

Grade Level Acceleration Procedure

Minnesota Statute 120B.15, **GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS PROGRAMS**, indicates that a school district must adopt procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students. These procedures must include how the district will:

- Assess a student's readiness and motivation for acceleration
- Match the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to a student to achieve the best type of academic acceleration for that student

District 197 Acceleration Procedure:

District 197 recognizes state statute 120B.15 and supports the need for academically gifted students to receive appropriate accelerated instruction. *A Nation At Risk*, and the recent response, *A Nation Empowered* identify 18 different types of acceleration. Two of which involve “grade skipping”: Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Whole Grade Acceleration. Whole Grade Acceleration¹ occurs when a student is not only doing the caliber of work necessary to be promoted to the next grade or enrolled in the next course in the academic sequence, but also demonstrates the ability to do the caliber of work required of students in the next grade level/subject/course. The goal of acceleration is to match the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the learner.

The district uses the process outlined below to determine if there is evidence to support acceleration however, final determination to accelerate resides with the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Minimum Criteria:

Prior to requesting Grade Level Acceleration, District 197 has **established minimum criteria** for consideration. The criteria consist of:

Being identified as a Tier 3 student by the current district Gifted Identification Process,

OR

Academic Achievement results in math AND reading as measured by MAP 2-5 (for students in grades 1 - 4) or MAP 6+ (for students in grades 5 and up) at the 98 percentile or higher and two years ahead of their current placement

AND

Cognitive Ability Test (CogAt) - Composite Score of 130+

If a student has not taken the CogAt, MAP Math or MAP Reading tests, the district will arrange for the tests to be taken, but the student must have been enrolled in the district for at least six months. CogAT will be administered in the district testing window whenever possible. If a student needs to be assessed outside of this window, the assessment will occur in late April or early May. The exact date is dependent on the availability of the Minnesota Testing Center at the University of Minnesota. The district Gifted and Talented Coordinator will work with the Minnesota Testing Center to establish a window, when necessary.

¹ *Whole grade acceleration is an empirically validated educational intervention for high-ability students. (Calangelo, Assouline & Gross 2004, 2011).*

Part 1: Starting the Process

If minimum criteria are met, to begin the process, the parent or guardian should fill out a Whole [Grade Acceleration Request Form](#) and Parent Inventory for Finding Potential (PIP) by April 15 for consideration for the following school year.

Copies of Whole Grade Acceleration forms will be available at all schools. Forms may also be available under Gifted and Talented on the district webpage or from the district Gifted and Talented Coordinator. Parents/guardians must sign the form giving the district permission to administer needed tests, and permission for a member of the evaluation team to invite their son or daughter to an interview.

Any qualified student, in grades 1-8, residing in the District may also be referred by a building principal, or a District staff member as long as the student meets minimum qualifications. Upon referring a child, the building principal would set up an initial meeting and review the procedure, share the Whole Grade Acceleration Request Form, and discuss possible expenses with the family.

Initial Screening

1. A staff member, parent or student may initiate grade acceleration. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator and building principal will review the procedures with staff and/or parent(s) who are considering acceleration for a student.
2. The parent must submit the acceleration request and the Parent Inventory for Finding Potential (PIP) to the building administrator.

Between April 15 and May 1 annually,

3. The administrator and Gifted and Talented Coordinator meet to discuss the request.
4. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator gathers existing student data including two documented strategies to meet the student's acceleration needs, previous test scores, work samples, teacher rating scales (academic and socioemotional) and a summary of classroom achievement.
5. The Acceleration Committee will review the existing data.

Acceleration Committee

The acceleration evaluation committee shall include the following:

- A. Current teachers of the referred student
- B. A teacher at the grade level or course to which the referred student may be accelerated
- C. A district psychologist*
- D. The district Gifted and Talented Coordinator
- E. The building principal or designee

*It is recommended that the same psychologist is used for all acceleration evaluations.

Part 2: Data Gathering

Following the initial screening a meeting will be held between May 1 and May 8 with the parents/guardians, building administrator and Gifted and Talented Coordinator to discuss whether the process continues and/or next steps. If the process continues, the next phase will be additional data gathering.

Data Gathering

1. If the process continues, the Iowa Acceleration Scale-3² assessment will be completed by the building administrator or Gifted and Talented Coordinator.
2. As part of the IAS-3 assessment the most recent version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) or the Stanford-Binet individual measure of intellectual ability is required.
 - a. Parents may choose to submit scores from an outside psychologist at their own expense.
 - b. If a family is not able to access outside resource, the parents/guardians may request testing by the district. The district would provide needed assessments at the expense of the parents/guardians - not to ever exceed \$250. Families who qualify for free or reduced lunch would not be required to pay. If testing is done by the local district, the parent/guardian should understand that they may not have access to printed reports but rather reports that most likely will be hand-scored.
3. Additional assessments may include any combination of the following:
 - a. End of the year assessments* for reading and math curriculum and other curriculums as requested by the acceleration committee. It will be necessary for the student to demonstrate competency of the grade level content that will be missed.
 - b. A student interview with the school psychologist and Social Skills Rating System to determine social readiness and student motivation.
 - c. Possible classroom observations
 - d. Current grades
 - e. Any other portfolio or digital portfolios of examples of student work or performance provided by teachers, the family or the building administrator.

*MCA scores

² **The Iowa Acceleration Scale* is authorized by professors at the Belin and Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. The IAS-3 gives an objective look at various aspects of the student while analyzing major factors that need to be considered when making a decision about grade acceleration. Each section has a numerical value which are added together to determine the final score. The score becomes the primary guideline for predicting how successful the student will be as a candidate for whole grade acceleration. Ability is defined as what the child can do. Aptitude is what a child can learn, and Achievement is what a child is doing. All three must be considered when determining placement.

Part 3: Evaluation of Data Gathering

The Acceleration Committee will review the data and make a recommendation. A meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardians, building administrator and Gifted and Talented Coordinator to discuss the recommendation and next steps between June 1 and June 15.

The Acceleration Committee reviews data from the data gathering process and recommends acceleration based on the following criteria:

- IAS-3 Recommendation

Total Numerical Value	IAS-3 Recommendation
60 - 80 total value	Excellent candidate for grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.
46-59	Good candidate for grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.
35-45 total value	Marginal candidate for grade acceleration. There is no clear recommendation-consider subject-acceleration as an alternative.
34 or fewer total value	Grade acceleration is NOT recommended - consider subject acceleration, enrichments, differentiation and/or other alternatives.

- High achievement in current grade level in all academic areas
- Intellectual ability score of 130
- Academic achievement test results in 98 percentile or higher as measured by the MAP in Reading and Math
- Evidence of social/emotional maturity, academic motivation and persistence
- A desire to accelerate without pressure from parent(s)/guardian(s)

Part 4: Recommendation Procedures

If grade acceleration is recommended:

- A plan for class placement and transition considerations will be developed. The plan shall specify:
 - the placement of the student in an accelerated setting
 - strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting
 - how the placement alters the student's ability to access classes at the middle school and high school prior to his or her peers
 - required meetings with the school counselor for social and emotional support
 - how this may impact eligibility at the middle school or high school for activities
- To assure student is being successful, a follow-up meeting will take place 6 - 8 weeks into the start of the school year with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The building principal will be assigned to oversee the implementation of the plan, and to monitor the adjustment of the student to the accelerated setting. Parents will also understand that the plan is a guide.
- Gifted and Talented Coordinator will document acceleration in student's cumulative file.

If grade acceleration is NOT recommended:

- The building principal will work with and be supported by the building Gifted teacher and/or Gifted and Talented Coordinator to ensure that the student is being appropriately challenged.
- Recommendations for current success in the current grade may be created by the evaluation committee.

Deadline for Submitting Forms:

Whole Grade Acceleration Forms should be submitted by April 15. Students referred for accelerated placement will be evaluated in a prompt manner, not to exceed 60 calendar days.

The Acceleration Committee shall be responsible for conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the student. The committee will consider the student's own thoughts on possible accelerated placement in its deliberation.

Written Notification:

The Acceleration Committee shall issue a written decision of the evaluation process to the building principal and to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). This notification shall include instructions for appealing the decision.

Parent's Rights Granted by the District:

At any time during the first quarter of the transition period, a parent/guardian may request in writing that the student be withdrawn from accelerated placement. In such cases the principal will remove the student from the accelerated placement without repercussions. The student's acceleration procedure shall be revised accordingly.

At the end of the two month accelerated placement -- the placement shall become permanent. The student's records shall be modified accordingly if necessary by district or state procedures.

After six months the accelerated educational plan shall become part of the student's permanent record to facilitate continuous progress through the curriculum.