

ACCELERATION PROCEDURES

District 110 Guidelines and Procedures

References:

Minn. Stat. § 120B.15: Gifted and Talented Students Programs

Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance in regards to curriculum acceleration as a way to meet the needs of high ability and/or high achieving students currently enrolled in D110. School districts in the state of Minnesota are required by law to adopt acceleration procedures ensuring that promotion decisions are made based on students' academic and social emotional needs. This procedure is intended to facilitate consistent and direct practices by providing guidelines for processing the referral, assessment, and appropriate placement of acceleration candidates.

Background:

Educational acceleration of academically gifted and talented students has a proven history of being a successful strategy for matching learner abilities with appropriate curriculum and level of challenge. The purpose of acceleration is to place the learner in a setting that is appropriate to them both in terms of pace and instructional fit. Although instructional practices such as differentiation can meet the needs of many academically talented students, situations arise in which these modifications are insufficient to fulfill the academic potential of highly capable learners. In these cases, student acceleration may be required.

Any acceleration decision should be approached on a case-by-case basis and handled with careful consideration and great care. Those individuals involved in the decision making process are encouraged to follow the suggested procedures and timeline outlined in Section VI.

Definitions:

Acceleration - An educational intervention that moves students through an educational program at a more rapid rate than that of his or her age peers. The goal of acceleration is to tailor the level and complexity of the curriculum to the ability level and academic readiness of individual students.

Whole Grade Acceleration - This is the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade than is typical for the student's age. This form of acceleration, sometimes referred to as grade-skipping, occurs on a full-time basis with the goal of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

Individual Subject Acceleration - The practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age. This is done for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.

Early Admission to Kindergarten - The practice of admitting a student to kindergarten who has not yet reached typical kindergarten admittance age. This is done for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging academic and learning opportunities (Refer to Early Admission to Kindergarten Guidelines and Procedures).

General Outline of Procedures:

The process for considering a student for acceleration may be initiated by several different stakeholders in a student's educational career. Potential persons who may initiate the acceleration process include: parents, guardians, classroom teachers, principals, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and community psychologists. Acceleration inquiries and recommendations should be directed to the student's building principal. Final acceleration decisions will be made by the receiving building principal based on the recommendation of a child study team of professionals. This team will be appointed by the principal and will consist of: the principal or a designee; current and previous teachers; the Gifted Education Services Coordinator; the school counselor; the school psychologist and others the principal deems appropriate.

In keeping with Minnesota state statutes, the child study team will use multiple criteria when determining appropriate student placement. Data sources for decision making should include standardized test scores, teacher observations and recommendations, evaluation by the school psychologist, parent/guardian input and student input. Families will be notified in writing by the building principal or designee once a decision has been rendered.

Decision Making Process:

1. Upon receiving a request for acceleration, the principal will convene a child study team consisting of the principal or a designee, current and previous teachers, the Gifted Education Services Coordinator, the school counselor, the school psychologist, and others the principal deems appropriate.
2. The Iowa Acceleration Scale will be used to guide the decision making process. The child study team will meet to gather information about the student and to determine the process for gathering further information based on the components outlined in the Iowa Acceleration Scale. The child study team will then reconvene at a later date in order to reach a timely decision. The following components are recommended to be included in the decision making process:

- a. An assessment of student achievement – performance on group or individually administered standardized achievement tests.
 - b. An assessment of student aptitude – Above level achievement tests done in an academic talent search. Possible instruments include the PLUS test or the EXPLORE test (both for elementary students), or the SAT or the ACT (both for seventh to ninth graders). Aptitude tests are designed to measure problem solving ability for material that has not yet been formally presented to the learner.
 - c. An assessment of student ability – The most recent version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) or the Stanford Binet individual measure of intellectual ability.
3. The committee will make a decision/recommendation for one of the following:
 - a. Single subject acceleration
 - b. Whole grade acceleration
 - c. Acceleration is not recommended
 4. Grade 9-12 – See Test Out Procedures.

Parameters:

1. In cases of whole grade acceleration in grades K-8, a student shall only advance one grade at a time.
2. The process shall be initiated no later than the beginning of Trimester 3 for the following fall grade acceleration.
3. If a student is potentially eligible for acceleration, timelines may be waived as deemed necessary.
4. The district reserves the right to make any changes at a natural break in the school calendar.

Follow-Up:

1. Acceleration shall be done on a trial basis for the first trimester after the decision to accelerate has been made.
2. The Gifted Education Services Coordinator shall serve as case manager for the accelerated student and designate an advocate for the student at the destination school.

3. Within one month after acceleration begins, stakeholders/vested parties will meet at least once to monitor the student's emotional, social and intellectual progress in the new environment. This group will recommend either continuation or abandonment of acceleration.
4. When the accelerated student reaches secondary schools, he/she will be assigned to the school counselor who shall consult with the Gifted Education Services Coordinator as needed.

Suggested Timelines:

By March 1

Referral agent notifies building principal with request or recommendation to accelerate.

By March 15

Building principal assembles the Child Study Team. Team members are notified and a meeting date for initial discussion is set.

By April 1

Initial Child Study Team meeting occurs, determining whether acceleration is a viable option to explore. If acceleration appears to be appropriate, the principal assigns team members to gather specific data pieces. If acceleration does not appear to be appropriate, the family and/or referring agent are contacted.

By May 1

The Child Study Team completes data collection and reconvenes to review data and develop a recommendation to the principal.

By May 15

Building principal renders a decision based on the Child Study Team recommendation and notifies parents/guardians in writing. Principal may designate the Gifted Education Services Coordinator to develop a student transition plan if necessary. The transition plan should include a designated advocate for the student at the destination school and appointments scheduled as needed with the school counselor and/or the designated advocate. Exceptions may be made to this timeline as necessary.