

Category:	Procedure:	
Instructional Goals and Objectives	Academic Acceleration in Grades K-8	
Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:	Revised Date:
AP-I-123	April 2025	September 2026

Knox County Schools recognizes the important role that learning alongside same-grade, same-age peers plays in students' academic, social, and interpersonal development. Therefore, acceleration should not be the first option considered when academically challenging or providing support for students. Any time acceleration is considered, it must include a thorough review of student data as well as the student's individual academic and developmental needs.

In kindergarten through 8th grade, the window to be considered for acceleration for the next school year begins during the spring semester and the deadline to determine acceleration is April 30. All requests should be made in writing and submitted to the student's school. This allows data to be collected and reviewed before the end of the current academic year. There will not be considerations for grade-level or course acceleration after the April 30 deadline, unless a student is a transfer student from a different school district or state or acceleration is deemed necessary to fulfill an IEP. The request window is intended to provide for proper staffing, scheduling, and planning to accommodate acceleration.

INITIATING CONSIDERATION

If a parent makes a verbal or written request for acceleration to another grade - whether in one or all subject areas - the school should open and schedule an S-Team within 10 days. Prior to convening the initial S-Team the following steps should be completed:

- Send home the parent referral for the S-Team. (Note that the school team does not have to wait for the referral to be completed to schedule the S-Team.)
- Gather academic data for the student including screening data, benchmark data, student work samples, transcripts, etc.
- Convene a S-Team of relevant stakeholders that are able to contribute valuable insights to the discussion. This team should include the following, but is not limited to: general education teachers, school administrators, parents, regional content facilitator, content area supervisors, and an intellectually gifted facilitator if the school does not have access to a school-based representative with a gifted education endorsement.
 - *If acceleration from elementary to middle school is being considered, a middle school representative must be present for all meetings.*

During the initial S-Team and prior to making a determination, the administrator is expected to facilitate a conversation including:

- The reason for the requested accelerated coursework or grade level.

- Opportunities for differentiation, including enrichment opportunities within the current course and/or grade level.
- The need and timeline for data collection and analysis based on depth of understanding outlined by Tennessee Academic Standards.

EVALUATING ACCELERATION AS AN OPTION

Full grade acceleration—whether for a single subject or all subjects—is a significant decision. As a result, a comprehensive review of assessment data and exhibited access to enrichment must take place prior to any decision being made regarding the potential for acceleration.

Assessment Data

Data assessment must include, but should not be limited to: content-specific data, state-wide assessment data, and curriculum-based assessments. Transcripts from accredited homeschools or online public schools may also be considered in addition to the pertinent student data points.

Students who exhibit beyond-grade-level expectations as outlined in the Tennessee Academic Standards may be appropriate candidates for acceleration.

Access to Enrichment

Academically rigorous enrichment is often sufficient to meet the advanced learning needs of students. As a result, students should receive access to enrichment prior to considering acceleration as an option.

For Students Who Have Not Experienced Enrichment:

If the student has not previously received enrichment support, the S-Team should create a plan of action designed to provide enrichment and complex material. The support should target areas where assessment data identifies a need for enrichment.

- The detailed action plan will cite the subject, resources, and intended learning outcomes.
- After implementing the enrichment plan and collecting data for an agreed upon period of time, the team should reconvene to discuss whether enrichment resources have provided a challenging experience for the student.
- If the team decides the enrichment opportunity is not sufficient to meet advanced learning needs of the student, acceleration may be needed.

For Students Who Have Previously Experienced Enrichment:

If the S-Team decides the enrichment opportunity is not sufficient to meet advanced learning needs of the student, acceleration may be needed. At this point, the S-Team should complete the following steps:

1. The school will administer assessments to determine grade-level content mastery. Schools should contact the specific content area supervisor for assessments. Content supervisors will support schools with assessment evaluation guidelines and provide an examination of the data and results of the

assessment. Based on the data results, content supervisors will collaborate with schools in making a recommendation.

2. The school will convene a second S-Team meeting to review the results of the data collection and analysis and inform parents of the data results and the school's recommendation.

Making a Determination

Based on the comprehensive review of assessment data and the student's experience with enrichment, one of two determinations may be made:

Candidate for Acceleration

If the following conditions have been met, the student may be a candidate for consideration:

- The school team has developed an instructional plan and implemented enrichment support before considering acceleration.
- The student exhibits beyond grade-level expectations as outlined in the Tennessee Academic Standards.
- Data review warrants a full grade level or subject area acceleration.

Not a Candidate for Acceleration

If the above conditions do not appear to have been met during the comprehensive review, the student should not be considered for acceleration. Instead, the school should develop a plan of action to address the student's individual needs.

INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED EVALUATIONS

If at any point the parent or legal guardian requests an evaluation for IG (intellectually gifted), the school team should contact the school psychologist and IG Facilitator (if there is not a school-based representative with a gifted endorsement) to arrange permission to assess. The use of this process may not be used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation to a child suspected of having a disability.