

A Guide to Subject Acceleration for Student Success



What Is Subject Acceleration?

Subject acceleration allows a student to advance in one specific academic area when there is strong evidence they are ready for next-level instruction. It is considered when a student has demonstrated sustained mastery of current grade-level standards and is prepared for increased academic demands.

Subject acceleration is **not** based on:

- A single test score
- A strong grading period
- Parent request alone
- Being identified as gifted

It is based on patterns of readiness.

Is My Child Ready?

Students who are successful in subject acceleration typically demonstrate:

Academic Readiness

- Consistent mastery of grade-level standards.
- Performance well above grade-level expectations on district/state assessments.
- Ability to apply knowledge to complex or unfamiliar problems.
- Little need for repetition or reteaching.

Learning Behaviors

- Independent work habits.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Persistence when work becomes challenging.

- Ability to manage increased workload.

Emotional & Social Readiness

- Comfort interacting with older peers.
- Ability to accept correction and feedback.
- Confidence without becoming easily discouraged.
- Desire to take on more advanced work.

When Acceleration May Not Be the Best First Step

Acceleration may not be appropriate if:

- Gaps exist in foundational skills.
- The student requires frequent reteaching or reassurance.
- High performance is inconsistent.
- Motivation is dependent on external reward.
- The student is hesitant or anxious about moving ahead.

In these cases, enrichment or advanced differentiation within the current grade may better support growth.

How Decisions Are Made

Lakota uses a structured, data-informed evaluation process that includes multiple data points collectively:

- Review of academic performance
- Above-grade-level assessment (when appropriate)
- Interpersonal readiness indicators
- Student input
- Committee review

If approved, a written acceleration plan and transition period are established.

Important Considerations for Math Acceleration

Math acceleration is one of the most common requests. Families should consider:

- Is my child demonstrating mastery across all strands of mathematics?

- Does my child show strong problem-solving ability – not just computation speed?
- Is my child prepared for increased homework and pacing?
- Is my child comfortable asking for help in a class with older students?

Acceleration should support long-term success – not create pressure.

How to Begin

If you believe subject acceleration may be appropriate:

1. Contact your child's classroom teacher.
2. Complete and submit the Acceleration Referral Form (available on the district website).
3. The school team will guide you through next steps.

Note: This guide aims to provide families with a comprehensive overview of subject acceleration in Lakota Local Schools. It is important to consider all aspects of readiness before pursuing acceleration to ensure it is the best fit for your child's educational journey.