

Acceleration occurs when academic opportunities are provided that allow students to proceed more rapidly through the usual progression of required skills and objectives for a given grade level or course of study, to work above the assigned grade level, and/or to complete studies at an earlier age.

The staff will support individual learners with acceleration opportunities when student performance demonstrates need. The School Based Committee for Gifted Education will conduct a thorough review of the student's classroom performance, work samples, grades over time and other portfolio evidence. The School Based Committee may recommend the student for content acceleration. The recommendation of the School Based Committee shall be presented to the parents and principal for approval.

In grades 6-8, the State Board of Education allows students to receive graduation credit for high school mathematics, second language, science, and social studies courses, as well as English I, taken while the students are in middle school. Students must achieve level III or IV on an EOC, if available, to meet that high school graduation requirement. High school courses taken in middle school will count toward graduation requirements, but the students' GPA will be computed with courses taken during the high school years only. Advancing or placing out of a particular course in a high school may award a credit toward high school graduation. Credits for high school graduation are based on approved instructional experiences, group or individual, in grades 9 through 12 or through approved experiences at off-campus institutions. See State Board Policy GCS-M-001.

**A. Differentiated Learning Opportunities**

- 1. Students shall be provided appropriate instruction that is differentiated to meet the varied needs, interests, and learning styles of students.
- 2. Teachers consult with the school's Academically Gifted Resource Teacher and the School Based Committee for Gifted Education for support with gifted learners.

**B. Recommended forms of Accelerative Practice include:**

- 1. Early Entrance to Kindergarten
- 2. Whole Grade Advancement
- 3. Curriculum Compacting
- 4. Grade Telescoping
- 5. Subject Area Acceleration
- 6. Cross-Grade Grouping
- 7. Concurrent Enrollment for Content Area Needs
- 8. Advanced Placement
- 9. Mentorship
- 10. NC Virtual Public School
- 11. High school credit at the middle school level
- 12. Dual Enrollment
- 13. Early high school graduation and admission to college

Academic acceleration is an empirically validated educational intervention for high-ability students (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004). The National Association for Gifted Children defines acceleration (NAGC, 2004) as “allowing a student to move through traditional educational organizations more rapidly, based on readiness and motivation” (p. 1).

Acceleration and academic advancement allows any student to work above the assigned grade level, and/or to complete studies at an earlier age. WCPSS students may be nominated for participation in an accelerative practice by a parent, teacher, or themselves. Acceleration opportunities are provided for any K-12 student who meets the requirements while enrolled and attending a school in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS). Students are considered for accelerative opportunities regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, any specific individual or program identification, disability status, socioeconomic status, and/or English language proficiency, meeting the requirements. Participation in a school's gifted program is not a prerequisite for consideration of any student for acceleration.

Students nominated for acceleration shall meet the criteria for acceleration as established by the guidelines set forth by the Local Education Agency (LEA). Time frame, and data, needed will be detailed within the WCPSS AIG plan. The SBCGE, not individuals, should make acceleration decisions based upon student data compiled at the school site. Membership in the School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE) includes staff members representative of core content areas and grade levels at the school as well as a school administrator and other school professionals as needed. A full description of SBCGE and membership is included in the AIG Parent Guide and AIG plan.

Based upon student data collected, the SBCGE may recommend the student for Content-based or Grade-based Acceleration. The recommendation of the School Based Committee for Gifted Education shall be presented to the parent/guardian and principal for approval. Any appeal to an accelerative practice decision should follow the Procedures to Resolve Disagreements as outlined in the AIG Parent Guide.

Per State Board of Education policy (GCS-M-001) only students in grades 6-8 are allowed to receive graduation credit for high school mathematics, second language, science, and social studies courses, as well as English 1, taken while a student is in middle school. The student must achieve a level III or level IV on an EOC, if available, to meet the high school graduation requirement. High school courses taken in middle school may count toward graduation requirements, but the grade earned will not be computed in the student's Grade Point Average (GPA). Credits for high school graduation are based on approved instructional experiences, group or individual in grades 9 through 12.

#### **A. Differentiated Learning Opportunities**

1. Any student demonstrating need should be provided appropriate, differentiated instruction to meet the varied needs, interests, and learning styles of that individual student.
2. Teachers should consult with the school's Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Teacher or AIG Coordinating Teacher along with the SBCGE or school committee to support gifted and/or highly capable learners.
3. There are two categories for acceleration; Content-based and Grade-based. The distinguishing feature between the two categories is whether the accelerative intervention shortens the number of years that a student spends in the K-12 system.

a. **Content-based Acceleration** typically allows a student to remain with peers of the same age and grade for a most/majority of the school day but receive

higher grade-level instruction in an advanced grade. Content-based acceleration can also refer to allowing a student to work on higher grade-level instruction in his regular classroom in lieu of grade-level instruction.

**b. Grade-based Acceleration** includes strategies that typically shorten the number of years a student spends in the K-12 system. A student is placed in a higher-grade level than is typically given for the student's age on a full time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

## **B. Framework for Accelerative Practices**

### **1. Content-based Acceleration**

- a. Curriculum Compacting (K-12):** A student is pre-assessed at the beginning of a unit of study or standard to determine proficiency on a specific curriculum standard. If proficient, the student should engage in advanced content and skill development in that area, or another area, while remaining in the current course of study. This accelerative practice focuses on enrichment within a specific content area for depth of knowledge.
- b. Dual Enrollment (6-12):** WCPSS middle or high school students have the opportunity to take approved courses for high school credit at regionally accredited institutions including institutions of Higher Education (IHE), community colleges, NCVPS, and non-WCPSS secondary schools. Courses taken must provide opportunities not currently available to the student at the middle school or high school, including courses of an advanced or expanded nature. The base school will award high school graduation credit, and grades, when the official grade report for the course taken is received at the base school. Quality points will be calculated as defined in the WCPSS high school program-planning guide. The student's official high school transcript will include grades and credit earned through dual enrollment. For students in grades 9-12, the grades earned through dual enrollment will factor into the Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) and class rank. Reference WCPSS BOE Policy 5534.
- c. Advanced Placement (AP) (9-12):** The AP program offers college-level coursework for students as early as middle school. AP exams allow students to earn university credit and/or advanced university standing based on the examination score. The state weighting system adds the equivalent of two quality points to the grade earned in the AP/IB course. See State Board Policy HSP-L-004 & GS 116-11(10a).
- d. NC Virtual Public School (NCVPS):** NCVPS provides students the opportunity to enroll in courses that they cannot take at their local school. NCVPS offers high school and middle school credit acceleration course options. Reference WCPSS BOE Policy 5534.
- e. Individual Subject Acceleration (ISA)(K-5):** ISA is the practice of assigning a student to a higher-grade level than is typical given the student's age, for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
- f. Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (6-12):** A student shall demonstrate mastery through a multi-phase assessment consisting of (1) a standard examination or a final exam developed locally, and (2) an artifact which requires the student to

apply knowledge and skills relevant to the content standards. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may require additional requirements, such as performance tasks. Based upon this body of evidence, a student may be awarded credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

- g. International Baccalaureate-Middle Years Programme (MYP) (6-8):** The MYP is a whole-school 9th-10th grade curriculum at Garner Magnet High School, Broughton Magnet High School, Millbrook Magnet High School. After 10th-grade, students have the opportunity to enroll in the 11th-12th grade Diploma Programme, which fulfills all graduation requirements for North Carolina through an internationally-normed liberal arts curriculum (See IB Baccalaureate Diploma)
- h. International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB)(9-12):** Advanced students may participate in the IB program, if they have participated in the International Baccalaureate MYP program and by taking the corresponding university-level curricula. At the end of high school the student should complete an international examination, receiving advanced standing and course credits upon matriculation to university.

## 2. Grade-based Acceleration

- a. Early Kindergarten Entry (EKE):** A child who has reached his /her 4<sup>th</sup> birthday by April 16, may be participate in Kindergarten early, if he or she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. The child must meet specific requirements set forth by the LEA prior to conditional enrollment for entering kindergarten early. The process as outlined in WCPSS EKE documents must be followed to ensure the most appropriate placement decision is made. See GS 115-364(d) & WCPSS BOE Policy 6201:School Admissions
- b. Whole Grade Advancement (WGA):** WGA typically shortens the number of years a student spends in the K-12 system. In practice, a student is placed in 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. Grade-based acceleration is commonly known as "grade skipping," but it can include other means to shorten the number of years a student remains in the K-12 school system. The exception is early entrance to kindergarten, which does not shorten the number of years the student spends in the K-12 system but shortens the wait time to start school. WCPSS will provide whole-grade acceleration options to exceptional students that meet the standards set by the district. Students that do not meet the standards for whole-grade acceleration, may be eligible to participate in other forms of acceleration. Students may be considered only if the following can be clearly demonstrated and confirmed, as defined by the Iowa Acceleration Scale 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.
  - A. Academic achievement in all areas of the curriculum
  - B. Intellectual ability
  - C. Social and emotional maturity
  - D. Persistence and motivation
  - E. Acceleration is determined to be in the best interest of the student
- c. Early College High School:** Early College means students take college courses at local colleges as well as the courses required to earn a high school

diploma over a five year period. Early Colleges blend high school and college in a rigorous, yet supportive program, compressing the time it takes to complete a high school diploma and the first two years of college.

- d. **Early High School Graduation:** Early High School Graduation is the practice of facilitating the completion of the high school program in fewer than four years for the purpose of providing earlier than typical access to post-secondary educational opportunities.

#### References

Colangelo, N., Assouline, S., & Gross, M.U.M. (2004). *A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students* (Vols. 1-2). Iowa City: University of Iowa, The Connie Belin and Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development.

Ohio Department of Education. (2006). *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*. Columbus, Ohio.

National Work Group on Acceleration. (2009, November). *Guidelines for Developing an Academic Acceleration Policy* by IRPA and NAGC and CSDPG.

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