

Procedural Guidance: Grade Level Acceleration K-8

Charter School Institute Schools may choose to adopt a formal board policy for grade level acceleration or may follow written procedures that align to this guidance document. Required components include the Iowa Acceleration Scale process with body of evidence collection, review team recommendations for determination, and a documented process for appeal. School specific roles may be amended.

Grade Level Acceleration and/or grade skipping in grades K-8 shall be based upon the professional judgment of a review committee whose composition will be the child's Classroom Teacher, the school's Gifted Education Lead, the Dean of Students, the Parents, and any other school personnel the Head of School deems appropriate. Grade acceleration of students shall be used sparingly; therefore, a student will not be accelerated past a grade level unless evidence clearly indicates that acceleration would be in the best interest of the student. A student who is grade accelerated will be one whose needs cannot be met in his or her present placement.

Many sources of information and data (also known as "a body of evidence") will be used for decision-making and may include an observation period, teacher-made and/or standardized assessments, input from the counselor, and/or interview(s) with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). A preponderance of evidence must indicate that the student has mastered current standards across at most content areas and the new placement is the most appropriate academic environment. In all cases, the Iowa Acceleration Scale process will be applied, and the results will serve as the primary evidence when considering acceleration. The Iowa Acceleration Scale is a tool designed to provide a structured format to guide a child study team in the discussion and decision about the type of acceleration that might be most appropriate for a given student. It has been used in every state and in several countries.

The following procedures will be followed to determine whether a student in grades K-8 shall be accelerated in their academic program:

- A Parent or Teacher may initiate the evaluation process by submitting a written request for review to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students may also initiate a review following a referral by a staff member.
- The Dean of Students shall gather relevant data and meet with the student's Parent and school's Gifted Education Lead to discuss whether the child is likely to qualify as gifted/talented following formal evaluation. If both Parent and Dean of Students agree that formal evaluation is warranted, the Gifted Education Lead will contact the Charter School Institute to obtain the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) to begin compiling the student's data.
- The Gifted Education Lead will work with the Parents and Classroom Teacher to complete the IAS on the student in consideration.
- The review committee, consisting of Dean of Students, Gifted Education Lead, Parents, and Classroom Teacher will meet to review the data and determine if the student is a good candidate for acceleration. The review committee shall consider the following criteria:
 - Academic achievement – The student is functioning above grade level in most academic areas.
 - Attendance – The student has a history of strong, regular attendance. Excused absences related to a student's documented health need or disability will not be used to disqualify a student from grade level acceleration.

- Attitude toward acceleration – The student’s and parents’ attitudes toward acceleration have been considered.
- Intelligence – The student has been found to operate above the normal range of intelligence. The student meets statewide criteria for gifted identification.
- Maturity – The student is generally mature for his/her age and is comfortable and successful in interactions with older children.

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

- A decision will be made by the Dean of Students based on the data and support of the review committee for the student’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 within 60 days of completion of all testing and a copy shall be placed in the student’s cumulative records.
- A Parent/Guardian who disagrees with the Dean of Student’s decision shall be informed of the school’s grievance policy and may appeal to Head of School.