

Prairie Grove CSD 46 - Academic Acceleration Placement Procedures

Prairie Grove CSD 46 believes that all students, 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 them access to curricula and learning environments more commonly provided to older students. This document describes the procedure that will be used for evaluating students for possible accelerated placement and identifying students who should be granted early admission to kindergarten or first grade, accelerated in one or more individual subject areas, or promoted to a higher grade level than their same-age peers. The procedure shall be applied equitably and systematically to all students referred for acceleration regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gifted and talented status, twice/multiple exceptionality, English language proficiency, socioeconomic background, or other protected classification.

Definitions

Accelerated placement: 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. Accelerated placement options must include, but need not be limited to, early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, individual subject acceleration, and whole grade acceleration. Accelerated placement is not limited to those students who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all students who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement. Eligibility for accelerated placement shall also be open to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, English language proficiency, or socioeconomic status.

Early entrance to kindergarten: the admission of a student to kindergarten who will not yet be five years old by September 1 of that school year.

Early entrance to first grade: 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 successfully completed kindergarten. Students who are younger than six upon starting first grade but who were admitted early to kindergarten, at Prairie Grove, do not need to be reevaluated prior to admission to first grade.

Whole grade acceleration: the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical, given the student's age/grade, 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 specific content at a higher instructional level than is typical, given the student's age/grade, for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.

Publication of Acceleration and Referral Procedures/Forms

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Copies of this procedure and related referral forms for evaluation for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, whole grade acceleration, and individual subject acceleration, shall be made available to District staff and parents at each school building and shall be published on the school District website.

The Principal (or designee) of each school building shall annually solicit referrals of students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement, and ensure that all staff are aware of procedures for referring students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement.

Initiation of Evaluation Process/Procedures

Referrers: Any student, residing in the District, may be referred by a teacher, administrator, social worker, school psychologist, or parent/legal guardian to the Principal for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. A student may refer himself or herself through a District staff member who has knowledge of the referred student's abilities.

Referral Intake Form: The referrer shall complete the appropriate section of the referral form and submit it to the Principal. The Principal shall then forward the referral form to the appropriate individual(s) so that any additional forms may be completed within fourteen (14) days. The submission of the referral intake form by the initial referrer starts the clock on a sixty (60) day evaluation process.

Written Parental Consent: The Principal of the referred student's school shall obtain written permission from the student's parent/legal guardian to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement. Consent is presumed when the individual referring the student for evaluation is a student's parent/legal guardian. 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.

Timeline: Students, residing in the District, who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement during the school year shall receive a determination within sixty (60) days. Students, residing in the District, who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement sixty (60) or more days prior to the start of the school year shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year such that the student may be placed in the accelerated placement on the first day of school. In all other cases, including but not limited to students transferring into the District, evaluations of a referred student shall be scheduled at the student's Principal's discretion and placed in the accelerated setting(s) at the time recommended by those involved in determining whether the student should be accelerated.

Evaluation Process

The procedure must utilize a fair and equitable decision-making process that involves multiple persons and includes a student's parents or guardians. This multi-person evaluation team is responsible for gathering relevant, reliable, and comprehensive data in order to determine whether and what type of accelerated placement is appropriate for that student.

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Multiple Evaluators/Decision Makers: A diverse evaluation team shall consist of multiple participants. Recommended team members may include:

- Curriculum coordinator or designee responsible for understanding the needs of an accelerated student
- Principal from the student's current school
- Most current(s) teacher of that student
- School psychologist and/or school social worker

A parent/legal guardian shall be allowed to invite an individual who is knowledgeable about the student's academic abilities. Accommodations should be made for parents with disabilities or who are not fluent English speakers to enable them to participate fully in the process.

Multiple Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation process shall include multiple valid, reliable indicators. The criteria used to determine whether accelerated placement is appropriate should be reasonable, e.g., helpful in assessing whether a student is ready for the accelerated placement and not whether he or she has already mastered the content at that level.

For students referred for possible whole grade acceleration, the Iowa Acceleration Scale will be utilized. For students referred for possible acceleration in an individual subject area, an above-grade-level assessment in that subject area may be recommended as part of the evaluation process.

If any assessments are utilized as part of the evaluation process:

- the instruments shall be appropriate, given the needs of the student (e.g., linguistically appropriate instruments should be used with English Learner students)
- any assessment accommodations to which the student may be entitled generally (e.g., by the terms of an IEP) shall be available during the evaluation for accelerated placement
- parents or guardians 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.

The student's desire to be accelerated shall be considered in the decision-making and transition planning process.

Notifying Parents/Guardians of the Decision is Required

A parent/legal guardian of the evaluated student shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process within sixty (60) days of the submission of the referral to the referred student's Principal. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.

A parent/legal guardian of the referred student may appeal, in writing, the decision of the evaluation team to the District Superintendent within fourteen (14) days of being notified of the initial decision. The

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Superintendent shall review the appeal and notify the parent/legal guardian of the decision within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

Communication of the Decision to Student's Educators: The decision that a student is eligible for accelerated placement shall be communicated to the student's current teacher(s) and to all teachers (including specialists) and relevant administrative personnel at the level to which the student will be accelerated, to ensure that all are informed and prepared to support the placement.

Accelerated Placement

The evaluation team shall create a written placement and transition plan for students selected for whole grade acceleration or acceleration in an individual subject area(s). The written plan will be provided to the student's parent/legal guardian. The plan will detail the type of acceleration the student will receive and the 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 or modifications the student is entitled to receive under an IEP or 504 plan shall be available in the accelerated setting.

The written plan shall provide guidance regarding how the accelerated student's transition will be monitored and by whom. It is recommended that the accelerated student's transition be evaluated no later than thirty (30) days after placement. During the transition period specified in the written plan, the accelerated student's parent/legal guardian or a school administrator may request, in writing, that the student be returned to the non-accelerated setting without consequence.

At the end of the specified transition period, the student's records will be updated to reflect the student's accelerated status. This is designed to facilitate continuous progress in future years in the same District or if the student matriculates or transfers to a different District.

State Requirements

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that accelerated students' participate in appropriate state assessments based on guidance from the State Board of Education. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that data regarding accelerated placement is collected and reported in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education.