

Approved: 9/12/2022

Updated:

553 GRADE ACCELERATION/RETENTION POLICIES

MN Statutes 120B.15

(c) School districts must adopt procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students consistent with section 120B.11, subdivision 2, clause (2). These procedures must include how the district will: (1) assess a student's readiness and motivation for acceleration; and

(2) match the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to a student to achieve the best type of academic acceleration for that student.

At Crosslake Community School (CCS), grade-level acceleration is considered only for students in grades K-6, online and seat-based. Students in 7th and 8th grade may be considered for acceleration on a course-by course basis. Once in 9th grade and beyond, students make progress towards graduation on the basis of credits earned, rather than assigned grade level.

1. Upon request of a parent/guardian, or teacher recommendation, CCS' seat-based and online students in grades K-6 may be considered for grade-level acceleration. Written consent for student evaluation is obtained from the parent/guardian.
2. While the following process is underway, the student will remain in their current assigned grade level and is expected to complete the work along with the rest of the class. The teacher may provide accelerated coursework at their discretion.
3. When the grade-level acceleration request/recommendation is made, the Acceleration Committee meets to consider the request.
 - a. The Acceleration Committee for each program (seat-based and online) consists of: School Director, School Counselor or Social Worker, the student's current teacher, the teacher of the proposed grade level. Additional personnel may be invited to participate as needed (Special Education teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, etc.).
NOTE: Students must have been a CCS student for at least one grading period (trimester or semester) in order to be considered for acceleration.
 - b. The initial review will include quantitative (STAR and MCA test scores, previous course grades, local formative and summative assessments, attendance, etc.) and qualitative (input from teachers and parent/guardian, student interview, etc.) data.
 - c. If the Committee finds the request is defensible, they will recommend a comprehensive evaluation. If further evaluation is not indicated, the Committee may choose to recommend consideration for other forms of acceleration.
 - d. Upon notification of the Committee's decision, written permission from a parent/guardian to evaluate the student for acceleration must be obtained within 30 days. If evaluation is not recommended, the parent/guardian may accept or appeal the decision.
4. Comprehensive Evaluation Process:
 - a. Iowa Acceleration Scale is administered. This gathers data in five categories:
 - i. Academic ability, aptitude, and achievement;

- ii. School and academic factors;
 - iii. Developmental factors;
 - iv. Interpersonal skills; and
 - v. Attitude and support.
 - b. Student completes an Ability Test (DAS, K-ABC, Stanford-Binet IV, WISC-IV<amp Wechsler Scale of Intelligence, or WJ-III Cog).
 - c. Student completes Aptitude/Out-of-Level testing using the CAT or SCAT assessment. This may require the student to meet in-person with a teacher.
5. Following the evaluation, the Acceleration Committee will meet to discuss the result and recommend, deny, or postpone grade-level acceleration. This meeting may include the parent/guardian.
6. The Committee will create a written report for the student's file and will provide this report to the parent/guardian.
- a. If grade-level acceleration is not recommended, the notification will include:
 - i. appropriate student placement and accelerative opportunities
 - ii. identification of the school counselor and other staff able to support instructional, social and emotional needs; and
 - iii. information on student enrichment opportunities and parent/guardian resources;
 - iv. an appeals process
 - b. The grade-level acceleration recommendation will include:
 - i. student placement;
 - ii. an appropriate transition period*;
 - iii. the designation of the school counselor and other staff responsible for overseeing the transition;
 - iv. ongoing counseling opportunities;
 - v. a plan for communication with parents/guardians, and school staff;
 - vi. strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting to include addressing any gaps in knowledge or skill;
 - vii. information on student enrichment opportunities and parent/guardian resources;
 - viii. the student is coded as "accelerated" for reporting purposes and will take required state assessments for the course/grade level at which instruction is delivered
- *A student may only be removed from the acceleration setting after the stated transition time following a student conference with a counselor, a written request from a parent/guardian and the signature of the classroom teacher.

GRADE-LEVEL RETENTION

It is the general policy of CCS to advance students in grades K-8 to the next grade level each year, regardless of the course grades earned. Grade-level retention has been associated with lower reading and math achievement at age 14, above and beyond other variables. Intervention approaches other than grade-level retention have been shown to better promote school achievement and adjustment ([source](#)). However, some 7th and 8th grade students may need to repeat their math course in order to be prepared for higher-level math. This would not be considered a grade-level retention, rather it is a course-specific repeat.

After 8th grade, students make progress towards graduation based on passing courses/earning credit. Courses that are required for graduation and failed will need to be re-taken in order to earn the credit towards graduation. Students who are not on track to graduate with their original graduating class may need to attend school for additional semesters or years until graduation requirements are met or the student reaches the end of the year they turn 21 years old.

Students who struggle with mastering grade-level content have multiple additional supports available, including but not limited to Title I, AmeriCorps tutoring, and differentiated instruction and support provided by teachers. CCS conducts regular assessments to monitor student growth and learning, and has a MTSS Committee that meets weekly to discuss potential interventions for students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally.

If parents/guardians would like to have their student participate in additional assessment or intervention, they can make this request to their student's classroom teacher (or learning coach, for online students) and school staff will do all we can to support your student.

In very special circumstances retention may be considered upon parent/guardian request for students in grades K-7. The following process is employed when CCS receives such a request:

1. The request for grade-level retention must be provided in writing to the school Director by the parent/guardian. 2. While the following process is underway, the student will remain in their current assigned grade level and is expected to complete the work along with the rest of the class. The teacher may provide remedial coursework at their discretion.
3. A Committee will be established to review the request (Retention Committee). This Committee will include at least the student's most recent classroom teacher, the school Director, school counselor or social worker. Additional personnel may be invited to participate as needed (Special Education teacher, Curriculum Coordinator, etc.).
4. The initial review will include quantitative (STAR and MCA test scores, previous course grades, local formative and summative assessments, attendance, etc.) and qualitative (input from teachers and parent/guardian, student interview, etc.) data.
NOTE: Students must have been a CCS student for at least one grading period (trimester or semester) in order to be considered for grade-level retention.
5. As needed, the Committee may request additional data, documentation, assessments or other evaluative measures to help them complete the review process.
6. Following the review, the Retention Committee will recommend, deny, or postpone grade-level retention. This meeting may include the parent/guardian.
7. The Committee will create a written report for the student's file and will provide this report to the parent/guardian.
 - a. If grade-level retention is not recommended, the notification will include:
 - i. appropriate student placement and remedial opportunities
 - ii. identification of the school counselor and other staff able to support instructional, social and emotional needs; and
 - iii. information on student enrichment opportunities and parent/guardian resources;
 - iv. an appeals process
 - b. The grade-level retention recommendation will include:
 - i. student placement;
 - ii. the designation of the school counselor and other staff responsible for overseeing the transition; iii. ongoing counseling opportunities;
 - iv. a plan for communication with parents/guardians, and school staff;
 - v. strategies to support a successful transition to include addressing any gaps in knowledge or skill;
 - vi. information on student enrichment opportunities and parent/guardian resources; and vii. the student will take required state assessments for the course/grade level at which instruction is delivered.

Cross Reference: Policy 513 (Student Promotion, Retention, and Program Design)