



# Pathways to Acceleration

Office for Exceptional Children, 2014

**Ohio** | Department  
of Education

# Acceleration

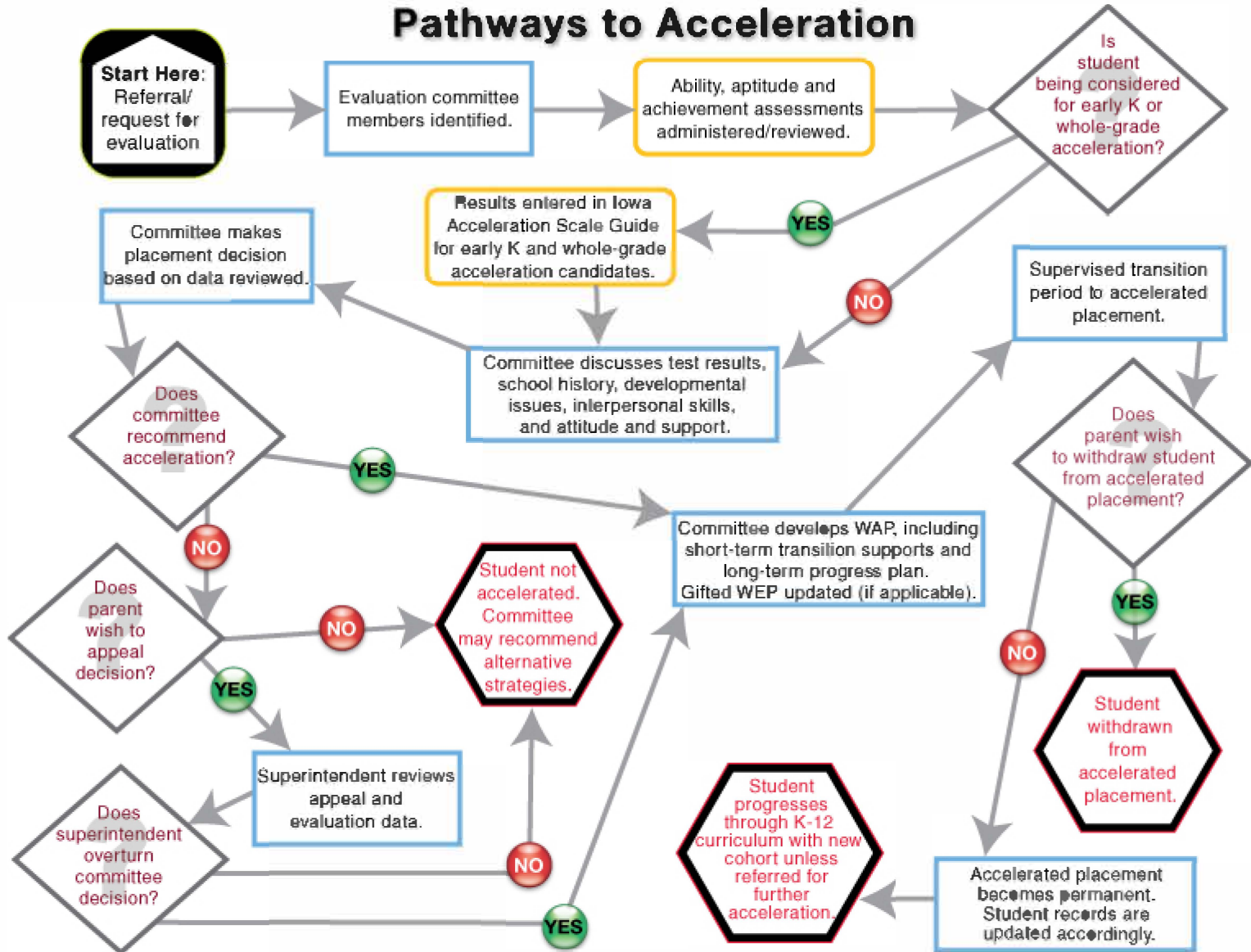
- Allows students to move academically at a faster pace;
- Designed for students interested, able, and ready to learn at faster pace;
- Based on objective data and critical social/emotional considerations; and
- Effective, inexpensive, available to any school district.

# Acceleration Process

## Process includes:

- Referral
- Data collection
- Data review by committee
- Committee decision
- Creation and implementation of Written Acceleration Plan
- Reporting to Educational Management Information System (EMIS)

# Pathways to Acceleration



# Referrals

- All districts must accept referrals from students, parents, teachers, pediatricians, and psychologists.
- Some districts *solicit* referrals through staff and parent communications, district Web site.

# Data Collection

- Tests administered or scores collected by school psychologist or gifted coordinator

Data provided to evaluation committee members

# Required Acceleration Committee Members

- Principal (or designee)
- Current Teacher
- Accelerated Grade/Content Teacher
- Parent or Legal Guardian
- Gifted Coordinator and/or Intervention Specialist (psychologist or guidance counselor with knowledge of acceleration practices if gifted personnel not available)

# Principal Role

- Solicit or accept student referrals
- Provide overview of staff roles and duties
- Assist with scheduling and/or transportation needs
- May assist in evaluation committee meeting(s) facilitation



# Current Teacher Role

- Provide information about:
  - Student's performance in current grade level
  - Student achievement (with examples)
  - Social/emotional factors

# Accelerated Teacher Role

- Inform committee about expectations for students at accelerated grade level

# Parent Role

- Provide information about:
  - Social/emotional considerations
  - Academically oriented achievements outside school
- Receive all the same data and social/emotional information that other committee members have access to

# Gifted Coordinator Role

- Serve as acceleration coordinator and/or evaluation committee facilitator
- Provide information about effective acceleration practices and tools to aid in process
- Administer tests (as per technical manual instructions)

# Gifted Intervention Specialist Role

- If student is identified as gifted, provide:
  - Information about student's performance during gifted instruction
  - Academic support during transition period

# Psychologist Role

- Optional role
- Administer tests
- Interpret test results
- Compare test results to other students of same age, grade or ability

# Guidance Counselor Role

- Optional role
- Help mediate conflicting viewpoints
- Address social/emotional issues affecting student achievement

# Special Education Coordinator

- Optional role
- Required if student referred for acceleration has dual exceptionalities
- Assist with Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan considerations



# Collecting Data

➤ **Use a variety of data and considerations including:**

- Ability tests
- Achievement tests
- Aptitude test (2 years above grade level)
- Other data such as examples of work or additional test data

# Other Considerations

- Social/developmental/emotional factors such as a sibling in the same grade level
- Student desire for accelerated placement or motivation

# Reaching a Decision

- Use consensus to make decision to accelerate or not accelerate
- If unable to reach consensus, use majority vote

# Decision Not to Accelerate

- If a candidate for whole-grade acceleration, consider appropriateness of single-subject acceleration
- Offer other curricular options such as differentiated instruction and some compacted or advanced content
- Offer enrichment opportunities such as competitions, contests and/or project-based learning

# Parent Appeal

- Parent has right to appeal evaluation committee's decision if not in agreement
- Appeal must be made in writing to district superintendent within 30 days of committee decision

# Decision to Accelerate

- Create a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP)
- Assign staff member (WAP facilitator) to ensure smooth implementation of acceleration

# Written Acceleration Plan Facilitator

- Address acquisition of minor “gaps in knowledge”
- Monitor student adjustment during transition period specified in the WAP
- Help coordinate move to different building
- Provide orientation session or transition activities

# Making it Permanent

- At the end of a successful transition period:
  - Written Acceleration Plan becomes part of the student's permanent record
  - Report the acceleration in Educational Management Information System (EMIS)



# Subject Acceleration for a Group of Students

In some cases a large group of individual students in middle school may meet objective criterion goals that districts address by offering an accelerated course for high school credit. The question arises about how to use the subject acceleration evaluation process.

# Evaluation Process for Group

- Obtain a variety of clear objective data (not teacher recommendations or grades **only**) for each student
- Obtain acceleration committee consensus that indicates the need for acceleration for each student
- Convene parent group meetings or parent/teacher conferences to discuss data and recommended placement
- Obtain parental consent for accelerated placement

# Considerations: State Testing

- In any subject, students will participate in all testing, including end-of-course tests, at their accelerated subject grade level;
- If there is no test or end-of-course test at the student's accelerated-subject grade level, the student will not be tested;
- This rule applies regardless whether students are formally accelerated on Written Acceleration Plans (WAPs.)

# Considerations: Third Grade Reading Guarantee

- The Third Grade Reading Guarantee applies to students accelerated to third grade or to third grade in reading.
- Students accelerated to fourth grade or to fourth grade in reading take fourth grade assessments and do not participate in the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

# Considerations: High School Transcript

- If a middle school student is accelerated to a high school level course, taught by a teacher licensed for that course then law stipulates the district **shall** give credit and start the high school transcript.

# Considerations: High School GPA

- Calculation of GPA is a district determination. It must be consistent for all students in similar situations and should not disadvantage a student because he/she is taking a course early or through another means.

# Reaching the Destination

- The evaluation committee does *not* have a crystal ball.
- They do have some good tools for predicting student success.

*National research shows high success with a large majority of students accelerated after a thorough evaluation process.*

# Related Resources

- [Acceleration Institute](#)
- [Introduction to the Iowa Acceleration Scale](#)
- [National Association for Gifted Children,  
Parent TIP Sheet on Acceleration](#)



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