

## **IAGC Model Acceleration Policy**

*NOTE: Italicized portions of the document denote the components of the Model Acceleration Policy that are required by the Illinois Accelerated Placement Act, Public Act 100-0421.*

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The District 300 Board of Education believes that all students should be challenged and supported based upon their individual needs in order to develop their full potential. This belief is supported by the District's commitment to provide both enrichment and acceleration options for students.

### **Definitions**

*“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.*

*“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.*

*“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.*

*“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.*

*“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.*

### **Publication of Acceleration Policy and Referral Procedures/Forms**

*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.*

### **Initiation of Evaluation Process**

#### **Referral Procedures**

Referrers: Any student in grade 3 or above residing in the district may be referred by school personnel, or

legal guardian of the student to the Principal for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. In primary grade levels (K-2) student acceleration needs will be addressed through classroom based enrichment activities provided by the district.

#### Referral Intake Form:

The referrer shall complete 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. The submission of the referral intake form by the initial referrer starts the clock on the thirty (30) calendar day evaluation process.

Parental Consent is obtained via the referral form when the individual referring the student for evaluation is a student's parent or legal guardian. In the event the referral is made by school personnel, the school principal shall obtain written consent. 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.

For students returning to the district, evaluation requests should be made in the fourth quarter of the previous school year, and the student shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year in order to start 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 completed within 30 calendar days of the referral. Placement in the accelerated setting shall be made for the current school year, if the referral is made within the first quarter. For all referrals submitted after the first quarter and approved for acceleration, student acceleration would not begin until the start of the next school year.

Evaluation Process: The team 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.

#### Multiple Evaluators/Decision Makers

*A diverse evaluation team shall consist of multiple participants. Recommended team members include:*

1. Principal/assistant principal from the student's current school
2. Most current teacher of that student
3. School psychologist and/or school social worker
4. District level administrator

*A parent or legal guardian of the student shall be invited to participate in the evaluation process*

#### Multiple Evaluation Criteria

*The evaluation process shall include multiple valid, reliable indicators.*

For students referred for possible acceleration in an individual subject area, multiple assessments will be utilized, including, but not limited to: iReady diagnostic, iStation diagnostic, Devereax Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA), and available district and state assessments.

For students referred for possible whole grade acceleration, in addition to the assessments listed for individual subject area acceleration (above) the team will also use of the The Cognitive Abilities Test (**CogAT**), a multiple-choice K-12 assessment that measures reasoning skills with different types of verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal questions.

If 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 should be used with English Learner students); 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.

#### *Procedures for Notifying Parents/Guardians of the Decision*

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 request for consideration to the school principal. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.

A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may appeal in writing the decision of the evaluation team, outlining the specific reasons for the appeal, to the local Superintendent or designee within thirty (30) days of being notified of the committee's decision. The Superintendent or designee shall review the appeal and notify the parent or legal guardian who filed the appeal of his or her final decision within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Superintendent or designee shall be final. However, the student may be referred and evaluated again at the next available opportunity if he or she is again referred for evaluation by an individual eligible to make referrals as described in this policy.

For appeals related to either grade level or subject area acceleration, the team will consider additional assessment options, as applicable.

#### **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. 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 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.

For students in grades 3 and 4, who have been approved for subject-area acceleration, they will be placed in a classroom in the next sequential grade level to meet their academic needs. For students in grade 5, their services will be met by a building-based interventionist or literacy specialist.

The accelerated student's parent or guardian may request in writing that the student be returned to the

non-accelerated setting without penalty.

**State Requirements**

The Superintendent or his or her designee shall ensure that accelerated students participate in appropriate state assessments based on guidance from the State Board of Education. 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.