ACCELERATION HANDBOOK
2026-2027

WE EDUCATE FOR EXCELLENCE…Empowering all students to achieve their educational goals, to direct their lives, and to contribute to society.

Acceleration Placement
Ohio Revised Code section 3324.10 requires that districts implement a student acceleration policy for advanced learners. Acceleration allows students who are ready to learn above grade-level content to experience appropriately challenging standards-based instruction at a level that promotes continued academic growth. Acceleration can be defined as an educational opportunity in which a child moves at a faster pace through academic content and when a child demonstrates competencies, knowledge, abilities, and/or skills at a higher grade level than typical for the child's age.

Acceleration Options:

- Early entrance to Kindergarten or 1st grade – moves a child into Kindergarten or 1st grade
- Whole grade acceleration - moves a child to a higher-grade level for all classes.
- Single-subject acceleration - moves a child to a higher grade level in one subject area
- Early graduation- student meets graduation requirements

Research shows advanced students may need acceleration in math more than other core subject areas. Typically, the need for whole-grade acceleration is rare. The Westlake City School District may have one or two whole-grade accelerations in any given academic year.

Is Acceleration Right for My Child?
Sometimes a student may need more than what is currently offered in the classroom. If this is the case, typically the parent and/or teachers confer and then a referral requesting an acceleration conference is completed by District personnel. Parents should discuss with classroom teachers first or call building principals to discuss acceleration options.

Who might benefit from acceleration?

- A child with high cognitive ability. The higher the IQ, the greater the need to adjust the curriculum. For example, a student who has an IQ of 145 *may* need an enriched curriculum, intensive curriculum modifications or even whole-grade acceleration.
- A child in Kindergarten who already has mastered the curriculum.
- A student strong in math (or another subject) who demonstrates strong understanding and application of the material **and** consistently performs at the top of their class.
- The student consistently works on above grade level concepts.
- The student is open to challenges, risk-taking, independent activities, and productive struggle. The student demonstrates flexibility with routines, procedures, and schedules. The student is a self-advocate and demonstrates success in working with above grade-level peers."

According to BOE Policy 5410, an acceleration committee will convene to review all students referred for the accelerated courses. The committee ***may*** consist of the building principal or assistant principal, current teacher, potential accelerated placement teacher, school psychologist, counselor, parent, gifted specialist or central office representative. The committee will review and discuss multiple criteria including but not limited to, normative data (i.e. MAP, ITBS, IAAT), cognitive results, state assessment results, academic progress through Ohio's Learning Standards, student work habits and social and emotional readiness.

Candidates for acceleration are evaluated through a review of cognitive, achievement, and aptitude scores plus demonstrated evidence of advanced achievement in core subject areas. This includes a review of the student's cognitive ability (CogAT) scores from 2nd and 4th grade, academic achievement and social/emotional growth.

Accelerated students do not need to be identified as gifted to be accelerated. "Gifted" means students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to

others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of section 3324.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Acceleration is an educational option and is not guaranteed for every gifted student. Once the team determines if acceleration is the appropriate placement, parents will be notified in writing. All students enrolled in Kindergarten through Eighth grade will be placed prior to the first official student day in August. Any placement changes after the first day of school will be reviewed by the committee and determined by a case-by-case basis.

Early Entrance

The practice of admitting a student to Kindergarten or 1st grade who has not yet reached the typical age at which students are admitted to Kindergarten or 1st grade for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities is referred to as early entrance.

The district uses the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) (3rd ed.), modified for the needs of Kindergarten and 1st grade students, as a guide for determining whether or not early entrance is appropriate.

Early Entry Handbook and Application forms can be found on Academic Services website
(http://www.wlake.org/departments/academic-services/acceleration)

Whole Grade Acceleration

Step I: Acceleration Referral Form

Acceleration Referral Form submitted to the building principal. All referral forms should be sent to building principals by **March 15th** for currently enrolled students. Referral forms will not be accepted late. New to district students should contact their building principal for more information.

Step II: Data Collection, Testing and Analysis

The *Iowa Acceleration Scale (3rd ed.)* is used as a tool to guide acceleration teams on appropriate placement. The Westlake City School District adopted the *State Model Policy for Acceleration* in 2006. Evaluations related to referrals that occur during the school year will be completed and a written report issued within forty-five calendar days. Evaluations related to referrals that occur during the summer will be completed and a written report issued either before the end of the school year, if possible, or within forty-five calendar days of the start of the next school year.

Steps III-V – *see subject acceleration steps listed below.*

Subject Acceleration

Step I: Acceleration Referral Form

The Acceleration Referral Form should be submitted to building principal. All referral forms are sent to building principals by **March 15th**. Referral forms will not be accepted late.

Step II: Data Collection, Testing and Analysis

After the referral form and permission to test is received by the building principal, students will take the appropriate above grade level assessment. *Note: students in Grades 6 and Grade 7 applying for Algebra I will have already taken the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test as that is given to all students in Grades 6 and 7. No additional above grade level testing will be necessary for Algebra I placement unless the placement is appealed.

> **Data Collection and Analysis** – Information is gathered by the classroom teachers, support staff and building principals. Data used by Acceleration Committee: MAP data, state assessment data, teacher recommendations, progress through standards, IAAT scores, social and emotional readiness, etc. Additional testing may be required.

Testing – The Ohio Department of Education does not have an approved list of assessments for subject acceleration placements. The Westlake City School District uses the IAAT (Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test, ITBS for science (above grade level) or any additional above grade level assessments during this process. Testing results will be provided within 45 calendar days per Policy 5410.

Step III: Acceleration Committee Meeting
The Acceleration Committee will review all available data. The committee will discuss and make recommendations for accelerated placement. The committee will reach a consensus and share the list with building principals no later than **May 15, 2027.** The acceleration committee shall issue a written decision on the outcome of the evaluation process to the principal and the student's parent/guardian. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the decision.

According to BOE Policy 5410, parents have the right to appeal in writing to the Superintendent within 30 calendar days of the parent/guardian receiving the committee's decision. The Superintendent or his designee shall review the appeal and notify parent(s)/guardian(s) within thirty calendar days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent or his designee's decision shall be final.

Step IV: Curricular Options Reviewed with Parents
All evaluation results and a written report will be issued to parent(s)/guardians(s) for the recommended placement. All information will be disseminated to parents during a conference, phone call or in writing.

Step V: Development of a Written Acceleration Plan
After accelerated placement, all students will be given a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP). Westlake City School District WAPs will include strategies to ensure success and list staff members responsible for monitoring academic progress until the end of the transition period. The WAP will provide a transition period of thirty school days. Parents can request an extension during the initial transition period.

At any time during the transition period, a parent/guardian or teacher may request in writing an alternative accelerated placement. In such cases, the principal shall direct the evaluation committee to consider other accelerative options and to issue a decision within thirty calendar days of receiving the request. If the student will be placed in a different accelerated setting from that initially recommended, the student's acceleration plan shall be revised accordingly and a new transition period shall be specified. In such cases, the principal shall remove the student from the accelerated placement without repercussions.

At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement shall become permanent. The student's record shall be modified accordingly and the acceleration implementation plan shall become part of the student's permanent record in order to facilitate continuous progress through the curriculum.

If a student is taking a high school level course, the final grade will be part of the official transcript and the student will be required to take the End-of-course examination.

Transportation for Subject Accelerated Students
The district will provide transportation for students placed in advanced coursework which is offered at another building within the district. For example, a 4th grade student taking Advanced Math 5 at Dover Intermediate. In this situation, bus transportation is provided at no cost to parents.

Early Graduation

The Board of Education acknowledges that some students are pursuing educational goals which include graduation from high school at an earlier date than their designated class.

Application for early graduation will be submitted to the high school principal in accordance with school regulations. Before a student is evaluated for early high school graduation, the principal (or his/her designee)

Must obtain written permission from the student's parent/guardian. Interested students should speak with their counselor and complete an Acceleration Referral Form. The form should be submitted by **December 1st** of students' junior year. The principal may honor this request if all conditions for graduation are met and the student fulfills the graduation requirements. Acceleration Committee decisions will be made prior to the first day of second semester of junior year. Special consideration may be given to new to district students or head principal recommendation for unique circumstances.

The student may participate in the graduation ceremonies with his/her newly designated class.

Students referred for early high school graduation will be evaluated in a prompt manner. Evaluations related to referrals that occur during the school year will ordinarily be completed within thirty calendar days. Evaluations related to referrals that occur at the end of a school year or during the summer will occur either before the end of the school year, if possible, or within thirty calendar days of the start of the next school year. The building principal will schedule the evaluations. Normally, changes in a student's schedule to accommodate the accelerated learning will only occur at the start of a semester.

Upon referral, the student's principal (or his/her designee) shall convene an acceleration evaluation committee to determine the appropriateness of early high school graduation for the student. The committee shall be comprised of the following:

a. A parent/legal guardian of the referred student
b. A school psychologist or school counselor with expertise in early high school graduation
c. A principal or assistant principal from the student's current school
d. The student

The acceleration evaluation committee shall be responsible for conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the student.

Students referred for early high school graduation shall be evaluated based on past academic performance, measures of achievement based on State academic content standards and successful completion of State mandated graduation requirements. The acceleration evaluation committee will consider the student's own thoughts on possible accelerated placement in its deliberations.

The acceleration evaluation committee shall issue a written decision on the outcome of the evaluation process to the principal and the student's parent/guardian. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the decision.

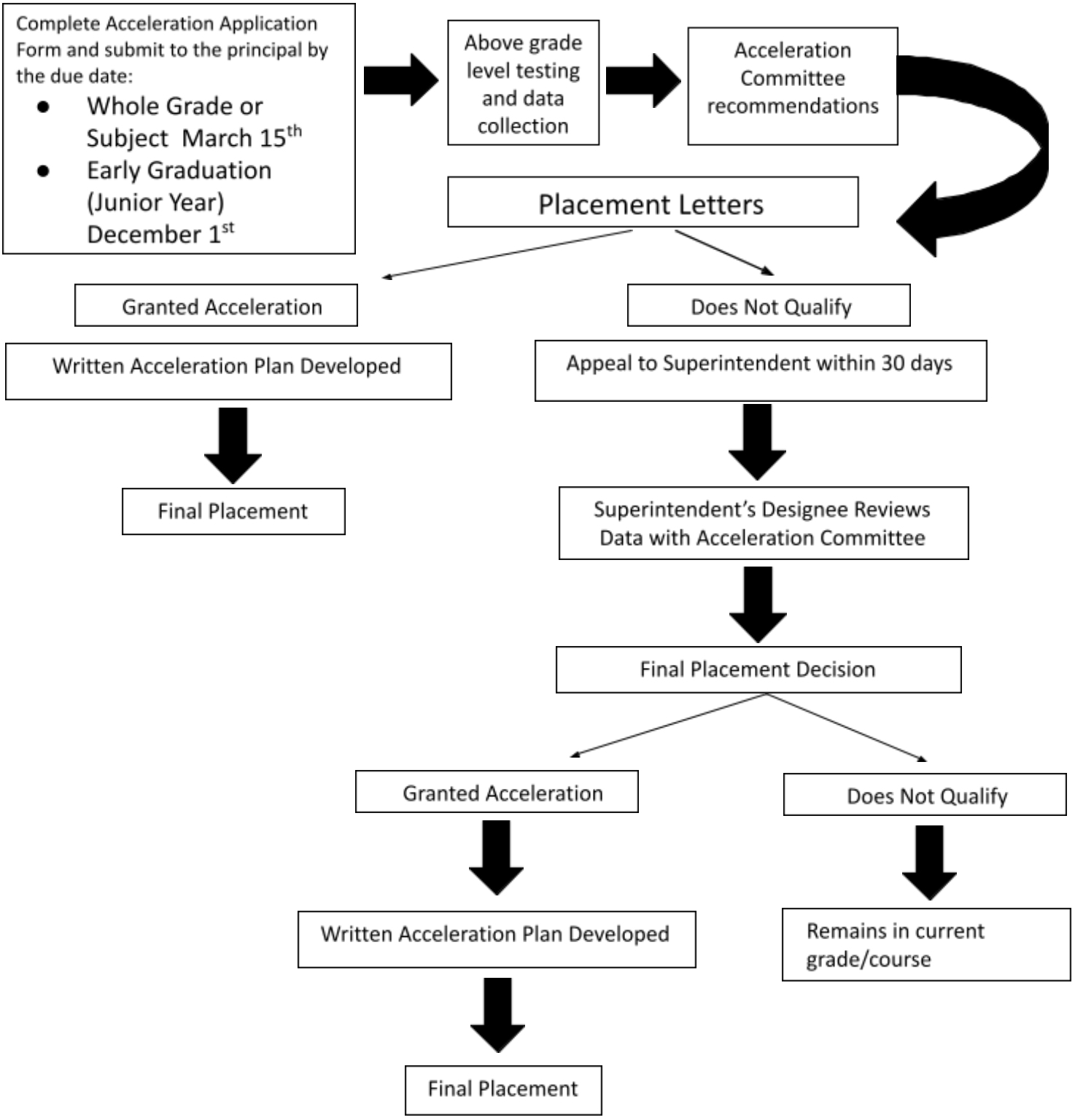
Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent within thirty calendar days of the parent/guardian receiving the committee's decision. The Superintendent or his designee shall review the appeal and notify parent(s)/guardian(s) within thirty calendar days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent or his designee's decision shall be final.

If the student is recommended for early high school graduation, the acceleration evaluation committee will develop a written acceleration plan designed to allow the student to complete high school graduation requirements on an accelerated basis. The plan may include the provision of educational options in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35-06(G), waiving District graduation requirements that exceed those required by the State, and early promotion to sophomore (or higher) status to allow the student to take the End-of-Course exams required by the State of Ohio or alternative assessment.

Acceleration Evaluation Committee Members - Roles and Responsibility

Current Building Principal or Assigned District Representative– required, voting member of committee, shares components of building schedule that may impact acceleration, selects specific staff members for each role of acceleration committee
Current Teacher – required, voting member of committee, provides information about the student's performance in the current grade level, gives examples of achievement as well as social or emotional factors that might impact an accelerated placement
Accelerated Teacher – required, voting member of committee, informs the evaluation committee about expectations for students at that grade level, identifies possible knowledge gaps
Accelerated Building Principal – input required if student's acceleration will result in a change of buildings, voting member of the committee, shares components of building schedule that may impact acceleration, selects specific staff members for each role of acceleration committee
Parent/Guardian – required, voting member of the committee, provides information about any social or emotional concerns related to an accelerated placement, provides information about any academically oriented achievements that the child may have made outside of school
Special Education Coordinator – required if student has dual exceptionalities, voting member of the committee, defines how the student's special education needs may impact the acceleration
Gifted Intervention Specialist/Coordinator –required, voting member of the committee, serves as acceleration coordinator and/or facilitator of the evaluation committee, provides information about effective acceleration practices and tools to aid in the process, provides information about the student's performance in current gifted services (if applicable), provides academic support during the transition period
Psychologist – optional, non-voting member of the committee, administers tests, interprets test results to show how the student compares to other students of the same age, grade or ability
School Counselor – optional, non-voting member of the committee, mediates conflicting viewpoints or addresses social or emotional issues that impact student achievement
Other Teachers– optional, non-voting members of the committee, provides information about the student's performance in the current grade level, gives examples of achievement, informs the evaluation committee about expectations for students at the accelerated grade level, identifies possible knowledge gaps.

Acceleration Process for Parents



WESTLAKE City Schools

Acceleration Process for Staff

Acceleration window opens and is communicated to families by the building principals. This typically runs for two weeks between late February and late March.

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Applications are due to the building principal by the due date and given to the Associate Superintendent of Instruction. *For Algebra I – the Associate Superintendent will manage the digital Application. All other acceleration requests must be communicated via the Acceleration Application.

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Grades K – 4: Acceleration applications are communicated by Associate Superintendent to the WES Gifted Intervention Specialists. The WES Gifted Intervention Specialists will administer a 1 year above grade level assessment to the applicants.

Grades 5 and above: The Associate Superintendent will coordinate all above grade level testing.

*Algebra I: All students in Grades 6 and 7 will have already taken the IAAT (Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test). No other testing information is needed.

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The Associate Superintendent will run score reports for all applicants Grades K and above. Scores will be given to the WES Gifted Intervention Specialists if needed. Other data including, but not limited to, quarter grades, MAP scores, and ITBS scores, will also be compiled for each applicant by the Associate Superintendent of Instruction.

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The Associate Superintendent of Instruction will run score reports for all applicants Grades K and above. Scores will be given to the WES Gifted Intervention Specialists if needed. Other data including, but not limited to, quarter grades, MAP scores, and ITBS scores, will also be compiled for each applicant by the Associate Superintendent of Instruction.

Grades K – 4: The GIS will organize and run the acceleration committee meeting. Committee members: District Representative, GIS, Current Teacher, Above Grade Level Teacher, Parent

Grades 5 and above: Associate Superintendent will organize and run the acceleration committee meeting. Committee members: Associate Superintendent, Current Teacher(s), Above Grade Level Teacher(s), Building Principal

Meeting Components:
Review of Data
Review of Social-Emotional Readiness
Determination
Creation of WAP (Grades K – 4 accelerations)

Grades K – 4: Determinations will be communicated to the Associate Superintendent. Final placement letters, or DNQ letters, and a copy of the WAP (if applicable) will be sent home by the Associate Superintendent.

Grades 5 and above: Determinations will be communicated by the Building Principal. Final placement letters, or DNQ letters, will be sent home by the building principal or Associate Superintendent.

Application for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Early Entry Handbook and Application can be found on Academic Services website.
(http://www.wlake.org/departments/academic-services/acceleration)

Application for Acceleration 2026-27

Board of Education

24365 Hilliard Blvd.
Westlake, Ohio 44145
440.871.7300 tel.
440.871.6034 fax

Westlake Elementary School
27555 Center Ridge Road
440.250.1200

Dover Intermediate School
2240 Dover Center Rd.
440.835.5494

Lee Burneson Middle School
2260 Dover Center Rd.
440.835.6340

Westlake High School
27830 Hilliard Rd.
440.835.6352

Please complete this application to have your child considered and evaluated for acceleration.

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO: BUILDING PRINCIPAL
(Due dates: Early Graduation (**12/1/26- Jr. Yr.)**; Whole Grade or Subject Acceleration (**3/15/27**); Early Entrance form located on the registration website.

Child's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Child's Current Grade: _____ Address _____

Custodial Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Name _____

Home #: _____

Work #: _____ Cell #: _____

Email: _____

Why do you feel that your child would be ready for formal acceleration? Comment on your child's social behavior and academic skills. *(Use additional paper, if needed)*

_____
_____
_____

☐ **Which type of acceleration are you seeking?**

- ☐ **Subject Acceleration**
  - ☐ **Mathematics** (course specific – please check one below)
    - ☐ Math 4 to Math 6 Advanced
    - ☐ Math 5 Advanced to Math 7B/8 (Google form will be sent via email)
    - ☐ Math 6 Advanced to Algebra I (Google form will be sent via email)
    - ☐ Math 7 or Math 7B/8 to Algebra I (Google form will be sent via email)
    - ☐ Other grade level (from)_____ (to) _____
- ☐ **Whole grade acceleration**
- ☐ **Early Graduation**

By signing below, I understand that I am granting permission for my child to participate in additional assessment(s) by designated school personnel and that the information may be shared with teachers, principals, and other appropriate school personnel. In accordance with state and district policy, a team will convene to decide the best placement for my child.

Parent/ Guardian Signature _____

Relationship to child _____

Date _____