CONNEAUT SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS' REGULATION

215.1 AR - **Academic Acceleration**

Created 8/15/22

Acceleration may take many forms, such as single-subject acceleration, curriculum compacting, dual enrollment, credit by examination, advanced placement courses, early entrance to school, whole-grade acceleration, continuous progress, self-paced instruction, and telescoping curriculum.

I. Identification of Students to be Considered for Acceleration

A. Gifted students shall be considered for acceleration, where appropriate, during the development of their gifted individualized education plan or individualized education program.

B. A student who is not receiving special or gifted education may be referred for acceleration consideration to the Director of Student Services.

1. The referral must be in writing and may be made by the student's parent/guardian, a District staff member, counselor, school psychologist, or administrator, or by the student himself/herself.

2. Criteria which may justify a referral for consideration of academic acceleration include:

a. ELA & Math benchmark goals established by the district (94%).

b. On grade-level PSSA, student scores of high Advanced (upper 50% of advanced scores) in Reading and/or Math. (grades 5-12)

c. On grade-level Study Island assessment, student scores of high Advanced (upper 50% of advanced scores) in Reading and/or Math.

d. Curriculum-based assessment scores in the 95th percentile or above.

e. Other standardized achievement or aptitude test scores in the 95th percentile or above.

f. Overall IQ score one or more standard deviations above the mean.

g. Student products of high quality or other evidence of outstanding performance.

h. A student who claims to be bored in school is not a sufficient criteria for consideration for acceleration. Boredom in class can have numerous meanings, including that the student finds the curriculum too challenging, for which boredom may be an avoidance technique. The significance of

such a claim must be evaluated by the team, including dialogue with the student.

C. Upon receipt of a Request for Academic Acceleration, Director of Student Services (or his/her designee) shall immediately review the District's procedures concerning the screening and evaluation process for identifying students who are thought to be gifted ("gifted identification procedures"). If required by the gifted identification procedures, the Director of Student Services (or his/her designee) shall direct the applicable District employees to take appropriate action, and no further action shall be taken with respect to acceleration of the student until the gifted identification procedures are completed.

D. If either (a) no action is required under the gifted identification procedures with respect to the student following the referral for acceleration, or (b) the gifted identification procedures are completed and as a result the student is not to receive specially designed instruction through a gifted individualized education plan or an individualized education program, then the Director of Student Services (or his/her designee) shall request written permission from the student's parent or legal guardian to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement. No evaluation shall proceed without such consent.

1. If the parent/guardian consents, then the Director of Student Services (or his/her designee) shall convene an acceleration evaluation team that may include a building administrator, gifted program coordinator, classroom teacher(s), school counselor, and school psychologist. The team shall seek input from the parent or guardian and may consult with the student, as deemed appropriate. The membership of the team may be modified depending on the student's needs and the type of acceleration being considered.

2. The acceleration evaluation team shall conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the student, using a variety of data sources, including standards-based and curriculum-based assessments, and the student's maturity and desire for acceleration. The acceleration evaluation team shall consider the criteria described in Section I.B.2 above, the following factors and skills, and any other information it deems relevant:

    a. Academic Factors — attendance, motivation, attitude toward learning, academic self-concept, grade level(s) of any sibling(s).

    b. Development Factors — age, physical size, motor coordination.

    c. Interpersonal Skills — emotional development, behavior, relationships with peers, relationships with teachers.

3. Upon completion of their evaluation, but no later than 45 school days after the District receives consent from the parent/guardian to evaluate, the acceleration evaluation team shall issue a written decision to the Director of Student Services and the student's parent or legal guardian. If the team determines that the student qualifies for one or more forms of acceleration, the decision shall include a written acceleration plan which includes:

a. The appropriate type(s) of acceleration; and

b. Strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting.

4. The student's parent/guardian may appeal any decision of the acceleration evaluation team to the District Superintendent, in writing, within 15 school days after receipt of the team's decision. The Superintendent shall review the appeal and notify the parent/guardian of his/her decision within 15 school days after receipt of the appeal. Except as provided in paragraph 5 below, the Superintendent's decision shall be final.

5. No acceleration plan issued by the acceleration evaluation team or by the Superintendent shall be implemented without the consent of a parent/guardian of the student.

6. The Superintendent (or his/her designee) shall appoint a staff member to oversee the implementation of the acceleration plan.

7. If the student experiences academic difficulties or the staff member identifies other factors affecting the academic acceleration, a review of the matter shall be scheduled with the acceleration evaluation team, the parent/guardian, and the student. The acceleration evaluation team may recommend a modification or revocation of the acceleration plan where appropriate. The modification or revocation shall be implemented with the consent of the parent/guardian. In the absence of such consent, the Superintendent shall permit the continuation of the original acceleration plan if the parent/guardian expressly and in writing waives the proposed modification or revocation and any claim that the original acceleration plan is not appropriate for the student. If the parent/guardian fails or refuses to sign either a consent to the modification or revocation or a waiver, the Superintendent shall take such action as he/she deems in the best interest of the student.

II. Acceleration Limited to District Curriculum

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, students who qualify for acceleration, including gifted students, shall only be accelerated within the scope of the District's curriculum. The District's curriculum shall include any dual enrollment courses offered to District students through the Regional Choice Initiative (RCI).

III. Testing Out of a Course

1. A student who qualifies for acceleration may be recognized as being competent in the subject matter of a course not taken by the student if the student:

   a. Achieves a score of at least Advanced on the Keystone Exam (if any) which is associated with the course; and

b. Achieves a score of at least 93% on the final examination administered for that course.

A student who is so recognized with respect to a course may be referred to as having "tested out" of that particular course.

2. The academic transcript of a student who tests out of one or more courses shall include the names of all such courses, with an appropriate descriptor indicating that the student did not take the course but was recognized as being competent in the subject matter of the course through superior performance on an approved test.

3. Course credit shall not be awarded to a student for any course that the student tests out of taking, and no such course shall be counted towards the minimum number of credits required for graduation.

4. The test scores received by a student for any course that the student tests out of taking shall not be factored into the calculation of the student's grade point average. A course that a student tests out of taking shall not in any other manner be considered in determining the student's grade point average.

5. A student who tests out of a course which is a prerequisite for taking another course shall be treated as having satisfied that prerequisite.

6. A student who tests out of a course which is required for graduation shall be treated as having satisfied that particular graduation requirement.

7. If (a) there is a graduation requirement that a student take and pass a minimum number of courses in a particular subject area, (b) the student tests out of one or more courses in that subject area, and (c) there are no remaining courses under the District curriculum in that subject area that the student has not already completed or tested out of taking, then the student shall be treated as having satisfied that particular graduation requirement.

IV. Whole Grade Acceleration

A. A whole grade acceleration is the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age full-time for the purpose of meeting the high achieving or gifted student's unique needs. Whole grade acceleration is rare, and many factors are considered when evaluating whether or not a child is a good candidate. Whole grade acceleration shall be consideration only where it matches the level and complexity of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student.

A student may only be considered as a good candidate for whole grade acceleration if he/she has done each of the following:

1. Clearly demonstrated consistent high ability in almost all subject areas

2. Clearly demonstrated accelerated performance in almost all subject areas when compared to his or her age-level peers

3. Has Full Scale IQ or cognitive score at least one standard deviation above the mean

4. Consistently scores in Advanced category on state assessments (if available) for the are being considered for acceleration

5. Likes challenges

6. Physical size and motor skills comparable with the proposed acceleration grade level; if size is dramatically different, team needs to discuss the impact and how the discrepancy will be managed

7. Has good school attendance

8. Demonstrates a positive attitude, neither over-estimating or under-estimating his/her ability

9. Completes assignments with care

10. Is motivated to do well

11. Adapts easily socially and emotionally to new and/or challenging environment

12. Received challenging and enriching instruction but still cannot have his/her needs met at the current grade level

B. Where whole grade acceleration is under consideration, the procedures in Section I.D shall be followed. This shall include:

1. A request for written permission from the student's parent or legal guardian to consider possible whole grad acceleration

2. The convening of an acceleration evaluation team that may include a building administrator, gifted program coordinator, classroom teacher(s), school counselor, and school psychologist. The team shall seek input from the parent or guardian and may consult with the student, as deemed appropriate.

3. Issuance of a written decision to the Director of Student Services and parent on the request for whole grade acceleration.

4. The right of appeal of a determination to the Superintendent.

C. When whole grade acceleration is being considered for a student, the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) shall be used as a guide.

D. A student who just qualifies as a result of the evaluation may not be an ideal candidate for acceleration. One must examine the potential for long-term achievement. Accelerated students should be expected to achieve, relative to their new grade peers, at a high level that is generally comparable to their performance in their previous grade. The student shall be returned to their regular grade assignment if he/she has not achieved as expected in the whole grade acceleration at any time during a nine-week transition period. The determination shall be made by the acceleration evaluation team in consultation with the parent/guardian and student, as appropriate. The whole grade acceleration shall become a permanent placement after the nine-week transition period.