

## Acceleration Procedures

Missoula County Public Schools supports **Content Based Acceleration**, **Grade Based Acceleration**, and **Early Access to School** as appropriate interventions for providing accelerated, challenging educational opportunities for advanced learners. When a student qualifies for one of the three forms of **Acceleration** outlined below, grade level or content teams, in conjunction with the student and family, will draft an individual plan outlining effective strategies to address the student's individual learning needs. The plan will include specific steps to implement the identified strategies. Many forms of **Acceleration** can and do happen in the general education classroom. However, it may be necessary to go beyond these forms of **Acceleration**. Plans will be updated annually through the student's graduation or more often as needed. Forms of **Acceleration** include:

- **Content Based Acceleration** strategies provide the student with advanced content, skills or understandings beyond what is typical for their age and/or grade.
- **Grade Based Acceleration** strategies allow the student to be placed in a higher grade level on a full-time (or part time) basis to provide access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
- **Early Access to School** allows the student to begin kindergarten when their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs after September 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Implementation Guidelines for Acceleration Procedures

A student who needs **Acceleration** beyond typical classroom acceleration may be referred for acceleration consideration by a teacher or other staff member, a parent or they may advocate for themselves. Readiness for Content Based Acceleration, Grade Based Acceleration, or Early Access to School (with academic acceleration) will be evaluated using the **Iowa Acceleration Scale: A Guide for Whole-Grade Acceleration K-8** (3rd Edition, Complete Kit), Author(s): Susan G. Assouline, Ph.D., Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D., Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D., Jonathan Lipscomb, Ph.D., Leslie Forstadt, Ph.D.

#### ***Content Based Acceleration***

Content Based Acceleration provides the student advanced content, skills or understandings beyond what is typical for their age and/or grade. The student typically remains with peers of the same age and grade but at times during the day works at a higher grade level, in their own classroom or another classroom.

#### **Forms of *Content Based Acceleration* may include:**

- **Single-subject acceleration**
  - The student typically remains in the assigned grade level but at times during the day may be placed in another classroom where advanced materials and instruction will be provided.

- **Curriculum compacting**
  - The student’s instruction involves reduced amounts of introductory activities and follow-up activities as determined by pre-tests. The time gained may then be used for more advanced content instruction or to participate in enrichment activities.
- **Concurrent/Dual Enrollment**
  - The student takes a course at one level and receives credit at a higher level.
- **Distance Learning**
  - The student is enrolled in advanced level courses delivered online or in a blended learning format.
- **Mentoring**
  - The student is paired with a mentor or expert tutor who provides advanced or more rapid pacing of instruction. Course credit may be an option.
- **Advanced Placement**
  - The student takes an Advanced Placement course (traditionally in high school) with a specific examination that may confer college credit upon matriculation to college/university.
- **International Baccalaureate**
  - Although International Baccalaureate is appropriate for a wide range of learners, the student qualifying for acceleration may participate in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program or complete individual IB classes, taking the corresponding university-level curricula. At the end of each IB course, the student completes an international examination which may confer advanced standing and college credit upon matriculation to college or university.

***Grade-based Acceleration***

Grade-based acceleration typically shortens the number of years a student spends in the K-12 system. In practice, a student is placed on a full-time basis in a higher grade level than is typical given the student’s age for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

**Forms of *Grade Based Acceleration* include:**

- **Early Access to School**
  - *Early Access to Kindergarten* –The student enters kindergarten prior to achieving the minimum age for school entry as determined by the State of Montana. (See ***Guidelines for Early Access to School*** for specific information about this strategy.)
  - *Early Access to First Grade* – The student may skip kindergarten and be enrolled into first grade or an enrolled kindergarten student may be accelerated into first grade. (See ***Guidelines for Early Access to School*** for specific information about this strategy.)
- **Whole-grade Acceleration**
  - The student is considered to have been whole-grade accelerated (“grade skipped”) if he or she is given a grade-level placement ahead of his/her chronological-age. Whole-grade acceleration may be done at the beginning of or during the school year.

- **Partial-grade Acceleration**
  - The student participates in some but not all academic content activities in a higher grade level ahead of his/her chronological-age. This dual assignment may continue or the team may determine that the student is ready for Whole-grade Acceleration.
- **Continuous progress**
  - The student is given content progressively as prior content is completed and mastered. The practice is accelerative when the student's progress exceeds the performance of chronological-age peers at a rate and level which is controlled by the student.
- **Self-paced instruction**
  - The student proceeds through learning and instruction activities at a self-selected pace. Self-paced instruction serves as a substitute for regular class assignments.
- **Telescoping curriculum**
  - The student completes instruction in less time than normal (three years of curriculum in two). Telescoping differs from curriculum compacting in that time saved from telescoping always results in advanced grade placement.
- **Multi-aged classrooms**
  - Although multi-aged classrooms are not specifically designed for acceleration, this placement can allow younger students to interact academically and socially with older peers. It may or may not result in an advanced grade placement.
- **Early entrance into middle school, high school, or college**
  - The student receives an advanced level of instruction at least one year ahead of normal. This may be achieved along with other accelerative techniques such as dual enrollment and credit by examination or by determination of college teachers and administrators.
- **Early graduation**
  - The student graduates from high school or college in three-and-a-half years or less. Generally, this is accomplished by increasing the amount of coursework undertaken each year in high school typically through dual/concurrent enrollment or extracurricular and online learning.

Cross Reference:  
BP2000 Goals  
BP2166 Gifted Program

## INSTRUCTION

### Goals

The District shall provide an equal opportunity for all students to receive an education designed to enable each to fulfill his/her optimum role in society, commensurate with individual ability, in compliance with legal requirements and reflecting the desires of the people.

The instructional programs, methods and resources shall be designed to meet the needs of each individual student, regardless of race, color, creed, sex or level of ability. The District recognizes that equal opportunity education does not imply uniformity and that each student's unique characteristics must be acknowledged.

The instructional programs, methods and materials shall be based upon respect of others and not imply, teach or encourage any beliefs or practices reflecting bias or discrimination toward other individuals or groups based upon race, ethnicity, religion, sex, creed, age, or national origin, and shall not deny others their basic human rights.

The District will strive to develop and implement programs consistent with District vision, mission, and the following skills and knowledge students are expected to learn.

Students are expected to:

1. Read, write, compute and communicate effectively
2. Know how to access, evaluate and use information
3. Think creatively and critically
4. Solve problems cooperatively and individually
5. Use technology effectively
6. Recognize and develop their talents
7. Respect themselves and the rights and property of others
8. Appreciate world events, history, and cultural diversity
9. Understand, appreciate, and practice a healthy lifestyle
10. Be committed to active citizenship and community service
11. Continue to learn, grow and adapt to a rapidly changing job market, and world.

These student expectations shall be publicized and made available to all interested citizens. The Board of Trustees shall annually review and revise the district vision, mission, student expectations. They shall annually develop strategic goals that will guide the staff in the development and implementation of the instructional curriculum.

Legal Reference      10.55.701.                      ARM, Board of Trustees

### Policy History:

Adopted on: January 14, 2003

**INSTRUCTION**

Gifted Program

The term "gifted and talented" refers to children of outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance and require differentiated educational programs beyond those typically offered in public schools in order to fully achieve their potential contribution to self and society. The children so identified include those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability.

The Missoula County Public School District shall serve all students K-12 identified as gifted and talented. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to provide school-based, district-wide gifted services which:

- Sustain procedures for identifying students of demonstrated achievement or potential in terms of general intellectual ability and academic aptitude.
- Provide appropriate academic, social and emotional services, and interventions for gifted students as dictated by current best practices in the field of Gifted Education.  
*Reads: (Provide appropriate academic, social and emotional services, and interventions for gifted students as dictated by current best practices in the field of Gifted Education.)*
- Develop and implement guidelines ensuring student needs are met as they transition from one grade level to another and one building to another.
- Include training and materials related to identification and best practices in the field of Gifted Education for district staff and families of identified gifted students.
- Identify, utilize and involve parent and community resources to expand opportunities for gifted students.
- Monitor and evaluate stated goals and objectives regularly.

Legal References:	§ 20-7-901 through 904, MCA	Gifted and talented children
	10.55.804, ARM	Gifted and talented

Policy History:

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Approved at Second Reading: October 25, 2016