



Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163

**Academic Acceleration  
&  
Honors Program Handbook**

Revised 7.11.19

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Policy 6:135 Accelerated Placement Program.....	3
Academic Acceleration & Honors Program Overview.....	4
Characteristics of High Achievers & Honors.....	5
Definitions and Differentiation Strategies.....	6
Early Entrance to Kindergarten and/or 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade K-3 Academic Acceleration.....	7
Honors Program.....	8
Honors Classes 4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grades & High School Course Options 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade.....	9
4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Initial Identification Flowchart for Honors Program.....	10
4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Initial Identification Flowchart for Academic Acceleration....	11
4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Review Criteria and Intervention Plan.....	12
4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Exit Procedures.....	13
Parent Referral Form.....	14-15
Teacher Referral Form.....	16-17
Appeals Form.....	18-19
District 163 Board & Honors Administration.....	20

## Policy: 135 Accelerated Placement Program

The District provides an Accelerated Placement Program (APP). The APP 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 setting 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 or first grade. Participation in the APP is open to all students who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement. It is not limited to students who have been identified as gifted and talented. Eligibility to participate in the District's APP shall not be conditioned upon the protected classifications identified in Board policy **7:10, *Equal Educational Opportunities***, or any factor other than the student's identification as an accelerated learner.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement an APP that includes:

1. Decision-making processes that are fair, equitable, and involve multiple individuals, e.g. District administrators, teachers, and school support personnel, and a student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. Notification processes that notify a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of a decision affecting a student's participation in the APP; and
3. Assessment processes that include multiple valid, reliable indicators.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify the community, parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and school personnel about the APP, the process for referring a student for possible evaluation for accelerated placement, and the methods used to determine whether a student is eligible for accelerated placement. Notification may: (a) include varied communication methods, such as student handbooks and District or school websites; and (b) be provided in multiple languages, as appropriate.

LEGAL REF.:

[105ILCS5/14A.](#)

CROSS REF.: **6:10** (Educational Philosophy and Objectives), **6:130** (Program for the Gifted), **7:10** (Equal Educational Opportunities), **7:50** (School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools)

Adopted: 06/25/2018 3:19:34 PM

Park Forest - Chicago Heights School District 163

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## **Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163 Academic Acceleration and Honors Program Overview**

Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163 is committed to meeting the needs of a diverse student body, and recognizes that academically accelerated and honors students require curricular modifications that support and expand their talents. Identified learners are offered experiences that maximize their social and intellectual development and encourage them to intensively pursue their individual talents and interests. Honors and academically accelerated students demonstrate consistently high performance in one or more core academic areas.

The following statements support this vision:

- The honors and academically accelerated student may demonstrate multiple areas of intelligence or one specific area of talent.
- An effective program requires various curricular options that meet the identified strengths of the participating students.
- Content modifications, critical and creative thinking, and authentic product-based outcomes are essential elements of a differentiated curriculum.
- Characteristics may emerge at various ages or grade levels.
- These students thrive on challenging, active, problem-solving activities that make connections within and across systems of knowledge by focusing on issues, themes, and ideas.
- The responsibility for academic development is shared by educators, students, parents, and the community.
- To meet the needs of honors and academically accelerated, the district offers these options:

Differentiated instruction within the classroom including acceleration in reading and/or mathematics

Acceleration for above grade-level students

Advanced placement in high school classes

Academic competitions

Self-contained Honors classes.

## Characteristics of High Achievers vs. Honors

*\*Characteristics include but are not limited to:*

High Achievers	Honors
❖ Knows the answers	❖ Asks the questions
❖ Has good ideas	❖ Has wild, silly ideas
❖ Works hard	❖ Plays around, yet tests well
❖ Top group	❖ Beyond the group
❖ Listens with interest	❖ Shows strong feelings & opinions
❖ 6-8 repetitions for mastery	❖ 1-2 repetitions for mastery
❖ Enjoys peers	❖ Prefers adults
❖ Is pleased with own learning	❖ Is highly self-critical
❖ Enjoys straightforward sequential presentation	❖ Thrives on complexity
❖ Works hard	❖ Draws inferences and opens up new questions
❖ Completes assignments	❖ Initiates projects
❖ Is on the honor roll	❖ Enjoys learning – but may hate school

## 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. 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.
- b. "Compacting" students demonstrate mastery over content through a "pre-test" and receive differentiated lessons or activities to pursue topics in a more in-depth manner.
- c. "Differentiation" a wide variety of teaching techniques and lesson adaptations that educator use to instruct a diverse group of students.
- 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 reevaluated prior to admission to first grade.
- e. "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.
- f. "Honors/Advanced Classes" academic classes taught at a faster pace, and that focus on developing critical thinking, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills.
- g. "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 are.
- h. "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.

## Differentiation Strategies

Differentiation strategies that could be implemented before recommending subject or grade acceleration are:

- a. Advanced Placement Classes
- b. Cluster Grouping
- c. Compacting
- d. Distance Learning
- e. Dual Enrollment Programs
- f. Flexible Skills Grouping
- g. Honors/Advanced Classes
- h. Independent Study Projects
- i. Individualized Programs in Math/Reading such as Accelerated Math
- j. Learning Contracts
- k. Literature/Socratic Circles
- l. Tiered Assignments
- m. Tiered Centers

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten and or 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

School District 163 follows Illinois law which specifies that, to enter kindergarten or first grade, children must be five years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of their kindergarten year or six years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of their first grade year. However, School District 163 allows exceptions to this law for children whose potential and skills are in the very superior range when compared to their peers.

Parents may request early entrance to kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade by following the procedures outlined below:

### **Early Entrance Procedure K or 1<sup>st</sup>**

1. Parent requests and completes "Acceleration Referral Form" by August 1<sup>st</sup>.
2. Academic acceleration team will provide assessment and triangulation of cognitive, social emotional, and academic data through the following indicators:
  - Cognitive Ability Test
  - Social Emotional Assessment
  - District created academic assessment:
  - Benchmark reading
  - Benchmark math assessment
3. Within 30 days of receiving the referral form, the team will complete the battery of assessments.
4. The team will use a decision making matrix to determine early entrance to kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
5. The team will communicate to parents the results and the placement decision.
6. Early entrance acceleration placement at the child's home school will be contingent upon available space. If placement at the accelerated grade level is unavailable, the team will develop a differentiated accelerated plan at the age appropriate grade level.

## **K-3 Academic Acceleration**

K-3 students must be in the top tier of their grade level as determined by the District Scoring Matrix. Student assessments will be given more consideration than other qualifiers on the matrix. Qualifiers include:

- ❖ Cognitive Test
- ❖ District Assessments
- ❖ Grade Point Average (GPA)
- ❖ Achievement Tests
- ❖ NWEA Map

## Honors Program

Honors students must be in the top tier of their grade level as determined by the District Scoring Matrix. Student grade point average (GPA) and performance on district assessments will be given more consideration than other qualifiers on the matrix. Qualifiers include:

- ❖ Performance on District assessments
- ❖ Grade point average (GPA)
- ❖ Classroom performance
- ❖ Teacher recommendation
- ❖ Parent recommendation
- ❖ Previous school recommendation





## Honors Classes 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grades



Dependent upon enrollment, honors classes may be offered or children will be supported through differentiated programming.

Students receive instruction in above grade level reading, mathematics, and a language arts program that includes emphasis on oral and written communication skills and the study of grammar. Other components of the program emphasize:

- ❖ Collaborative group projects
- ❖ Cooperative learning
- ❖ Creative thinking
- ❖ Distance learning
- ❖ Higher level thinking
- ❖ Inquiry based learning
- ❖ Problem based learning
- ❖ Project based learning
- ❖ Technology integrated learning
- ❖ Differentiated learning

Class activities offer experiences in individual learning, team learning and collaborative group projects.

## High School Course Options 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students who complete the accelerated course work offered within District 163 are eligible for placement in courses at Rich East High School. Courses may include Spanish, Honors Algebra and Geometry. Some courses may be offered on the Rich East high school campus. Students successfully completing these courses may be eligible for high school credit or to take the next course level at the high school when they enter. Placement tests may be given.

**4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
**Initial Identification Flowchart for Honors Program**

Students must be in the top tier of their grade level as determined by the District Scoring Matrix. Performance on District assessments will be given more consideration than other qualifiers on the matrix.

Classroom Performance

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Performance on District Administered Assessments

Previous School Recommendation

Teacher/Parent Recommendation

Cognitive Test

NWEA MAP State & Local Assessments

District Eligibility Performance Indicators

Writing Assessment

**4th - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Initial Identification Flowchart for Academic Acceleration**

Students must be in the top quartile of their grade level in a subject area as determined by the District Scoring Matrix. Performance on District assessments will be given more consideration than other qualifiers on the matrix.

Classroom Performance

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Performance on District Administered Assessments

Previous School Recommendation

Teacher/Parent Recommendation

NWEA MAP State & Local Assessments

District Eligibility Performance Indicators

Writing Assessment

## **4th – 8th Grade**

### **Review Criteria Procedure to Remain in Honors or Academic Acceleration Program**

1. Teacher will review grades, test scores and classroom performance.
2. Teacher will review District 163 Performance Indicators.
3. Student will move to next grade in program if all criteria is maintained from initial identification process.

## **4th – 8th Grade**

### **Intervention Plan for Students Experiencing Difficulty with Placement**

1. Teacher will contact parent to discuss concerns.
2. Teacher, student and parent will create a plan together for the student with strategies for intervention for 4 – 6 weeks.
3. Teacher will bring results of the plan to the team to discuss progress and alternatives if the plan is not working.
4. The intervention plan will be updated at this conference and the updated plan will be implemented for four to six weeks at which time the plan will be re-evaluated with all parties present to determine if the plan is working.
5. If improvements are made, the child will remain in their current placement.
6. Possible re-assignment to a regular education class in the home school may result as indicated by the progress of the plan. An exit meeting will be scheduled.

## **4th – 8th Grade Exit Procedures**

1. Parent, teacher and principal will meet to review student progress and determine whether student should remain in program or be transitioned to a regular classroom at their home school after an intervention plan has been implemented.
2. A meeting will be set up with the parent, the teacher and the principal.
3. Transition will be planned at an optimal time in the school calendar for the student to move to the regular classroom.
4. If a child earns a D or F for two or more quarters in mathematics or ELA they will be removed from honors/accelerated math.



**Park Forest ~ Chicago Heights School District 163**  
**Parent Referral Form for Considering Acceleration or Honors Placement**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Present School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_                      DOB \_\_\_\_\_                      Age \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Referral \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of acceleration being requested (Chose most appropriate)**

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| _____ Early entrance to kindergarten | _____ Early entrance to 1 <sup>st</sup> grade |
| _____ Grade based acceleration       | _____ Subject matter acceleration             |
| _____ Honors program placement       |   |

**Reason for acceleration referral:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Park Forest ~ Chicago Heights School District 163**  
**Parent Referral Form for Considering Acceleration or Honors Placement**

Signature of person making referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of building principal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
I give my permission to school personnel to conduct an evaluation to determine if acceleration would be appropriate for my child. I also understand that I will be informed of the results of this evaluation and will be consulted before any acceleration is implemented.

Signature of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Park Forest ~ Chicago Heights School District 163  
Teacher Referral Form for Considering Acceleration or Honors Placement**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Present School \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Referral \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of acceleration being requested (Chose most appropriate)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Early entrance to kindergarten      \_\_\_\_\_ Early entrance to 1<sup>st</sup> grade  
\_\_\_\_\_ Grade based acceleration      \_\_\_\_\_ Subject matter acceleration  
\_\_\_\_\_ Honors program placement

**Part one: General issues surrounding request**

Please give specific examples that you have observed of how this student functions at a significantly higher level to warrant this request for acceleration. In your narrative, describe each of the following and provide specific data to support your narrative; Academic performance, ability to apply, analyze, and evaluate ideas at an advanced level, ability to think creatively, motivation to work on advanced materials.

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**Part two: Interventions**

Please describe any interventions that have taken place to meet the needs of the student. For instance; curriculum compacting, differentiation, etc.

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**Park Forest ~ Chicago Heights School District 163  
Teacher Referral Form for Considering Acceleration or Honors Placement**

**Assessment information (Most current):**

OLSAT: \_\_\_\_\_ Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Nonverbal \_\_\_\_\_

Illinois Assessment for Readiness: ELA \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_

NWEA RIT Score: Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_

ESGI (kindergarten only): \_\_\_\_\_ District Math Assessment Score: \_\_\_\_\_

DRA/Lexile Level: \_\_\_\_\_ District Writing Assessment Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Point Average: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Recommendation and Implementation Plan**

**Recommendation:**

**Implementation Plan, including Timeline:**



**Park Forest ~ Chicago Heights School District 163  
Appeals Request for Gifted Service**

**The service for which the appeal is requested:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Early entrance to kindergarten      \_\_\_\_\_ Early entrance to 1<sup>st</sup> grade      \_\_\_\_\_ Grade based acceleration  
\_\_\_\_\_ Subject matter acceleration      \_\_\_\_\_ Honors program placement

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Present School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_      DOB \_\_\_\_\_      Age \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_      Alternate Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

*Please provide a rationale explaining why the student should be reconsidered for placement in gifted services. As an option, you may also submit one artifact that represents the student's academic ability to aid the committee in its process. Appropriate artifacts to support the rationale may include but are not limited to documentation of outside work, an award/recognition from an outside activity or a letter of support from a coach or activity leader.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*The Appeals Committee will consider this information as it reviews additional data, which may include classroom performance and other historical data from assessments.*

As signified by my signature, I certify that the information provided accurately represents the student and that I will honor the placement decision of the Appeals Committee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



**Park Forest ~ Chicago Heights School District 163  
Appeals Request for Gifted Service**

**Appeal Committee Decision**

## **Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163**

### **Board of Education**

Tammi Davis, President

Allison R. McCray, Vice President

Judy Hawthorne, Secretary

Christina Dupee, Assistant Secretary

Lance L. Jefferson, Board Member

Margaret McDannel, Board Member

Randall White, Board Member

### **Administrative Staff**

Dr. Caletha White, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Erika Johnson, Director of Instructional Services & Grants

### **Academic Acceleration-Honors Committee**

Dr. Regina Nottke, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Lori Colbert, Principal & Director of District Honors Program

Valerie Valente, Principal of Michelle Obama School of Technology & the Arts

Danielle Gladstone, Curriculum Coach