

ACCELERATION POLICY

All children learn and experience success given time and opportunity, but the degree to which academic content standards are met and the time it takes to reach the standards will vary from student to student. The Findlay City Schools Board of Education believes that all students, including advanced learners, should be challenged and supported to reach their full potential. For many advanced learners, this can best be achieved by affording them access to curriculum, learning environments, and instructional interventions more commonly provided to older peers.

This policy describes the process that shall be used for identifying and evaluating students for possible accelerated placement: students who should be granted early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, promoted to a higher grade level than their same-age peers, accelerated in one or more individual subject areas, and granted early graduation from high school. Definitions:

Early Entrance: The practice of admitting a student to kindergarten or first grade who has not yet reached the typical age at which students are admitted to kindergarten or first grade for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities. (See procedure 9.01a3)

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.

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.

Early High School Graduation: The practice of facilitating completion of the high school program in fewer than four years for the purpose of beginning a post high school career path.

A. Referral Process for all four areas of acceleration

1. Any student residing in the district may be referred by a teacher, administrator, gifted education specialist, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or a parent or legal guardian of the student to the principal of his or her school for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. A student may refer himself or herself or a peer through a district staff member who has knowledge of the referred child's abilities.
2. Copies of this policy and referral forms for evaluation for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, whole-grade acceleration, individual subject acceleration, and early high school graduation shall be made available to district staff and parents at each school building. The principal of each school building (or his or her designee) shall solicit referrals of students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement annually, and ensure that all staff he or she supervises is aware of procedures for referring students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement.
3. The principal (or his or her designee) of the referred student's school shall obtain written permission from the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement. The district shall evaluate all students who are referred for evaluation and whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have granted permission to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement.
4. The referred student's principal (or his or her designee) shall convene an Acceleration Evaluation Committee (AEC) within ~~30~~ 45 days upon receipt of the signed parental referral/permission acceleration form to determine the eligibility and appropriate placement. The AEC will also determine the timeline for whole grade or subject acceleration and/or appropriate placement. The timeline may vary if the referral is given June – August. This committee shall be comprised of the following:

- a. a principal or assistant principal from the child's current school;
 - b. a current teacher of the referred student (with the exception of students referred for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade);
 - c. a teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated (with the exception of students referred for possible early graduation from high school);
 - d. a parent or legal guardian of the referred student or a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian of the referred student;
 - e. a gifted education coordinator or gifted intervention specialist. If a gifted coordinator or gifted intervention specialist is not available in the district, a school psychologist or guidance counselor with expertise in the appropriate use of academic acceleration may be substituted.
5. Pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code 3321.01, all children who will be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of August of the school year for which admission is requested may enroll. Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of August of the school year for which admission is requested shall be evaluated for possible early entrance if referred by a parent/guardian, an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
 6. The AEC will convene and use an ODE approved acceleration assessment process, the Iowa Acceleration Scale, for early entrance and whole grade acceleration. The parent or legal guardian of the evaluated student shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process within 45 days of the submission of the Early Entrance Referral Form obtained from Student Services. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.
 7. Children who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement 60 or more days prior to the start of the school year shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year so that the child will be placed appropriately on the first day of school.
 8. A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may appeal in writing the decision of the Acceleration Evaluation Committee to the local Superintendent within 30 days of being notified of the committee's decision. The Superintendent shall review the appeal and notify the parent or legal guardian who filed the appeal of his or her final decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

B. Acceleration Evaluation Process and Committee Responsibilities

1. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee shall conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the student using the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) for early entrance to kindergarten and first grade and whole grade acceleration. IAS will not be used for subject acceleration or early high school graduation.
2. Upon submission by the parent/guardian of the Referral Form for Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade, the student shall be evaluated.
3. Students considered for whole grade acceleration shall be evaluated using the Iowa Acceleration Scale. Students considered for subject acceleration shall be evaluated using a variety of data sources, including Ohio Achievement Tests, nationally-normed tests, end-of-year diagnostic tests, and consideration of the student's maturity and desire for accelerated placement. The committee shall consider the student's own thoughts on possible accelerated placement in its deliberations.
4. Students referred for possible early high school graduation shall be evaluated based on past academic performance, any tests mandated by the state, and successful completion of state mandated graduation requirements. The committee shall consider the student's own thoughts on possible accelerated placement in its deliberations.

5. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee shall issue a written decision to the principal and the student's parent or legal guardian based on the outcome of the evaluation process.
6. If a consensus recommendation cannot be reached by the committee, a decision regarding whether or not to accelerate the student will be determined by a majority vote of the committee membership.
7. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee shall develop a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) for students who will be admitted early to kindergarten or first grade, whole-grade accelerated, accelerated in one or more individual subject area or early high school graduation. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student shall be provided with a copy of the Written Acceleration Plan. The WAP shall specify:
 - a. placement of the student in an accelerated setting;
 - b. strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting;
 - c. requirements and procedures for earning high school credit prior to entering high school (if applicable); and
 - d. a four-week transition period for accelerated placement for early entrants to kindergarten or first grade, grade-level accelerated students, and students accelerated in individual content areas.
- ~~8.~~ For students whom the Acceleration Evaluation Committee recommends for early high school graduation, the committee shall develop a WAP designed to allow the student to complete graduation requirements on an accelerated basis. This may include the provision of educational options in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35-06(G), waiving district prerequisite requirements for enrolling in advanced courses, 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 any Ohio state tests.
9. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee shall designate a school staff member to ensure successful implementation of the Written Acceleration Plan and to monitor the adjustment of the student to the accelerated setting.

C. Accelerated Placement

1. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee specifies a four-week transition period determined by the team for accelerated placement for early entrants to kindergarten or first grade, grade-level accelerated students and students accelerated in individual subject areas.
 - a. At any time during the transition period, a parent or legal guardian of the student may request in writing that the student be withdrawn from accelerated placement. In such cases, the principal shall remove the student without repercussions from the accelerated placement.
 - b. At any time during the transition period, a teacher, parent or legal guardian of the accelerated student may request in writing to have the Acceleration Evaluation Committee reconvene to re-evaluate the accelerated placement.
2. At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement shall become permanent. The student's records shall be modified accordingly, and the acceleration implementation plan shall become part of the student's permanent record to facilitate continuous progress through the curriculum.

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