

# **Acceleration Whole-Grade Skipping Information Packet**

**In Support of BOE Policy/Regulation 2535  
Student Academic Acceleration**

**October 1, 2007**



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# Acceleration Information Packet For Whole-Grade Skipping

## Rationale

Acceleration is an intervention that moves students through an educational program at rates faster, or at younger ages, than typical. It means matching the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to the readiness and motivation of the student.

In the 2004 national report on acceleration, A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students, research was presented on acceleration practices and results over the past fifty years. This report states that the practice of acceleration has been found to be a highly effective intervention for gifted students. The report goes on to reveal that acceleration has been:

- well researched and documented as the best intervention for gifted students.
- is consistently effective with gifted students.
- found to have long-term beneficial effects, both academically and socially for gifted students.

Additionally, research indicates that when students' academic and social needs are not met, the results are boredom and disengagement from school. Closing our eyes to students' educational differences is neither democratic nor helpful.

For these reasons, the Rockwood School District makes whole-grade skipping available for appropriately selected students. For the majority of gifted students, in-class differentiation combined with services offered through the Rockwood Gifted Program (RGP) provide the learning opportunities needed for advanced students to be challenged. This document describes the process for identifying and serving the small percentage of gifted students for whom more aggressive forms of intervention are necessary. The selection process considers the whole student: social, emotional, physical, academic, and intellectual.

## **STUDENTS**

### **Policy 2535**

#### **Student Academic Acceleration**

The Board of Education of the Rockwood School District believes it is important to encourage, support, and assist each student to develop academically. Given the range of abilities represented in each Rockwood classroom, it is essential that teachers adapt instruction to meet the wide range of student abilities and skills that exists. In recognition of the diverse needs of students and the benefits associated with instructional adaptations, the Board supports acceleration appropriate to individual students.

## **STUDENTS**

### **Regulation 2535**

#### **Student Academic Acceleration**

Acceleration in the Rockwood School District refers to educational strategies which provide opportunities for students to more rapidly achieve education goals as described on the next page. Participation in acceleration often is based on individually identified needs and is designed on a case-by-case basis.

The following chart provides examples of acceleration options that may be considered in making decisions appropriate to the individual student. When considering whole-grade skipping, the Director of the Gifted Program must be consulted. For Whole-Grade Skipping procedures, refer to the steps outlined in this packet. All student assessment data will be factored in a decision. In each instance, the best interest of the student predominates.

### Options Applicable in Grades K-12

<b>Curriculum Compacting</b>	A procedure used to streamline the regular curriculum for students who are capable of mastering it at a faster pace. Pre-testing identifies learning objectives already mastered, and students are allowed to “test out” of certain academic exercises and move on to new material.
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	Consistently using a variety of instructional approaches to modify content, process, and/or products in response to learner readiness, interest, and/or learner profile of academically diverse students.
<b>Grade Skipping *</b>	The student is moved ahead of normal grade placement. This may be done during an academic year (e.g. placing a third grader directly into fourth grade, or promoting a third grader to fifth grade).
<b>Individually Paced Instruction</b>	The student is presented with materials that allow him/her to proceed at a self-selected pace.
<b>Subject-Matter Acceleration</b>	The student is placed for a part of a day with students at more advanced grade levels for one or more subjects without being assigned to a higher grade (e.g. a fourth grader going to fifth grade for science) or the student works for part of a day on material above grade level for one or more subjects within his/her regular classroom.

\* In accordance with Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations Whole-Grade Skipping in kindergarten is not an option.

### Options Applicable at the Middle School and/or High School Levels

<b>Challenge Program</b>	Available for middle school students who qualify by meeting expectations of an assessment matrix based on academic performance.
<b>Advanced Placement</b>	The student takes a course in high school that prepares him/her for taking an examination that can confer college credit for satisfactory performance.
<b>Distance Learning</b>	An instructional strategy by which technology is used to allow the student to not physically be in the place where the teaching is taking place. Access to the instructor is gained through technology such as the Internet, interactive videoconferencing, and satellite.
<b>Dual-Enrollment/Credit</b>	The student is enrolled in course work or summer programs that confer advanced instruction and credit for study (e.g. fast-paced language or math courses offered by universities).
<b>Early Graduation</b>	Graduate from high school in less than four (4) years based upon current District Policy 2525 – Graduation Requirements.
<b>Elective System</b>	The student can select a variety of upper level courses for the purpose of meeting his/her educational goals.

## Who Should Be Whole-Grade Skipped?

All acceleration requires high academic ability. The student's motivation, social-emotional maturity, and interests must also be considered. Some examples of students who might be considered for whole-grade skipping:

- The gifted student whose achievement is significantly beyond their gifted peers.
- The gifted student with extraordinary ability who is not achieving well in class.

## Procedures for Whole-Grade Skipping Consideration

### Step 1:

Parents, teachers, administrators or students may initiate a grade skipping consideration for students currently in the District gifted program by submitting a ***Request for Whole-Grade Skipping*** form. This packet and the accompanying ***Acceleration Resource Packet*** should be reviewed before considering acceleration. These items can be obtained on the District's gifted webpage at <http://www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/giftededucation/aboutus/Pages/AccelerationProcedures.aspx>.

Forms and packets are also available from the Director of the Gifted Program or school secretary. Once the ***Request for Whole-Grade Skipping*** form is completed it should be submitted to the Director of the Gifted Program. The Director of the Gifted Program will immediately inform the building principal of the request and will send copies of the form to the building principal, school counselor, and gifted program counselor.

The Director of the Gifted Program reviews the ***Request for Whole-Grade Skipping*** form.

Every attempt will be made to have a decision within 60 school days of the receipt of the ***Request for Whole-Grade Skipping*** form.

If requested, the District will consider up to two acceleration requests per student during the student's enrollment in the district.

### Step 2:

The following items are critical to successful whole-grade skipping. The Director of the Gifted Program will check the following four items:

1. Whether the student is already a part of the District gifted program.
2. Whether the student indicates that he/she wants to be whole-grade accelerated.\*
3. Whether the student currently has a sibling in the same grade (i.e. a twin).
4. Whether the student would be accelerated into the same grade as (or higher grade than) a sibling.

If any of the above four items apply to the student this information will be taken into strong consideration by the ***Acceleration Study Team***.

\*A discussion with the student regarding the possibility of grade-skipping will take place. This discussion, led by the school counselor and/or the gifted program counselor, will be to gain the student's perspective.

Proceed to step 3 for all students.

### **Step 3:**

The Gifted Program Director will gather data from school records, parents (see *Whole-Grade Skipping Request Form-Parent*), teachers (see *Whole-Grade Skipping Request Form-Teacher*), and the student. Parts I and II of the *Grade Skipping Data Collection and Decision-Making (GS-DC&DM) Form* will be completed by Gifted Program Director or designee.

### **Step 4:**

An *Acceleration Study Team* meeting is scheduled by the Gifted Program Director for the purpose of assessing the student's suitability for acceleration. Possible team members should include: the building principal, current teacher or team, potential receiving teacher or team, school counselor and/or gifted program counselor, curriculum facilitator(s)/directors, Gifted Program Director, and others as requested by the Gifted Program Director (i.e., parents, gifted teacher, acceleration resource teacher).

The *Acceleration Study Team* members are sent copies of the student's *GS-DC&DM Form* for review prior to the meeting. The *Acceleration Study Team* will meet and complete the rest of the *GS-DC&DM Form*. A group consensus must be reached on each of the following sections of the form:

- Part I & II – Critical Issues, School and Academic Factors
- Part III – Developmental & Interpersonal Factors

If the decision is made to consider whole-grade skipping, proceed to Step 5.

If the decision is made not to consider whole-grade skipping, proceed to Step 6.

### **Step 5:**

#### **For Students Being Considered for Whole Grade Skipping**

If the decision of Step 4 is to consider whole-grade skipping for the student, the *Acceleration Study Team* should discuss and create a grade-skipping plan by using the *GS-DC&DM Form (Part IV)* keeping in mind the following points:

- Acceleration should take place at natural transition points.
- Accelerated students should be placed with the high ability students in the new class.
- An effort should be made to combine students who have been accelerated.

If the recommendation is for whole-grade skipping the recommendation and *GS-DC&DM Form* are formally approved by the Gifted Program Director and sent to the Superintendent or Superintendent designee for final approval.

If approval is given by the Superintendent or Superintendent designee, a letter will be sent by the Gifted Program Director to the parents and the building principal. Included in this letter will be a parent agreement form that will be signed by the parent(s) and placed in the student's cumulative file upon receipt by the Gifted Program Director.

If approval is denied by the Gifted Program Director or by the Superintendent or Superintendent Designee, notification will be sent to the parent(s), proceed to Step 6.

Within 6 to 8 weeks following grade skipping, the Gifted Program Director will contact parents, the building principal, and the teacher(s) to review the student's progress. If the student is progressing, the current plan continues. If there is concern, the *Acceleration Study Team* will meet to make the necessary modifications to the plan. For exceptionally gifted students, further acceleration may be necessary.

All decisions will be recorded on **Part IV** of the *GS-DC&DM Form* which will be referred to in any subsequent acceleration meetings. The *GS-DC&DM Form* will be filed in the student's cumulative (confidential) file at the building level, and a copy, along with other testing data, is retained by the Gifted Program Director.

During the last quarter of each school year, the building principal will work with his/her building staff and other desired personnel as needed to determine the best placement for students who have been or are being grade skipped for the coming year.

A meeting between the current teacher(s) and the receiving teacher(s) will take place with the purpose of sharing student progress and successful strategies.

### **Step 6**

#### **For Students NOT Being Considered for Whole-Grade Skipping**

If the decision of Step 4 is not to consider whole-grade skipping or appropriate approval has not been received in Step 5, the *Acceleration Study Team* should discuss and plan a challenging program using the *Subject Acceleration Data Collection and Decision-Making Form (SA-DC&DM)* as a guide (found in *Subject-Matter Acceleration* packet). Recommendations should include opportunities for acceleration options as listed in Board Regulation 2535 (see page 3 of this packet).

If the decision is to consider subject-matter acceleration, refer to *Subject-Matter Acceleration Packet* (Step 5) for procedural guidelines.

All decisions will be recorded, referred to, and built on in the event of subsequent meetings. The **SA-DC&DM Form** will be filed in the student's cumulative (confidential) file at the building level, and a copy, along with other testing data, is retained by the Gifted Program Director. Parent(s) will be contacted by the Gifted Program Director.

## Request for Whole-Grade Skipping

**TO BE COMPLETED BY CURRENT CLASSROOM TEACHER OR TEAM**

The Rockwood School District is committed to academic and personal success for every student. This includes providing education with high academic standards and rigor which will promote the maximum academic, social-emotional, and physical development of each student.

Acceleration is an educational intervention that moves students through an education program at a significantly faster pace or at a younger than typical age. Prior to completing this form, please read the *Whole-Grade Skipping Packet and Acceleration Resource Packet*.

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Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade Placement: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Team: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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Give specific examples of how this student functions at significantly higher level than students of the same age. Please continue on a separate piece of paper if needed.

Document the differentiation that has been utilized to accommodate this student's needs. Please check all that apply.

Applicable		Differentiation	Length of Implementation	Successful		Applicable		Differentiation	Length of Implementation	Successful	
Yes	No			Yes	No	Yes	No			Yes	No
		Change pace/depth						Curriculum Compacting			
		Learning Centers						Higher level questioning			
		Learning Contracts						Independent Research			
		Enrichment Opportunities						Tiered Assignments			
		Differentiated Assessments						Student Choice			
		Open-ended Assignments						Other			

Name of Person(s) Submitting Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this form to the Gifted Program Director.

## Request for Whole-Grade Skipping TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN

The Rockwood School District is committed to academic and personal success for every student. This includes providing education with high academic standards and rigor which will promote the maximum academic, social-emotional, and physical development of each student.

Acceleration is an educational intervention that moves students through an education program at a significantly faster pace or at a younger than typical age. Prior to completing this form, please read the *Whole-Grade Skipping Packet and Acceleration Resource Packet*.

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Name of Student:	Date of Birth:	
Current Grade Placement:	School:	Teacher/Team:
Parent/Guardian:		
Address:	Phone Number(s):	

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On a separate piece of paper, give specific examples that you have observed of how your child functions at a significantly higher level. In your narrative describe each of the following:

1. Overall academic performance
2. Ability to apply, analyze, and evaluate ideas at an advanced level
3. Ability to work independently
4. Ability to think creatively
5. Motivation to work on advanced material
6. Oral and written communication skills
7. Exhibits passion for topic(s) of interest
8. Social/Emotional development

Name of Person(s) Submitting Request:

Relation to Student:

Date:

Please submit this form to the Gifted Program Director.

ROCKWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**GRADE SKIPPING**  
DATA COLLECTION AND DECISION-MAKING FORM

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Requested Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Current School: \_\_\_\_\_ New School (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Submitting Request \_\_\_\_\_ Relation to Student \_\_\_\_\_

**PART I: CRITICAL ISSUES**

- \_\_\_\_ Student is in gifted program
- \_\_\_\_ Student expresses interest in grade skipping
- \_\_\_\_ Sibling is currently in same grade
- \_\_\_\_ Sibling will be in same grade if accelerated

Comments:

**PART II: SCHOOL & ACADEMIC FACTORS**

**1. INTELLIGENCE TEST RESULTS (include summary report)**

- \_\_\_\_ Clearly indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ Partially indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ No need for acceleration indicated
- \_\_\_\_ Information is not available

**2. SUBJECT AREA ACHIEVEMENT TEST RESULTS (include current & past year MAP, SAT-10, Other standardized achievement test results)**

- \_\_\_\_ Clearly indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ Partially indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ No need for acceleration indicated
- \_\_\_\_ Information is not available

**3. SUBJECT AREA COORDINATOR ASSESSMENT (include report)**

- \_\_\_\_ Clearly indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ Partially indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ No need for acceleration indicated
- \_\_\_\_ Information is not available

**4. TEACHER ASSESSMENTS (include recent assessments)**

- \_\_\_\_ Clearly indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ Partially indicates need for acceleration
- \_\_\_\_ No need for acceleration indicated
- \_\_\_\_ Information is not available

5. REQUEST FOR GRADE SKIPPING FORM  
(attach completed Teacher Form)

- Clearly indicates need for acceleration
- Partially indicates need for acceleration
- No need for acceleration indicated
- Information is not available

6. OTHER DATA AND/OR INFORMATION PERTINENT TO DECISION  
(eg., Parent Grade Skipping Request Form, work samples, observations, informal feedback from student, etc.)

- Clearly indicates need for acceleration
- Partially indicates need for acceleration
- No need for acceleration indicated
- Information is not available

SUMMARY (PARTS I & II):

SUMMARY (PART III, see next page):

PART III: DEVELOPMENTAL & INTERPERSONAL FACTORS

ELEMENT	BA	A	AA	S	COMMENTS (Optional)
Academic self-concept					
Academic motivation					
Special talents					
Age relative to classmates					
Size relative to classmates					
Motor coordination					
Maturity					
Behavior					
Relationship with peers					
Relationship with teachers					
Extracurricular activities					

BA (Below Average); A (Average); AA (Above Average); S (Superior)

PART IV: RECOMMENDATION & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendation: Grade Skipping    Subject Acceleration Study    Other (Describe)

Transition Plan For Grade Skipping, including Timeline:

Monitoring Student Progress -- Dates, Process, Person Responsible:

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Name:

Relationship/Position:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

*Place copy of completed form in student's file.*

## **Glossary of Terms for Acceleration and Gifted Education**

<b>Acceleration</b>	Used when a student demonstrates competencies, knowledge, abilities, and/or skills which exceed that which is outlined in the planned course curriculum for his/her chronological age or grade placement level. This can be demonstrated in the classroom or by pre or diagnostic tests in the skill areas. In this document it refers to Whole-Grade Skipping.
<b>Achievement Tests</b>	A test that measures what students have learned or have been taught in a specific content area relative to the expected achievement of average students. Example: Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).
<b>Advanced Placement (AP)</b>	The student takes a course in high school that prepares him/her for taking an examination that can confer college credit for satisfactory performance. AP courses are high level/high rigor courses whose syllabi are dictated by the College Board. Some universities may award college credit for high scores on AP exams.
<b>Challenge Program</b>	The student qualifies by meeting expectations of an assessment matrix based on academic performance at the middle school level.
<b>Cluster Grouping</b>	Assigning students of the same grade level who have been identified as gifted to a small instructional group within a class of otherwise heterogeneously grouped students.
<b>Curriculum Compacting</b>	A procedure used to streamline the regular curriculum for students who are capable of mastering it at a faster pace. Pre-testing identifies learning objectives already mastered, and students are allowed to “test out” of certain academic exercises and move on to new material.
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	Consistently using a variety of instructional approaches to modify content, process, and/or products in response to learner readiness, interest, and/or learner profile of academically diverse students.
<b>Distance Learning</b>	An instructional strategy by which technology is used to allow the student to not physically be in the place where the teaching is taking place. Access to the instructor is gained through technology such as the Internet, interactive videoconferencing and satellite.
<b>Dual Credit</b>	The student is enrolled in college level courses that confer both high school and college credit.
<b>Dual-Enrollment Programs</b>	The student is enrolled in course work or summer programs that confer advanced instruction and credit for study (e.g., fast-paced language or math courses offered by universities). Some programs confer only college credit. Other programs confer both high school and college credit (dual credit).
<b>Early Graduation</b>	Graduate from high school in less than four (4) years based upon current District Policy 2525 – Graduation Requirements.

<b>Elective System</b>	The student can select a variety of upper level courses for the purpose of meeting his/her educational goals.
<b>Grade Skipping (Whole Grade Acceleration)</b>	The student is moved ahead of normal grade placement. This may be done during an academic year (e.g., placing a third grader directly into fourth grade, or promoting a third grader to fifth grade).
<b>Honors Courses</b>	Courses offered in high school for high achievers. These are usually planned to motivate the intellectually gifted learner. The content is broader, the curriculum is accelerated, and the instructor carefully selected.
<b>Individually Paced Instruction (Independent Study)</b>	The student is presented with materials that allow him/her to proceed at a self-selected pace.
<b>Intelligence Quotient (IQ)</b>	Measure of a person's cognitive ability that compares mental age and actual age.
<b>Learning Style</b>	Describes a preferred mode of learning. There are several learning style theories which attempt to correlate the traits of learners with teaching methods which will promote optimum learning situations.
<b>Pull-out Program</b>	A part-time program where students and/or special need students leave the regular classroom for a limited time to attend specialized classes with an instructor other than the classroom teacher.
<b>Subject-Matter Acceleration</b>	The student is placed for a part of a day with students at more advanced grade levels for one or more subjects without being assigned to a higher grade (e.g., a fourth grader going to fifth grade for science).
<b>Underachiever</b>	A student who has a discrepancy between their performance and their potential and/or ability to perform at a much higher level as indicated by their standardized test scores.