

Grade Acceleration

Grade Skipping or Double Promotion



Austin Public School District #492 Policy and Procedure Guide

Submit Requests by April 1st

Decisions will be made and communicated by June 15th



Austin Public School Board Policy

EARLY ENTRANCE AND GRADE ACCELERATION #536

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for the consideration of early entrance for students in kindergarten and grade acceleration for students in grades 1-8.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The school board will allow early school entrance and grade acceleration. The following steps will be followed prior to the school district's decision regarding each individual student case.

A. Early Entrance

Students who have met the criteria set by the Austin Public Schools will be allowed to enter kindergarten early. The decision made by the administration shall be final.

B. Grade Acceleration

Students who have met the criteria set by the Austin Public Schools will be allowed to accelerate.

Grade Acceleration

It is the procedure of the Austin Public Schools to allow grade acceleration providing that the elementary and middle school student meets the following criteria:

1. The parent initiates the request with the building principal in whose attendance area the child resides. All requests should be submitted by April 1. Parents will be notified regarding the dispensation of the request no later than June 15.
2. The building principal will arrange a meeting with himself/herself, the parent, the student's teacher(s), the central office designee and, if applicable, the building principal of the next level.
3. The purpose of the meeting will be to gather data regarding the student's current achievement and abilities. It may be necessary to request further testing in order to make a decision. If that is the case, the parent is responsible for any costs incurred in this process.
4. After all necessary data has been collected the building principal, teacher(s), and the central office designee will make a decision as to whether the student shall be accelerated. The building principal is responsible for communicating the decision to the parent.
5. If the student meets the criteria set by the district, it will be necessary for the student to demonstrate competencies of the grade level(s) that will be missed.

Research Regarding Grade Acceleration

- Based on a meta-analysis of 32 studies on grade acceleration [grade skipping], Karen Rogers calculated the overall *effect size [additional year's growth]* of grade acceleration is 0.56 academically, 0.31 socially, and 0.10 Esteem.
- Rogers also found that students that were grade accelerated were more likely to make friends, probably because the older students have similar interests and are slightly more mature socially.
- Grade accelerated students did not lose confidence in themselves even though they had to work a little harder to compete with their classmates.
- Rogers noted research by Tom Southern and Eric Jones in 1991 that said that school personnel were more likely than parents to believe that grade acceleration was detrimental to a gifted child's development even though the research consistently showed the benefits for gifted children.

Grade Acceleration Requirements

Based on the work of Karen Rogers in Re-Forming Gifted Education, candidates who will likely benefit from grade acceleration:

- Are processing and achieving well beyond grade level peers in a specific academic area [Cognitive Functioning]
 - Score well on ability tests [>130], are 2+ years ahead on achievement test grade-equivalent scores, are frustrated with slow pace of regular classroom instruction at current grade level
- Are self-directed, independent, and motivated to learn [Personal Characteristics]
 - Are independent in thought and action, persist in assigned and self-selected tasks, enjoy school and learning, and are socially mature
- Prefer to work at own pace, though not necessarily alone [Learning Preferences]
 - Prefer fast-paced, challenging learning experiences, enjoy self-instructional materials for learning, enjoy working with small groups of like-ability learners
- Like academic work as well as time to pursue more school studies outside of school time [Interests]
 - Have wide-ranging interests, are actively involved in a variety of activities and hobbies outside of school

Grade Acceleration Process

(See below for information about each step in the process.)

- Parent request for grade acceleration and building principal will arrange communication about process.
- Student Background Information
 - Student Information Form
 - Letter of Support from the Parent
- Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement Assessments
- The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition: A Guide for Whole-grade Acceleration K-8 (IAS-3)
- Teacher Rating Scale
- Child Study Team Meeting
- Assessment findings and grade acceleration recommendations are shared with the family.

Student Background Information for Grade Acceleration

Submit the Student Background Information Form (attached) and all required supplemental materials to the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education by April 1st of the year.

- Submit a Letter of Support from the parents/guardian outlining why the child should be considered for grade acceleration.
- The parents may be asked to provide a psychologist’s recommendation based on achievement and ability testing. If asked for this evaluation, the parents are responsible for all costs incurred to secure the recommendation. Parents will need to sign a release of information form for the results of the testing to be sent to the school district. (Only need to submit upon request)

Andrea Malo, District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Programs
 Austin Public Schools District Office of Teaching and Learning
 401 3rd Ave. NW, Austin, MN 55912
 507-460-1924
andrea.malo@austin.k12.mn.us

Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement Assessments

Once the student information and supplemental materials are reviewed, the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education and/or the Gifted and Talented Interventionist at the site will review data from ability, aptitude, and achievement assessments. If the data is not available, the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education and/or the Gifted and Talented Interventionist will schedule and administer the assessment(s). The subtotal of the three numerical values must be greater than or equal to 10 using the IAS-3 to continue with the Child Study Team Meeting.

The assessments used may include, but are not limited to:

Assessment	Purpose for Assessment	Tools Commonly used in APS
Ability	Measures what a child CAN DO	Cognitive Ability Test [CogAT]
Aptitude	Measures what a child CAN LEARN	STAR Assessment Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Battery EXPLORE Test [not provided by APS]
Achievement	Measures what a child IS DOING	STAR Assessment

The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition: A Guide for Whole-grade Acceleration K-8 (IAS-3)

Austin Public School District #492 uses the criteria and procedures of The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition: A Guide for Whole-grade Acceleration K-8 to determine candidacy for grade acceleration. The

Iowa Acceleration Scale is authored by professors at the Belin & 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 deciding about grade acceleration. Each section has a numerical value which are added together to find a final score. The score becomes the primary guideline for predicting how successful the student will be as a candidate for grade acceleration.

Teacher Rating Scale

This instrument is completed by the student's classroom teacher(s) who rates the student in comparison to their peers on a list of behaviors and characteristics.

Child Study Team Meeting

The Child Study Team includes, but is not limited to, the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education, Principal(s) of the current and possible incoming schools, current and possible incoming classroom teachers, current and possible incoming Gifted and Talented Interventionists, and the parents of the child.

The Child Study Team will review the three assessment results and discuss potential problems that an accelerated student may have by examining school-related issues. Problems in these areas may indicate potential difficulties or obstacles that could hamper the success of whole grade acceleration.

The Child Study Team will be led by the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education. The leaders' role is to guide the team to reach a consensus on each discussion item and calculate the sum of the numerical values using the IAS-3.

At the end of the meeting, the leader will calculate the sum of the numerical values using the IAS-3 and including all topics of discussion. A decision will be made and communicated to the family regarding grade acceleration.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the process for grade acceleration, please contact:

- District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education:
Mrs. Andrea Malo

Austin Public Schools District Office of Teaching and Learning
401 3rd Ave. NW, Austin, MN 55912
507-460-1924
andrea.malo@austin.k12.mn.us

➤ Building Administrators

Woodson Kindergarten Center, Mrs. Jen Lawhead	507-460-1400
Banfield Elementary School, Mr. Blake Henley	507-460-1200
Neveln Elementary School, Mrs. Lynn Hemann	507-460-1600
Southgate Elementary School, Mr. Derik Gustafson	507-460-1300
Sumner Elementary School, Mrs. Jill Rollie	507-460-1100
I.J. Holton Intermediate School, Mr. Dewey Schara	507-460-1525
Ellis Middle School, Mr. Dewey Schara	507-460-1500

➤ Para Español al Success Coach

Woodson Kindergarten Center	507-460-1404
Banfield Elementary School	507-460-1213
Neveln Elementary School	507-460-1605
Southgate Elementary School	507-460-1303
Sumner Elementary School	507-460-1103
I.J. Holton Intermediate School	507-460-1529
Ellis Middle School	507-460-1515

Grade Acceleration ~ Student Background Information

Student Name	
Student Address	
Family Phone Number	Alternative Phone Number[s]
Current School Name	
Current School Address	
Current School Phone Number	Number of Years at Current School
Current Grade	
Current Age [Years and Months]	Student Birthdate [Month/Day/Year]

Family Background Information

Parent or Guardian's Name:	Email Address
Parent or Guardian's Name	Email Address

Siblings' Name	Sibling's Age	Sibling's School Grade	Sibling's Current School Name
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

**If you need space for additional siblings, please attach a separate sheet of paper.*

Professional Evaluation Services

If the student has received a formal professional evaluation [example: from a psychologist, social worker, or learning specialist] for a disability or disorder, please complete the chart below. Note: Disclosure of a disability will not disqualify a child from Grade Acceleration.

Disability	Details: Specific Type, Date of Diagnosis, Special Education Services Received, Additional Comments
Specific Learning Disability: [example: Written Language, Math, Reading, Nonverbal]	
Developmental:	

[example: Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-NOS]	
Other Health Impairment: [example: ADD, ADHD]	
Social/Emotional/Psychiatric: [example: Depression, Bipolar Disorder, OCD, ODD]	
Physical: [example: Visual, Hearing, Motor, Traumatic Injury]	
Any Not Listed:	

Please comment on the following:

Describe your child's academic skills. (Problem solving, memory, intellectual capability, etc.)	
Describe your child's relationships with peers and teachers.	
Describe your child's attitude or motivation toward learning.	
List any school or non-school extracurricular activities, clubs, or sports your child has participated. Has your child received any special recognitions?	

Please share any additional information that you feel important:

--