

Adopted November 17, 2008

Revised _____

550 BECKER SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT ACCELERATION POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to professional staff, parents and students regarding curriculum acceleration to meet the academic and social needs of high ability or high achieving students. This policy is in compliance with Minn. Stat. §120B.15 requiring school districts to adopt policies and procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Every Minnesota child is entitled to an appropriate and challenging education. (MDE, 2007). Students regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, disability or giftedness shall have access to a challenging, standards-based curriculum. Becker Independent School District 726 supports the judicious use of acceleration when there is compelling evidence that the student is likely to benefit academically.

III. BACKGROUND

Several forms of acceleration may be considered for students in this school district. They include early school entrance, grade-skipping, single-subject acceleration, taking courses at another institution, and early graduation.

Any acceleration decision should be approached on a case-by-case basis with careful consideration. Those involved in the decision should follow the process outlined in Section V.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Acceleration is an intervention that moves students through an educational program at a more rapid rate than their age-mates. The goal of acceleration is to tailor the level and complexity of the curriculum to the ability and academic readiness of individual children.

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 Admission 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.

Continuous Progress: The student is given content progressively as prior content is completed and mastered, The practice is accelerative when the student's progress exceeds the performance of chronological peers in rate and level.

Correspondence Courses: The student enrolls in coursework delivered outside of normal school instruction. Instruction may be delivered traditionally by mail, but increasingly other delivery mechanisms such as internet-based instruction and televised courses are used.

Early Graduation: The student graduates from high school in 3 ½ years or less. Generally this is accomplished by increasing the amount of coursework undertaken each year in high school or college, but it may also be accomplished through dual/concurrent enrollment (see below) or extracurricular and correspondence coursework.

Concurrent/Dual Enrollment: The student takes a course at one level and receives credit for a parallel course at a higher level (e.g. taking algebra at the middle school level or taking a high school chemistry course and receiving credit for a university course upon successful completion).

V. PROCEDURES

Initiation: The process for considering a student for acceleration may be initiated by the student, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), or a staff member by completing the attached form and submitting it to the student's current principal.

Decision-making Process (K-8 Whole-Grade, Single Subject or Early Admittance Acceleration):

1. For early admission to Kindergarten refer to current policy.
2. When the principal receives a completed request for acceleration, he/she shall convene an ad hoc acceleration committee composed of the principal, the child's past, current and future teachers, the gifted/talented coordinator/resource teacher, the school psychologist, counselor, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), and the receiving principal, if applicable.
3. The Iowa Acceleration Scale will be used to guide decisions. The acceleration committee shall meet to gather information about the student, determine a process for gathering further information based on the components of the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 2nd Edition (2003) and reconvene to reach a timely decision. The following-will occur in order and proceed from one to the other as determined by the ad hoc committee.

- a. An assessment of student achievement. Performance on group or individually administered standardized achievement tests.
 - b. An assessment of student aptitude. Above level achievement tests done in an academic talent search. Instruments include the PLUS test or the EXPLORE test (both for elementary students), or the SAT or the ACT (both for seventh to ninth graders). Aptitude tests are designed to measure problem solving ability for material that has not yet been formally presented to the learner.
 - c. An assessment of student ability. The most recent version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) or the Stanford Binet individual measure of intellectual ability.
 - i. Parents may choose to submit scores from an outside psychologist at their own expense. In these cases the Stanford Binet is recommended, as it has a higher ceiling for exceptionally gifted students.
 - ii. The school district will provide a WISC to qualified candidates who do not have an individual ability assessment.
 - d. An assessment of social skills will be conducted.
4. The committee shall make a decision for one of the following:
- a. Single subject acceleration
 - b. Whole grade acceleration
 - c. Acceleration is not recommended
5. Grade 9-12 – See Test out policy.

Parameters:

- 1. In all cases of whole grade acceleration in grades K-8, a student shall only advance one grade at a time.
- 2. The process shall be initiated no later than the first day of the fourth quarter for the following fall grade acceleration.
- 3. If a student is potentially eligible for acceleration, time lines may be waived as deemed necessary.
- 4. The district reserves the right to make any changes at a natural break in the school calendar.

Follow-up:

- 1. Acceleration shall be done on a trial basis for the first quarter/trimester after the decision to accelerate is made.
- 2. The coordinator for gifted/talented shall serve as a case manager for the accelerated student and provide a mentor for him/her.

3. Within one month after acceleration begins, vested staff will meet at least once with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) to monitor the student's emotional, social, and intellectual progress in the new environment. This group will recommend continuance or abandonment of the acceleration.
4. When the accelerated student reaches the secondary schools, he/she will be assigned to the counselor who shall consult with the gifted and talented coordinator as needed.

Decisions Final:

Decisions are final and acceleration may not be reviewed for one academic year.

References and Resources

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