

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 283

SECTION/FILE 640 DATE OF ADOPTION August 25, 1975
AFFIRMED/REVISED 01.28.85; 01.08.01;
12.11.06; 01.24.11

TITLE ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

The School Board recognizes that in certain situations it may be desirable to accelerate the placement of a student in instructional programs appropriate to the student's academic, social, and personal development levels. The Superintendent is directed to develop a procedure that allows students to be accelerated.

Administrative Procedures for Policy 640

ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to offer guidance to professional staff, families and students and to provide consistent district practice regarding student acceleration.

II. General Statement of Policy

The School Board recognizes that in certain situations it may be desirable to accelerate the placement of a student in instructional programs appropriate to the student's academic, social, and personal developmental levels.

III. Whole-grade acceleration

Initiation

The process for considering a student for acceleration may be initiated by the parent(s) or guardian(s) or a district staff member, who will then contact the gifted and talented department chair. Upon request the following procedure will be utilized:

A. Assemble Student Records

Records of current achievement and aptitude will be assembled. Available records may include current and past grades/evaluations in subject areas, standardized test information and any assessment administered outside the school district and made available by the parent(s).

B. Gather information from Teachers

Information concerning the student's current classroom performance, which may include work samples and the teacher's perspectives on the student's learning needs will be gathered. (Appendix I)

C. Gather information from Parent(s)

Parent(s) or guardian perspectives on the student's learning needs and current educational placement will be gathered. (Appendix II)

D. Convene Grade Acceleration Team

The principal will convene a team that may consist of the principal, the student's past and current teachers and the gifted and talented department chair to review the available information and determine whether the student is a viable candidate for grade level acceleration. The following criteria should serve as a guideline for determining if a referral should proceed through the acceleration process:

1. Evidence of high degrees of talent and achievement in multiple curriculum areas with special emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics
2. High degrees of persistence and motivation
3. Social and emotional readiness
4. Instructional needs cannot be reasonably met through modification of a curriculum area within the current grade level placement

E. Refer to School Psychologist as Appropriate

Viable candidates will be referred to the school psychologist for further assessment. Possible assessments may include:

1. An intellectual ability or aptitude evaluation
2. An individual achievement test
3. Measures of social-emotional readiness

F. Meet to Review Information

Once the assessment is complete, the grade acceleration team consisting of the principal, the classroom teachers of the current grade and the potential grade for advancement, the gifted and talented department chair and the gifted and talented services teacher, the school psychologist, parent(s)/guardian(s) and any other parties who may have knowledge beneficial to the decision making process will be involved in this review. All of the information for the review will be compiled using the Iowa Acceleration Scale.

G. Determine Appropriate Action

Using the Iowa Acceleration Scale as a guideline for discussion, the team will make a recommendation for or against acceleration. The grade acceleration team including the building principal will make the final acceleration placement decision and the decision will be final. A decision will be made to:

1. Fully accelerate the student to the next grade level, or
2. Develop an educational plan which will make necessary modifications in the current grade level's curriculum, or
3. Pursue course acceleration.

IV. School District Action

A. If full grade acceleration is recommended, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The receiving and sending teachers, the gifted and talented service teacher and/or the gifted and talented department chair will be part of the transition planning with student and parent(s).
2. The team will establish a timeline for the transition.
3. The grade advancement will be considered a trial placement for six weeks. During that time the gifted and talented service teacher will work with the classroom teacher to ensure success. If at the end of six weeks, it is apparent the student is not making adequate progress, a change may be instituted.

4. At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement shall become permanent. The student's records shall be modified accordingly, and the acceleration implementation plan shall become part of the student's permanent record to facilitate continuous progress through the curriculum.
5. Students who are new to the district and have attended an accredited school or have attended a non-accredited school (in or out of the United States) or have been home-schooled, will be placed in an age-appropriate grade level for a period of six to eight weeks, in order to provide an opportunity to observe social, academic and emotional readiness. Following this time period, grade acceleration assessment may be pursued as per parent request.

B. Educational Program Plan

The following are some of the modifications in the current grade level's curriculum that may be implemented if whole grade acceleration is determined to not be the best course of action at the time.

1. Classroom differentiation that accommodates use of leveled materials
2. Independent study
3. Online learning opportunities
4. Mentorship
5. Concurrent enrollment

VII. Course/Subject Acceleration

Students considered for individual subject acceleration shall be evaluated using a variety of data sources, including measures of achievement based on state academic content standards and consideration of the student's maturity and desire for accelerated placement.

- A. Course/subject acceleration for elementary students will first be done through differentiated classroom work the classroom teacher can provide in partnership with the gifted services teacher. If full subject acceleration is implemented in a sequential content area, a plan must be created that accommodates the potential for continued sequential implementation beyond the year it is instituted.
- B. Course/subject acceleration for junior high school students wishing to participate at the high school level is intended for students who are implementing an educational plan inclusive of sequential courses that are unavailable at the junior high school, to ensure continuous placement occurs. Such enrollments will be limited to two of four core-area courses. At the point of three of four core-area courses are needed, the student shall be whole grade accelerated. These enrollments may be dependent upon adjustments and/or accommodations made by the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to facilitate his/her participation in the class at no additional cost to the school district.

VIII. Parameters for Both Whole-grade and Course/Subject Acceleration

- A. In all cases of whole grade acceleration in grades K-8, a student shall advance one grade at a time.

- B. In cases of whole grade acceleration, the application shall be made no later than March 1st of the current academic year for placement of the next school year.

Appendix I

ACCELERATION INFORMATION GATHERING FOR TEACHERS

1. How would you describe the student's emotional adjustment and stability?
2. Are the student's emotional patterns and responses appropriate for acceleration?
3. How would you describe the student's social maturity?
4. What are the characteristics of the student's friends? At what grade level are his/her friends?
5. What are his/her relationships to adults?
6. What are the parent(s)' feelings about acceleration?
7. What are the student's aptitudes, intellectual ability, special talents, and achievements?
8. How would you rate the student's overall classroom performance?
9. What is his/her ability to work independently?
10. Does s/he show flexibility in thought and daily activities?
11. What is his/her frequency and accuracy of responses?
12. What is the quality and accuracy of his/her class work?
13. What are his/her problem solving, decision-making skills in comparison with same age peers?
14. To what extent are the student's skills of self-evaluation developed?
15. What choices does s/he make in independent activities?
16. Other classroom assessment information

Appendix II

ACCELERATION INFORMATION GATHERING FOR PARENT (S)/GUARDIAN(S)

1. What are the child's aptitudes, intellectual ability, special talents, and achievements?
2. What are high interest areas of the child?
3. What is his/her flexibility when routines change?
4. What kinds of activities does the child engage in at home?
5. Does s/he participate in school and non-school extracurricular activities?
6. What is his/her ability to work independently?
7. What are his/her relationships with peers, older children and adults?
8. What are his/her attitudes toward school and learning?
9. What are his/her feelings about acceleration?
10. What is his/her level of maturity and emotional stability?
11. To what extent are his/her skills of self-evaluation developed?
12. Other assessment information