

A Family Guide for Algebra Accelerations

*A guide for math pathway options in middle
and high school math.*



Athens City School District
Every Learner. Every Day.

Athens City School District

Acceleration: Algebra I

Definition:

Acceleration is an option that moves students through an educational program at rates faster, or at younger ages, than typical. It means matching the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to the readiness and motivation of the student. Examples of acceleration include early entrance to school, grade-skipping and subject acceleration. Many students may show readiness for algebraic concepts while others will benefit from strengthening foundational skills necessary to be successful for higher math. Two pathways are provided during the 8th grad year: Math 8 or Honors Algebra I, a high school credit course. This information specifically addresses the need for acceleration in middle school mathematics. Additional information can be garnered from our website.

athenscsd.org

Benefits of Acceleration:

- Academic gains
- Improved self concept through connecting with similar peers
- A match between ability and appropriate content
- Guaranteed level of rigor that matches the individual child
- Discussions with peers that have appropriate depth and reference.

How to Get Started:

- Each student in 7th grade will be introduced to algebraic concepts within the curriculum.
- All student progress is monitored using I-Ready data with algebraic readiness included to determine adequate foundational skills.
- All students receive a recommendation from the AMS math team based on the data in preparation for the next year.
- Families are welcome to be part of the team decision by participating in a conference if desired.

Process:

Acceleration is a *multi-step process* to ensure consideration of academic, social, and emotional factors. Acceleration requires a committee or team to review student data in order to determine eligibility. Committee decisions are predicated upon the required procedures established by the Ohio Department of Education and include the following:

1. A policy that supports the use of research-based criteria for identifying students for accelerated placement.
2. Includes multiple stakeholders: teachers, parents, and administrators
3. Decisions are made according to a unanimous vote.
4. A nine-week trial is applied to determine suitability of fit.
5. Committee reconvenes only if there is a need at six-week mark.

What to Expect:

- Your child will take the I-Ready Diagnostic Assessment (85% or above) to indicate algebraic readiness.
- Based upon data, a recommendation by the AMS math team will be sent home to families.
- You are encouraged to be part of the decision making process. Conferences regarding placements are optional.
- You will be required to sign a written acceleration plan.
- Your student will have a 9 week trial to determine the appropriate placement.

Resources:

- *A Nation Deceived*--Acceleration Institute at the Belin-Blank Center
- Ohio Association of Gifted Children (OAGC)
- The Ohio Department of Education
- ACSGD Gifted Services website at [athenscsd.org>departments>Gifted](http://athenscsd.org/departments/Gifted)

FAQs

How does the process start?

The process usually starts by an individual request made to indicate a scheduling choice, a teacher referral, or a high score on a grade level screening assessment. Anyone can make a referral including: parents, teachers, administrators, counselors or the student themselves. The process is built into the 7th grade math year. Students are routinely screened for gifted identification and progress monitoring. Pre and post assessments are given during algebra content to determine success. Parents receive an acceleration form indicating the success of an accelerated placement into algebra. A family decision can be made based upon that information.

Is this the right fit for my student?

Not every advanced student needs to utilize acceleration to meet their needs, however, when students are consistently exceeding grade level standards and expectations, studies show acceleration is an effective option. The gifted department, school teachers and administrators will work with your family to help guide a decision making process to determine if acceleration is right for your child.

Doesn't every student take Algebra?

Algebra skills are embedded within the curriculum in primary grades. Determining if a deeper understanding and foundation in other math domains is necessary for your future success in high school math, is a key factor for your child's next step.

If we wait until grade 9 to take Algebra, will this set my child back in high school?

No, a typical math sequence of 9th grade Algebra, 10th grade Geometry and 11th grade Algebra II with options for a final course is provided even without an algebra acceleration.

What if my child struggles in Algebra?

A trial period is set for students to acclimate to algebra. During this time, you should contact the teacher if you notice your child having difficulty with the content. The option to return to 8th grade math is not a failure, but rather the right developmental step at this time.

What if my child wants to accelerate in high school instead of now?

High school students can follow credit flexibility procedures in order to accelerate into credit courses required for graduation. See credit flex information on our website or contact the school guidance counselor.

What if my child doesn't want to stay in the acceleration anymore?

A trial period of nine weeks is established to determine if the new service is beneficial for the student. During that time if a problem arises, it can be addressed with support for the student. If the intervention is not successful, then the placement can revert to the original grade level. After nine weeks, the placement is permanent and cannot be reversed in successive years.

Does my child have to be tested?

Testing is part of the process. Students are assessed on a regular basis to determine instructional needs. The End of Course Exam for Honors Algebra I is necessary for high school graduation requirements.

What if I don't agree with the committee's decision?

A parent or guardian of a student whose data does not indicate acceleration is recommended may appeal the committee decision in writing to the school principal. The superintendent's decision will be rendered within 14 school days of parent or guardian appeal.