

501.4R1 GRADE PLACEMENT - ADMIN REGSAdministrative Regulations

Whole Grade Acceleration of Students in Grades K-8

Occasionally there is a request to consider whole-grade acceleration for a student. MCSD Board Policy 501.4 states, "Students will only be promoted at the beginning and ending of school Years unless there are extenuating circumstances. The principal shall determine the grade in which the student shall be classified." [LJ1] These guidelines are intended to help the principal determine the best grade.

Whole-grade acceleration is an important and potentially difficult issue. Established guidelines are needed to help parents and educators make appropriate decisions. There is substantial evidence to support whole-grade acceleration as an effective intervention for many gifted students, but there is little information available to help parents and educators determine when a child is ready and when that intervention is necessary (Iowa Acceleration Scale).

Performance on ability and achievement assessments is an important indicator in whole-grade acceleration decisions. Students should demonstrate academic skill levels that would place them in the upper range of students in the grade into which they would be accelerated. Although it is not expected that student will know all of the skills necessary in the new setting, there does need to be evidence that they are able to learn quickly. Providing specific skill training to meet gaps that may result from whole grade acceleration may be necessary.[LJ2]

Procedures:

A written request from the student, parents or school personnel is to be directed to the building principal. In order to plan appropriately the request should be no less than three months before such acceleration would take place. For example, a request should be made in the spring for consideration of acceleration in the fall.

The principal (or designee) will assemble a team consisting of principal (or designee), parent(s) and current classroom teacher(s). Other members may include a guidance counselor, receiving teacher, ELP/G-T teacher, Director of Special Programs, and others deemed appropriate by administration. The student will be involved when appropriate. Written input may be requested of others. It is important that one member be familiar with the Iowa Acceleration Scale, second edition (IAS).

The team will complete the Iowa Acceleration Scale. They must reach consensus on the most appropriate response for each item. Scores will be recorded in the IAS Summary and Planning Record. This will be the guideline for discussion on whole-grade acceleration.

The team will make a formal recommendation to the building principal. This recommendation will be recorded in the IAS Summary and Planning Record. All team members must indicate in writing his or her agreement or disagreement with the team's conclusion and sign.

The administrator who is responsible for the ultimate decision must sign the record before the plan can go into effect.

If whole-grade acceleration is recommended, the team will complete a step-by-step implementation plan, a transition plan, and a monitoring plan. This will be kept with the IAS Summary and Planning Record.

The IAS Summary and Planning Record will be kept in the student's school file.

The decision may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools.

The guidelines apply only to students in grades K-8. The high school program allows for acceleration in a variety of ways. For example, AP courses, college-level early entry programs, course offerings at MCC and carrying a heavier course load are possibilities for high school students.