

# SCHOOL DISTRICT 197

West St. Paul + Mendota Heights + Eagan Area

## Strategic Implementation Plan:

*Creating the  
World's Best Workforce*

**2020-2021**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK</b> <b>Adopted June 2020</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FOCUS AREAS IMPLEMENTATION TARGETS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ANNUAL REPORT</b> <b>AND OTHER PERFORMANCE MEASURES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PLAN FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2020-2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC</b> <b>ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS</b>	<b>8</b>
District Goals	8
Sites Goals	9
<b>MULTI-TIERED INTERVENTION MODEL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>REQUIRED NOTICES</b>	<b>12</b>
Access to Diverse Teachers	12
Gifted and Talented Identification Process	12
Acceleration	12
Early Entrance to Kindergarten	12
School Readiness	13
<b>PARENT, COMMUNITY,</b> <b>and STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CONSTITUENT FEEDBACK</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>16</b>
Gifted and Talented Identification Process	17
Grade-Level Acceleration Procedure	19
Early Entrance to Kindergarten	30

# INTRODUCTION

In fall 2019, School District 197 hosted community-wide input sessions to gather input into the creation of a revised strategic plan. Hundreds of community members, students, and staff responded to the following prompts:

- What do our students need to learn so they are ready for their future?
- What do you value most about our schools?
- What are some new opportunities we should explore?
- How can you and our community connect with and support our schools?

A representative group was convened in December 2019 to digest all of the input and create a new strategic framework to guide our new and long-term work. The framework they drafted included a mission statement, belief statements, and focus areas for improvement. After an initial review by the school board, additional input was sought through a variety of focus groups. This input was used to revise the initial draft of the strategic framework. The final draft was approved by the school board in June 2020.

The strategic framework provides the district with a direction for our work. For example, one focus area for improvement is to, “Establish a district-wide system of social-emotional learning and support.” The next step is to determine the more specific strategies the district needs to implement to achieve the desired improvement. Work is already underway in each of the three focus areas. More will be described later. In addition, the 2020-2021 school year will be used to develop longer range plans in each of the three focus areas.



We are excited to introduce you to our new strategic framework and the work it will direct. Our new tagline...

***Nurture, Inspire, Prepare  
Together, we thrive!***

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Adopted June 2020

## SCHOOL DISTRICT 197

*Nurture. Inspire. Prepare. Together, We Thrive.*

School District 197 is committed to caring relationships, equitable practices, and high achievement for all.

### GOALS

All students are academically and socially ready for school.

All 3rd graders can read at grade level.

All racial and economic achievement gaps are closed.

All students graduate from high school.

All students are ready for career and college.

### WE BELIEVE...

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- People thrive when they feel connected, trusted, and affirmed.
- Communication and collaboration strengthen school, family, and community relationships.

#### EQUITY

- Our diversity makes us stronger.
- Seeking to understand each other strengthens the individual and community.
- We are all accountable for removing barriers and creating equitable systems.

#### ACHIEVEMENT

- High expectations and personalized support are critical for student success.
- Innovative environments promote curiosity, creativity, and courageous action.
- Everyone has the ability to continually grow.

### FOCUS AREAS

1

Establish a district-wide system of social-emotional learning and support

2

Build equitable systems and support throughout the district

3

Increase E-12 opportunities for career exploration and preparation

## FOCUS AREAS IMPLEMENTATION TARGETS

Our focus areas in the new strategic framework were grounded in research as well as the input we received from questions we asked the public. As you will see below, a theme in our strategies for this year is to continue to provide systems to gather feedback from our stakeholders on the specific strategies we should implement to achieve our desired outcomes. The table below groups the specific strategies we plan to implement this year under each of the focus areas. We will note this is not intended to describe all of the district’s initiatives this year. Rather, it is intended to highlight the key areas established through the strategic framework process that we want to improve and our plans to do so. One notable exclusion from the list below is the various endeavours the school district is taking to ensure the best instruction possible amid the COVID pandemic.

Focus Area	2020-2021 Actions
Establish a district-wide system of social-emotional learning (SEL) and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish SEL leadership team</li> <li>● Participate in MDE grant on SEL</li> <li>● Select SEL framework</li> <li>● Conduct a needs assessment</li> <li>● Identify research-based practice aligned to selected SEL framework</li> <li>● Develop a long-range plan of specific strategies to support focus area</li> </ul>
Build equitable systems and support throughout the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish equity advisory committee</li> <li>● Conduct equity audit</li> <li>● Select equity framework</li> <li>● Draft recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff of color action plan</li> <li>● Draft elevating student voice and leadership action plan</li> <li>● Draft creating and sustaining equity leadership action plan</li> <li>● Develop a long-range plan of specific strategies to support focus area</li> </ul>
Increase E-12 opportunities for career exploration and preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plan for implementation of recommendations from the 2019-2020 Graduation Requirement Task Force</li> <li>● Implement Math for Trades course with articulation with Dakota County Technical College</li> <li>● Revise physical education and health course offerings to include certifications and use of the new high school aquatics facility</li> <li>● Continued and improvement of Warrior Seminar and internship opportunities</li> <li>● Develop a long-range plan of specific strategies to support focus area</li> </ul>

# ANNUAL REPORT AND OTHER PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Each fall, the annual report shows progress towards attaining our strategic goals. The report identifies performance measures that indicate both a desired outcome and degree to which the district is making progress towards those outcomes. The report is available on the district website. In addition, the results are reported in an annual meeting in which key messages are prioritized and highlighted. Other reports are tailored to relevant audiences as deemed appropriate.

Annual Achievement and Program Targets are set based on the previous year's performance. The Annual Targets differ from the goals in the Annual Report as they break down the aspirations specified incremental, specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound (SMART) goals at the grade and/or site level.

The Annual Targets measure the degree to which individual schools and the district are accomplishing the five goals established through the strategic framework:

- All students are academically and socially ready for school
- All third graders can read at grade level
- All racial and economic achievement gaps are closed
- All students graduate from high school
- All students are ready for career and college

Measurements used to assess progress minimally include those listed below.

- Student performance on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)
- Student performance on FASTBridge assessments in area of literacy and math
- Student performance on the ACT
- High school graduation rates
- Results from each assessment will be broken down by student group to measure the achievement/opportunity gap



The following, in support of the district plans, are reported annually to the Minnesota Department of Education as part of Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce Initiative:

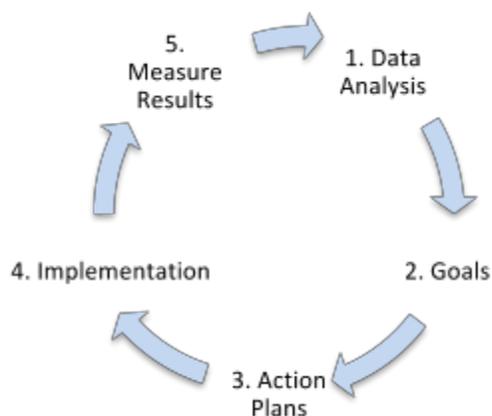
- District Strategic Implementation Plan and World’s Best Workforce Initiative
- Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services (ADSIS) Plan
- Alternative Teachers Performance Pay System (ATPPS) Plan
- District American Indian Education Plan
- District Achievement and Integration Plan
- District Staff Development Plan
- Read Well by Grade 3 Literacy Plan

## PLAN FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Schools and departments set annual continuous improvement goals aligned to the District Strategic Framework Goals. A needs assessment occurs each year by reviewing achievement trends. This assists schools and the district in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in pursuit of student and school success.

Schools complete their assessment by reviewing student achievement data that is disaggregated by subgroup,<sup>10</sup> by site, and by district in annual data retreats in August. District and school goal setting follows. A Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) is then developed. After district and site goals have been established, teachers develop goals in their Collaborative Teams (CTs).

Figure 2: District 197 Continuous Improvement Model



Every teacher in the district must participate as a member of a CT. As part of the district, site, and team goal-setting and action-planning process, staff examine strategies for improving instruction, as well as considering and selecting best practices.

# 2020-2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS

The strategic framework establishes five goal areas. The district uses a variety of formative (along the way) and summative (at the end) measures to assess our progress towards achieving each goal. Among those measures, key progress indicators have been selected to use for our annual district targets.

## District Goals

- **All students are academically and socially ready for school.**
  - The percentage of students in the district's four-year-old preschool program who are "kindergarten ready" in the areas of literacy and social/ emotional development will increase by 2% in each area by spring 2021.
- **All third graders can read at grade level.**
  - The percentage of students who will meet the low risk or lowest risk target on aReading in grade 3 will increase from 66% in the fall 2020 to 68% in spring 2021.
- **All racial and economic achievement gaps are closed.**
  - The gap between students of color and white students in grades 1-8 will decrease from 24% to 22% in spring 2021 by increasing the percent of students who meet the low risk or lowest risk target on aReading of the groups as follows:
    - White students from 75% in fall 2020 to 77% in spring 2021
    - Students of color from 51% in fall 2020 to 55% in spring 2021
  - The gap between students of color and white students in grades 1-8 will decrease from 25% to 23% in spring 2021 by increasing the percent of students who meet the low risk or lowest risk target on aMath of the groups as follows:
    - White students from 79% in fall 2020 to 81% in spring 2021
    - Students of color from 54% in fall 2020 to 58% in spring 2021

Consideration will be given in 2020-2021 to write goals using the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in grades 3-8 and high school.

- **All students graduate from high school.**

Our improvement efforts will be focused on providing equitable supports for students of color in order to meet the goals below:

  - The four-year graduation rate at Henry Sibley High School will increase from 91.4% in 2019 to 93.4% in 2020.

- The percentage of students in grades 9-12 who pass all of their courses will increase from 71% for semester 1 in 2020 to 73% in 2021.
- **All students are ready for career and college.**
  - The percent of graduating seniors who meet the ACT college ready benchmark on the all four ACT subtests will increase from 29% for Class of 2020 to 31% for Class of 2021.
  - The percentage of Hispanic students enrolled and successfully completing a college-level course during the 2020-2021 school year will increase from 13% in spring 2020 to 18% in spring 2021.

Please note: All targets under other goals areas will be disaggregated by race and socio-economic status to ensure gaps in those measures are closing as well.

### **Sites Goals**

Each site will use their local baseline data to establish their annual goals in alignment with applicable district goals as follows. Sites may set a subject area focus. Goals should have a minimum increase of 2% annually.

- **Pre-K Goals:** Each site will improve by at least 2% the site's performance in the following areas:
  - The percentage of students in the district's four-year-old preschool program who are "kindergarten ready" in the areas of literacy and social/ emotional development in each area
  - The largest race-based achievement gap in literacy and/or math
- **Elementary School Goals:** Each site will improve by at least 2% the site's performance in the following areas:
  - The percentage of students in grades 1-4 who will meet the low risk or lowest risk target on aReading
  - The achievement gap for students of color in reading **and/or** math
- **Middle School Goals:** Each site will improve by at least 2% the site's performance in the following areas:
  - The percentage of students in grades 5-8 who will meet the low risk or lowest risk target on aReading
  - The achievement gap for students of color in reading **and/or** math
- **High School Goals:** The high school will improve by at least 2% the site's performance in the following areas:
  - The percentage of students in grades 9-12 who pass all of their courses

- The percent of graduating seniors who meet the ACT college-ready benchmark on the all four ACT subtests will increase
- The achievement or opportunity gap for students of color in alignment to district go



## MULTI-TIERED INTERVENTION MODEL

Annually, each student's progress toward meeting state and local academic standards is assessed. The assessment measures vary by grade level. In the primary grades, the Benchmark Assessment System is used in reading. In grades 2-8, the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test is used for reading and math. Selected students are assessed using the MAP test in high school.

When data indicate a student is not making progress toward meeting standards, a student is referred to the school's Problem-Solving Team (PST). The PST is a general education initiative that provides support for teachers in meeting the unique learning and behavioral needs of students. The goal of the PST is to assist students needing differentiated instruction or other interventions to ensure their success in the general education setting.

The PST model should not be confused or combined with Special Education Child Study. PST focuses on problem solving by intervening early and providing effective instructional, social, and behavioral interventions. Through this process, assigned staff collect data to determine whether the student has shown improvement following consistent implementation and evaluation of targeted interventions.

The array of interventions available to students needing additional support varies somewhat by grade level, but several key supports are used in the district:

- Intervention services funded by Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services (ADSIS)
- Basic Skills Instruction
- Title I Services
- Targeted Services (after school and summer school, grades K-8)
- Credit Recovery (grades 9-12)
- Alternative Learning Center (ALC) Services (high school)
- Family Support Program

# REQUIRED NOTICES

## **Access to Diverse Teachers**

Annually, the Human Resources Department provides data on effective teachers, which includes demographic information including race. The data is reviewed at each site during the staffing process to assess the degree to which licensed teachers in district and/or school reflect the diversity of students enrolled. The Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) also makes recommendations regarding the means to improve students' equitable access to effective and more diverse teachers.

## **Gifted and Talented Identification Process**

At the end of each school year, the academic performance of students in grades 2-7 is evaluated to identify children who should receive Gifted and Talented (GT) services or be placed on School District 197's Talent Development and Watch list for the following year. Performance measures include, but are not limited to, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), reading and math assessments from the Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP), and the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST).

Alternate Identification is an additional option for students who may be very high academic performers but do not qualify for GT services using the standard measures. Please contact the program coordinator for more information regarding Alternative Identification. See appendix for specific identification criteria.

## **Acceleration**

School District 197 recognizes MN State Statute 120B.15 and supports the need for academically gifted students to receive appropriate accelerated instruction. Whole Grade Acceleration or Single Subject Acceleration 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 processes outlined in the Appendices to determine if there is evidence to support acceleration. However, final determination to accelerate resides with the parent(s)/guardian(s).

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten**

State of Minnesota regulations mandate that children reaching the age of five on or before September 1 of the school year are eligible for kindergarten. Children reaching the age of five after that date are not eligible for kindergarten until the following September. Exceptions will be considered when a child demonstrates, through assessments, above average social, emotional,

physical, and intellectual maturity and the child will be five on or before November 1. Please see the Appendices for the application procedures.

**School Readiness**

The district’s school readiness programs provide partial and full-day options that include a comprehensive curriculum aligned with state early childhood guidelines and kindergarten standards. The curriculum includes cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and academic skills that prepare students for success in kindergarten. Students participate in assessments three times a year that measure their progress and growth in academic content as well as social/emotional skills. The Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) provides input on programs, curriculum, and transition practices into kindergarten. All early learning teachers participate in ongoing professional development throughout the school year including specific strategies for working with students whose native language is not English.



## **PARENT, COMMUNITY, and STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

A number of parent and staff advisory committees engage stakeholders in the process of reviewing programs and making recommendations for improvement, as well as general communication and advice. Membership is generally open to anyone who has an interest in promoting and supporting the program or initiative.

The standing advisory committees for School District 197 are listed below:

- District Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC)
- District Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- District Gifted and Talented Advisory Committee (GTAC)
- Tri-District Community Education Advisory Council
- Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)
- District Staff Development Committee (DSDAC)
- District Wellness Committee
- American Indian Parent Advisory Committee
- Padres Latinos en Acción
- Title I Parent Advisory
- Parent Ambassador Network (PAN)



## **CONSTITUENT FEEDBACK**

Bi-annually the district hires an external evaluator to do a random phone survey of a minimum of 400 district constituents. The survey provides a longitudinal look at how well residents feel the school district is educating our students, how well we are managing our resources, and how well the school board is performing in its role. The results are reported at a school board meeting, and the entire report is available for the public to access online.

# ANNUAL BUDGET

Minnesota's World's Best Workforce legislation requires districts to identify how resources will be dedicated to accomplishing the goals of their plan. The plan need not be dependent on new funding. In most cases, resources can be redirected. However, in other cases, additional expenditures will be necessary and are subject to school board approval.

School District 197 reviews its budget annually to determine how existing funds will be used to support the plan and whether additional resources are needed. Requests for additional resources are considered in the context of the regular budgeting process, which begins annually in January and ends in June.



## **APPENDICES**

## **Gifted and Talented Identification Process**

At the end of each school year, the academic performance of students in grades 2-7 is evaluated to identify children who should receive Gifted and Talented (GT) services or be placed on School District 197's Talent Development and Watch list for the following year. Performance measures include, but are not limited to, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), reading and math assessments from Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP), and the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST).

Alternate Identification is an additional option for students who may be very high academic performers but do not qualify for GT services using the standard measures. Please contact the program coordinator for more information regarding Alternative Identification. See appendix for specific identification criteria.

### **Tier 1**

Tier 1 of the Gifted and Talented Program focuses on the training and support of all teachers in the practice of differentiated instruction. This impacts all students, especially those achieving at high levels, as it offers different learning opportunities that extend beyond the general classroom expectation.

### **Tier 2**

Tier 2 of the Gifted and Talented Program focuses on the practice of Total School Cluster Grouping. Clustering is a "common gifted education practice that places a group of high achieving, gifted, or high-ability students in a classroom with other students and with a teacher who has received training or is willing to differentiate curriculum and instruction for these target students" (Gentry, 2008). Tier 2 elementary students also work with the Gifted and Talented teacher in their school.

Criteria for Tier 2 Identification is a combination of:

- Cognitive Ability Test: Composite Score of 125+
- Cognitive Ability Test: Single Subtest Score (Verbal, Non-Verbal, Quantitative) of 125+ and scores at the 96th percentile or higher in both reading and math on either the NWEA MAP or FAST assessments
- Teacher Recommendation
- Parent Recommendation

### **Tier 3**

Tier 3 of the Gifted and Talented Program focuses on the implementation of curriculum extension projects. These projects serve as curricular extensions that allow students to grow in order to develop their academic and social skills through problem solving,

higher-level thinking skills and creativity. In order to offer students appropriate academic challenges, clustering is also used for Tier 3 students.

Criteria for Tier 3 Identification is a combination of:

- Cognitive Ability Test: Composite Score of 130+
- Cognitive Ability Test: Single Subtest Score (Verbal, Non-Verbal, Quantitative) of 125+ and scores at the 98th percentile or higher in both reading and math on either the NWEA MAP or FAST assessments
- Teacher Recommendation
- Parent Recommendation



## Grade-Level Acceleration Procedure

### School District 197 Acceleration Procedure

School 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* identifies 18 different types of acceleration. Two of which involve “grade skipping”: Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Whole Grade Acceleration. Whole Grade Acceleration 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 aReading and AMath FAST assessments 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.

#### 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.

1. If the process continues, the Iowa Acceleration Scale-3 (IAS-3) 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 resources, 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:
- 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.
  - A student interview with the school psychologist and Social Skills Rating System to determine social readiness and student motivation.
  - Possible classroom observations
  - Current grades
  - Any other portfolio or digital portfolios of examples of student work or performance provided by teachers, the family or the building administrator.

\*MCA scores

### 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	<b>Excellent</b> candidate for grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.
46-59	<b>Good</b> candidate for grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.
35-45 total value	<b>Marginal</b> candidate for grade acceleration. There is no clear recommendation-consider subject-acceleration as an alternative.
34 or fewer total value	Grade acceleration is <b>NOT recommended</b> - 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 the 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 the 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.

## **Single Subject Acceleration**

Minnesota Statute 120B.15 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

## **Single Subject Acceleration**

Single subject acceleration is defined as the delivery of curriculum by either physically moving a student into a higher-grade level classroom within the same district, or having him/her work with higher grade level curriculum either independently or in his/her own age-based classroom.

### **Elementary Single Subject Acceleration**

No subject acceleration in math is available in the current elementary program, teachers will meet student needs through differentiation.

A Gifted and Talented teacher at each site provides support to students in grades three and four during the literacy portion of the classroom schedule. During that time students will receive instruction at their academic level through guided reading.

### **Middle School Single Subject Acceleration**

Subject acceleration is available in math in the middle school and is an educational accommodation designed for exceptional math students. Subject acceleration requires an ongoing and committed partnership between the school district and the family. The subject acceleration procedures for math are designed to guide the process in determining if a student is a good candidate for this accommodation. To aid in the decision making process, more information about math pathways can be found through these resources: [Middle School Courses](#) and [Math Pathways](#).

Subject acceleration is not available in any other content area. A Gifted and Talented teacher at each site provides support to students in grades 5 - 8 during Language Arts and will consult with social studies and science teachers to differentiate instruction.

Families need to apply for single subject acceleration by the **last day of school** in order to be considered for the fall of the upcoming school year. Criteria for acceleration are listed below.

### **General criteria for students**

1. Student must demonstrate high achievement in math by scoring at or above 95th percentile on the aMath FAST assessment and achieve “exceeds” on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA).
2. An end of the year assessment may be given and a score of 80% or above will need to be achieved demonstrating mastery of district materials at least one year ahead of current placement.
3. The student’s current teacher and previous teacher in the subject area will be consulted about student achievement and work ethic.
4. The student should exhibit all or most of the following traits: social and emotional maturity, strong independent study skills, motivation and persistence, and an intense interest in the subject area.
5. The student must show a desire to subject accelerate.

### **General Process**

1. Students who meet the criteria in the first step under general criteria should complete the single subject acceleration application so that a time can be scheduled to take the end of the year assessment at least one year ahead of current placement. The application should be submitted to the building principal.
2. Parents will be contacted by the Gifted and Talented Coordinator to arrange a time for the assessment.
3. Results of the assessment will be shared within 1 week of completing the assessment.
4. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator, building principal, counselor and teacher of the subject the student is requesting to accelerate in, will determine if appropriate, permission for single subject acceleration will be granted.
5. If it is determined that the request is not appropriate, recommendations will be developed for the current level and the teacher will monitor student progress.

### **Process for students going in grade 4 going into grade 5**

1. Students that meet the criteria in the first step under general criteria, will be given the end of year assessment that assesses grade 5 standards during the school day in mid-May.
2. Results of the assessment will be shared by Memorial day.
3. Students meeting the criteria of 80% or more on the end of year assessment that want to enroll in Accelerate Middle School Math 1 should complete the Acceleration form.

Note: Students who do not meet the entrance criteria for accelerated math in grade five will have other opportunities for acceleration throughout their middle and high school career in School District 197.

### Procedures

1. The recommendation of the subject acceleration will occur at a natural transition time and be on a nine week (quarter) trial basis with the current teacher monitoring student progress. To be considered for the start of the year, requests should be made by the last day of school of the previous year.
2. Students **must maintain a 70% quarterly average** on all unit assessments in order to remain in the accelerated course.
3. Scheduling issues and transportation needs must be considered. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent.
4. Acceleration plans will be re-evaluated annually.

### Students New to District

1. Complete appropriate testing, testing needed will be based on tests taken in previous school.
2. Submit a recommendation form from previous school

## Early Entrance to Kindergarten

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
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## Procedures for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

State regulations mandate that children reaching the age of five on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year are eligible for kindergarten. Children reaching the age of five after that date are not eligible for kindergarten until the following September. Exceptions will be considered when a child demonstrates above average social, emotional, physical, and intellectual maturity and the child will be five on or before November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Admission Procedures

1. The child's birthday must be between September 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Parents/Guardians should submit a request to the principal of the school in the attendance boundary in which the family resides. An *Application For Early Admission to Kindergarten* will be sent to them to complete. Parents/Guardians must return completed applications along with a \$50 assessment fee by May 30<sup>th</sup> to the principal. Proof of early childhood screening must be provided along with the completed application.
3. All families requesting early admittance must bring their children to a designated elementary school for a half-day screening in the kindergarten room. The screening day is held no later than June 20<sup>th</sup> each year. Families will be notified of the assessment date no later than May 1.
4. Children will be assessed using the Kindergarten Readiness Test developed by Slosson Educational Publications, INC., work samples, and developmental observations for kindergarten readiness. At this time, the team will review any independent outside evaluations done at the parents' expenses, but such assessments are not required.
5. A written report will be developed by the district team. The report will indicate either of the following: (1) early entrance would not be in the best interests of the child, or (2) the child demonstrates kindergarten readiness skills. The findings in the report are the final decision.

6. The District will mail home the written report within one week of testing. The building principal will follow-up with the applicant by phone within one week of the written report being received.

A record of assessments and recommendations will be filed in the student's cumulative file.

7. All early admission placements are subject to available space in the kindergarten classrooms and will be considered probationary for a period of four weeks. During that time the child's progress and adjustment to kindergarten will be monitored. Based on this information, if the team recommends the child not continue in kindergarten, the principal will notify the parents of that decision.

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### **Procedures for Early Entrance to First Grade**

Children reaching the age of six on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year will be eligible for first grade. Children reaching the age of six after that date and before November 2<sup>nd</sup> will not be eligible for first grade until they have successfully completed a kindergarten program or gone through our district Grade Acceleration Process. Applications for early entrance to first grade are due on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any questions regarding procedures for early entrance to kindergarten/ first grade, please call the Elementary Curriculum Coordinator, Kate Skappel at 651-403-7026.