

## Instruction

### Administrative Procedure - Accelerated Placement Program Procedures<sup>1</sup>

The District's Accelerated Placement Program (APP) places qualified students in an educational setting that includes curriculum usually reserved for students who are older or in higher grades than the student, and is implemented by the Superintendent or designee. 105 ILCS 5/14A.

This administrative procedure contains seven sections as follows:

1. Definitions
2. Annual Notification
3. Referral Process
4. Evaluation Process
5. Eligibility Determination
6. Automatic Enrollment in Advanced High School Coursework
7. Program Reporting, Review, and Expanded Access Plan

#### Definitions<sup>2</sup>

**Accelerated placement** is the placement of a student in an educational setting with curriculum that is usually reserved for students who are older or in higher grades than the student.<sup>3</sup> Accelerated placement includes, but may not be limited to: early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, accelerating a student in a single subject, and grade acceleration.<sup>4</sup>

**Advanced academic program** is a course of study, including but not limited to, accelerated placement, Advanced Placement coursework, International Baccalaureate coursework, dual credit, or any course designated as enriched or honors, that a student is enrolled in based on the student's advanced cognitive ability

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<sup>1</sup> Customize this procedure to meet the district's needs. It is written in general terms with regard to 105 ILCS 5/14A, the Accelerated Placement Act (APA). Districts may wish to utilize different procedures for different types of accelerated placement. For example, many districts that permit early entrance to kindergarten or first grade require that early entrance requests be submitted by a certain calendar date, often months in advance of the start of a school term, to allow sufficient time for evaluation and the determination of incoming class sizes and staffing needs. The law is silent regarding whether these deadlines may be waived or adjusted for students who move into the district after the deadline; consult the board attorney for further guidance. Districts should also consider implementing specific and objective criteria for early entrance and address such issues as who pays the costs for assessments, etc.

To provide school administrators and personnel with a familiar procedural framework, the **Referral Process**, **Evaluation Process**, and **Eligibility Determination** sections of this sample administrative procedure are loosely modeled on the Ill. Council of School Attorneys' *Special Education Procedures Assuring the Implementation of Comprehensive Programming for Children with Disabilities*. See [www.iasb.com/law/icsaspeced.cfm](http://www.iasb.com/law/icsaspeced.cfm).

<sup>2</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-17, amended by P.A. 103-263, requires districts to have an accelerated placement program that includes, but need not be limited to, the following types of acceleration: early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, accelerating a child in a single subject, and grade acceleration. The APA does not define these types of acceleration however, they are defined in Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) regulations at 23 Ill.Admin.Code §227.5.

For high school districts, delete the definitions of *early entrance to kindergarten* and *early entrance to first grade*. If the district offers additional types of acceleration, such as curriculum compacting or telescoping curriculum, then the definitions of such additional types should be added to this section.

<sup>3</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-17, amended by P.A. 103-263; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §227.5.

<sup>4</sup> Id. For high school districts, delete "early entrance to kindergarten or first grade." For districts that offer additional types of acceleration, amend this sentence to include those types in the list of accelerated placement offerings.

or advanced academic achievement compared to local age peers and in which the curriculum is substantially differentiated from the general curriculum to provide appropriate challenge and pace. <sup>5</sup>

**Early entrance to kindergarten** is the admission to kindergarten of a student who: (a) is assessed for and meets the District’s readiness standards to attend school; and (b) will not be five years of age on or before September 1 of that school term. <sup>6</sup>

**Early entrance to first grade** is the admission to first grade of a student who is assessed for and meets the District’s readiness standards to attend school. A student may, but is not required to, have attended a non-public preschool and continued his or her education at that school through kindergarten and been taught in kindergarten by an appropriately certified teacher. A student who is younger than six upon starting first grade but who was admitted early to kindergarten does not need to be reevaluated prior to admission to first grade. <sup>7</sup>

**Individual subject acceleration** is the practice of assigning a student to a specific content area 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.

**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.<sup>9</sup> Commonly referred to as skipping a grade, grade acceleration may be done at the beginning of or during the school term.

Annual Notification <sup>10</sup>

Actor	Action
Superintendent or designee	Annually notifies the community, including community-based organizations, providers of out-of-school programs, parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and school personnel, about the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. APP</li> <li>2. Process for referring a student for possible evaluation for accelerated placement, including:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Steps to be taken to make a referral;</li> <li>b. Individual(s) to whom a referral may be submitted;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<sup>5</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-17, amended by P.A. 103-263.

<sup>6</sup> 23 Ill.Admin.Code §227.5. Use the following alternative in a district operating on a year-round basis:

*Early entrance to kindergarten* is the admission to kindergarten of a student who: (a) is assessed for and meets the District’s readiness standards to attend school; and (b) will not be five years of age within 30 days after the commencement of that school term.

<sup>7</sup> 23 Ill.Admin.Code §227.5.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Optional. 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(1) permits, but does not require “procedures for annually informing the community at-large, including parents or guardians, community-based organizations, and providers of out-of-school programs, about the accelerated placement program and the methods used for the identification of children eligible for accelerated placement, including strategies to reach groups of students and families who have been historically underrepresented in accelerated placement programs and advanced coursework[.]” Delete if the board has not included annual notification language in its adopted Board policy 6:135, *Accelerated Placement Program*.

Actor	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Deadlines by which a referral must be made; and</li> <li>d. Information that must be provided in the referral.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Methods used to determine whether a student is eligible for accelerated placement.</li> <li>4. Strategies used to reach groups of students and families who have been historically underrepresented in accelerated placement programs and advanced coursework.</li> </ul> <p>Provides such notification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By varied communication methods, such as student handbooks and District/school websites; and</li> <li>2. In multiple languages.</li> </ul>

**Referral Process**

Actor	Action
<p>Parent(s)/Guardian(s), Licensed Educational Professionals, Student (with written consent of a parent/guardian), or Peer (through a licensed educational professional who has knowledge of the student’s abilities).</p> <p>In addition to the above-noted individuals, referrals for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade may also come from: Preschool Educator, Non-public Kindergarten Teacher, Pediatrician, or Psychologist who knows the child. <sup>11</sup></p>	<p>Refers a student for possible evaluation for accelerated placement using the process set forth in this procedure.</p>
<p>Student Services Director, Building Principal, or designee</p>	<p>Within [<i>insert number</i>] school days after receiving a referral, determines whether an evaluation for accelerated placement is warranted.</p>

<sup>11</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(2) recommends that the referral process allow for multiple referrers, and specifically notes that referrers for possible early entrance may include “a preschool educator, pediatrician, or psychologist who knows the child.” High school districts should delete the list of additional referrers for possible early entrance. ISBE regulations define *multiple referrers* as including, but not being limited to, “the student’s parents or guardian, current teachers, district gifted coordinator or gifted education specialist, guidance [school] counselor, principal, and school psychologist.” 23 Ill.Admin.Code §227.5.

Actor	Action
	<p>To determine whether an evaluation is warranted, may review existing data about the student, utilize screening data, and conduct preliminary procedures such as observation of the student, consultation with the teacher or other individual making the request, and a conference with the student.</p> <p>Provides the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of the referral determination. For cases not warranting an evaluation, the process ends here. For cases warranting an evaluation, proceed to Evaluation Process, below.</p>

**Evaluation Process**

Actor	Action
Student Services Director, Building Principal, or designee	<p>Convenes an Evaluation Team (consisting of District teacher(s) and school support personnel, as appropriate) having the knowledge and skills necessary to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify multiple valid, reliable indicators<sup>12</sup> to use during the evaluation;</li> <li>2. Identify appropriate assessment instruments;</li> <li>3. Administer said assessments; and</li> <li>4. Interpret evaluation results.</li> </ol> <p>The composition of the team may vary depending upon the type of acceleration requested and other relevant factors.</p>
Evaluation Team	<p>Identifies multiple valid, reliable indicators and any assessment instruments appropriate to use during the evaluation.</p> <p>Prepares a written document identifying the evaluation components. This may occur without a meeting.</p>
Student Services Director, Building Principal, or designee	<p>Provides parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notification of the Evaluation Team’s conclusions regarding the evaluation components and requests parent(s)/guardian(s)’ written consent to conduct the evaluation.</p>
Parent/Guardian	<p>Provides written consent to conduct the evaluation.</p>
Evaluation Team	<p>Completes the evaluation within [<i>insert number</i>] school days following the date of receipt of parent(s)/guardian(s)’ written consent to conduct the evaluation.</p> <p>Ensures the evaluation is nondiscriminatory and follows Board policy 7:10, <i>Equal Educational Opportunities</i>.</p>

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<sup>12</sup> Required by 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(a)(4). *Multiple valid, reliable indicators* are not defined in the APA or ISBE regulations; some attorneys prefer using “standardized and norm-referenced indicators” instead.

### Eligibility Determination

Actor	Action
Evaluation Team	<p>Convenes a meeting<sup>13</sup> with parent(s)/guardian(s) to review evaluation results and determine eligibility for the APP. Provides parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of eligibility determination.</p> <p>If the student is found eligible for the APP, prepares and provides parent(s)/guardian(s) with a written plan detailing the type of acceleration the student will receive and strategies to support the student.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>If the student is not found eligible for the APP, provides parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of their right to appeal the eligibility determination, within five calendar days after receiving the determination, by submitting a written request to the Superintendent.<sup>15</sup></p>
Parent/Guardian	<p>If desired, within <i>[insert number]</i> calendar days after receiving written notice that student is not eligible for the APP, submits written appeal to the Superintendent.</p>
Superintendent	<p>Within <i>[insert number]</i> calendar days after receiving the written appeal request, reviews the case, and provides parent(s)/guardian(s) with written notice of his/her decision.</p> <p>The Superintendent’s decision is final.</p>

### Automatic Enrollment in Advanced High School Coursework<sup>16</sup>

Actor	Action
Student Services Director, Building Principal, or designee	<p>Identifies students who qualify for automatic enrollment in the “next most rigorous level of advanced coursework” (NMR) offered by the District, for the following school term, by reviewing State assessment results in English language arts, mathematics, and science.</p>

<sup>13</sup> Convening a meeting with parents/guardians is not required, however, 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(a)(2) requires “a fair and equitable decision-making process that involves multiple persons and includes a student’s parents or guardians.” A meeting logically allows the Evaluation Team to explain evaluation results, parent(s)/guardian(s) to ask questions and be heard, and all stakeholders to be involved in the eligibility determination. Delete this sentence if the district will not offer a meeting.

ISBE regulations define *multiple persons* as including, but not being limited to, “the student’s parent or guardian, current teachers, district gifted coordinator or gifted education specialist, guidance [school] counselor, principal, and school psychologist. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §227.60.

<sup>14</sup> Optional. The APA permits but does not require this written plan. 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(3).

<sup>15</sup> Optional.

<sup>16</sup> Required only for districts with grades 9-12. 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(a-5), (a-10), amended by P.A.s 102-209 and 103-743. Delete for elementary school districts. See f/ns 10 and 11 in sample policy 6:135, *Accelerated Placement Program*, for further discussion of this requirement. Written notice to parents/guardians is not required but is a best practice to memorialize that automatic enrollment into the next level of advanced coursework and the option of alternative coursework were offered to qualified students.

Actor	Action
	<p>For English language arts, the NMR includes courses in English, social studies, humanities, or related subjects. <sup>17</sup></p> <p>For a student entering grade 12, the NMR in English language arts or mathematics must be a dual credit course (as defined in the Dual Credit Quality Act, 110 ILCS 27/5), an Advanced Placement course (as defined in the College and Career Success for All Students Act, 105 ILCS 302/10), or an International Baccalaureate course. The same is true for all other subjects, except that the NMR may also include an honors class, an enrichment opportunity, a gifted program, or another program offered by the District. <sup>18</sup></p> <p>Provides written notice to parent(s)/guardian(s) of a qualified student of the student’s eligibility for automatic enrollment in the NMR level of advanced coursework offered by the high school that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifies the course(s) the student is eligible for, including the location and schedule, if known, of the course(s);</li> <li>2. Informs the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the option to instead enroll the student in alternative coursework that better aligns with the student’s postsecondary education or career goals; <sup>19</sup></li> <li>3. Identifies the alternative coursework the student is eligible for, including the location and schedule, if known, of the alternative coursework; and</li> <li>4. Requests that the parent(s)/guardian(s) notify the District within <i>[insert number]</i> calendar days of their course enrollment decision.</li> </ol>
Parent/Guardian	Provides the District with written notice of their course enrollment decision within <i>[insert number]</i> calendar days after receiving the written notice.

**Program Reporting, Review, and Expanded Access Plan**

Actor	Action
Superintendent, Student Services Director, or designee	<p>Submits by July 31 each year to the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) through the Student Information System (SIS): <sup>20</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demographic information for each student participating in the APP;</li> </ol>

<sup>17</sup> Id. at (a-5)(1), amended by P.A. 103-743.  
<sup>18</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(a-5), amended by P.A.s 102-209 and 103-743.  
<sup>19</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(a-5), amended by P.A.s 102-209 and 103-743.  
<sup>20</sup> 23 Ill. Admin.Code §227.60(b).

Actor	Action
	<p>2. Student participation in the APP; and 3. Type of APP placement.</p> <p>Develops procedures to provide support and promote success for students who are newly enrolled in the APP.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Develops procedures to promote equity, which may incorporate one or more of the following evidence-based practices:<sup>22</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The use of multiple tools to assess exceptional potential and provide several pathways into advanced academic programs when assessing student need for advanced academic or accelerated programming;</li> <li>2. Providing enrichment opportunities starting in the early grades to address achievement gaps that occur at school entry and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their advanced potential;</li> <li>3. The use of universal screening combined with local school-based norms for placement in accelerated and advanced learning programs;</li> <li>4. Developing a continuum of services to identify and develop talent in all learners ranging from enriched learning experiences, such as problem-based learning, performance tasks, critical thinking, and career exploration, to accelerated placement and advanced academic programming; and</li> <li>5. Providing professional learning in gifted education for teachers and other appropriate school personnel to appropriately identify and challenge students from diverse cultures and backgrounds who may benefit from accelerated placement or advanced academic programming.</li> </ol> <p>Reviews disaggregated data on APP participation and successful completion rates to address gaps among demographic groups in accelerated placement opportunities.<sup>23</sup></p> <p>Develops and, as necessary, updates a plan to expand access to the APP and to ensure the teaching capacity necessary to meet any increased demand.<sup>24</sup></p>

<sup>21</sup> Optional. 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(4).

<sup>22</sup> Optional. 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(6), added by P.A. 103-263. For districts that prefer to not use the terms *gifted* or *gifted education*, consider replacing No. 5 with the following:

Providing professional learning in instructional practices, including identifying and challenging students from diverse cultures and backgrounds, to support all students' successful participation in accelerated placement or advanced academic programming.

<sup>23</sup> Optional. 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(b)(5).

<sup>24</sup> 105 ILCS 5/14A-32(d).