
DERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUBJECT ACCELERATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES



Definition:

Subject acceleration allows students to move to an advanced grade level in one or more subject area(s), but remain identified with their own age group and grade. This can be accomplished within the regular classroom, or by having the child spend part of the day with students of a higher grade. For example, a sixth grade student attends a seventh grade math class.

Background/Benefits:

Subject acceleration is the least radical type of acceleration. It allows students who have demonstrated that they have advanced knowledge and skills in a particular domain to access a curriculum at least one year in advance of their current year-for-age level. Where a student has specific talents in a subject area, such as mathematics or languages, single-subject acceleration may be beneficial to the student's overall academic achievement and school satisfaction. Research on subject acceleration indicates <http://www.accelerationinstitute.org> it may result in significant positive academic increases for both elementary and secondary students. Socialization was shown to be neither harmed nor enhanced.

Participation Requirements

Eligibility Criteria:

Given the aggressiveness of this approach, Derry Township School District requires that a comprehensive psychological evaluation of the student's intellectual functioning, academic skill level, and social-emotional adjustment need be completed prior to any decision for subject acceleration. To be considered for subject acceleration, the student must meet all of the following criteria:

- a. Have already scored in the 98th percentile or above on grade level achievement and aptitude tests. Grade level achievement tests to be considered are the following: PSSA, Keystone, DIBELS, STAR, 4Sight
- b. Demonstrate achievement of 140 or above on individual measures of achievement (Example: Woodcock Johnson IV Tests of Achievement)
- c. Demonstrate sound study attitudes, capability to work independently, and the desire to subject accelerate without parental pressure, and
- d. Be free of any serious social, emotional and/or physical adjustment problems that will negatively impact on this placement

It should be noted that subject acceleration is not an option reserved exclusively for students who have been formally identified as gifted.

Application Process

Initial Contact:

A parent /guardian or teacher can initiate subject acceleration. The student and parent/guardian should express an interest in subject acceleration to the teacher, principal, or gifted teacher, and complete and submit an application form. (See Subject Acceleration Application)

Screening:

A Subject Acceleration Committee comprised of a teacher, principal, school psychologist and gifted education teacher will review all applications in accordance with established entrance criteria. Students will be approved or disapproved for progress to a higher grade level course of study. Independent study and differentiated instruction strategies will also be considered as alternative options during this review.

Determination:

The student and parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the Committee’s decision regarding eligibility; and additional issues related to scheduling and transportation will be worked through with the parent/guardian, student and principal before a six-week trial placement is initiated. Following this trial period, if it is determined that this placement can successfully continue, progress will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the teacher and parent/guardian. The student will be placed in a curriculum no more than one year ahead of current placement, with the goal of providing appropriate challenge while allowing the student to perform at a high level within the new curriculum.

Deadlines:

Note: If a date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline moves to the next school day.

Last day for application for Subject Acceleration:	April 1 st
Notification of trial approval/denial:	June 1 st
Notification of formal approval/denial:	October 15 th

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SUBJECT ACCELERATION APPLICATION



To be completed by the student or parent/guardian:

Student Name: _____ Date _____

I request acceleration into the following course/level _____.

**Please submit a letter explaining how subject acceleration will benefit you/student.*

To be completed by parent or guardian:

I grant permission for assessments in application of grade acceleration.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

To be completed by school staff:

Date of receipt of application: _____

Gifted Teacher Signature: _____ Date _____

Building Principal Signature: _____ Date _____

Recommendation of Acceleration Committee:

Acceleration request approved: _____

Acceleration request denied: _____

Reasons/Notes _____

Building Principal Signature: _____ Date _____

Plan for student learning:

Attach the implementation plan including class placement or independent study plans, and any other important considerations.