

Abingdon-Avon CUSD #276 District Acceleration Policy

It is the belief of Abingdon-Avon CUSD #276 that all students will be challenged and receive support based upon their individual levels of ability. 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 policy describes the process that shall 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 policy 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, English language proficiency or socioeconomic background.

1. 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 demonstrated 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. *“Early entrance to kindergarten” is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will no yet be five years old by September 1 of that school year.*
- c. *“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.*
- d. *“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 areas.*

- e. *“Whole grade acceleration” is the practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical given the students age on a full-time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.*

2. Publication of Acceleration Policy and Referral Procedures/Forms

- a. *Copies of this policy and 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.*
- b. *The Principal (or his or her designee) of each school building shall ensure that all staff he or she supervises are aware of procedures for referring students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement.*

3. Initiation of Evaluation Process

- a. *Referral Procedures*
 - i. *Referrers: Any student residing in the district may be referred by a CUSD #276 teacher, administrator, parent or legal guardian of the student to the Principal for evaluation for possible accelerated placement.*
 - ii. *Referral Intake Form: The referrer shall complete the appropriate section (parent or CUSD #276 teacher/administrator) of the referral form and submit it to the Principal. The Principal shall then forward the referral form to the appropriate individuals so that the remaining sections may be completed within 14 days. The submission of the referral intake form by the initial referrer starts the clock on the sixty (30) day evaluation process.*
- b. *Written Parental Consent: The principal of the referred student’s school shall obtain written permission from the student’s parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement. Consent is presumed when the individual referring the student for evaluation is a student’s parent or 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.*
- c. *Timeline:*
 - i. *Students residing in the district who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement during the school year shall receive a determination within (30) days.*
 - ii. *Students residing in the district who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement prior to the school year shall be placed in their designated grade. The timeline for evaluation will begin with the first day of student attendance, and the student will remain in their designated*

grade until the the evaluation is completed an a determination for acceleration has been approved.

- 4. Evaluation Process: The policy 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.*
 - a. Multiple Evaluators/Decision Makers*
 - i. A diverse evaluation team shall consist of multiple participants and may include any or all of the following:*
 - 1. Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s)*
 - 2. Principal*
 - 3. Teacher(s) of student being evaluated*
 - 4. Speech Pathologist*
 - 5. Reading Specialist*
 - 6. School Counselor*
 - ii. A parents or 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.*
 - b. Multiple Evaluation Criteria*
 - i. The evaluation process shall include multiple valid, reliable indicators. for students referred for possible whole grade acceleration, the Iowa Acceleration Scale will be used, as well as above-grade level assessment. in order for the evaluation team to determine appropriate placement, three data points will be collected (See Early Entrance Assessment Grids and Acceleration Rubric).*
 - ii. When any assessments are utilized as part of the evaluation process: A) the Instruments shall be appropriate given the needs of the student (e.g., linguistically appropriate instruments shall be used with English Language Learners); B) 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; and C) parents or guardians shall be notified about any assessments that will be conducted as part of the evaluation at the time that they are asked to consent in writing to the evaluation pursuant to Section 3(b).*
 - iii. The student's desire to be accelerated shall be considered in the decision-making and transition planning process.*

c. Decision Process

- i. Once the three data points have been gathered, a school based committee of involved stakeholders will gather to make determinations regarding services that are in the best interests of the student. During this meeting, the information gathered during the evaluation phase will be reviewed and scored and/or analyzed.*
- ii. A parent or legal guardian of the evaluated student shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process within thirty (30) days of the submission of the referral by the school's Principal. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.*
- iii. A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may appeal in writing the decision of the evaluation team to the local Superintendent within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's shall review the appeal and notify the parent or legal guardian who filed the appeal of his or her final decision with thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final. However, the student may be referred and evaluated again at the next available opportunity by a person eligible to make referrals as named in this policy.*

- d. 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.*

5. Accelerated Placement

- a. The evaluation team shall develop a written placement and transition plan for whole grade acceleration or content area acceleration. The written plan will be provided to the student's parents or guardians and will detail the type of acceleration the student will receive and strategies to be used to support the student to facilitate a successful transition to the accelerated setting. any accommodations or modifications the student is entitled to receive as part of an IEP or 504 plan shall be available in the accelerated setting.*
 - b. The 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 or guardian may request in writing that the student be returned to the non-accelerated setting without penalty.*
- C. At the end of the specified transition period, the student's records will be*

Updated to reflect the student's accelerated status.

6. State Requirements

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