

Acceleration Policy and Procedures

Policy No. 540

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the process to be followed for evaluating students for Level 4 services through Faribault Public Schools. Level 4 services include possible accelerated grade placement as well as identifying students for possible early admission or acceleration in one or more specific subject areas.

For grade or subject acceleration, a student must already be receiving Level 3 services through the Gifted Education Program and must have previously been identified as a high potential learner. The teacher should implement two or more strategies to meet the student's needs in the classroom and document the results before Level 4 acceleration is considered.

II. Acceleration Process

Step One: Application

Any district student may be recommended by administrator, teacher, gifted and talented teacher, psychologist or parents for accelerated academic learning opportunities. The student should be spoken to about the accelerative options being considered. The student's attitude toward acceleration is very important in the overall success of the process.

The student will submit an application and letter to the Gifted Teacher. Permission for evaluation will be obtained from parents/guardians. The preferred application deadline is April 1 for the following year.

Step Two: Initial Screening

The classroom teacher will submit a teacher recommendation/student informational form to the Gifted Teacher that contains the following:

1. Demonstrated need for acceleration based on the documentation of differentiated strategies used in the classroom for the student.
2. Scores on grade level nationally recognized standardized tests. Scores should be at the 95th percentile or above on the math portion to demonstrate high achievement in math.
3. Traits and observations of the student's academic readiness such as:
 - a. social and emotional maturity
 - b. academic readiness and motivation (without parental pressure)
 - c. strong independent study skills

- d. an intense interest in the specific academic area
- e. rate of mastery of new concepts in area being considered
- f. past academic grades and records

The student must meet the above criteria successfully to move on in the process.

Step Three: Committee Review

If the child does qualify for possible accelerative options from the initial screening, then a child study team will be scheduled to review the request for acceleration and identify additional assessment procedure(s) necessary. It is recommended that the following people be present at the child study team meeting: the building administrator, teacher (current and possible receiving in subject area/grade), gifted teacher and other school personnel as deemed necessary.

The Child Study Team will identify additional assessment procedure(s) necessary to demonstrate fulfillment of the following criteria:

1. Demonstrate off-level standardized testing performance at least two years above current placement. The target score is at or above the 75th percentile as compared to students two years older (nationally).
2. Student scoring between the 50th and 75th percentile will be considered based on the testing instrument used. Other criteria should be met at a high standard.
3. Demonstrate mastery of district materials at least one year ahead of current placement. Mastery is considered achieving at least 85 percent or above on a prior knowledge inventory for entering grade or end-of-year test for grade to be skipped. A mid-year test for entering grade may be used if acceleration is being considered mid-year.
4. Recognizing that learning gaps may exist, students scoring between 75 and 85 percent mastery may retest in up to two specific skill areas using targeted chapter tests. This should be completed within four weeks of initial assessment. Materials will be provided to parents for remediation. These students must have met previous criteria at a high level.

The IAS (Iowa Acceleration Scale) will be used by the gifted teacher. This data includes ability, achievement and aptitude test scores, and will help determine whether or not the child qualifies for accelerative options.

Where acceleration is granted, a student will be placed in a subject or grade no more than one year ahead of the current placement. The subject or grade acceleration will be reviewed at the end of each grading period. If a student is recommended for additional subject or grade acceleration, the CST will determine that recommendation.

Step Four: Placement Recommendation

At the conclusion of the committee review and additional assessment, the team will determine what acceleration option would be most appropriate for the student. Each candidate will be considered on an individual basis. Parents will also be notified at this time.

If Level 4 acceleration is recommended by the Child Study Team:

1. A Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) is completed for the child and copies are distributed to each member of the child study team. A copy will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
2. This plan will include the following information: placement of the student in the accelerated setting, strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting, an appropriate transition period for accelerated placement, and finally details regarding how to support continuous progress through graduation.

Level 4 acceleration requires a partnership between the school district and families. Communication between the district, family and educational sites servicing the student is crucial.

Parents/Guardians should be aware that future years might require independent study, dual enrollment options, or out-of-school programming. The parent/guardian is responsible for all transportation programming needs of the student and should take this into account when considering the acceleration options.

If Level 4 acceleration is not recommended by the Child Study Team:

1. If deemed necessary, the gifted coordinator will meet with the teacher to determine academic interventions appropriate to meet the needs of the student.
2. The teacher and/or the gifted teacher will monitor the student's progress.
3. Parents may appeal the decision by writing a letter of request for further consideration to the building principal or the gifted teacher.

Step Five: Monitoring and Review

Level 4 acceleration will be on a trial basis. In the case of a grade skip the child will be placed on a two month trial period in the receiving grade. The receiving teachers and gifted coordinator will continue to monitor the child's success to ensure that the correct placement decision was made.

In the case of subject acceleration, the child will be monitored a minimum of two times per year to ensure the appropriate placement decision was made. The child will need to maintain at least 80% on tests, quizzes, homework and class work in the accelerated setting and 90% or above by the end of the school year. The monitoring will be done by the gifted education teacher.

Adopted: 12/18/08 _____

Revised: _____

Process for Early Entrance

Early entrance to kindergarten is defined as allowing students to enter kindergarten before the age of five. Minnesota State law indicates, "No person shall be admitted to any public school (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age on September 1st of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences... except that any school board may establish a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age." (Statute 120A.20 Admission to Public School)

The following is an overview of Faribault Public School's procedures for early entrance to kindergarten.

Please keep in mind that it is best if you contact the Principal for Early Entrance before August 1 of the upcoming school year. If you contact the school after August 1, there will be a risk of the student not being able to enter school when school starts.

Part 1:

1. The student's 5th birthday must fall after September 1st and before October 15th.
2. Early entrance is not recommended for a child that would be accelerated to the same grade as an older sibling.
3. A parent/guardian request needs to be made in writing to the Principal of the elementary school where the student will attend. It must be turned in by August 1st
4. Once the Principal of the elementary school receives a parents/guardian request, they will contact and schedule an appointment with a licensed school psychologist to administer the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children – 2nd Edition to the child. The cost of this test will be borne by the parent, at a cost of approximately \$200-\$300. Scholarships are available for parents who qualify based on federal standards for free or reduced priced meal guidelines.
5. The student must complete and obtain a full-scale IQ score 130 or better to be considered eligible, with consideration for the student scoring within the 90% confidence interval.

Part 2: If the child obtains this score, the following steps will apply:

1. The school psychologist and the principal will meet with the parents prior to August 21 with the testing results.
2. The Principal will arrange for the gifted and talented teacher/coordinator or psychologist to administer the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – 2nd Edition.
3. The Principal will request a parent questionnaire to be completed.
4. Although attending preschool is not required, it is highly recommended. If the child attends a preschool, a form will be given for the child's preschool teacher to complete.

All information needs to be completed and turned into the building Principal by August 25 or one week prior to school starting.

A school staff will meet to consider the child for early entrance. Parents or guardians will be notified of the school's decision by August 25th or as soon as the testing is completed. If early entrance is not recommended, you may request a meeting with the principal and curriculum director.

Part 3:

1. If early entrance is recommended, the parents will be contacted by the building Principal to set up a time to meet with school staff regarding the needs of the child. This should be done prior to the first day of school.
2. All early entrance placements are on a trial basis. During the first six weeks of school, classroom observations will be made to determine if the placement is appropriate.
3. If the team determines the placement is not appropriate, the student will be withdrawn from kindergarten. A meeting with the parents or guardians will be arranged to discuss other options.