

A GUIDE TO WHOLE GRADE ACCELERATION

Definition:

Grade acceleration usually refers to the placement of a student in a grade ahead of where s/he would be according to his/her chronological age.

Customarily, the student has been identified as TAG, and is one for whom flexible grouping, curriculum extension, and single subject acceleration appear not to meet his/her **very advanced level and rate of academic learning**.

Guidelines:

Grade acceleration decisions are based on a comprehensive look at the whole child and should follow these guidelines:

- The student should be intellectually gifted and/or academically advanced.
- Current achievement should be above the mean for the intended target grade.
- Developmental factors are considered (e.g. birth date, physical size, motor coordination)
- Interpersonal skills are considered (e.g. emotional development, behavior, relationship with peers and teachers, non-school extracurricular activities, leadership roles)
- Social and emotional variables (age of siblings, support for grade acceleration within the family, student self-concept, careful consideration of age differences with grade-mates in high school...)
- Factor in student history (e.g. attendance, motivation, physical health)
- The student should desire advancement independently of parental preference
- When possible, involve the receiving teacher(s)/school.
- Grade acceleration should be at transition points (e.g. beginning or end of the school year)

Psychological Issues:

The best educational placements consider additional factors:

- interactions with others
- ability to easily cope with frustration
- the demand for strong interpersonal skills
- one's attitude toward self as a learner
- concerns about sensitivity to criticism
- the attitude of the new grade or school about grade acceleration
- the impact on an older sibling who will be in the same grade as a younger sibling
- the placement of one age-mate sibling in a higher grade level than the other age-mate

Process:

Anyone who seeks grade acceleration for a student must begin the conversation as a team at the school. This should include parent/s, teacher/s, the principal and any other school staff. The school team meets initially and completes all but the final section of the application. If the school team believes grade acceleration may be appropriate for a student, the school must make a request to the TAG office to begin assessment, and observation. A TAG TOSA will schedule, administer, and score the assessments.

The TAG office will make a recommendation to the school team based on cognitive and academic readiness. After this is complete, as a final stage, the school team should meet again briefly to complete the final section of the application which documents the placement decision. A complete application is necessary.

Timing:

Grade Acceleration studies will be conducted in a **Fall/Spring window**.

Parent/Guardian Right to Appeal:

Parents have a right to appeal the decision. This appeal will need to begin at the school, with the principal. If the school needs additional support, a TAG TOSA will be available.