Guide to Subject and Grade Level Acceleration

Ottawa Hills Local Schools

Ottawa Hills Local Schools
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Legislation Governing Acceleration and Giftedness

Ohio law recognizes academic acceleration as an appropriate educational option for students who demonstrate readiness for learning beyond the level typically associated with their age or grade. The district's acceleration procedures are designed to provide students with appropriately challenging learning opportunities and to comply with Ohio requirements for evaluating students referred for acceleration.

Legislation Governing Acceleration and Giftedness in Ohio

- **Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3324 – Gifted Education:** Establishes Ohio's requirements for gifted identification, services, and district gifted education policies.
- **Ohio Revised Code Section 3324.10 – Student Acceleration:** Requires districts to follow Ohio's academic acceleration requirements and policies for students who demonstrate readiness for advanced learning.
- **Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15 – Operating Standards for Identifying and Serving Students Who Are Gifted:** Establishes requirements for gifted identification, assessment, referral, and opportunities for students to be identified.
- **Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.6032 – Advanced Mathematics:** Establishes requirements for advanced mathematics opportunities and accelerated mathematics pathways for qualifying students.

Rationale

Rationale: Acceleration provides an appropriate educational option for students who demonstrate readiness for learning beyond the level typically associated with their age or grade. Research on gifted education has found that, when thoughtfully planned and matched to a student's academic and social needs, acceleration can support academic growth and provide students with an appropriate level of challenge. The district recognizes acceleration as one of several strategies that may be used to meet the individual needs of advanced learners.

Definitions

- **Whole-Grade Acceleration:** The practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age on a full-time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
    - Example: After completing the first grade year, a student is placed in a third grade classroom (rather than a second grade classroom) on a full-time basis at the beginning of next school year.

- **Individual Subject Acceleration:** The practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.
    - Example: A third grade student performing above grade level in math goes to a fourth grade teacher every afternoon for instruction in this subject and returns to the third grade classroom for instruction in other subject areas.

- **Junior/Senior High Advanced Math Opportunities:** The practice of automatically enrolling a student in an honors class based upon state test scores unless otherwise requested by the parent.
    - Example: A student will be placed in Honors Pre-Algebra in 7th grade based on their performance on the 6th grade Ohio State Test in Mathematics.

- **Early Entrance to Kindergarten:** The practice of admitting a student to kindergarten who has not yet reached the typical age at which students are admitted to kindergarten for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
    - Example: A child who can read independently and is socially similar to typical five year-olds is assessed with the intent to be admitted to kindergarten, although he/she will not reach his/her fifth birthday until the end of the school year.

- **Early High School Graduation:** The practice of facilitating completion of the high school program in fewer than four years for the purpose of providing earlier than typical access to post-secondary educational opportunities.
    - Example: An advanced student is granted a diploma after spending only six semesters in high school by meeting all graduation requirements on an accelerated timeline.

- **Written Acceleration Plan (WAP):** The plan written for accelerated students that includes the committee determination, strategies to ensure a successful transition, grade level testing instructions, and signatures of the acceleration committee.

Referrals and Evaluation

Procedures to Implement Academic Acceleration

(pursuant to the Board approved Academic Acceleration Policy)

1. Complete the Request for Acceleration form and submit to the building principal.

2. A variety of assessments will then be reviewed to determine eligibility for acceleration. These evaluations may occur between the beginning of May and through the end of August, but will not be conducted from September through April. The Gifted Coordinator may be called in at this time to initiate the Iowa Scale of Acceleration. This will not be used to determine early entrance into kindergarten or early graduation.

3. An Acceleration Evaluation Committee (may be comprised of the principal, curriculum director, teacher, gifted coordinator, parent, and possibly an intervention specialist and/or counselor) will review the assessments to determine the most appropriate and available learning environment for the students.

4. The Acceleration Committee will issue a written recommendation. Parents have the right to appeal the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent. No change in placement will be made during the current school year after September 30.

5. The Acceleration Committee will develop a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) for any student who is admitted early to kindergarten, offered whole-grade acceleration, or acceleration in one or more individual subject areas. The parents are provided with a copy of the written plan. The plan includes acceleration reviews to ensure smooth transition and student success.

6. Each student case is determined on an individual basis and will be based on assessment data, and social/emotional readiness as determined by observations and interviews and parents, teachers and the student.

Timeline for Application for Acceleration

- Applications for acceleration will be accepted anytime throughout the school year. Evaluations may occur between the beginning of May and through the end of August, but will not be conducted from September through April. No change in placement will be made during the current school year after September 30.

- The deadline to apply for Early Entrance to Kindergarten is April 15.

Considerations and Frequently Asked Questions

● What is a benefit of taking an accelerated math course?
○ If a student is interested in pursuing a postsecondary pathway in a STEM field, then math acceleration can be a benefit. If not, then our typical math sequence sets our graduates up with competitive transcripts for college applications.

● Which state test will my child take if he/she is accelerated in a single subject?
○ Students are required to take the Ohio State Test at the accelerated grade if they have been subject accelerated.

● Why is the benchmark set so high for math acceleration at Ottawa Hills?
○ It is important to know that our jr/sr high school rotating schedule effectively compresses 180 days of content into 135 days of instruction. That means that the Pre-algebra courses are very fast paced, and our benchmark for acceleration is set high enough to ensure that the students would be successful under those conditions-- on top of the social-emotional impact of being placed into a new peer group.

● What happens when my child has exhausted the usual math offerings by the time they are a senior?
○ Starting with Pre-algebra, an honors level section of every course is offered. We also offer AP Calculus, AP Statistics, College Algebra, and Discrete & Financial Mathematics. In the past, we have had some accelerated math students take on independent studies or college courses (College Credit Plus) in their senior year if they have exhausted our usual offerings.