

Administrative Procedures for Policy 640

ACCELERATION OF STUDENTS

- I **Background:** Several forms of acceleration currently exist in St. Louis Park Public Schools. They include early school entrance, grade-skipping, single-subject acceleration, taking courses at another institution, and early graduation. One connotation of acceleration implies completion of the K-12 program in less than 13 years, while another connotation means earlier introduction and use of curriculum content and materials.

Both varieties of acceleration should remain as acceptable alternatives in the district's attempts to provide each student with the optimal opportunity of succeeding in school.

Any acceleration decision should be approached on a case-by-case basis with careful consideration. Those involved in the decision should follow the process outlined in Section II below.

II **Decision-making**

A. **Initiation:** The process for considering a student for acceleration may be initiated by the student, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), or a staff member by completing the attached form and submitting it to the student's current principal.

B. **Decision-making Process (K-6 Grade Level Acceleration):**

1. When the principal receives a completed request for acceleration, he/she shall convene an ad hoc acceleration committee composed of the principal, the child's past and current teachers, the gifted/talented coordinator/resource teacher, the school psychologist, counselor, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), and the receiving principal, if applicable.
2. The acceleration committee should also involve personnel from other levels (i.e. junior or senior high) in an attempt to ascertain the potential "ripple" effect of acceleration. Acceleration at one level will influence curriculum at other grade levels. It is crucial for adequate articulation that those making such decisions discuss them with staff members from the grade levels that will be affected. This is true whether the acceleration is "skipping" a grade or a single subject's content.
3. The acceleration committee shall meet to gather information about the student, determine a process for gathering further information it deems necessary to have, and reconvene to reach a timely decision.
4. Those involved in acceleration decisions must consider carefully the questions, which follow. Specific answers or minimum standards are not proposed. Each question should be examined and answered in a way favorable to the student's school success before acceleration is recommended.
 - a. How would you describe the student's emotional adjustment and stability?
 - b. Are the student's emotional patterns and responses appropriate for acceleration?
 - c. How would you describe the student's social maturity?
 - d. What are the characteristics of the student's friends? At what grade level are friends?
 - e. What are the parents' feelings about acceleration?
 - f. Are you aware of the student's aptitudes, intellectual ability, special talents, and achievements?
 - g. Are any curriculum enrichment possibilities available or feasible?
 - h. How will acceleration benefit the student?
 - i. Of what importance, if any, is the student's physical maturation?
 - j. What impact might acceleration have on the student's self-concept and motivation?
 - k. What will be the "ripple" effect of acceleration at other educational levels? How do we plan for it?
 - l. How does the student handle:
 - 1). decision-making
 - 2). change
 - 3). advanced content
 - 4). stress
 - m. What is the child's reading ability? What kind of material does he/she choose to read?

- n. What is the child's motivation to succeed?
 - o. How will acceleration impact the student's time?
 - p. What is the probable impact of acceleration on the student's movement through the Minnesota academic standards?
 - q. What are the possible negative ramifications of a decision to accelerate?
 - r. Does the student demonstrate a high degree of persistence?
5. The committee shall make a decision for one of the following:
- a. single subject acceleration
 - b. whole grade acceleration

B. Decision-making Process (Secondary Level Acceleration):

- 1. In the case of single subject acceleration at junior high level, a committee consisting of learning team, parent, teacher, gifted/talented resource teacher and/or dean will convene to discuss student need, describe possible options, assign testing, or collect former assessment results. The committee will reconvene in a timely manner to move forward or maintain current student status.
- 2. In the case of whole grade acceleration at junior high level, a committee consisting of principal, parent, teacher, gifted/talented resource teacher and/or dean will convene to discuss student need, describe possible options, assign testing, or collect former assessment results. The committee will reconvene in a timely manner to move forward or maintain current student status.
- 3. Students entering the high school in the 9th grade may apply to be accepted into an accelerated program that includes Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science classes. Scores on standardized tests, a writing sample, and teacher recommendations help select the students who can be successful in this program. Beyond that program, many honors, advanced, and Advanced Placement courses are available to high school students. In addition, there are PSEO, Credit for Learning, and IB (starting in 2001-02) opportunities. Students must meet criteria for specific programs.

C. Parameters:

- 1. In all cases of whole grade acceleration in grades K-8, a student shall only advance one grade at a time.
- 2. In all cases of whole grade acceleration, application shall be made no later than January 31 of the current academic year for fall placement of the next school year.
- 3. If a student is new to the district and potentially eligible for acceleration, time lines may be waived as deemed necessary.

III Follow-up

- A. Acceleration shall be done on a trial basis for the first quarter/trimester after the decision to accelerate is made.
- B. The coordinator for gifted/talented shall serve as a case manager for the accelerated student and provide a mentor for him/her.
- C. Within one month after acceleration begins, vested staff will meet at least once with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) to monitor the student's emotional, social, and intellectual progress in the new environment. This group will recommend continuance or abandonment of the acceleration.
- D. When the accelerated student reaches the secondary schools, he/she will be assigned to the counselor for gifted/talented.