

## Acceleration Policy

BCPS believes that acceleration is an appropriate and effective intervention for highly able students who have demonstrated high performance in one or more academic areas. The referral process for consideration of acceleration is open to all students in grades K-12, including students who are English language learners, at-risk, of low socioeconomic status, profoundly gifted, and/or twice exceptional. Profoundly gifted students are those whose ability scores place them at the highest percentiles. Twice-exceptional students are those who are gifted and who have a cognitive, social, or behavioral disability. Referral forms and copies of the policy can be obtained from each school and Central Services.

BCPS provides the following options for acceleration:

Type of Acceleration	Grade Levels Available
Early Entrance to College: Governor's School of Southside Virginia	11-12 (Second semester application process for 10 <sup>th</sup> graders)
Single-subject	6-12
Dual Enrollment	9-12
Advanced Placement	9-12
Whole-grade acceleration	K-12

Early Entrance to College through a separate application process to the Governor's School of Southside Virginia is open to 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Students and their parents attend an informational session usually held in January. With parental approval, students can apply to attend Governor's School in the fall with required attendance during their junior and senior year. This is a rigorous program with an in-depth application process.

Single-subject acceleration is based on student performance on the Standards of Learning test results.

Dual Enrollment acceleration is based on student performance on placement tests.

Advanced Placement acceleration is based on student performance on Standards of Learning test results and grade point average.

Whole-grade Acceleration is based on student performance on Standards of Learning tests, benchmark tests, grade point average, in-class performance, standardized testing results, and observations. **Per the Code of Virginia, a child must be five years of age or reach his/her fifth birthday on or before September 30th of the school year in order to enroll in Kindergarten.**

**Therefore, four-year olds may not be considered for whole-grade acceleration into Kindergarten.**

Parental permission is needed for whole-grade acceleration. Other acceleration placement decisions are based on student interest and BCPS criteria along with parental consent.

Student evaluation is fair, objective, and systematic. BCPS uses both verbal and nonverbal ability assessments (Otis-Lennon School Ability Test and Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test) in conjunction with scores on other assessments such as the Standards of Learning assessments, benchmark testing and in-class performance. For English language learners, the instruments used are in the student's heritage language when applicable.

Written consent is required from parents or legal guardians in order to evaluate the referred student for possible acceleration placement. Students who are referred, and for whom consent has been obtained, shall receive an evaluation from BCPS staff. Once evaluations are completed, the Acceleration Assessment Team which includes the principal, Central Services representative, Gifted Coordinator, classroom teacher, and guidance counselor shall meet. Parents or legal guardians shall be informed of the evaluation results and the decision of the Acceleration Assessment Team within fifteen (15) days of the Team's meeting date.

Parents shall be invited to attend a meeting to address their child's specific learning needs in a written plan. Members of the planning team shall include the parent, current teacher(s), principal, gifted specialist, Central Services representative, and guidance counselor. The Whole-Grade Acceleration Written Plan for Elementary shall include the type of acceleration, transition period, strategies to ensure a successful transition, strategies to ensure continuous progress following the transition period, requirements and procedures for earning high school credit prior to entering high school (if applicable), and staff member assigned to monitor the implementation of this plan. Copies of the plan shall be distributed to the student's building principal, current teacher(s), receiving teacher(s), gifted coordinator, Division Assistant Superintendent, and parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A copy shall be placed in the student's cumulative folder.

The Whole-Grade Acceleration Written Plan for Elementary shall include a monitored transition period of no more than thirty (30) days. Thirty (30) days after placement, and sooner if there are concerns about the placement, the Acceleration Assessment Team along with the parent shall meet to discuss the success of the placement. Within the 30-day transition period, the parent or legal guardian may request in writing a return to the original placement without any repercussions. The principal shall bring such proposals before the Acceleration Assessment Team which will be responsible for issuing a decision within ten (10) days of receiving the

request. If the acceleration plan is modified, the Whole-Grade Acceleration Written Plan for Elementary shall be updated.

Administrative considerations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Short-term needs are addressed such as specifying which grade level state achievement test shall be taken and allowing for flexible transportation arrangements should a student need to travel between buildings.
- Long-term needs are addressed such as providing guidance throughout K-12 to make sure that students will be allowed to maintain their accelerated standing, working with the district to discuss distance learning options, indicating acceleration coursework on a student's transcript, and determining the student's class rank.

The process of awarding credit to a student is addressed in the **Brunswick County Public Schools Policy and Regulations Manual**, Acceleration, File: IKEB.

#### **Grade Acceleration Procedure**

1. Parent initiates consideration of child for placement in the next grade level with supporting evidence, such as school reports, testing, work samples by contacting the child's principal and completing the Acceleration Referral Form which includes Permission to Test.
2. Principal calls a meeting of the Acceleration Assessment Team to review the request and determine if additional information such as testing is needed for consideration.
3. If no additional information is needed, the team can make a decision regarding the student based on their responses to the following questions:
  - a. Is the student academically ready for acceleration?
    - i. Has the student achieved age level basic knowledge and skills?
    - ii. Does the student possess exceptional abilities and intense interests in specific academic area(s)?
    - iii. Is the student able to master new skills and knowledge at an exceptionally rapid pace?
    - iv. Is the student a self-directed learner with independent thought?
  - b. Is the student socio-emotionally ready for acceleration?
    - i. Does the student have perseverance to cope with challenges?
    - ii. Is the student socially mature and accepting of others?
    - iii. Is the student highly motivated and committed to learning at advanced levels?
  - c. Is the student him/herself eager for acceleration with acknowledgement of potential impacts such as
    - i. Relative advantages: meeting with peers with similar ability level, having more opportunities to engage in advanced knowledge.

- ii. Needs and implications: leaving friends, doing more work, being presented with a greater challenge.
- iii. Potential drawbacks: falling behind at the beginning.

Responses to the questions should be supported by previous data and committee input. If committee members answer “no” to the majority of the questions listed above, grade acceleration is not currently appropriate for the student, and the committee will explore other options to meet the student’s specific needs.

4. If additional testing is needed, the gifted coordinator and others as assigned will administer the needed tests. Needed assessments can include: Otis-Lennon School Ability Test, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, and achievement tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test.
5. Once testing has been completed, the Acceleration Assessment Team reconvenes to discuss the additional data. If the new data in conjunction to the responses to the questions listed above do not warrant grade acceleration at this time, the committee must explore other options to meet the student’s specific needs. If the new data in conjunction to the responses to the questions listed above do support grade acceleration, the student provisionally enters the next grade at the designated time with appropriate support.
6. The principal will notify parent(s) or guardian(s) of the committee’s decision. If a Whole-Grade Acceleration Written Plan for Elementary is needed, the principal will notify the parent of the meeting date and time. The committee will develop a transition plan for the student with a designated date for placement and review of progress.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) dissatisfied with the decision of the Acceleration Assessment Team or with the provision of services may submit their appeal in writing during any step of the process.

The appeals process procedures are:

- (a) Parent/guardian submits a written appeal to the principal within fifteen (15) days of the date of notice.
- (b) The principal shall convene the Appeals Committee within fifteen (15) instructional days of receipt of the documentation pertaining to the appeal. The Appeals Committee shall consist of the three elementary principals, school level gifted education coordinator, and Central Services representative.

- (1) The Appeals Committee will review the data reviewed by the Acceleration Assessment Team.

(2) The committee will re-evaluate the original decision.

(3) The committee will use appropriate multiple sources of information to render a decision concerning the student's need for acceleration.

(c) The principal shall notify parents/guardians within ten (10) instructional days of the Appeals Committee decision. Decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

### **Policy Review for Effectiveness**

The Acceleration policy shall be reviewed once a year by the Gifted Advisory Committee in regards to effectiveness of the policy itself and its effectiveness in successfully accelerating students.

### **Forms**

<b>Form</b>	<b>Individuals Responsible for Completion</b>
Acceleration Referral/Acceleration Assessment Team Decision Form	Referral portion: Parent  Acceleration Assessment Team Decision portion: Chairperson
Parental Permission to Test Letter/Form	Letter portion: Principal  Permission portion: Parent
Acceleration Assessment Team Decision Notification from Principal	Principal
Acceleration Appeals Committee Decision Letter from Principal	Principal
Whole-Grade Acceleration Written Plan for Elementary	Principal, current teacher, receiving teacher, parent, guidance counselor, and gifted resource teacher
Appeal Form	Parent submit to principal