Pana Community Unit School Dist. No. 8

Accelerated Placement Program (APP)

The District provides an Accelerated Placement Program. The Accelerated Placement Program advances the district's goal of providing educational programs with opportunities for each student to develop to his or her maximum potential. The APP provides an educational opportunity with curriculum options usually reserved for students who are older or in higher grades than the student participating in the APP. APP options include but may not be limited to: (a) accelerating a student in a single subject; (b) other grade-level acceleration; and (c) early entrance to kindergarten. Participation in the APP is open to all students who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will not yet be five years old by September 1st of that school year and whose 5th birthday falls between **September 2 and September 30**, as documented by a certified copy of the birth certificate.

Parents must provide evidence of the student attending at least one year of pre-school taught by a highly qualified teacher and should provide a letter signed by the student's pre-school verifying this information. In addition, the pre-school instructor must complete the Pre-School Teacher Questionnaire.

Early entrance to Kindergarten will be considered based on the following assessments:

- Kindergarten Quarterly Checklist – student must score 90% on all objectives
- AimsWeb Kindergarten Spring Benchmark Test – student must score in the 90% on all of the Kindergarten Spring Benchmarks

Early Entrance to 1st Grade is the admission of a student to 1st grade who meet the following criteria:

- Student consistently outperforms even with documented differentiation for accelerated intervention in the current grade level and verified by teacher
- AIMSWeb 1st grade spring benchmark Test – student must score in the 90% quarter of objectives checklist

Whole Grade Acceleration (2nd – 8th grade) is 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. All of the following criteria must be met:

- Student consistently outperforms even with documented differentiation for accelerated intervention in the current grade level and verified by teacher
- Score of Exceeded Expectations (5) on the IAR test in Reading and/or Math where applicable
- AIMSWeb spring benchmark Test of the year wishing to skip – student must score in the 90% quarter of objectives checklist.
- 95% or higher in ELA and/or Math plus at least 2 other CORE classes

Individual Subject Acceleration is the practice of assigning a student to specific content at a higher instructional level than is typical given the student's grade for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas. This applies to English/Language Arts and/or Math. All of the following criteria must apply:

- Student consistently outperforms even with documented differentiation for accelerated intervention in the current grade level and verified by teacher
- Score of Exceeded Expectations (5) on the IAR test in Reading and/or Math where applicable.
- AIMSWeb spring benchmark Test of the subject area wishing to skip – student must score in the 90% quarter of objectives checklist.
- 95% or higher in ELA and/or Math (where applicable).
- Teacher Academic Readiness Statement: A current teacher who has direct knowledge of the student's academic performance shall complete a written Academic Readiness Statement. The statement shall include the teacher's length and context of experience with the student; evidence of the student's mastery of current grade-level standards; examples of differentiation, enrichment, or accelerated instruction already provided and the student's response; observations regarding the student's independence, work habits, and readiness for advanced instruction; and the teacher's professional assessment of the student's readiness for the requested acceleration. The statement shall be considered as one component of the Evaluation Team's review and shall not, by itself, determine eligibility for accelerated placement.

Accelerated Placement Referral Process for Whole Grade or Single Subject:

Single Subject Acceleration or Grade Acceleration Placement
Pana CUSD 8 accepts referrals for single subject acceleration or grade acceleration from parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators. All students in grades K-8 participate in the initial screening process via the Aimsweb Benchmark Test.

Evidence

The following additional evidence may be considered by the Evaluation Team when collecting and reviewing data regarding a student being considered for accelerated placement. At least two (2) of the following shall be considered in addition to the criteria identified above:

- WISC(Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children)
- WIAT(Wechsler Individual Achievement Test)
- KTEA(Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement)
- PSAT Scores

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The Pana CUSD 8 believes that all students from across the achievement spectrum should be challenged and supported to develop their potential. For some students needing a higher level of instruction, this can best be achieved by affording access to curricula and learning environments more commonly provided to older students. This policy describes the process that shall be used to evaluate students for early admission into kindergarten or first grade, acceleration one or more grade levels (skipping a grade(s)), or acceleration in one or more individual subject areas.

This policy shall be applied equitably and systematically to all Pana CUSD 8 students referred for acceleration regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gifted and talented status, or other protected classification identified in School Board policy 7:10.

The district shall annually notify the community, parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and school personnel, through various communication methods including websites and handbooks, the process for referring a student for possible evaluation for the APP and associated timelines.

1. **Definitions**
    a. "Accelerated placement" is the placement of a student at the instructional level that best matches that student's needs by allowing access to a curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the student.
    b. Accelerated placement is not limited to students who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all students who demonstrate exceptional ability and may benefit from accelerated placement.
    c. "Early entrance to kindergarten" is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will not yet be five years old by September 1 of that school year.
    d. "Early entrance to first grade" is the admission of a student to first grade who will not yet be six years old by September 1 of that school year and who has not completed kindergarten. Students who are younger than six upon starting first grade but who were admitted early to kindergarten do not need to be re-evaluated prior to admission to first grade.
    e. "Whole grade acceleration" is 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.
    f. "Individual subject acceleration" is the practice of assigning a student to specific content at a higher instructional level than is typical given the student's grade for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one of more subject areas.

2. **Referral Process**
    a. Referral Procedures
        i. Referrers: Any student residing in the district may be referred by a teacher, administrator, guidance counselor, school psychologist, non-pubic Kindergarten

teacher, pediatrician, psychologist, or a parent or legal guardian of the student to the principal for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. A student may refer him/herself through a district staff member who has knowledge of the student's abilities.

ii. Referral Form: The referrer shall complete the appropriate section of the referral form and submit it to the building principal. The principal shall review, with the assistance of teacher(s) and school support personnel as appropriate, existing data about the student including screening/benchmarking data, standardized assessment scores, and student observation.

iii. Within ten (10) school days of the conclusion of the referral period, a determination will be made whether an evaluation for accelerated placement is warranted based on data collected in the referral forms, recommendation form, and initial screener. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be provided a written notice of the referral determination. For cases warranting an evaluation, the school will proceed to the Evaluation Process below. For cases not warranting an evaluation, the process ends here.

b. Written Parental Consent: The principal of the referred student shall obtain written permission from the student's parent(s) or legal guardians(s) prior to any evaluation for accelerated placement. Consent is presumed when the referrer is the parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

3. Evaluation Process

a. The district will use a fair and equitable process that involves teacher(s) and school support personnel, as appropriate. This team is responsible for gathering relevant, reliable, and comprehensive data in order to determine whether and what type of accelerated placement is appropriate.

i. The principal shall convene an Evaluation Team consisting of administrator(s), teacher(s) and school support personnel, as appropriate. The composition of the team may vary depending upon the type of acceleration requested and other relevant factors.

ii. The evaluation will include multiple valid and reliable indicators and any assessment instruments shall be appropriate, given the needs of the student.

iii. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified about any assessments that will be conducted as part of the evaluation at the time they are asked to consent in writing to the evaluation.

iv. The school will complete the evaluation within 30 school days following the date of receipt of the parent(s)'/guardian(s)' consent to conduct the evaluation.

Notification of Decision

1. The principal or designee will convene a meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s) at which time written notification of the Evaluation Team's conclusions will be shared.
2. If the student is found eligible for the APP, a written plan explaining the type of acceleration and strategies for support will be developed.
3. If the student is not found eligible for the APP, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be provided a notice of their right to appeal the eligibility determination, within five (5) calendar days after receiving the determination, by submitting a written request to the Superintendent.

4. Within five (5) calendar days of receiving the written appeal request, the Superintendent will provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of his/her decision. The Superintendent's decision is final.

The Acceleration Plan

- The acceleration team shall create a written placement and transition plan for students selected for acceleration. The written plan will be provided to the student's parent/guardian and will detail the type of acceleration the student will receive and strategies to be used to support the student to facilitate a successful transition to the accelerated setting during a transition period specified in the written plan. Any accommodations the student is entitled to receive as documented on a student's IEP or 504 plan shall be available to the student as part of the acceleration plan.
- The plan will also designate an individual who will monitor and support the transition during the 30 school days after placement. During the transition period specified in the written plan, the accelerated student's parent/guardian may request in writing that the student be returned to the non-accelerated setting without penalty.
- The acceleration team shall use the district "Accelerated Placement and Transition Plan" form to document the plan for acceleration/transition.
- At the end of the transition period, the student's records will be updated to reflect the student's accelerated status. This is designated to facilitate continuous progress in future years in the same district or if the student matriculates or transfers to a different district.
- If a student is recommended for acceleration, every reasonable effort will be made to make that placement at the student's home school. However, under some circumstances the placement may be made at a different school.