Grade Acceleration

“Grade Skipping or Double Promotion”

Austin Public School District #492

Policy and Procedure Guide

Submit Requests by April 1st

Decisions will be made and communicated by June 15th
Austin Public School’s Mission Statement

Engaging and Empowering ALL Learners for Life!

Austin Public School Board Policy

EARLY ENTRANCE AND GRADE ACCELERATION #535

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for the consideration of early entrance for students in kindergarten and grade acceleration for students in grades 1-8.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The school board will allow early school entrance and grade acceleration. The following steps will be followed prior to the school district’s decision regarding each individual student case.

A. Early Entrance

Students who have met the criteria set by the Austin Public Schools will be allowed to enter kindergarten early. The decision made by the administration shall be final.

B. Grade Acceleration

Students who have met the criteria set by the Austin Public Schools will be allowed to accelerate.

Grade Acceleration

It is the procedure of the Austin Public Schools to allow grade acceleration providing that the elementary and middle school student meets the following criteria:

1. The parent initiates the request with the building principal in whose attendance area the child resides. All requests should be submitted by April 1. Parents will be notified regarding the dispensation of the request no later than June 15.
2. The building principal will arrange a meeting with himself/herself, the parent, the student’s teacher(s), the central office designee and, if applicable, the building principal of the next level.
3. The purpose of the meeting will be to gather data regarding the student’s current achievement and abilities. It may be necessary to request further testing in order to make a decision. If that is the case, the parent is responsible for any costs incurred in this process.
4. After all necessary data has been collected the building principal, teacher(s), and the central office designee will make a decision as to whether the student shall be accelerated. The building principal is responsible for communicating the decision to the parent.
5. If the student meets the criteria set by the district, it will be necessary for the student to demonstrate competencies of the grade level(s) that will be missed.
Questions?

If you have any questions about the process for grade acceleration, please contact:

- **District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education:**
  Mrs. Edwina Harder
  507-460-1924
  401 3rd Ave. NW, Austin, MN  55912 (Austin High School)
  edwina.harder@austin.k12.mn.us

- **K-8 Principals**
  Woodson Kindergarten Center, Mrs. Jill Rollie  507-460-1400
  Banfield Elementary School, Mr. Jeff Roland  507-460-1200
  Neveln Elementary School, Mr. David Wolff  507-460-1600
  Southgate Elementary School, Mrs. Katie Baskin  507-460-1300
  Sumner Elementary School, Mrs. Sheila Berger  507-460-1100
  I.J. Holton Intermediate School, Mr. Dewey Schara 507-460-1525
  Ellis Middle School, Mrs. Jessica Cabeen  507-460-1500

- **Para Español al Success Coach**
  Woodson Kindergarten Center  507-460-1404
  Banfield Elementary School  507-460-1213
  Neveln Elementary School  507-460-1605
  Southgate Elementary School  507-460-1303
  Sumner Elementary School  507-460-1103
  I.J. Holton Intermediate School  507-460-1529
  Ellis Middle School  507-460-1515
Research Regarding Grade Acceleration

- Based on a meta-analysis of 32 studies on grade acceleration [grade skipping], Karen Rogers calculated the overall effect size [additional year's growth] of grade acceleration is 0.56 academically, 0.31 socially, and 0.10 Esteem.
- Rogers also found that students that were grade accelerated were more likely to make friends, probably because the older students have similar interests and are slightly more mature socially.
- Grade accelerated students did not lose confidence in themselves even though they had to work a little harder to compete with their classmates.
- Rogers noted research by Tom Southern and Eric Jones in 1991 that said that school personnel were more likely than parents to believe that grade acceleration was detrimental to a gifted child's development even though the research consistently showed the benefits for gifted children.

Grade Acceleration Requirements

Based on the work of Karen Rogers in Re-Forming Gifted Education, candidates who will likely benefit from grade acceleration:

- Are processing and achieving well beyond grade level peers in a specific academic area [Cognitive Functioning]
  - Score well on ability tests [>130], are 2+ years ahead on achievement test grade-equivalent scores, are frustrated with slow pace of regular classroom instruction at current grade level
- Are self-directed, independent, and motivated to learn [Personal Characteristics]
  - Are independent in thought and action, persist in assigned and self-selected tasks, enjoy school and learning, and are socially mature
- Prefer to work at own pace, though not necessarily alone [Learning Preferences]
  - Prefer fast-paced, challenging learning experiences, enjoy self-instructional materials for learning, enjoy working with small groups of like-ability learners
- Like academic work as well as time to pursue more school studies outside of school time [Interests]
  - Have wide-ranging interests, are actively involved in a variety of activities and hobbies outside of school

Grade Acceleration Checklist

Austin Public School District #492 uses the criteria and procedures of The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition: A Guide for Whole-grade Acceleration K-8 to determine candidacy for grade acceleration. The
Iowa Acceleration Scale is authored by professors at the Belin & Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. The IAS-3 gives an objective look at various aspects of the student while analyzing major factors that need to be considered when making a decision about grade acceleration. Each section has a numerical value which are added together to find a final score. The score becomes the primary guideline for predicting how successful the student will be as a candidate for grade acceleration.

Submit Student Background Information for Grade Acceleration

Submit the Student Background Information Form [attached] and all required supplemental materials to the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education by April 1st of the year. Submit in person, mail, or email.

Edwina Harder, District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education
507-460-1924
401 3rd Ave. NW (Austin High School)
Austin, MN  55912
edwina.harder@austin.k12.mn.us

Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement Assessments

Once the student information and supplemental materials are reviewed, the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education and/or the Gifted and Talented Interventionist at the site will review data from ability, aptitude, and achievement assessments. If the data is not available, the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education and/or the Gifted and Talented Interventionist will schedule and administer the assessment. The subtotal of the three numerical values must be greater than or equal to 10 to continue with the Child Study Team Meeting.

The assessments used may include, but are not limited to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Purpose for Assessment</th>
<th>Tools Commonly used in APS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Measures what a child CAN DO</td>
<td>Cognitive Ability Test [CogAT]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptitude</td>
<td>Measures what a child CAN LEARN</td>
<td>Scantron Performance Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mondo Benchmark Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Battery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXPLORE Test [not provided by APS]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Measures what a child IS DOING</td>
<td>Scantron Performance Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mondo Benchmark Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scores from the assessments will be shared in Percentile Rank [PR] or Standard Age Score [SAS]. The average PR is 50 and average SAS is 100.
**Child Study Team Meeting**

The Child Study Team includes, but is not limited to, the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education, Principal(s) of the current and possible incoming schools, current and possible incoming classroom teachers, current and possible incoming Gifted and Talented Interventionists, and the parents of the child.

The Child Study Team will review the three assessment results and discuss potential problems that an accelerated student may have by examining school-related issues. Problems in these areas may indicate potential difficulties or obstacles that could hamper the success of whole grade acceleration.

The Child Study Team will be led by the District Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education. The leaders’ role is to guide the team to reach a consensus on each discussion item and calculate the sum of the numerical values.

At the end of the meeting, the leader will calculate the sum of the numerical values including all topics of discussion. The grand total of the IAS-3 will be interpreted as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Numerical Value</th>
<th>IAS-3 Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-80 total value</td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong> candidate for grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-59 total value</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong> candidate for grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-45 total value</td>
<td><strong>Marginal</strong> candidate for grade acceleration. There is no clear recommendation – consider subject-acceleration alternatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 or fewer total value</td>
<td>Grade acceleration is <strong>NOT recommended</strong> – consider subject-acceleration, enrichments, mentoring, or other alternatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IAS-3 Critical Factors**
The Iowa Acceleration Scale lists four critical factors which warn teachers and parents that in certain situations grade acceleration is not recommended:

1. Child’s ability score is less than 115.
2. The child would move up into the same grade as an older sibling. [Sibling rivalry and self-esteem could go down]
3. The child is currently in the same grade as a sibling. [Sibling rivalry and self-esteem could go down].
4. The child does not want to be grade accelerated.

**Student Background Information**

Attached to the Grade Acceleration Policy and Procedure Guide are the Student Background Information Sheets. This document provides important information about your child’s readiness for grade acceleration. Please submit this document along with the supplemental materials to the address listed previously.

**Supplemental Materials to Submit**

1. Letter of support from the parents/guardian outlining why the child should be considered for grade acceleration
2. IF NEEDED, the parents may be asked to provide a psychologist’s recommendation based on achievement and ability testing. If asked for this evaluation, the parents are responsible for all costs incurred to secure the recommendation. Parents will need to sign a release of information form for the results of the testing to be sent to the school district.
## Student Background Information ~ Grade Acceleration

### Student Name

### Student Address

### Family Phone Number  Alternative Phone Number[s]

### Current School Name

### Current School Address

### Current School Phone Number  Number of Years at Current School

### Current Grade

### Current Age [Years and Months]  Student Birthdate [Month/Day/Year]

## Family Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siblings’ Name</th>
<th>Sibling’s Age</th>
<th>Sibling’s School Grade</th>
<th>Sibling’s Current School Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*If you need space for additional siblings, please attach a separate sheet of paper.*

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**Professional Evaluation Services**
If the student has received a formal professional evaluation [example: from a psychologist, social worker, or learning specialist] for a disability or disorder, please complete the chart below. Note: Disclosure of a disability will not disqualify a child from Grade Acceleration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Details: Specific Type, Date of Diagnosis, Special Education Services Received, Additional Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability:</td>
<td>[example: Written Language, Math, Reading, Nonverbal]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental:</td>
<td>[example: Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-NOS]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment:</td>
<td>[example: ADD, ADHD]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Emotional/Psychiatric:</td>
<td>[example: Depression, Bipolar Disorder, OCD, ODD]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical:</td>
<td>[example: Visual, Hearing, Motor, Traumatic Injury]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Not Listed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please share any additional information that you feel important: