

Sycamore Community School District: Whole Grade Acceleration Guidance

Whole-grade acceleration is the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age on a full-time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities. In such instances, whole-grade acceleration may be considered as a viable option. The following procedures and guidelines shall be utilized.

Step 1: Acceleration Referral/Request

- A parent or legal guardian, teacher, school administrator, or professional staff member may refer a student for acceleration to the **building principal**. Students may also refer themselves or peers through a district staff member familiar with the student's abilities.
- The principal or his/her designee will obtain written permission from the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to evaluate the student for single-subject accelerated placement using the [Request for Acceleration Form](#). The district will evaluate all students who are referred and whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have granted permission to evaluate the student for single-subject accelerated placement.
- Referral forms and the district's acceleration policy and guidelines will be available to staff and parents on the district website.

Step II: Acceleration Evaluation Process

- The student will be evaluated by the Acceleration Evaluation Committee (AEC).
- The building Gifted Intervention Specialist or student's Guidance Counselor will coordinate the completion of the IAS.
- The building administrator or gifted intervention specialist will be in contact to clarify the process with the parent/guardian.
- The AEC shall be comprised of, but not limited to, the following:
 - a principal or assistant principal from the student's school;
 - a current teacher of the referred student for whom acceleration is being considered;
 - a teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated;
 - a school counselor and/or school psychologist if administered a test;
 - a gifted education coordinator or gifted intervention specialist or a school psychologist or school counselor if a gifted coordinator or gifted intervention specialist is not available;
 - a parent or legal guardian of the referred student or a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian;
 - the student himself/herself with parent/guardian permission.

The AEC is charged with the following responsibilities:

- To conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the student using the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS), the district approved assessment tool that is approved by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.
- The components of the IAS provide a comprehensive guide to be used as the primary instrument in discussion and decisions regarding a student's whole-grade acceleration. The IAS is composed of ten sections: general information, school history, critical items, evaluation of the student's ability, aptitude,

and achievement, school and academic factors, developmental factors, interpersonal skills, and attitude and support. Each of these sections contain items relevant to the success of a grade skip.

- To consider the impact of whole-grade acceleration on future coursework and long-term academic planning.

Step III: Acceleration Evaluation Team

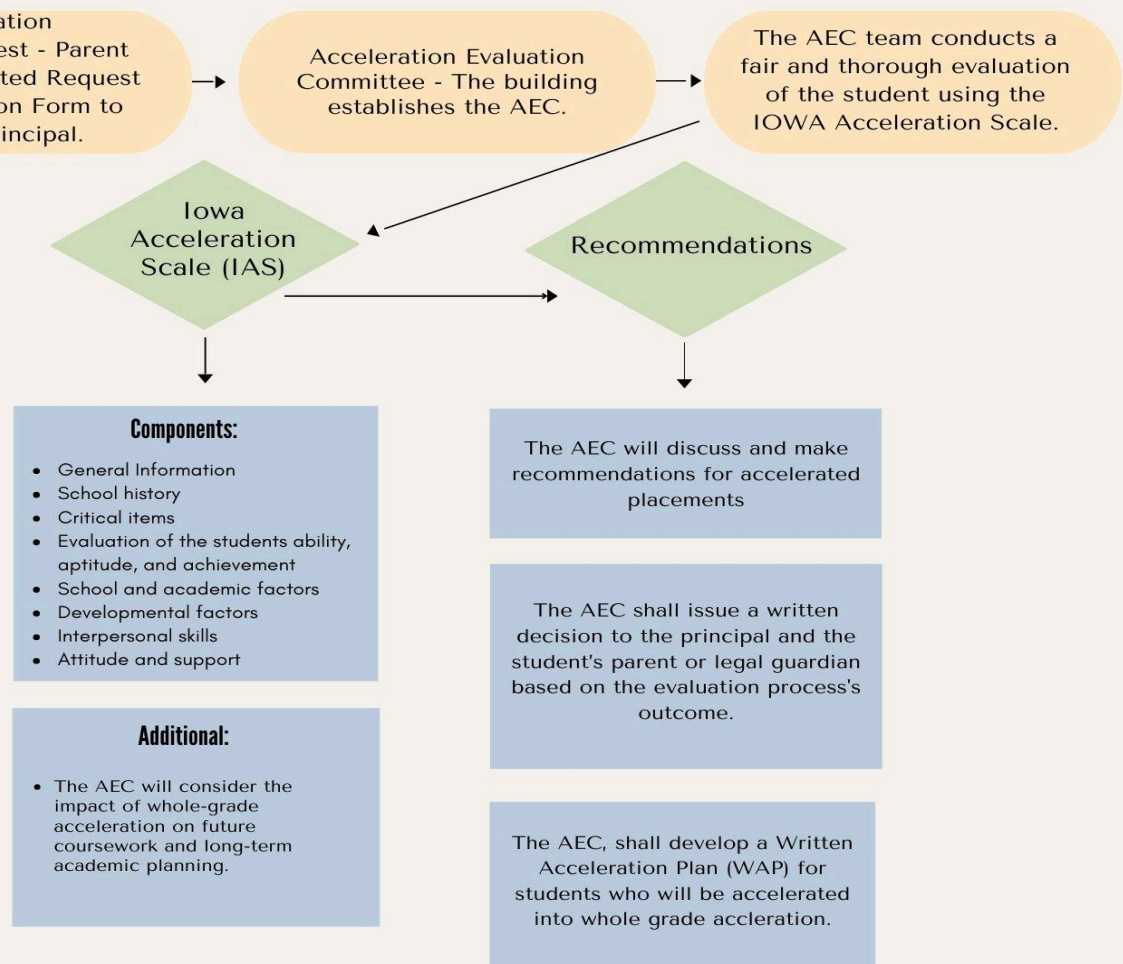
- Issue a written decision to the principal and the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) based upon the outcome of the evaluation process. The student should receive a "good candidate" or "excellent candidate" recommendation on the assessment tool and a determination that his/her needs cannot be adequately met in his or her current grade level placement.
- The AEC, shall develop a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) for students who will be accelerated in an individual subject area. The written acceleration plan shall specify:
 - identify support strategies for assisting with the transition;
 - designate a school staff member to ensure the successful implementation of the written acceleration plan and to monitor the adjustment of the student to the accelerated setting, which includes assigning responsibility for the ongoing review and support of the student and communication with the parent(s) or legal guardian;
 - identifying what criteria will be used to ascertain if the acceleration is successful
 - an appropriate transition period for accelerated placement for students in individual content areas.
 - Upon development of the Written Acceleration Plan (WAP), an appropriate transition period should be specified by the committee (Usually 6 to 8 weeks). After that time, the AEC, taking into account input from all team members, will determine whether the acceleration will continue. If single-subject acceleration is deemed appropriate, the WAP becomes permanent and is noted in the student's permanent record.
 - At the request of the parent or legal guardian, the student may be withdrawn from accelerated placement during the trial period. If this occurs, the student may not be considered again for whole grade acceleration until the following school year. In such cases, the principal will remove the student without repercussion.
- A parent or legal guardian of the evaluated student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process within 45 days of receiving permission from the student's parent/guardian. This notification will include instructions for accepting or appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.

Appeals Process:

- A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may make a written appeal to the superintendent within thirty days of being notified of the committee's decision.
- The superintendent will review the appeal and make a final decision within thirty days. He or she will notify the parent or legal guardian who filed the appeal of his decision. The Superintendent's decision will be final. The student may not be considered again for single-subject acceleration until the following school year.

WHOLE GRADE ACCELERATION PROCEDURES

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Appeal Process:

A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may make a written appeal to the superintendent within thirty days of being notified of the committee's decision. The superintendent will review the appeal and make a final decision within thirty days.