

Academic Acceleration

Guidelines and Procedures

Students for whom academic acceleration is considered are generally students who

- are already achieving academically at a level higher than chronological peers
- are recognized as having the ability and desire to proceed through the curriculum at a pace faster than the norm

Requests for academic acceleration in grades 1 through 8 can be made by a parent/guardian, teacher, or counselor. These requests should be made to the building administrator prior to April 1 to be effective the following school year. Requests for accommodations at the secondary level can be made to the Guidance Counselors at the high schools.

Board policy and administrative regulation 501.2a addresses the acceleration of kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year (last revision on October 28, 1997). Please refer to these documents when dealing with students of kindergarten age.

Code of Iowa 282.3, Section 2, allows pupils of **kindergarten age** who demonstrate the ability to profit by first grade work to be admitted to first grade prior to December 31. To receive consideration for advanced placement in Iowa City, the following procedures will be observed:

- A referral is made to the principal by parent or teacher for consideration.
- The child shall have completed at least three weeks in kindergarten. Any shortening of this time will need to be approved by the superintendent or designee.
- The Gifted Education Coordinator, the kindergarten teacher, the first grade teacher, the Language Arts Resource Specialist, the Math Area Resource Specialist and/or math coordinator, and the principal will review the child's academic and social behavior.
- The testing, observation, and social history may be completed by designated Iowa City Community School District staff members.
- A conference will be held with the above school personnel and the parents to share information and reach a decision on the appropriate placement of the child.

Range and Type of Acceleration Options

The range and type of acceleration options vary in terms of the degree to which the student is already performing at a higher level than chronological peers or demonstrating the ability and desire to proceed through the curriculum at a faster pace.

Each form of acceleration has a very different pattern of academic, social, and psychological outcomes for students. Therefore, careful attention must be given to matching the student to the form(s) of acceleration that reflects his/her learning, special, and psychological characteristics and needs.

Some acceleration options provide for meeting the needs of the student in the classroom at the site of current enrollment. These options are:

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
multigrade/multiage classrooms	The student is placed in classes where two or more grade levels are combined.	Allows younger students to interact with older ones academically and socially.
curriculum compacting	The regular curriculum of any or all subjects is tailored to the specific needs of a student. Through the use of pretests, the student's previously mastered skills and content are determined and instruction focuses only on mastery of deficient areas, resulting in reduced amounts of drill and review. The time saved may be used to move more quickly through the curriculum or to pursue alternate activities.	Requires training in compacting and access to appropriate replacement activities. Research indicates that this option results in significantly positive effects.
advanced placement	The student takes courses with advanced or accelerated content (usually at the secondary level) in order to test out of or receive credit for the completion of college-level work.	Has a positive effect for students having been adequately challenged.

Some acceleration options are more radical in nature and involve the movement of the students within the current site of enrollment, between enrollment sites, or entirely to a new site. These options are:

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
whole grade acceleration	The student is moved ahead of normal grade placement. This is best done at the end of an academic year to take place at the beginning of the next year. The movement of kindergarten	Very beneficial for bright students. Its greatest research-supported academic and social effects appear to be in grade 3-6. Social implications should be considered. Caution should also

	students will be done in accord with board policy 501.2a.	be used when considering having a student skip the last year at a site (6th grade, 8th grade)
subject-matter acceleration	The student is placed for a part of the day with students at more advanced grade levels for one or more subjects without being assigned to a higher grade.	Can result in significant positive academic increases, and socialization is neither harmed nor enhanced. Individual curriculum areas may have own guidelines for acceleration.
concurrent enrollment	A student attends classes in more than one building level during the school year	Can result in positive academic outcomes for students. May result in transportation problems.
Post-Secondary Enrollment	The student, after successfully completing all coursework in a subject offered by the district, enrolls in a class at a post-secondary institution while still attending high school. (See Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Act in Iowa Code.)	Allows student to earn college credit while still in high school. District assumes some portion of the cost of courses.

Evaluation Procedures

The intent of the following procedures is

- to determine whether academic acceleration is in the best interest of the student academically, socially, and psychologically
- to identify the most appropriate range and type of accelerative option

The testing, observation, and social history will be completed by designated Iowa City Community School District staff members, such as the coordinator of gifted education, subject-area coordinators, and subject-area resource specialists. If a parent/guardian chooses additional evaluations by privately-certified individuals, all related costs will be paid by the parent/guardian.

The designated review team is responsible for gathering performance and observation information relative to the current academic, social, and achievement levels of the student. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected from teachers, counselors, and parents.

These data may include:

- Achievement test scores –Iowa Assessments, and other nationally-normed and recognized achievement tests
- Cognitive testing – individual or group IQ tests
- Authentic assessment or portfolio information
- Student progress reports
- Current grade point average (for secondary)
- Any special assessments relative to the process
- Information from parents and educators who know the student in the school setting
- Out-of-level achievement testing to determine the ceiling of student’s ability
- Information from the Iowa Acceleration Scale to determine the appropriateness of acceleration
- Self-concept scales to determine the social and psychological nature of the student

The designated review team is also responsible for writing a status report in which all the data gathered in the evaluation process is presented. Upon completion of this report, the evaluation team meets to discuss results and to make a recommendation to the building administrator. The team will recommend no acceleration or the best range and type of acceleration.

Placement Recommendations

- *Acceleration Recommended:* If acceleration is recommended, the review team’s written report will demonstrate that all potential consequences of the intervention have been explored and will provide adequate documentation of the benefits of the recommended placement.
- *Acceleration Not Recommended:* If acceleration is not recommended, the written report will demonstrate that all potential consequences of the intervention have been explored, will provide documentation of why acceleration is not appropriate, and will recommend appropriate options to meet the needs of the student in the current placement.

Conference Procedures

The evaluation team and the building principal will meet with the parents to present the status report and the recommendation.

Following the conference, the written report will be placed in the student’s cumulative folder. Individuals not agreeing with the decision may add dissenting reports to the documentation.

A parent/guardian may appeal the decision using the guidelines in the Administrative Regulations of the district (502.3).

Following a recommendation for acceleration, an educational plan will be written for the student. This plan will include a description of the placement and growth goal and a plan and schedule for monitoring the student's progress. This monitoring will be done by a designated member of the evaluation team for a period of 10 weeks. For secondary students who have chosen a Post-Secondary Enrollment Option or an Advanced Placement class, the student's guidance counselor will be the monitor. During this time, the monitor will check in with the classroom teacher in the new classroom, parents, and the building principal. At the end of the 10-week period, the monitor will recommend the following:

- that the student continue in the current accelerated placement
- that some adjustments be made in the current accelerated placement
- that the student be returned to the previous placement

At the end of the 10 week review period, a final report will be written and placed in the student's cumulative folder.

Forms and Supplemental Documents to Assist in the Process

- Acceleration Procedures Checklist
- Guidelines for Acceleration in K-6 Mathematics
- Parent Information Form
- Teacher Information Form

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ?

You may contact the ELP Coordinator, Julie Ewert-Hays