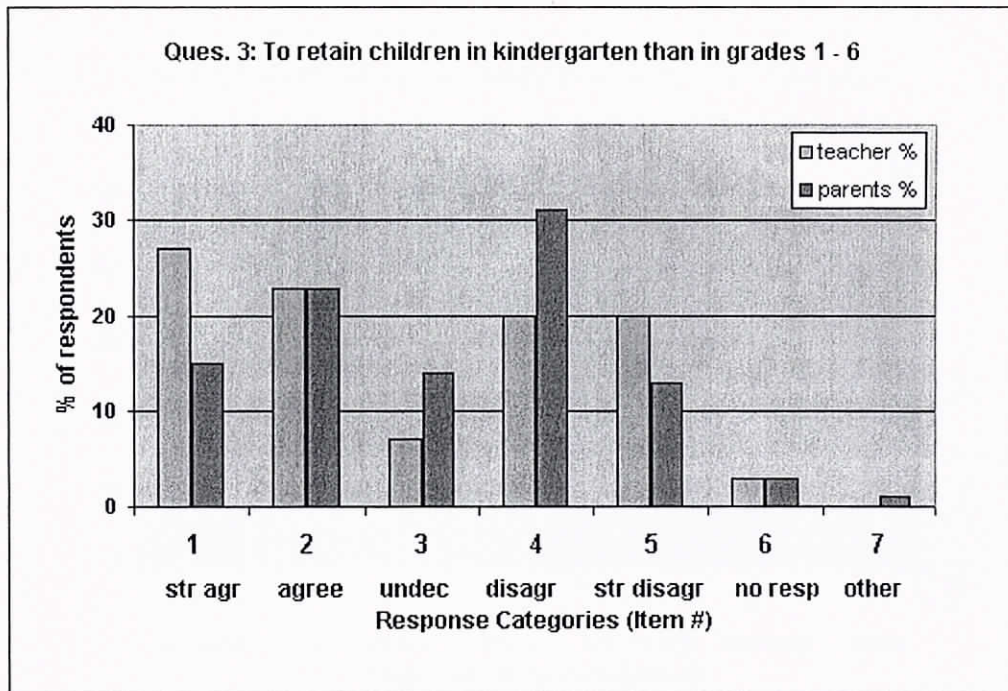


Figure 4

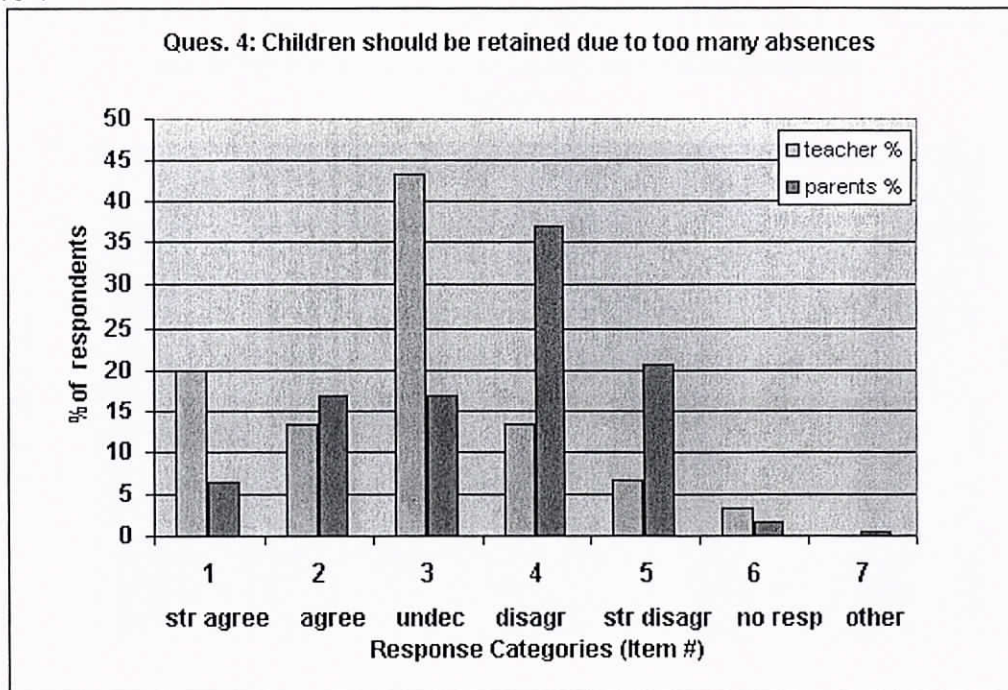


Figure 5

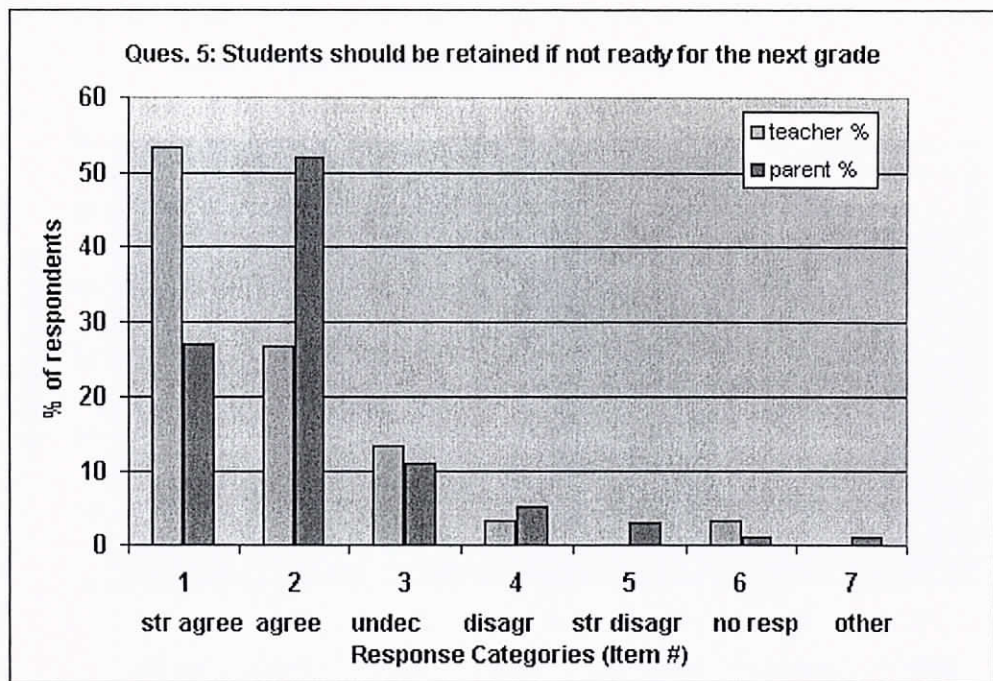


Figure 6

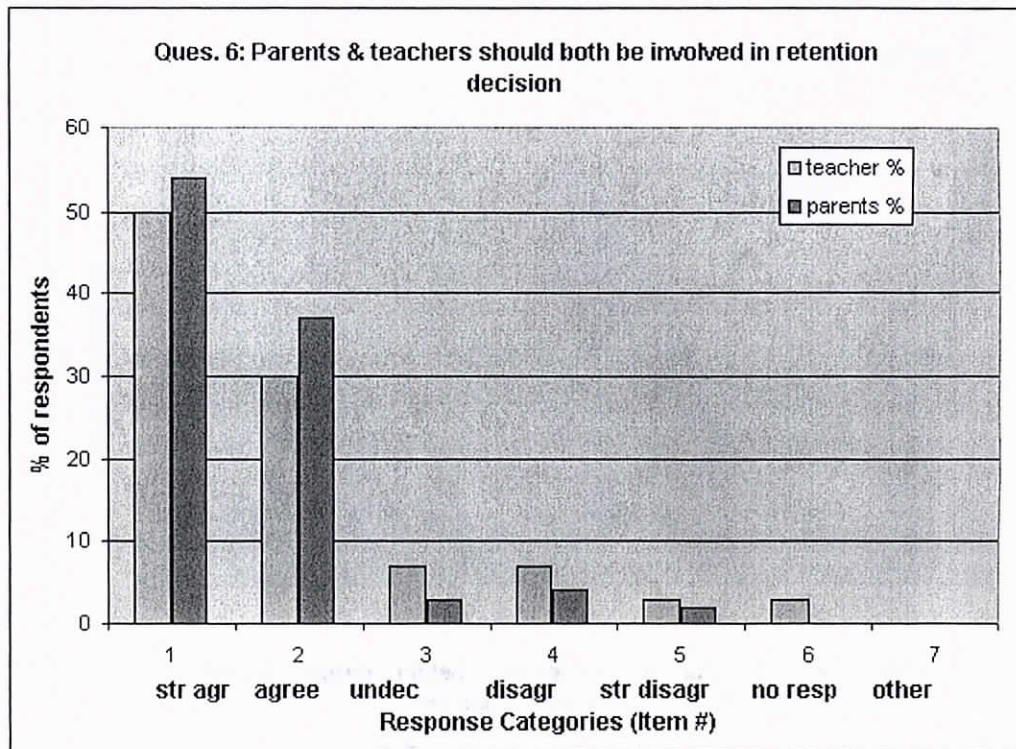


Figure 7

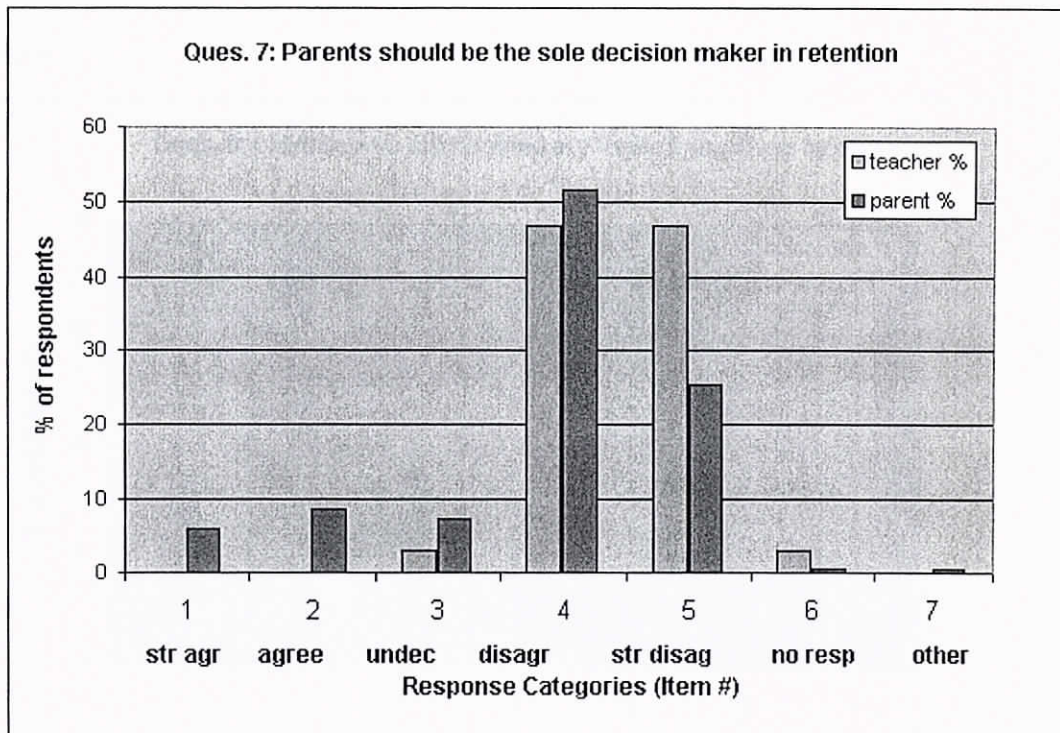


Figure 8

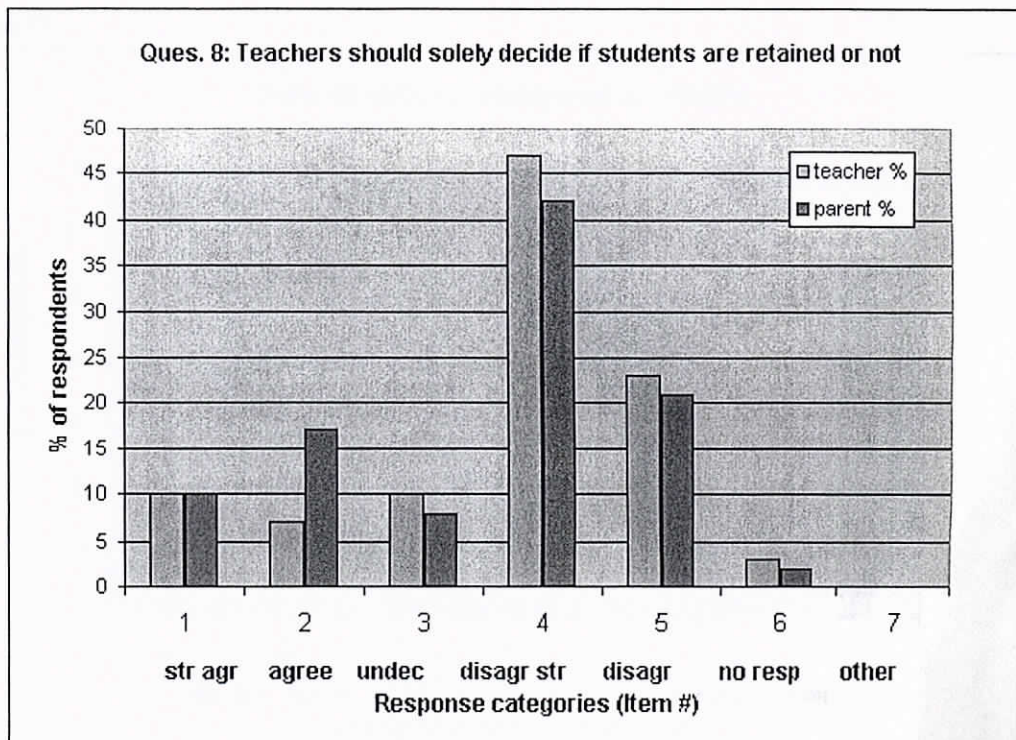


Figure 9

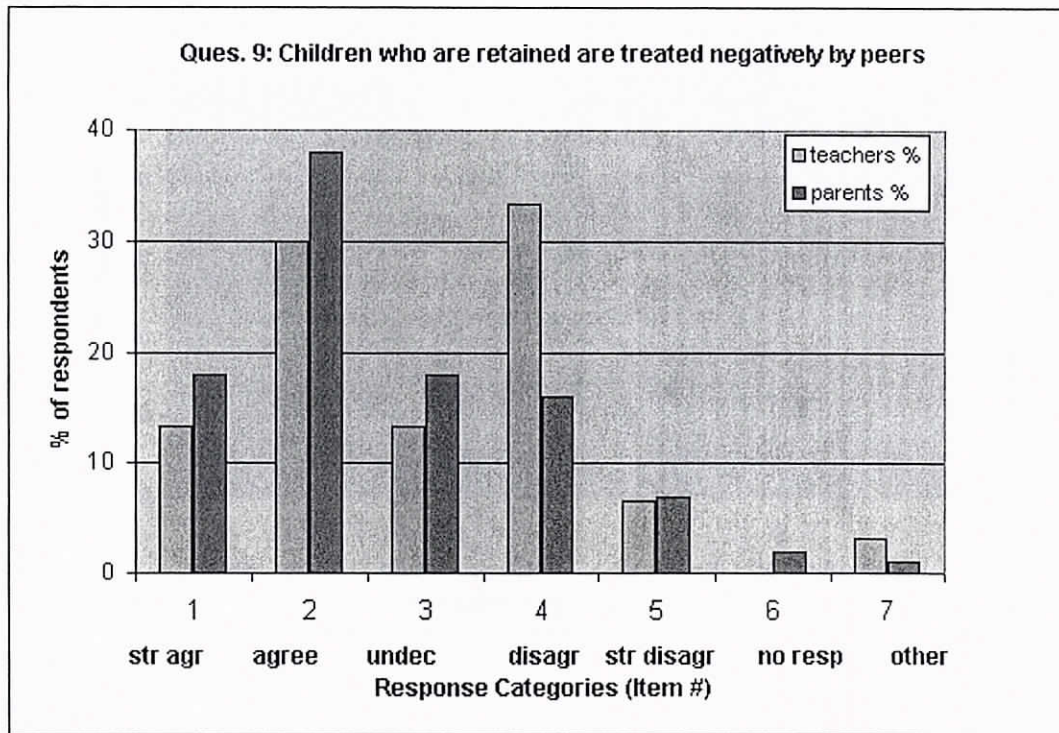


Figure 10

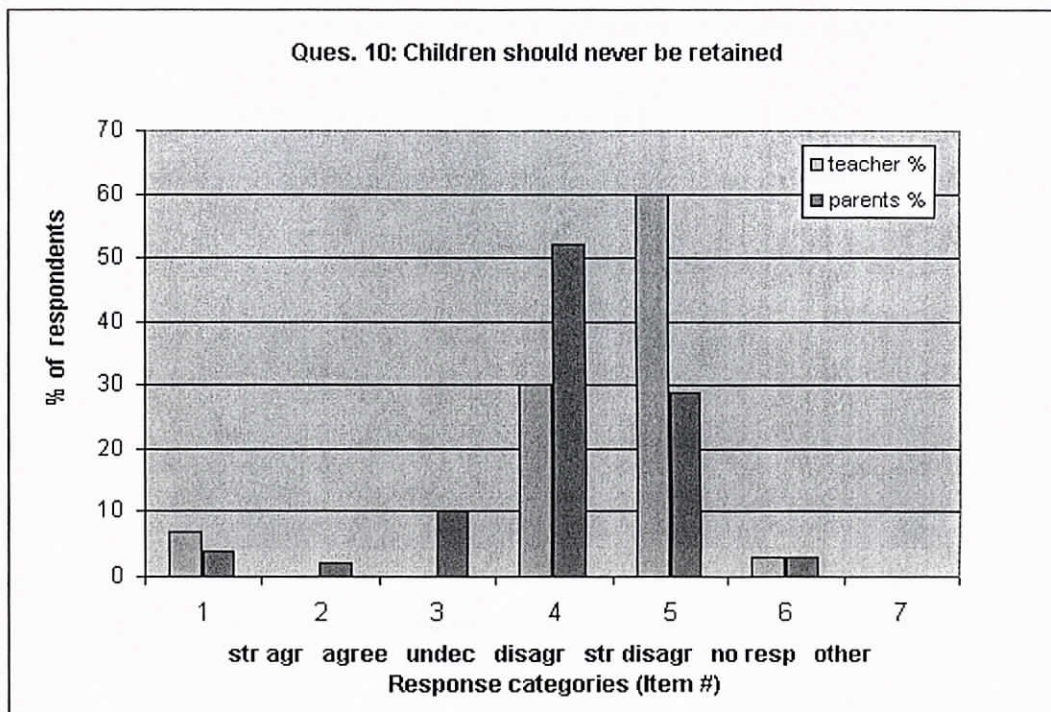




Figure 11

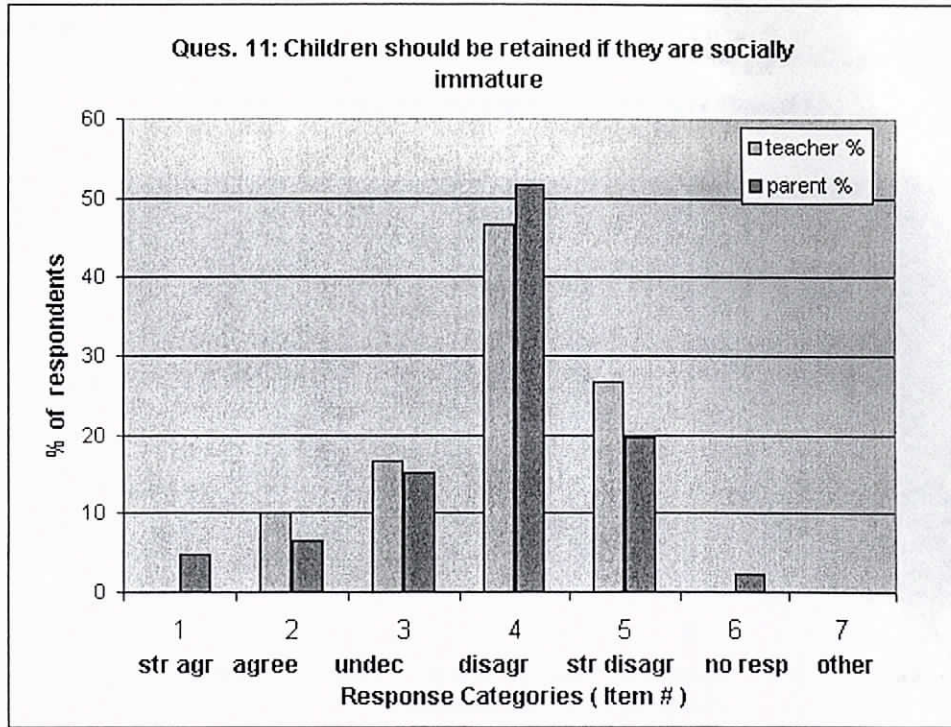


Figure 12

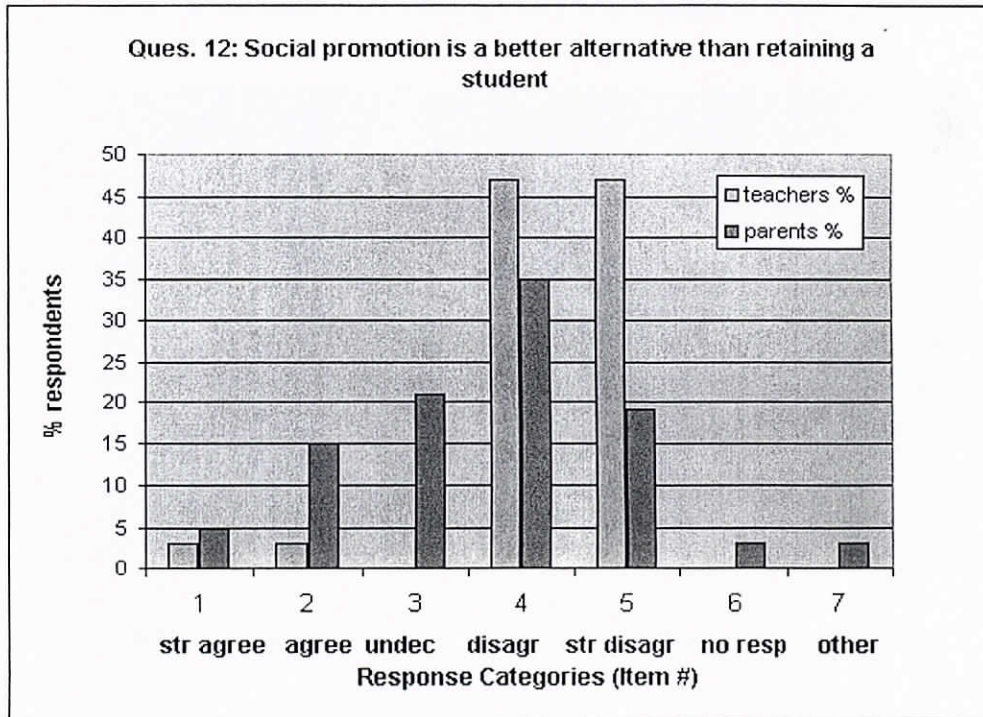


Figure 13

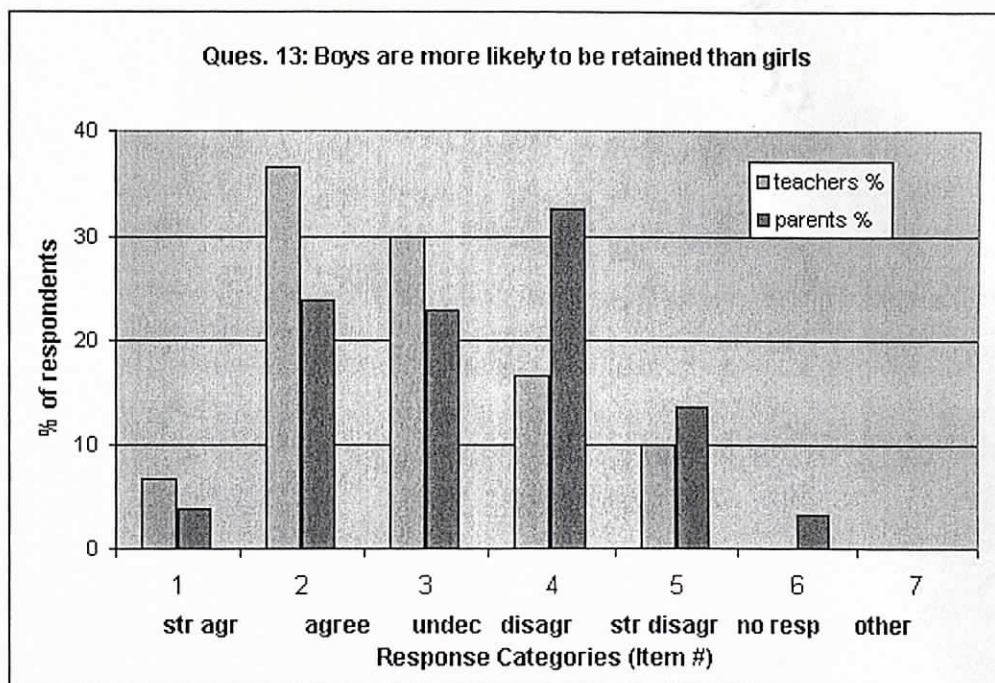


Figure 14

