

WLS Acceleration Policy

All children learn and experience success given time and opportunity, but the degree to which academic content standards are met and the time it takes to reach the standards vary from student to student. The West Liberty-Salem School District Board of Education believes that all students, including advance learners, should be challenged and supported to reach their full potential. For many advanced learners, this can best be achieved by affording them access to curriculum, learning environments, and instructional interventions more commonly provided to older peers.

This policy describes the process that shall be used for identifying and evaluating students for possible accelerated placement: students who should be granted early entrance to kindergarten, promoted to a higher grade level than their same-age peers, accelerated in one or more individual subject areas, and granted early graduation from high school.

Definitions:

Early Entrance to Kindergarten: The practice of admitting a student to kindergarten who has not yet reached the typical age at which students are admitted to kindergarten for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

Whole-Grade Acceleration: 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.

Individual Subject Acceleration: The practice of assigning a student to a higher level than is typical given the student's age for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.

Early High School Graduation: The practice of facilitating completion of the high school program in fewer than four years for the purpose of beginning post high school career path.

A. Referral Process

1. Any student residing in the district may be referred by a teacher, administrator, gifted education specialist, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or a parent or legal guardian of the student to the principal of his or her school for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. A student may refer himself or herself or a peer through a district staff member who has knowledge of the referral process.
2. Copies of this policy and referral forms for evaluation for possible early entrance to kindergarten, whole-grade acceleration, individual subject acceleration, and early high school graduation should be made available to district staff and parents at each school building. The principal of each building (or his or her designee) shall solicit referrals of students for possible accelerated placement annually, and ensure that all staff he or she supervises is aware of procedures for referring students for accelerated placement.
3. The principal (or his or her designee) of the referred student's school shall obtain written permission from the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to evaluate the student for possible accelerated placement. 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.
4. The referred student's principal (or his or her designee) shall convene an Acceleration Evaluation Committee (AEC) within 30 days upon receipt of the signed parental referral/permission for acceleration form to determine the eligibility and appropriate placement based on the data collected. The AEC will also determine the timeline for whole grade or subject acceleration and/or appropriate placement. This committee shall be comprised of the following:
 - a) A principal or assistant principal from the child's current school and a principal (or designee) from the child's receiving school;
 - b) A current teacher and/or teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated of the referred student (with the exception of students referred for possible early entrance to kindergarten unless the child is in a pre-school program);

- c) A parent or legal guardian of the referred student or a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian of the referred student;
- d) A gifted education coordinator or gifted intervention specialist;
- e) A school psychologist (optional);
- f) A guidance counselor (optional);
- g) Student (optional).

5. Pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code 3321.01, all children who will be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall be evaluated upon the request of the child's parent or legal guardian. Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall also be evaluated for possible early entrance if referred by parent/guardian, an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
6. The AEC will convene and use an ODE approved acceleration placement process. The parent or legal guardian of the evaluated student shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process within 90 days of the submission of the referral to the referred student's principal. The notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.
7. A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may appeal in writing the decision of the AEC to the local Superintendent within 30 days of being notified of the committee's decision. The Superintendent shall review the appeal and notify the parent or legal guardian who filed the appeal of his or her final decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final. However, the student may be referred and evaluated again 60 days prior to the start of the next school year.

B. Acceleration Evaluation Process and Committee responsibilities

1. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee shall conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the student using the Iowa Acceleration Scale, Third Edition (IAS) for early entrance, whole grade and a modified version of subject acceleration. The IAS will not be used for Early High School Graduation.
2. Students considered for early entrance to kindergarten shall be evaluated using the IAS, Third Edition, parent interview and possible readiness checklist. If readiness skills indicate possible acceleration the gifted coordinator and school psychologist will test the student.
3. Students considered for whole grade or subject acceleration shall be evaluated using a variety of data sources, including Ohio Achievement Tests, nationally normed tests and/or out of level tests and consideration of the student's maturity and desire for accelerated placement. The committee shall consider the student's own thoughts on possible accelerated placement in its deliberations.
4. Students referred for possible early high school graduation shall be evaluated on past academic performance, the Ohio Graduation Test, and successful completion of state mandated graduation requirements. The committee shall consider the student's own thoughts on possible acceleration in its deliberations.
5. The AEC shall issue written decision to the principal and the student's parent or guardian based on the outcome of the evaluation process. If a consensus recommendation cannot be reached by the committee, a decision regarding whether or not to accelerate the student will be determined by a majority voter of the committee membership.
6. The AEC shall develop a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) for students who will be admitted early to kindergarten, whole-grade accelerated, or accelerated in one or more subject areas. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student shall be provided with a copy of the WAP. The WAP shall specify:

- a) placement of student in an accelerated setting;
 - b) strategies to support successful transition to the accelerated setting;
 - c) requirements and procedures for earning high school credit prior to entering high school (if applicable); and
 - d) a nine-week transition period for accelerated placement for early entrance to kindergarten, grade-level accelerated students, and students accelerated in individual content areas.
7. For students whom the Acceleration Evaluation Committee recommends for early high school graduation, the committee shall develop a WAP designed to allow the student to complete graduation requirements on an accelerated basis. This may include the provision of educational options in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 3301-06 (G), waiving district prerequisite requirements for enrolling in advanced courses, waiving district graduation requirements that exceed those required by the state, and early promotion to sophomore (or higher) status to allow the student to take the Ohio Graduation Test.
 8. The AEC shall designate a school staff member to ensure successful implementation of the WAP and to monitor the adjustment of the student to the accelerated setting.

C. Accelerated Placement

1. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee specifies a nine-week transition period determined by the team for accelerated placement for early entrants to kindergarten, grade-level accelerated students, and students accelerated in individual subject areas.
 - a) At any time during the transition period, a parent or legal guardian of the student may request in writing that the student be withdrawn from accelerated placement. In such cases, the principal shall remove the student without repercussions from the accelerated placement.
 - b) At any time during the transition period, a teacher, parent or legal guardian of the accelerated student may request in writing to have the AEC reconvene to re-evaluate the accelerated placement.
2. At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement shall become permanent. The student's records shall be modified accordingly, and the acceleration implementation plan shall become part of the student's permanent record to facilitate continuous progress through the curriculum.