

Acceleration Policy Talent Development Services Program La Grange District 102

The Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 100-0421) was signed into Illinois law on August 25, 2017 and took effect July 1, 2018.

This Accelerated Placement Act (APA) requires Illinois public school districts to adopt and implement policies on acceleration that, at a minimum, provide opportunities for early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, opportunities for accelerating a student in a single subject area, and opportunities for “whole grade” acceleration (sometimes referred to as “grade skipping”).

In accordance with the APA, La Grange District 102 adopted a policy and has drafted a procedure and timelines related to accelerated placements and student placement reviews. Detailed information related to the procedures and timelines can be found in this document.

The placement review stated in the *Acceleration Service Identification Protocol* is explained through the procedure outlined in the La Grange District 102 Acceleration Policy. **Because acceleration is typically considered a high stakes decision, a preponderance of evidence that suggests a student’s profile is beyond what a differentiated core experience can offer him/her is required to recommend an accelerated placement.**

There is a lot of **important information** here regarding the district’s Acceleration Policy. If you have questions after reading this document, please contact xxxxxxxxxxxx (emailaddress.org)

More information on the accelerated opportunities within La Grange District 102’s Talent Development Services Program can be found on our homepage.

*To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it.
-Mother Teresa*

Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 100-0421)

La Grange District 102 Acceleration Policy Placement Review Summary

Because acceleration is typically considered a high stakes decision, a preponderance of evidence that suggests a student's profile is beyond what a differentiated core experience can offer him/her is required to recommend an accelerated placement.

- **Referral Form is completed by teacher/staff member or a parent or legal guardian (of the student).**
- **Referral Form is submitted to the Principal.**
- **An initial data review is conducted.**
- **Within fifteen (15) school days, the referrer will receive a summary of the findings from the initial review – including decision regarding a comprehensive evaluation. The school's Talent Development Services Program teacher manages the initial data review.**
- **If an evaluation is deemed appropriate, a school team will complete it within sixty (60) school days.**
**Refer to Section III.4 for referrals after May 1st*
- **A meeting is scheduled with parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) to review the results of the comprehensive evaluation, and determine if eligibility for an accelerated placement is appropriate.**
- **When acceleration is recommended, an appropriate date and transition plan is established.**
- **Appeals of the decision are submitted to the Principal.**

Note: Written consent from a parent/guardian is required prior to any assessment date being collected.

La Grange District 102 Accelerated Placement Program Policy - 6:135

Adopted by the La Grange District 102 School Board on October 25, 2018

The District provides an Accelerated Placement Program (APP). The APP advances the District's goal of providing educational programs with opportunities for each student to develop to his or her maximum potential. The APP provides an educational setting with curriculum options usually reserved for students who are older or in higher grades than the student participating in the APP. APP options include, but may not be limited to: (a) accelerating a student in a single subject; (b) other grade-level acceleration; and (c) early entrance to kindergarten or first grade. Participation in the APP is open to all students who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement. It is not limited to students who have been identified as gifted and talented. Eligibility to participate in the District's APP shall not be conditioned upon the protected classifications identified in Board policy [7:10](#), *Equal Educational Opportunities*, or any factor other than the student's identification as an accelerated learner.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement an APP that includes:

1. Decision-making processes that are fair, equitable, and involve multiple individuals, e.g. District administrators, teachers, and school support personnel, and a student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. Notification processes that notify a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of a decision affecting a student's participation in the APP; and
3. Assessment processes that include multiple valid, reliable indicators.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify the community, parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and school personnel about the APP, the process for referring a student for possible evaluation for accelerated placement, and the methods used to determine whether a student is eligible for accelerated placement. Notification may: (a) include varied communication methods, such as student handbooks and District or school websites; and (b) be provided in multiple languages, as appropriate.

LEGAL REF.:

[105 ILCS 5/14A](#).

CROSS REF.: [6:10](#) (Educational Philosophy and Objectives), [6:130](#) (Program for the Gifted), [7:10](#) (Equal Educational Opportunities), [7:50](#) (School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools)

Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 100-0421)

La Grange District 102 Acceleration Policy Procedures and Timeline

The La Grange District 102 Board of Education believes that all students across the achievement spectrum are subject to high expectations for their achievement and quality instruction, so we must meet students “where they are.” For some students needing a higher level of instruction, this can best be achieved by affording them access to curricula and learning environments more commonly provided to older students. The outlined procedures here align with the Accelerated Placement Act and School Board Policy 6:135.

Described here is the process that shall be used for evaluating students for possible accelerated placement and identifying students who should be granted early admission to kindergarten, early admission to first grade, accelerated in one or more individual subject areas, or promoted to a higher grade level than their same-age peers. Recognizing that high ability is found in populations, the policy shall be applied equitably and systematically by La Grange School District 102 to all students referred for acceleration.

Because of special education’s successful history of providing services for students, their procedures and timelines were referenced to help frame the acceleration policy. As stated above, La Grange District 102 is committed to providing curriculum and instruction commensurate with student achievement levels and needs.

I. Definitions

1. **“Accelerated placement”** is defined as the placement of a student at the instructional level that best matches that student’s needs by allowing access to a curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the student. Accelerated placement options must include, but need not be limited to, early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, individual subject acceleration, and whole grade acceleration.

Accelerated placement is not limited to those students who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all students who demonstrate high ability and who might benefit from accelerated placement. Eligibility for accelerated placement shall also be open to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, English language proficiency, or socioeconomic status.

2. **“Early entrance to kindergarten”** is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will not yet be five years old by September 1 of that school year; or admitted

prior to the dates established in the School Code based upon an assessment of his/her readiness to attend school.

3. **“Early entrance to first grade”** is the admission of a student to first grade who is assessed for readiness, attended a non-public preschool and continued his/her education at that school through kindergarten, was taught by an appropriately certified teacher, and will attain the age of six years old on or before December 31; **OR** is admitted prior to the dates established in the School Code based upon an assessment of his/her readiness to attend school.

(Note: Students who are younger than six upon starting first grade, but successfully completed an accredited kindergarten, do not need to be reevaluated prior to admission to first grade.)

4. **“Whole grade acceleration”** is 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. Commonly referred to as skipping a grade, grade acceleration might be done at the beginning of or during the school year.
5. **“Individual subject acceleration”** is the practice of assigning a student to specific content at a higher instructional level than is typical given the student’s grade for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas. It may be accomplished by either: (a) physically moving the student to a higher level class for instruction; or (b) using higher level curricular or study materials in the student’s current classroom.

II. Publication of Acceleration Policy and Referral Procedures/Forms

1. Annual notification of the district’s Accelerated Placement Program will be shared by the Superintendent (or his/her designee) with district staff and parents/guardians. Copies of the La Grange District 102 Acceleration Policy, procedures, and referral forms (used for evaluation for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, whole grade acceleration, and individual subject acceleration), shall be made available to district staff and parents at each school building and shall be published on the school district website.
2. The Principal (or Assistant Principal) of each school building shall accept referrals of students for evaluation for possible accelerated placement annually, and ensure that all staff he or she supervises are aware of the procedures for referring students for evaluation for a possible accelerated placement.

III. Initiation of Evaluation Process

Referral Procedures

1. **Referrers:** A teacher/staff member, administrator, Talent Development Services Program teacher, school psychologist, or a parent or legal guardian (of the student) may refer any student residing in La Grange District 102 to the Principal for evaluation for possible accelerated placement. A student may refer himself or herself through a district staff member who has knowledge of the referred student's abilities.
2. **Referral Intake Form:** The referrer shall complete the appropriate section of the referral form according to his/her role (e.g., parent/teacher/administrator) and submit it to the Principal at the student's school. The Principal shall then forward the referral form to the Talent Development Services Program teacher and/or Instructional Coach, so that an initial review of the placement request can be conducted to determine if a comprehensive placement review is deemed appropriate. The Talent Development Services Program teacher will manage the initial data review.

The initial data review shall be conducted within fifteen (15) school days. The purpose of the initial data review is to determine whether a comprehensive evaluation is warranted. At the conclusion of the initial data review, the referrer will receive a summary of the findings.

The submission of the completed referral intake form by the initial referrer initiates the sixty (60) school day evaluation process.

3. **Written Consent:** If La Grange District 102 deems an evaluation is appropriate, the Principal 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. Consent is presumed when the individual referring the student for evaluation is a student's parent or legal guardian and submits a signed placement review form. 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. **Timeline:** Students residing in La Grange District 102 who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement during the school year shall receive a determination within sixty (60) school days after the referral intake form is completed, and the evaluation for possible accelerated placement is recommended.

In the event there are less than sixty (60) school days left in a school year, the remaining days of the evaluation process will be completed the following school year.

Students who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement after May 1st, including (but not limited to) students transferring into La Grange District 102, shall be evaluated at the start of the new school year. The sixty (60) school day evaluation cycle will begin on the first student attendance day.

(Note: If the members of the school's team can be contacted during the summer, the referral intake form may be submitted prior to the start of the new school year.)

When the decision is an accelerated placement, the Principal, along with his or her team, will determine an appropriate date and transition plan for an accelerated placement.

IV. Evaluation Process

1. The policy must utilize a fair and equitable decision-making evaluation process that involves multiple persons and includes input from the student's parents or guardians. It will be nondiscriminatory and follow policy 7:10, *Equal Educational Opportunities*. This multiple person evaluation team is responsible for gathering relevant, reliable, and comprehensive data in order to determine a student's appropriate placement.

The initial data review that precedes an evaluation will target, but not be limited to:

- observation of the student,
- relevant student work samples,
- standardized ability and achievement profiles,
- teacher input, and
- the parent/guardian commentary included in the referral intake form.

The evaluation team is convened by the Principal (or his/her designee.) Team members might include: Principal/Assistant Principal, Talent Development Services Program Teacher, Instructional Coach, Current Teacher, School Psychologist, and/or Social Worker. **Although the initial data review and comprehensive evaluation are conducted at the school, the Talent Development Services Program Coordinator may serve as a consult.**

A parent or legal guardian of the student shall be invited to participate in the evaluation process by providing information from any individual (including outside persons/institutions) who is knowledgeable about the student's academic abilities.

The “team” should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to: identify appropriate assessment instruments, administer said instruments, and interpret the instruments’ results during the evaluation. Standardized and norm-referenced measures should be included in the suite of assessments used.

Because the appropriateness of an accelerated placement is being determined, above level assessments and learning tasks will be included.

The components anticipated to be administered and/or reviewed during the evaluation shall be compiled in a written document to be shared with the referrer.

2. The evaluation process shall include multiple valid, reliable indicators. The criteria used to determine whether accelerated placement is appropriate should be relevant to the subject matter and expectations of the accelerated placement. In the event of whole grade acceleration, the Iowa Acceleration Scale will be used to guide discussions and the final decision.

For students referred for possible acceleration in an individual subject area, above-level assessment in that subject area will be used as part of the evaluation process. The student’s desire to be accelerated shall be considered in the decision-making and transition planning process.

Any assessment tools and procedures utilized in the evaluation process:

- a.) shall be appropriate given the needs of the student (e.g., linguistically appropriate instruments should be used with English Learner students);
- b.) shall align with a student’s IEP or 504 plan;
- c.) shall be communicated with parents at the time that they are asked to consent in writing to the evaluation pursuant to “*Section II: Initiation of Evaluation Process.*”

3. The Principal (or his/her designee) will schedule a meeting with parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) to review the results of the evaluation and determine if eligibility for an accelerated placement is appropriate. (The written notice of eligibility will be provided to parent(s)/guardian(s) within the timeline detailed in this policy.)

The Talent Development Services Program Teacher shall communicate the decision that a student is eligible for an accelerated placement to all school personnel directly involved in the new placement. He/she will ensure that all are informed, prepared to support the placement, and are aware of the transition date and plan. The student’s records will be updated to reflect the student’s accelerated status.

A parent or legal guardian of the referred student may appeal in writing the decision of the evaluation team to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) school days of being notified of the school team'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 thirty (30) school days of receiving the appeal.

The Superintendent's decision shall be final. However, an eligible referrer may submit a new referral form after 90 (ninety) school days.

V. Accelerated Placement Plan (Whole Grade Acceleration)

1. The school's evaluation team shall draft a written placement and transition plan for students selected for whole grade acceleration or acceleration in an individual subject area. The written plan will be provided to the student's parents or legal guardians. It will detail the type of acceleration recommended for the student and strategies to be used to support the student to facilitate a successful transition to the accelerated setting during a transition period specified in the written plan. Any accommodations or modifications the student is entitled to receive under an IEP or 504 plan shall be available in the accelerated setting.
2. The policy shall provide guidance regarding how the accelerated student's (especially whole grade acceleration) transition will be monitored and by whom. It is recommended that the accelerated student's transition be monitored and evaluated with a final placement determination made no later than thirty (30) school days after the new placement. During the transition period specified in the written plan, the accelerated student's parent or guardian may request in writing that the student be returned to the non-accelerated setting without penalty.

VI. State Requirements

1. The Superintendent (or his or her designee) shall ensure that accelerated students participate in appropriate state assessments based on guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education.
2. The Superintendent (or his or her designee) shall ensure that data regarding accelerated placement is collected and reported in accordance with rules adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Full text <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=100-0421>

Drafted: June 15, 2018, Revised June 1, 2019

La Grange District 102 Acceleration Policy
Placement Review Responsibilities

Aspect	Who is Responsible
Referral of the Student	Anyone who is aware of a student's academic profile, including families, staff, and individual students
Receiving Referral Form	Principal
Initial Data Review Manager	Talent Development Teacher/Instructional Coach
Consent for Evaluation	Parent or Guardian
Convene School Evaluation Team	Principal (or designee)
Conduct Evaluation	Evaluation Team
Schedule Evaluation Meeting	Principal (or designee)
Accelerated Placement Communication	Talent Development Teacher
Review Appeals	Superintendent

*The Talent Development Services Program Coordinator is available for consult.