

Single Subject Acceleration Executive Brief

Single Subject Acceleration History

The practice of accelerating students through content and courses has been in place for many years without any formal criteria. Subject acceleration decisions were made individually by each school site particularly for K-3 students. If students needed the same type of acceleration beyond third grade, typically these students were identified as AIG. Approximately 20-30 students were accelerated each year. Funding was provided, until 2010, for one way transportation for students who needed to access content beyond what was offered at their assigned school site. In addition, 5th/6th compacted math was taught in various schools with no consistent criteria for participation. This came to the attention of Central Services in 2011 when transportation was no longer provided for subject accelerated students. Criteria was then created for participation in 5th/6th compacted math as well as a consistent curriculum. A central services review team evaluated students to determine participation in this course. The 5th/6th compacted course was made available to be offered for the 2011-2012 school year at all of our elementary schools.

There were no new recommendations for students for single subject acceleration implemented during the 2012-2013 school year due to the implementation of Common Core. Students who were previously accelerated continued to receive acceleration.

SSA is listed as an accelerative practice, without any specific details, in the current WCPSS Board Policy 5532 approved in Oct. 2010 and the WCPSS local plan approved in Fall of 2010.

Communication

In March of 2013, a district level committee approved criteria for Single Subject Acceleration (SSA). The criteria were then disseminated to elementary and middle school principals during the March district-wide Principal meeting. Within one week of meeting with principals, AIG teachers were trained on SSA criteria and process. A second meeting for AIG teachers was held to include any AIG teacher who was not able to attend the initial meeting.

All SSA documents were posted on the AIG Wiki as well as the Principal Wiki for reference. Each school, as is our past practice, determined how best to communicate this to the parents and communities that they serve. Sample communication documents were provided to assist in explaining the process to parents. AIG teachers were encouraged to send written notifications to parents as well as conference with parents as necessary throughout the process.

Appeals

Despite the fact that no formal appeal was part of the original SSA process, schools are directing parent inquiries to the AIG program staff and middle school program staff at the district level.

Single Subject Acceleration (SSA) Criteria K-8 (as disseminated March 2013)

Single Subject Acceleration is determined on an individual basis. Single Subject Acceleration (SSA) is an option that can be considered for the student who exhibits the following characteristics:

- consistently performs 1-2 grade levels above his or her current grade level in literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) or mathematics. Performance at this higher level is demonstrated both in rote skills (reading words, fluency and math calculation) and most importantly, in academic application (reading comprehension, retelling, written language, math application and problem solving).
- is cognitively and conceptually capable of handling the increased demands of the next grade level by transferring previous learning and acquired knowledge to accomplish complex cognitive tasks.
- is socially and emotionally mature and typically demonstrates excellent interpersonal skills in his/her interactions with adults, age-mates, as well as with both older and younger students.
- is an independent learner who actively seeks and persists in new and rigorous academic challenges.

The student who is single subject accelerated is able to go into the next highest grade and perform with the highest group of students. The student should be able to maintain this high level of performance throughout his/her school career. *The SSA assessment criteria are as follows:*

1. Student performance work samples demonstrating mastery 1-2 grade levels above current grade level as listed on the Grade Level Portfolio Component Checklist,
AND
2. Aptitude score >95% on CogAT (Composite score if A profile or appropriate subtest score, Verbal or Quantitative, if B, C or E profile to align with the area being considered for SSA) or other cognitive assessments as listed in the Guidelines for Independent Evaluations SSA (AIG Form #01035-SSA). Testing completed at the school will occur during specified test window during second semester,
AND
3. Achievement score >98% on Iowa Assessment (IA) one grade level above current grade placement, or approved individual reading or math test administered and scored one grade level above current grade level as listed on the Guidelines for Independent Evaluations SSA (AIG Form #01035-SSA).

Revised Single Subject Acceleration (SSA) Criteria K-8 (as disseminated May of 2013)

Revised criteria based upon evaluation of process and parent meeting held in May of 2013.

Upon review of the process and a meeting that was held with concerned parents, staff revised the SSA process. The decision was made to remove numbers two and three of the aforementioned criteria as we believed the additional testing was not needed to demonstrate mastery for SSA. The revised criteria communicated to principals and AIG teachers in May includes:

- Student performance work samples demonstrating mastery 1-2 grade levels above current grade level as listed on the Grade Level Portfolio Component Checklist.

Single Subject Acceleration Procedures

1. *Teachers or parents* submit a *written nomination* to the School Based Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE). If SSA is recommended, services will begin the following school year.
2. The SBCGE will facilitate data collection for Single Subject Acceleration once a nomination is received. Evidence from each area of the Grade Level Portfolio Component Checklist must be included in the student performance portfolio. *Parents may submit artifacts as support of the need for acceleration during the data collection process; however, these artifacts will not be included in the student portfolio. The school will provide opportunities to demonstrate similar performance, which will be included in the student portfolio.*
3. The SBCGE will meet to evaluate the collected portfolio and to make a recommendation. SBCGE records decision on the Single Subject Acceleration Portfolio Decision sheet. All portfolios will be sent to Central Services for final evaluation and recommendation.
4. Central Services will review all SBCGE recommendations along with portfolio documents. Portfolios must show consistent performance 1-2 grade levels above current grade placement to meet the established criteria. If approved, the portfolio is returned to the school with the Single Subject Acceleration Portfolio Decision sheet. Parents will be notified of the SBCGE decision via Single Subject Acceleration Nomination Decision Letter #1, from the school. If not approved, the portfolio is returned to the school with Single Subject Acceleration Portfolio Decision Letter #1A from the school.

Single Subject Acceleration Portfolio Components were created for each grade level in both reading and mathematics. *The Portfolio Components are attached as a separate document for your review.*

Credit By Demonstrated Mastery

The WCPSS Single Subject Acceleration criteria was written with consideration given to the new Credit by Demonstrated Mastery Policy (CDM) that is being developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI).

Official Guidelines will be released from NC DPI in Summer 2013 for implementation. The following is **DRAFT** only from a recent committee work session.

A multi-phase process will be utilized to demonstrate mastery, which may result in a student earning course credit.

- o Phase 1: A student must score 94% or higher on the CDM standard examination to be eligible to continue the process to receive credit by demonstrated mastery.
- o Phase 2: The student will create an artifact based on local criteria in addition to meeting any other local requirements.
- o Phase 3: The artifact will be evaluated in addition to the completion of any other local requirements to determine evidence of deep understanding of content knowledge. Students may earn credit for the associated course if all criteria are met. Students scoring below 94% correct on the CDM exam or failing to meet the local requirements for demonstrating mastery on artifacts will not receive course credit.

If the LEA team determines additional assessments are necessary to determine a deep understanding of content standards, such as performance tasks in world language courses, these assessments must be consistently implemented across an LEA.

Whole Grade Advancement (WGA) Criteria

There have been questions raised as to why SSA is only offered in either mathematics or reading, and not both. Accelerating in the both of those subject areas would no longer be Single Subject Acceleration, but would fall under Whole Grade Advancement. The WGA assessment criteria are listed below. **Students must meet all components of the criteria.**

1. The WGA assessment criteria are as follows:
 - a. Cognitive/IQ: $\geq 98\%$ on WISC IV or comparable test by a licensed psychologist
 - b. Achievement:
 - i. $\geq 98\%$ on approved, individual reading and/or math test
 - ii. $\geq 95\%$ on approved individual reading or math (the area that was not $\geq 98\%$)
 - iii. $\geq 90\%$ on test in a third area (written expression, knowledge, Science, or Social Studies)
 - c. Aptitude (above grade level Iowa)
 - i. $\geq 75\%$ in 3 out of 5 areas assessed by the Complete Iowa Assessments (Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Language)
 - d. Iowa Acceleration Scale Total score is ≥ 60 points
2. Additional Components of the Whole Grade Advancement Process
 - a. SBCGE uses all data to make WGA decision.
 - b. Parents are invited to a meeting to review results and to discuss recommendations.

Comparison of WGA & SSA

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Single Subject Acceleration(SSA)</u>	<u>Whole Grade Advancement (WGA)</u>
Initial data gathering	Collect portfolio of above level student work for subject nominated to accelerate beyond	Collect portfolio in reading, math, and other content areas as appropriate
Level of work	1-2 years beyond grade level	2-3 years beyond grade level
Assessment criteria	Above grade level local benchmark	Individual IQ, individual achievement, above grade level aptitude
Initial Review	SBCGE	SBCGE w/ Psychologist & parent with IOWA Acceleration Scale
Second review	Central Services committee	None
Appeal	Central Services Team(AIG & Content specialists)	Central Services AIG program staff