

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 111
WATERTOWN-MAYER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY**

513 STUDENT PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PROGRAM DESIGN

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to professional staff, parents and students regarding student promotion, retention and program design.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The school board expects all students to achieve at an acceptable level of proficiency. Parental assistance, tutorial and remedial programs, counseling and other appropriate services shall be coordinated and utilized to the greatest extent possible to help students succeed in school.

A. Promotion

Promotion is the system of students moving from grade level to the next grade level in school. Students who achieve at levels deemed acceptable by local and state standards shall be promoted to the next grade level at the completion of each school year.

B. Retention

Retention is the practice of repeating an academic year of school. Retention of a student may be considered when professional staff members feel that it is in the best interest of the student. Physical development, maturity, and emotional factors shall be considered as well as scholastic achievement. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

C. Acceleration

Acceleration is the practice of moving students through traditional curriculum at a rate faster than typical. Acceleration can include single subject acceleration (e.g. learning sixth grade math as a fifth grader), skipping a grade level (e.g. going from first to third grade), early entrance to kindergarten, or college-credit bearing courses at high school (e.g. College in the Schools, Advanced Placement). Acceleration of a student may be considered when professional staff members feel that it is in the best interest of the student. Physical development, maturity, and emotional factors shall be considered as well as scholastic achievement. Parents may also make a request for acceleration via email to school principal ahead of April 1st. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

D. Twice-exceptional

The term “twice-exceptional”, also referred to as 2E, is used to describe children who have the characteristics of gifted students with the potential for high achievement, and who also give evidence of one or more disabilities as defined by federal or state eligibility criteria (National Association of Gifted Children [NAGC]).

III. ACCELERATION PROCESS

A. Application

A student may be recommended for acceleration by a teacher, administrator, psychologist or parents for accelerated learning opportunities. The child should be involved in the discussion about acceleration as his/her attitude toward acceleration is very important in the overall success of the process.

If a parent is requesting the acceleration, they must submit in writing their request to their principal prior to April 1st for the upcoming school year including rationale and motivation for request. The principal will then inform the Director of Teaching and Learning. Student and family should be informed of acceleration options available and which could be potentially considered based on availability due to grade level/age/program. Parents should be aware of potential programming impacts of acceleration which may occur including missing other subject areas in the case of single subject acceleration or transportation needs in future needs that the family may be responsible for.

B. Initial Screening

Director of Teaching and Learning partners with School Psychologist to pull together students’ available historical data (screening data, report cards, grades, available testing data including scores on nationally recognized standardized tests).

Teaching and Learning Director and School Psychologist determine what additional testing would be deemed appropriate for further consideration such as traits and observations of the student’s academic readiness:

- Social and emotional maturity
- Academic readiness and motivation
- Independent study skills
- Interest in acceleration
- Rate of mastery of new concepts in subject area being considered
- Past academic performance including grades and records

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

C. Evaluation Process

If the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Psychologist feel from the initial

screening that the student is a good candidate for acceleration, then they will convene an Acceleration Team to review the request and identify additional assessment procedures if necessary. The team will comprise at minimum: the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Psychologist, the building principal, teachers (current and possible receiving in subject area/grade), and other school personnel deemed appropriate. Additional assessments are necessary to demonstrate:

- Performance at or above the national 95th percentile (or 2 standard deviations above the mean) as compared to students at least one grade level above the current placement for full grade level acceleration.
- For subject specific acceleration, performance at or above two standard deviations above the mean as compared to students at least one grade level above the current placement with supporting functional academic skills.
- For all acceleration options, students should demonstrate mastery of district materials at least one year ahead of current placement. Materials may include prior knowledge inventory for entering grade, end-of-year test for grade to be skipped, or a final test in a course or subject area.

Other assessments may also be given to determine the child's academic achievement level and intellectual ability.

D. Placement Determination

The Acceleration Team will review the additional assessment findings and determine what acceleration option (if any) would be most appropriate for the student. Parents will then be invited to a meeting to discuss the results and decision. The acceleration findings and plan will be shared with all members of the team and also in the student's record. Parents should be aware that future years might require programming needs which may impact transportation for which the parents would be responsible. This should be taking into account when considering the acceleration options.

Where acceleration is granted, the subject or grade acceleration will be reviewed after a 4-6 week placement trial period. The receiving teachers and team members will continue to monitor the child's success to ensure the correct placement decision was made. If concerns arise, the team will reconvene to discuss appropriate next steps for support.

1. Program Design

- a. Students typically advance from one grade level to the next each year based on their academic achievement or progress toward the goals outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) These decisions are guided by the professional judgment of school staff and are made with the student's best educational interests in mind. If retention or acceleration is being considered, the student's parent/guardian and appropriate staff members will be consulted. The final decision will be made by the

superintendent or designee. The superintendent is responsible for establishing procedures that ensure parent/guardian involvement and the participation of relevant professional staff when making retention or acceleration decisions.

- b. The District will create guidelines for evaluating and identifying students for advanced academic opportunities, including enrichment and acceleration programs. These guidelines will rely on multiple objective measures and use assessments grounded in current theory and research. They will also ensure that assessment tools and procedures are responsive to the needs of historically underrepresented groups, including, but not limited to, students of color, English learners, students from low-income backgrounds, and twice-exceptional students.

Adopted/Revised/Reviewed:

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Revised: April 23, 2018
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Revised: July 22, 2024
Revised: January 26, 2026

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 120B.15 (Gifted and Talented Program)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.143, Subd. 1 (Superintendents)

Cross References:

Independent School District 111 Policy 613 (Graduation Requirements)
Independent School District 111 Policy 614 (School District Testing Plan and Procedure)

Independent School District 111 Policy 615 (Testing, Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans and LEP Students)
Independent School District 111 Policy 617 (School District Ensurance of Preparatory and High School Standards)
Independent School District 111 Policy 618 (Assessment of Student Achievement)
Independent School District 111 Policy 620 (Credit for Learning)
Independent School District 111 Policy 607.1 (Early Entrance Into Kindergarten)