

**EARLY KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE,
ACCELERATION, AND GRADE SKIPPING**

1.0 Acceleration. The District recognizes that some children may benefit academically, socially and/or emotionally from accelerating and/or grade skipping. Students may be granted early entrance into kindergarten and accelerated in District academic programs as provided in this policy.

2.0 Kindergarten Early Entrance for Highly Advanced Gifted Children. A highly advanced gifted child is a gifted child whose body of evidence demonstrates a profile of exceptional ability or potential compared to same-age gifted children. The following procedures will be followed to determine whether a highly advanced gifted child who is age four should be enrolled in kindergarten prior to the age requirement established in Superintendent Policy 5230.

2.1 A parent living within District boundaries will initiate the evaluation process by submitting an application to the District Gifted and Talented Department between December 1 and March 1 of the school year prior to which fall enrollment is desired. Beyond the testing window, applications will be handled on a case by case basis if personnel are available to administer the screening process, but no applications will be considered beyond August 1. The application can be obtained from the District Gifted and Talented Department or any District elementary school office. The process will involve a nominal fee to cover the cost of testing materials and personnel time to administer the process. This fee may be waived for families that qualify for free/reduced lunch programs.

2.2 The Gifted and Talented Department will contact the parent/guardian to set up a screening appointment. This appointment will be approximately three hours in length and will involve a small group of children being considered for gifted and talented kindergarten and/or kindergarten early entrance.

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2.3 The children will spend approximately three hours with a committee of GT and/or preschool professionals going through the various instruments to gather data on the child. At the conclusion of the screening, if the child's body of evidence indicates performance on nationally normed assessments at the 98th percentile or higher, the team will set up an individual appointment with the child for IQ testing with a District licensed psychologist.

2.4 Once all testing is concluded, the committee will compile a report of data/portfolio on the child. The data/portfolio shall include the following information:

2.4.1 Aptitude – This is typically quantified in an IQ type of assessment. As a part of the early entrance application process, this will be administered by a District licensed psychologist.

2.4.2 Achievement – Data will be gathered through a screening process that involves the use of assessments such as the Test of Early Math Ability (TEMA), Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA), and cognitive screening instruments. A child's performance must be at the 98th percentile or higher for consideration.

2.4.3 Performance – Parents and preschool teachers (as appropriate) will be asked to complete a Likert Scale Inventory that addresses many of the child's abilities and characteristics.

2.4.4 Readiness, social behavior and motivation – The Kindergarten Readiness Test will be administered as part of the screening process.

2.4.5 Support systems – The Iowa Acceleration Scale will be used for data collection as appropriate.

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2.5 The Gifted and Talented Director will utilize the portfolio of data to determine whether the child should be enrolled in kindergarten through early entrance. A copy of the report of all assessment will be mailed out to the family. All reports will go out by April 30. A copy of the assessment report will be kept in the student's cumulative file and in the student's District GT file.

2.6 Following the mailing of reports, parents will have 30 days to express disagreement with the decision to the District's Director of Gifted and Talented Education. The Director will review the data and any additional information the parent submits for consideration to determine if the decision should be reconsidered. The Director shall issue a ruling within 15 days following receipt of all information provided by or requested from the parent.

2.7 A parent/guardian who disagrees with the Director's decision shall be informed of the appeal process described in Section 5.0.

3.0 Acceleration/Grade Skipping Grades K-5. Acceleration and/or grade skipping in grades K-5 shall be based upon the professional judgment of a review committee whose composition will be the child's classroom teacher, the GT building coordinator, the school principal, the parents, and any other school personnel the school principal deems appropriate.

3.1 The following procedures will be followed to determine whether a student in grades K-5 shall be accelerated in their academic program:

3.1.1 A parent or teacher may initiate the evaluation process by submitting a written request for review to the building principal. The principal may also initiate a review following a referral by a staff member. The principal shall gather relevant data and meet with the student's parent to discuss whether the child is likely to qualify as gifted/talented following

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formal evaluation. If both parent and principal agree that formal evaluation is warranted, the gifted and talented building coordinator will contact the Gifted and Talented Department at the District to obtain the Iowa Acceleration Scale to begin organizing the student's data.

3.1.2 The building coordinator will work with the parents and classroom teacher to complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale on the student in consideration.

3.1.3 The review committee, consisting of principal, gifted and talented building coordinator, parents, teacher, and Gifted and Talented Director or his/her designee will meet to review the data and determine if the child is a good candidate for acceleration.

3.1.4 The committee shall consider the following criteria:

3.1.4.1 Academic achievement – The following are examples of areas that may be considered: the child is functioning above grade level in most academic areas; has scores at the 85th percentile or higher on District standardized tests for the end of their designated grade level; has passed over 80% of the grade level objectives at the beginning of the school year; has a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

3.1.4.2 Attendance – The child has a history of strong, regular attendance.

3.1.4.3 Attitude toward acceleration – The child's and parents' attitudes toward acceleration have been considered.

3.1.4.4 Intelligence – The child has been found to operate above the normal range of intelligence. The child should have

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been identified as gifted and talented through the District identification process.

3.1.4.5 Maturity – The child is generally mature for his/her age and is comfortable and successful in interactions with older children.

It is recognized that few children will meet all of the above criteria; however, the greater the number of criteria present, the more advisable the acceleration. The District will utilize the Iowa Acceleration Scale to help to organize the data into qualifiable and quantifiable criteria for consideration.

3.1.5 A decision will be made by the Director based on the data and support of the committee for the child's acceleration. If the decision is made to accelerate the student, the team will design a transition plan and set appropriate dates for the acceleration to take place. The parent/guardian shall be provided a written copy of the decision and a copy shall be placed in the child's cumulative records and District GT file.

3.2 A parent/guardian who disagrees with the Director's decision shall be informed of the appeal process described in Section 5.0.

4.0 Acceleration/Grade Skipping. Students in grades 6-12 will be permitted to enroll in courses targeted for students in higher grade levels when supported by the student's record of academic achievement. Students who satisfy the District's graduation requirements may be graduated prior to the completion of four years of high school.

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5.0 Appeal Process.

5.1 The parents shall submit a written request for a hearing to the Executive Director of Schools. The request shall identify any items of noncompliance with this policy and the reasons why the Director's decision should be modified or changed.

5.2 A hearing shall be held by the Executive Director of Schools to review the Director's recommendation for acceleration. The parent/guardian, principal, teacher, building coordinator and Director may be asked to attend.

5.3 The parent/guardian will be informed in writing of the decision of the Executive Director of Schools.

5.4 If the recommendation is NOT to accelerate the child and the parent/guardian objects, the Executive Director of Schools will forward his/her recommendation to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services. The Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services may gather such information from the Director of Gifted/Talented education and from the parent/guardian as s/he deems appropriate. The decision of the Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services shall be final.

CROSS REFERENCES:

Code: 5230