

Academically Accelerated Handbook



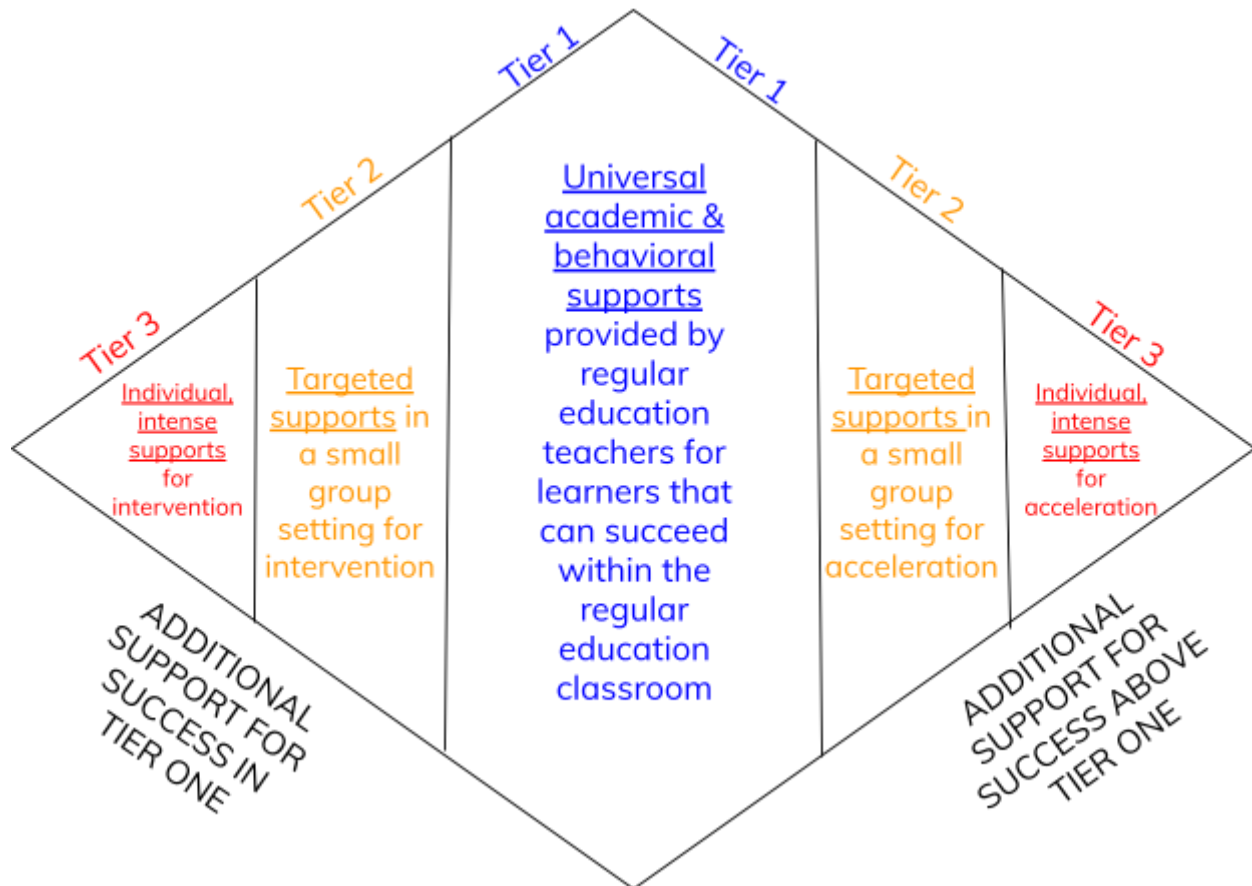
Nippersink School District 2

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Nippersink School District 2 Academically Accelerated Program

The Academically Accelerated Program (AAP) is a part of the district-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process, which intends to meet the specific needs of all learners.



The Accelerated Program is designed to address the specific learning needs for those students that need additional learning support in the area of mathematics for success above Tier One.

Academically Accelerated Program - Core Beliefs

Nippersink School District 2 will foster academic growth, instill integrity, confidence, and civic responsibility while preparing all students for an ever-changing global society. The Accelerated Program philosophy is that all students must be provided the opportunity to develop their talents to their fullest capacities. Students have the right to:

- learn something new every day
- be passionate about their talent area without apologies
- feel good about their accomplishments
- make mistakes
- seek guidance in the development of their talent

The purpose of the Academically Accelerated Program is to:

- Identify and support students who have the potential for high academic and intellectual achievement in their area(s) of talent
- Support students who are exhibiting high academic and intellectual ability
- Challenge students at their level with curricula that are rigorous and relevant so they can reach their full potential

While the [Illinois School Code](#) states that a child is considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude by scoring in the top 5% in that area of aptitude, services provided by the Academically Accelerated Program will include any student that demonstrates a need for academic acceleration.

Definitions

Academically Talented Learners: Definition of Academically Talented Learners in accordance with the Illinois Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 00-0421) and Board Policy 6:135 – Accelerated Placement Program, Nippersink School District 2 is committed to meeting the needs of all learners. The Accelerated Placement Act in Illinois tasks districts to provide accelerated learning opportunities for students who “demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement.” As such, students in Nippersink School District 2 who score in the top 80% on nationally normed assessments are considered to be demonstrating high ability and shall be considered for potential learning opportunities.

Ability: The extent to which competency can be developed in a particular area; this is also known as “potential”. Abilities can be developed in specific talent areas (math, science, art, music, sports, etc.) through various formal and informal educational experiences. The talent areas in the program will focus on developing student abilities in core academics, specifically mathematics.

Above grade-level: When a student is learning material that, according to Illinois State Standards documents, is considered to be one or more grade levels above the level of the student’s current grade.

Acceleration: When a student moves through the standard curriculum at a much faster pace than is typically seen. Acceleration can take many forms, such as grade-skipping, early entrance into kindergarten, taking dual-credit courses or AP courses at the high school level, or moving a student through the general education curriculum in a specific subject area (subject-area acceleration).

Achievement: Accomplishment or performance demonstrating what skills students have learned and/or acquired. Achievement typically is assessed using standardized achievement tests, curriculum based assessments, portfolios and products. The scores from these various assessments and tests can help determine students who are high-ability and in what specific talent areas(s).

Aptitude: Ability to learn material at advanced rates and levels of understanding in a specific area (e.g., humanities, mathematics, science). Students with higher aptitude demonstrate an ability to learn at faster rates and at deeper levels of understanding. Aptitude is measured by tests of knowledge, speed and accuracy in reasoning, and information retrieval in a specific content area.

Creativity: The ability to come up with new and original ideas, insights, or ways of doing things.

Curriculum: The skills and concepts students must master as specified in the Illinois Learning Standards for each subject area, along with the teacher-developed and standardized assessments that measure the extent of student mastery of those skills and concepts.

Differentiated Learning/Instruction: A philosophy of effective teaching and learning that provides students different means of mastering the content and skills indicated in the curriculum. These different means to mastery can consist of different ways of showing student evidence of understanding, different learning activities that get all students to master the same skill or concept, or using different content to help students acquire the same skill.

Early entrance: This form of acceleration refers to a student's entrance into school before the mandated age. In Illinois, students do not have to attend school until their 6th birthday. However, any student who will be 5 on or before September 1st may attend school at the beginning of the school term. The school must first assess the student's readiness before allowing students early entrance into school. (School Code 105 ILCS 5/10-20.12)

Grade skipping: A form of acceleration where a student skips the equivalent of one year's worth of curriculum in all subjects. DIAL, i-Ready, IXL CogAT and age-appropriate behavioral observations are used to determine if students should be able to skip an entire grade level. For more information on grade skipping or acceleration, please see the D2 "Early Entrance to Kindergarten and/or First grade and Whole grade acceleration" policy which can be found on the district website in the Curriculum Department.

Replacement curriculum: When students are receiving instruction at a different cognitive or grade level outside of their regular classroom day in one or more specific subject areas. The concepts and skills about which students are instructed are different from the ones students in regular education classrooms are receiving. These concepts and skills can consist of grade-level content that is at a higher cognitive demand or can consist of above grade-level content (i.e., 5th grade math standards being taught to a 4th grade student).

Webb's Depth of Knowledge: A framework of complexity in thinking that contains four levels: Recall, Skill/Concept, Strategic Thinking, and Extended Thinking. These four levels can be used to design and evaluate the rigor of learning tasks and assessment questions. Students in the Academically Accelerated Program will experience more learning tasks and assessments that require higher levels of complexity in thinking (strategic and extended thinking) according to Webb's Depth of Knowledge.

Service Delivery

Cluster Grouping (for Elementary only): In cluster grouping, students are assigned to an academically accelerated class in a separate classroom within their own grade level. This means that this group of students will be provided a curriculum that parallels the regular education students; however, this parallel curriculum is tailored to the abilities and aptitudes of the students in the academically accelerated cluster.

Academically Accelerated Services Continuum

The Academically Accelerated Program services potentially high-ability and identified high-ability students in grades 3-8. Services will be provided in the area of mathematics in grades 3, 4, and 5. Advanced courses in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies (grades 6, 7, and 8) are offered at Nippersink Middle School (NMS). All services provided utilize research-based practices and instructional strategies as well as differentiated instructional techniques where appropriate.

Grade-level services overview:

Grades 3-5: Accelerated math for students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will receive instruction via “Cluster Grouping” in a separate classroom by an Accelerated Math teacher. This model will provide accelerated opportunities to identified students on a daily basis. The curriculum will be parallel to the general education students, but tailored to the abilities and aptitudes of the clustered students. Students will receive instruction the same time the regular education classroom receives math instruction.

Grades 6-8: Students for Advanced Classes will be identified during the spring of 5th grade. While these courses move through grade-level standards quickly, extra time is spent exploring concepts, relationships, and connections that allow for advanced thinking and problem-solving.

What follows is a list of specific methods used to meet the needs of students identified as needing academically accelerated services. One or more may be used at a particular grade level depending on the needs of the students.

Academically Accelerated Program & Curriculum Development:

- Developing appropriate, academically accelerated education programs and curriculum involves a comprehensive review of sound instructional practices and strategies that will develop the academic talents of identified students. Age-appropriate academically accelerated educational opportunities are designed from these research-based practices and strategies. This develops students’ talents while still providing opportunities for mastery of the required grade-level Illinois Learning Standards.
- District-provided collaborative time between the academically accelerated teacher(s) and between general education allows for collaboration and articulation as needed.
- All courses and units of study are reviewed and approved in collaboration with the academically accelerated teacher and building administration.
- Course and unit curricula will be determined by the standards outlined in the Illinois Learning Standards as well as based on the individual learning needs of the identified students. This is in line with current best practice concerning the education of academically accelerated students.
- All courses and units of study will be rooted in content, concepts, and skills that students are required to master according to the Illinois Learning Standards. The primary goal for academically accelerated students will be to develop strategic and extended thinking skills as outlined in Webb’s Depth of Knowledge. Developing thinking skills in this way means that students will be asked to perform tasks

with a higher cognitive demand that go beyond simple recall of information, and ask students to synthesize and create. This higher level of cognitive demand may be accomplished through one or more instructional frameworks. This may include but is not limited to the following:

- Problem-Based or Project-Based Learning
- Flipped Mastery Classroom approaches
- Parallel Curriculum
- Integrated Curriculum Model

Identification & Placement Overview - Elementary

Identification and placement into the Nippersink District 2 Academically Accelerated Program in the Elementary level will be based on the following. Students must meet a minimum of 2 of the 3 in order to be considered.

MATH

i-Ready IXL Assessment - Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5

i-Ready IXL tests will be administered at the appropriate times in order to quantitatively assess academic ability. All students take the i-Ready IXL tests at scheduled points throughout the year. Students in grades 2, 3, 4, or 5 who score at or above the 80% percentile (Winter and Spring of the previous school year or Fall of the current school year) will be considered for placement into the Accelerated Program.

Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) - Grades 3 and 4 only

Illinois Assessment of Readiness is administered in the Spring of each school year. Students who score a 4 (meets or exceeds) or higher on the math section IAR assessment will be considered for the Accelerated Math Program.

Cognitive Abilities Assessment - 2nd Grade only

Parents/Guardians of 2nd grade students will be notified of the dates CogAT testing will take place at the students' school. After CogAT results are received the results will be shared with parents. Students in grade 2 that score at the 90th percentile (NPR) or above on the appropriate component of the CogAT test will be *considered* for enrollment in the appropriate academically accelerated program for grade 3. Please note that students who do not have strong i-Ready IXL scores (80th percentile and above), but meet the CogAT entrance criteria at grade 2 may not be placed in the program due to concerns about the student having adequate background knowledge to be successful in the Accelerated Program.

Teacher Input

Will include a review of grades, along with a students' growth mindset and general responses to academic challenges.

Identification Table - Math

Grade	i-Ready IXL	IAR	CogAT	Teacher Input	Notification
2	80th percentile on Math (winter and spring or fall of the current year)	NA	90th percentile (NPR) or above	Math grades and Qualitative feedback	Mid June
3	80th percentile on Math (winter and spring or fall of the current year)	4 or higher in Math (meets or exceeds)	NA	Math grades and Qualitative feedback	End of June (dependent on IAR)
4	80th percentile on Math (winter and spring or fall of the current year)	4 or higher in Math (meets or exceeds)	NA	Math grades and Qualitative feedback	End of June (dependent on IAR)

Students must meet a minimum of 2 of the 3 in order to be considered.

READING

i-Ready IXL Assessment - Grade 4

i-Ready IXL tests will be administered at the appropriate times in order to quantitatively assess academic ability. All students take the i-Ready IXL tests at scheduled points throughout the year. Students in grade 4 who score at or above the 90% percentile (Winter and Spring of the previous school year or Fall of the current school year) will be considered for placement into the Accelerated Program.

Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) - 4 only

Illinois Assessment of Readiness is administered in the Spring of each school year. Students who score a 5 (exceeds) on the math section IAR assessment will be considered for the Accelerated Math Program.

Teacher Input

Will include a review of grades, along with a students' growth mindset and general responses to academic challenges.

Identification Table - Reading

Grade	i-Ready IXL	IAR	Teacher Input	Notification
5	90% percentile on Math (winter and spring or fall of the current year)	5 in Reading (Exceeds Expectations)	4th grade reading grades and Qualitative feedback	End of June

Students must meet a minimum of 2 of the 3 in order to be considered.

Notification of Program Entry

Elementary School - When all data is received a letter will be sent home inviting students who qualify to be part of the Accelerated math program. Students that move into the district during the school year will take the i-Ready IXL/CogAT test within the first two weeks of attendance to determine if they meet the criteria for entry into the Academically Accelerated Program.

Parents/Guardians may refuse to have their student placed in the program at the time of initial placement or any time thereafter.

Identification & Placement Overview

Middle School - Identification and placement into the Nippersink District 2 Academically Accelerated Program will be based on a combination of performance results of the i-Ready IXL diagnostic (above grade level), the Illinois Assessment of Readiness or (IAR) (score of a 4 or 5), an academic based teacher recommendation, and a student interest survey. ~~Performance ranges for the i-Ready assessment are determined by the grade level. As an example, in 2022, i-Ready ELA performance on the Winter diagnostic in 6th grade begins at 646, 7th grade at 665 and 8th grade at 679. For specific levels, please visit the NMS website.~~

Program Exit Procedures

EXIT AND REMEDIATION PROCEDURES

Elementary School

If a student is not demonstrating progress or meeting 70% of the unit learning targets, the following process may be initiated by the teacher, principal, counselor, parent or student:

1. Conference with teacher/parent/student/principal to address concerns and develop an action plan
2. Student must meet goals as determined by the Accelerated Team
3. Conference again with teacher/parent/student/principal to discuss progress of action plan
4. Removal of a student from the Academically Accelerated class will be based on a student's lack of ability/achievement. A low performing student should not be removed because of compliance problems (i.e. poor homework completion, behavior in class, etc.). If the student is struggling and not demonstrating progress or meeting 70% of unit learning targets, it is assumed that regular communication has occurred between teacher and parent before the initial conference takes place.

Middle School

If a student earns a C or lower for the quarter, the following process may be initiated by the teacher, principal, counselor, parent or student:

1. Conference with teacher/parent/student/principal or counselor
2. Student has the next quarter to improve
3. Conference again with teacher/parent/student/principal or counselor to discuss progress. During this time, an academic improvement plan may be developed by the Accelerated teacher and the homeroom teacher that includes:
 - Descriptors of the unsatisfactory academic performance
 - Goals to improve academic performance
 - Indicators of academic improvement
 - Results (to be written at the end of the probationary period)
 - The student will continue to receive Accelerated services while working towards achieving satisfactory performance status (B or better in any Accelerated class in which they are enrolled).
 - Parents/guardians and students are notified in writing of the student's probationary status as well as the requirements the student must meet in order to continue receiving Accelerated services.
 - Parent/guardian involvement is highly encouraged, and parents/guardians are welcome to set up a conference with the Accelerated teacher and homeroom teacher after receiving notification of a student's probationary status.
4. Removal of a student from the Academically Accelerated class will be based on a student's lack of ability/achievement. A low performing student should not be removed because of compliance problems (i.e. poor homework completion, behavior in class, etc.) If the student is struggling and earning a C or lower, it is assumed that regular communication has occurred between teacher and parent before the initial conference takes place.
5. If it is determined that the student has met the goals outlined in the Improvement Plan at the end of the probationary period, then the student may continue in the Accelerated program. If it is determined that the student has not met the goals contained in his/her Improvement Plan and continues to demonstrate unsatisfactory performance in Accelerated classes, then a final review of the student's Accelerated placement will occur before the end of the school year. This review will consist of a Placement Review Meeting that will consider if the student's academic needs can be better met in the regular education classroom. The student's parent/guardian, Accelerated teacher, homeroom teacher, and one administrator will be present at the meeting.

Appendix

Appendix A: Accelerated Continuation Form

Appendix B: Notification of Probation

Appendix C: Notification of Placement Review

Appendix D: Accelerated Services Improvement Plan

Appendix E: Removal of Probationary Status Notification

Appendix F: Notification of Discontinuation of Accelerated Services

Appendix A: Accelerated Continuation Form

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Accelerated Teacher: _____

1. Indicate as applicable:

A. **For students in Grades 3-5 Math**, the student has achieved a grade of B or better in Accelerated Math at the time of this evaluation.

YES

NO

2. Please indicate the student's current performance in their cluster group or class: (S = Satisfactory, NI - Needs Improvement)

a. Exhibits creative and critical thinking

S

NI

b. Can apply learned concepts and skills to new situations

S

NI

c. Participates actively in class activities and discussions

S

NI

d. Shows respect for teacher and classmates

S

NI

e. Completes assignments on time

S

NI

f. Comes prepared for class

S

NI

3. Teacher Recommendation (circle one)

Continued Placement

Probation

Withdrawal from Accelerated Program

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Notification of Probation

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child, <name of student> is being placed on probation due to poor performance in the following Accelerated service or class:

_____ Grade 3 Accelerated Math

_____ Grade 4 Accelerated Math

_____ Grade 5 Accelerated Math

_____ Grade 5 Accelerated Reading

During the probationary period, your child will continue to receive Accelerated Services and his/her performance will be closely monitored. For Accelerated students in grades 3-5, a meeting will be held between the homeroom teacher and the Accelerated teacher to determine why the student is not performing as expected and an Improvement Plan will be developed for your child. This Improvement Plan will include goals, intervention strategies, and evaluation criteria used by the teachers to determine if your child is being successful at reaching the goals. You will receive a copy of this plan along with this notification, and if you or your child has any questions, you are encouraged to set up a meeting with your child's Accelerated teacher and/or homeroom teacher.

When the probationary period ends, your child's performance as compared to the Improvement Plan will be evaluated. Students must meet the goals as outlined in the Improvement Plan. If at the end of the probationary period your child does not meet the Improvement Plan goals, then a final review of placement will occur to determine if the regular classroom is the best place to meet your child's learning needs.

Should you desire to set up a meeting regarding this notice of probation, please contact your child's Accelerated teacher and/or homeroom teacher at your earliest convenience.

(School letterhead)

Appendix C: Notification of Placement Review

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to inform you that your student, _____, is experiencing difficulties in the Accelerated program even after being placed on an Improvement Plan. The main areas of difficulty are described below:

Enclosed with this letter you will find a copy of the Improvement Plan as well as your child's current progress in regards to that plan.

A conference with you to discuss this further is requested. Please contact me at your earliest convenience by either phone or email so we can set up a time to meet. My phone number is _____ and my email is _____.

Sincerely,

Appendix D: Accelerated Services Improvement Plan

(For students placed in probationary status)

Student: _____ School: _____

Grade: _____ Grade and subject involved: _____

Your student has been placed on probationary status in the Academically Accelerated Program. During this probationary period, your student will have the opportunity to demonstrate improvement in the areas identified in this contract. The contract will be in effect from _____ to _____, at which time a meeting will be held between the Accelerated teacher, the homeroom teacher, the student, the Parent or Guardian, and the building principal to determine the student's future placement.

Goals for Improvement	Evaluation Procedures (Assessments, Checklists, etc.)	Improvement Indicators (The student is improving when we see...)	Results (Has the student met/not met the goal? What evidence do we have to show the student has met/not met the goal?)

Additional Comments or Recommendations:

Signatures:

Student:	Accelerated Teacher:
Parent/Guardian:	Homeroom Teacher:

(School Letterhead)

Appendix E: Removal of Probationary Status Notification

Date:

Dear Parents of Guardians of _____:

We are pleased to inform you that your student, _____, has met the goals of his/her Improvement Plan, and is no longer in probationary status for the Accelerated Program. We do hope that the improved performance demonstrated during the probationary period will continue and that your student is successful for the rest of his/her time in the Accelerated Program.

A copy of your student's improvement plan showing that he/she met their goals is attached to this letter.

Please remind your student of the importance of seeking help from his/her teacher when they need it as well as the importance of keeping up with daily assignments. Thank you for the support you have shown for your student and Accelerated Program. Working together, we can certainly expect to see continued success.

Sincerely,

(School Letterhead)

Appendix F: Notification of Discontinuation of Accelerated Services

Date:

Dear Parent or Guardian of _____,

According to the decision reached at the Placement Review meeting held on _____, your student will be removed from the Accelerated service indicated below and placed in the regular classroom starting on _____.

_____ Grade 3 Accelerated Math

_____ Grade 4 Accelerated Math

_____ Grade 5 Accelerated Math

_____ Grade 5 Accelerated Reading

Should you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact me at the email or phone number listed below.

Sincerely,

