

Acceleration Procedures

Missoula County Public Schools supports **Content Based Acceleration, Grade Based Acceleration, and Early Access to School** as appropriate interventions for providing accelerated, challenging educational opportunities for advanced learners. When a student qualifies for one of the three forms of **Acceleration** outlined below, grade level or content teams, in conjunction with the student and family, will draft an individual plan outlining effective strategies to address the student's individual learning needs. The plan will include specific steps to implement the identified strategies. Many forms of **Acceleration** can and do happen in the general education classroom. However, it may be necessary to go beyond these forms of **Acceleration**. Plans will be updated annually through the student's graduation or more often as needed. Forms of **Acceleration** include:

- **Content Based Acceleration** strategies provide the student with advanced content, skills or understandings beyond what is typical for their age and/or grade.
- **Grade Based Acceleration** strategies allow the student to be placed in a higher grade level on a full-time (or part time) basis to provide access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
- **Early Access to School** allows the student to begin kindergarten when their 5th birthday occurs after September 10th.

Implementation Guidelines for Acceleration Procedures

A student who needs **Acceleration** beyond typical classroom acceleration may be referred for acceleration consideration by a teacher or other staff member, a parent or they may advocate for themselves. Readiness for Content Based Acceleration, Grade Based Acceleration, or Early Access to School (with academic acceleration) will be evaluated using the **Iowa Acceleration Scale: A Guide for Whole-Grade Acceleration K-8** (3rd Edition, Complete Kit), Author(s): Susan G. Assouline, Ph.D., Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D., Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D., Jonathan Lipscomb, Ph.D., Leslie Forstadt, Ph.D.

Content Based Acceleration

Content Based Acceleration provides the student advanced content, skills or understandings beyond what is typical for their age and/or grade. The student typically remains with peers of the same age and grade but at times during the day works at a higher grade level, in their own classroom or another classroom.

Forms of Content Based Acceleration may include:

- **Single-subject acceleration**
 - The student typically remains in the assigned grade level but at times during the day may be placed in another classroom where advanced materials and instruction will be provided.
- **Curriculum compacting**

- The student's instruction involves reduced amounts of introductory activities and follow-up activities as determined by pre-tests. The time gained may then be used for more advanced content instruction or to participate in enrichment activities.
- **Concurrent/Dual Enrollment**
 - The student takes a course at one level and receives credit at a higher level.
- **Distance Learning**
 - The student is enrolled in advanced level courses delivered online or in a blended learning format.
- **Mentoring**
 - The student is paired with a mentor or expert tutor who provides advanced or more rapid pacing of instruction. Course credit may be an option.
- **Advanced Placement**
 - The student takes an Advanced Placement course (traditionally in high school) with a specific examination that may confer college credit upon matriculation to college/university.
- **International Baccalaureate**
 - Although International Baccalaureate is appropriate for a wide range of learners, the student qualifying for acceleration may participate in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program or complete individual IB classes, taking the corresponding university-level curricula. At the end of each IB course, the student completes an international examination which may confer advanced standing and college credit upon matriculation to college or university.

Grade-based Acceleration

Grade-based acceleration typically shortens the number of years a student spends in the K-12 system. In practice, a student is placed on a full-time basis in a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

Forms of *Grade Based Acceleration* include:

- **Early Access to School**
 - *Early Access to Kindergarten* –The student enters kindergarten prior to achieving the minimum age for school entry as determined by the State of Montana. (See **Guidelines for Early Access to School** for specific information about this strategy.)
 - *Early Access to First Grade* – The student may skip kindergarten and be enrolled into first grade or an enrolled kindergarten student may be accelerated into first grade. (See **Guidelines for Early Access to School** for specific information about this strategy.)
- **Whole-grade Acceleration**
 - The student is considered to have been whole-grade accelerated ("grade skipped") if he or she is given a grade-level placement ahead of his/her chronological-age. Whole-grade acceleration may be done at the beginning of or during the school year.
- **Partial-grade Acceleration**

- The student participates in some but not all academic content activities in a higher grade level ahead of his/her chronological-age. This dual assignment may continue or the team may determine that the student is ready for Whole-grade Acceleration.
- **Continuous progress**
 - The student is given content progressively as prior content is completed and mastered. The practice is accelerative when the student's progress exceeds the performance of chronological-age peers at a rate and level which is controlled by the student.
- **Self-paced instruction**
 - The student proceeds through learning and instruction activities at a self-selected pace. Self-paced instruction serves as a substitute for regular class assignments.
- **Telescoping curriculum**
 - The student completes instruction in less time than normal (three years of curriculum in two). Telescoping differs from curriculum compacting in that time saved from telescoping always results in advanced grade placement.
- **Multi-aged classrooms**
 - Although multi-aged classrooms are not specifically designed for acceleration, this placement can allow younger students to interact academically and socially with older peers. It may or may not result in an advanced grade placement.
- **Early entrance into middle school, high school, or college**
 - The student receives an advanced level of instruction at least one year ahead of normal. This may be achieved along with other accelerative techniques such as dual enrollment and credit by examination or by determination of college teachers and administrators.
- **Early graduation**
 - The student graduates from high school or college in three-and-a-half years or less. Generally, this is accomplished by increasing the amount of coursework undertaken each year in high school typically through dual/concurrent enrollment or extracurricular and online learning.

Cross Reference:

BP2000 Goals

BP2166 Gifted Program