# LaGrange Highlands
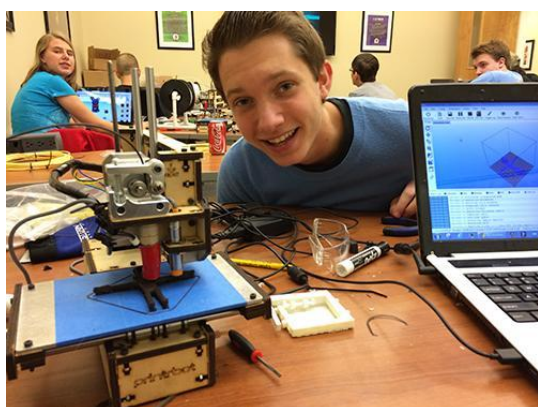# District 106

# *Programs and Services for Students with Gifts and Talents*

**September, 2018**

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*"Excellence in education is when <u>we</u> do everything that we can*

*to make sure <u>they</u> become everything that they can."*

*~ Carol Tomlinson*

# INTRODUCTION: STUDENTS WITH GIFTS AND TALENTS

In 2010, the *National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)* issued a position paper, created by a task force of 15 distinguished researchers, which highlighted a revised conception of students with talents and gifts. The premise of the document was that (a) previously, traditional conceptions of high ability or giftedness focused too narrowly on individuals with a high IQ and (b) programs for high-ability students should be driven by models of service options instead of solely by traditional identification methods.

An excerpt from the *NAGC* position paper includes:
- Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains.
- Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).
- The development of ability or talent is a lifelong process. It can be evident in young children as (a) exceptional performance on tests and/or other measures of ability, (b) as a rapid rate of learning, compared to other students of the same age, or (c) in actual achievement in a domain. As individuals mature through childhood to adolescence, however, achievement and high levels of motivation in the domain become the primary characteristics of their giftedness.
- Various factors can either enhance or inhibit the development and expression of abilities (n.p. 2010).

Further, the *NAGC* promotes referring to these students as "students with gifts and talents," not "gifted and talented students." The former phrase is preferred because it emphasizes the *individual* rather than the *exceptionality*, and it is consistent with usage in the field of special education. Further, "students with gifts and talents" includes "students with high ability," "students with advanced ability," advanced students," "students with advanced potential," and similar terms. The focus should be on what the school is doing to support the **needs** of students with gifts and talents, not on what **term** is used to describe the students and/or their programs and opportunities.

The *NAGC* also underscores the importance of noting that children with advanced abilities do not look or act alike. High ability, and the **potential** for high ability, exists in every demographic group and personality type. The term "students with gifts and talents" **includes** those students whose abilities are latent as well as students whose abilities already are manifest. Significantly, students whose economic, physical, emotional, or academic needs go unmet or serve as barriers to talent recognition or development are in danger of underachieving. Stakeholders must be strategically committed to seeking, recognizing, and nurturing the gifts and talents of students from chronically underrepresented groups (i.e., racially diverse, culturally diverse, linguistically diverse, from lower socioeconomic strata).

# DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY (DRAFT) REGARDING
# STUDENTS WITH GIFTS AND TALENTS

Reflecting the LaGrange Highlands District 106 mission, "We will ensure every child reaches his or her potential," we believe:
- Students with advanced talents and gifts need educational programs and opportunities that will challenge them through a continuum of service options, including in regular classroom settings, in enrichment opportunities, and in accelerated programs.
- Tailored and strategic programming is required to enable these students to make continuous progress in school.
- Students with advanced gifts and talents come from every cultural, racial, linguistic, and socio-economic group, and some students' gifts and talents may be latent or undeveloped.
- Students with gifts and talents need educator advocates who care about them, understand them, and can provide differentiation in the classroom, as well as options and opportunities outside of the classroom that will help them achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVING AND
# NURTURING STUDENTS WITH GIFTS AND TALENTS

The *National Association for Gifted Students* advocates for a focus on **programs** and **opportunities** that meet students' needs, **not** on the **labels** assigned to those students, programs, and/or opportunities. The critical and research-based hallmark of an effective and responsive pedagogy for high-ability students is the presence of an **integrated continuum of special services.** The *National Association for Gifted Children* defines a continuum of services as a range of offerings which provides administrators, teachers, parents, and students with a menu of options that are respectful of individual student differences and mindful of classroom and community resources.

According to research, an effective integrated continuum of services will include:

## A.    ACCELERATION
Acceleration occurs when students move through traditional curriculum at a rate faster or at an age younger than typical. Academic acceleration is well researched and documented to be highly effective to support the academic achievement of high-ability students.

The two types of acceleration options are:
1. *Content-Based Acceleration*: Content-based acceleration opportunities provide students with advanced content and skills before the expected age or grade level. With content-based acceleration, students may receive the accelerated instruction in either an advanced grade setting or in the classroom with their own grade level peers.

    Two recommended forms of content-based acceleration are:

- Single-Subject Acceleration (also called Individual-Subject Acceleration): A student participating in single-subject acceleration typically remains with peers of the same age and grade for most of the school day but receives higher-level instruction in the subject or class in which he or she has advanced ability; this is done for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.

  Another option involves having students engage in the higher grade-level instruction in their grade level classroom in lieu of the regular grade-level instruction. An example of single-subject acceleration is a second-grade student who reads at the fourth-grade level being instructed in a fourth-grade reading group, mastering fourth-grade reading standards and learning targets.

- Curriculum Compacting: Curriculum compacting is a strategy to streamline the learning activities for students who, prior to teaching, demonstrate proficiency on concepts and skills. With a compacted curriculum, a student moves through instructional material at a faster pace because the curriculum and skills already mastered are not retaught; the time gained is used for more advanced content instruction or enrichment activities. This important instructional strategy condenses, modifies, or streamlines the regular curriculum to reduce repetition of previously mastered material. "Compacting" what students already know allows time for acceleration or enrichment beyond the basic curriculum for students who would otherwise be simply practicing what they already know.

2. **Grade-Based Acceleration**: Grade-based acceleration approaches typically shorten the number of years a student spends in the K-12 educational system. This occurs when a student is placed in a higher grade level than is typical, based on the child's age, on a full-time basis for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging curricular opportunities. Whole-grade acceleration is not a process that simply speeds student progress; rather, it is an acknowledgement that the student has already achieved at the requisite level to qualify for a higher grade placement and further instruction in what has already been mastered is not beneficial.

Common grade-based acceleration options include:
- Early Admittance to Kindergarten (or "EAK"): EAK is a process by which a child may be admitted to enter kindergarten prior to the typical age (i.e., age 5 by September 1) if he/she meets predetermined criteria.

- Early Admittance to Grade 1 (or "EA1"): EA1 is a process by which a child may be admitted to first grade prior to the typical age (i.e., age 6 by September 1) if he/she meets predetermined criteria. Students who participated in EAK do not need to be reevaluated, unless requested by parents and/or school officials.

- Whole-Grade Acceleration (also known as "Grade Skipping"): Whole Grade Acceleration is the practice of assigning a student, on a full-time basis, to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age, and it is done for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

**B. ENRICHMENT**

Enrichment for students with advanced abilities is defined as strategies that supplement or go beyond standard grade-level work, but do not result in advanced placement or potential credit. Enrichment activities, which may occur in the general classroom or in a separate setting, provide students with richer and more varied educational experiences. Unlike acceleration, which is intended to move a student through the curriculum more quickly or provide access to accelerated curriculum, **the goal of enrichment is to add depth and breadth to the general curriculum.** Taking many forms, recommended enrichment options include activities, assignments, and opportunities which extend classroom work, such as:

- adapted curricular units, tiered assignments, projects, and independent study in an area of strength or interest;
- service delivery options that develop skills and areas of interest (e.g., Saturday programs, after-school programs, and summer school programs);
- academic clubs and/or competitions.

**C. DIFFERENTIATION**

Although it is common to hear educators discuss the ways in which content, products, and/or processes are differentiated for students who are struggling, educational experts contend it is less common to hear how differentiation occurs for students with advanced abilities. This should not be the case, however, because high-ability students also require and deserve differentiation just as much as students who are work at or below grade level. **Because of the wide variance among high-ability students, it is essential they receive thoughtfully differentiated curriculum and instruction.** Effective differentiation includes adaptations in content, process, product, affect, and learning environment in response to student readiness, interests, and learning profile; this is done in order to ensure appropriate challenge and support for the full range of learners in a classroom, including classes for students with advanced abilities. Effective differentiation involves designing lessons based on students' current competencies; grouping students by shared interest, topic, or skill level; assessing students formatively; and making adjustments to meet students' needs.

The concept of identifying and presenting students with differentiated tasks at a moderate level of difficulty aligns with Vygotsky's proposition that an individual learns best when working in his or her Zone of Proximal Development (or ZPD). The Zone of Proximal Development refers to a point of mastery where a child cannot successfully function alone, but can succeed with educator-provided scaffolding or support; it is within this range that new learning takes place.

Examples of effective differentiation (i.e., proactive and student-centered) for students with advanced abilities include:

- Flexible Grouping: Studies found the use of small, flexible teaching-learning groups for reading and mathematics was especially effective for students with talents and gifts in the early and middle grades. With both cross-grade flexible groups and within-class flexible groups for reading and or math, students are grouped and regrouped based on progress and needs (e.g., guided reading groups, guided math groups).
  - Current grade K example: 6 flexible reading groups, Instructional Levels B to P
  - Current grade 1 example: 5 flexible reading groups, Instructional Levels B to U

- Cluster Grouping: Cluster grouping describes a grouping assignment for students with gifts and talents in the regular heterogeneous classroom. Typically, a group (e.g., 4-6) of high-ability students with similar needs, abilities, and/or interests are "clustered" in the same classroom, which allows the teacher to more efficiently meet their needs, as opposed to one or two of these students being placed in each of four sections at that grade level.
- Student Choice: Providing student choice opportunities (e.g., self-selecting topics for research and projects) is motivating to students with gifts and talents.
- Academic Support: High-ability students may need scaffolding and/or academic intervention support. For example, a student with advanced ability may (a) have had limited opportunities to master information/skills as a result of discrimination, poverty, or cultural barriers; (b) have physical or learning disabilities; and/or (c) have motivational or social-emotional needs. In these instances, effective academic support and intervention will recognize, affirm, and build on a student's strengths, while also identifying, understanding, and compensating for gaps or needs in schools, families, and communities.

By contrast, differentiation for students with high ability is **not** (a) giving more of the same kind of work or busy work to a student who has demonstrated mastery; (b) placing and keeping students in inflexible/static groups; (c) expecting students with advanced abilities to automatically have all of the prerequisite skills and knowledge required for a lesson/concept.

## D.    SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
Educational systems must meet the social-emotional needs of students with advanced ability. This will include addressing areas such as self-concept, underachievement, peer relations, peer pressure, and learning profiles. Two common recommendations for social-emotional interventions include counseling and psychological support. Within these supports, examples of focus areas and strategies include (a) support, 1:1 and/or small group, to learn coping strategies for dealing with issues such as negative peer pressure, stress, and discriminatory practices; and (b) mentoring programs.

## E.    OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS – Sections to be developed
   **1.    Selecting Students for Participation in Programming**
   a.  Using Standardized Assessments Appropriately
   b.  Utilizing Multiple Criteria

   **2.    Developing Educators**
   a.  Training to Understand and Meet the Needs of High-Ability Students
   b.  Training to Foster a Responsive Multicultural Perspective

   **3.    Monitoring Program Demographics**
   a.  Data and Analysis Regarding Which Students are Accessing Programs
   b.  Data and Analysis Regarding the Progress of Students Accessing Programs

# CURRENT PROGRAMMING AT HIGHLANDS
# FOR STUDENTS WITH GIFTS AND TALENTS

Note: These charts are not all encompassing, represent
key examples, and are still a work in progress.

| Kindergarten | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas*<br>*(ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Early Admittance to Kindergarten<br><br>Content Based: Math and ELA | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Guided Reading, Guided Writing, Lexia, Scootpad, literacy centers<br>Math: Guided math, Zearn, math centers, homework choice menu<br>Science: Differentiated content (e.g., leveled trade books), alternative experiments and activities<br>Social Science: open-ended/higher-level questions | Art: "Choice and Challenge" in subject matter, materials, and art-making techniques<br>Technology: utilize above-grade level standards, independent exploration, choice |
| *Enrichment* | Social Science: **Time for Kids** periodical<br>Summer School: Learning with Legos, Invent Build and Explore, Science Explorers, Let's Write | Summer School: Art |

| Grade 1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Early Admittance to 1st grade<br><br>Content Based: Math and ELA | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Guided Reading, Guided Writing, Words Their Way, Lexia, Literacy Centers and, WIN (What I Need) activities<br>Math: Guided math, Math Tiles, Khan, WIN<br>Science: Differentiated content (e.g., leveled trade book), alternative experiments and activities<br>Social Studies: inquiry-based learning | Art: "Choice and Challenge" in subject matter, materials, and art-making techniques<br>Technology: utilize above-grade level standards, independent exploration, choice |
| *Enrichment* | Social Studies: field trips, **Time For Kids** periodical<br>Summer School: Learning with Legos, Invent, Build, and Explore, Science Explorers, Let's Write | Summer school: Art |

| Grade 2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes<br><br>Content Based: Math and ELA | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Guided Reading, Guided Writing, word study, ReadWorks, StoryWorks<br>Math: Guided math, Map to Khan, Zearn, problem solving<br>Science: Differentiated content (e.g., leveled text), alternative experiments and activities<br>Social Studies: leveled texts, inquiry units | Art: "Choice and Challenge" in subject matter, materials, and art-making techniques<br>Technology: utilize above-grade level standards, independent exploration, choice |
| *Enrichment* | Summer School: Invent and Explore through STEAM, Science Explorers, What do Scientists and Engineers do?<br>Interventionists Enrichment Groups for reading and math | Summer school: Art, Introduction to Computers and Technology |

| Grade 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes<br><br>Content Based: Math and ELA | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Guided Reading, Guided Writing, Scootpad, MobyMax, WIN, Readworks, leveled text,<br>Math: Guided math, choice, MAP to Khan, Zearn, WIN<br>Science: Differentiated content (e.g., leveled texts), alternative experiments and activities<br>Social Studies: text, inquiry units | Art: "Choice and Challenge" in subject matter, materials, and art-making techniques<br>Technology: utilize above-grade level standards, independent exploration, choice<br>Spanish: Utilize higher proficiency levels on assignments |
| *Enrichment* | STEM Club<br>Summer School: Invent and Explore through STEAM,<br>What do Scientists and Engineers Do?<br>Interventionists Enrichment Groups for reading and math | Summer school: Art, Introduction to Programming and Coding, Introduction to Computers and Technology |

| Grade 4 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes<br><br>Content Based: Math and ELA | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Guided Reading, Guided Writing, stations, WIN, and Word Study<br>Math: Guided math, stations, and Khan<br>Science: Differentiated content (e.g., leveled texts), alternative experiments and activities<br>Social Studies: Inquiry Units | Art: "Choice and Challenge" in subject matter, materials, and art-making techniques<br>Technology: utilize above-grade level standards, independent exploration, choice<br>Spanish: Utilize higher proficiency levels on assignments |
| *Enrichment* | STEM Club<br>Summer School: Chemistry and Hands-on Engineering and Design, What do Scientists and Engineers do?, Invent and Explore through STEAM, Games Galore | Art Club<br>Summer school: Art, Introduction to Computer Programming and Coding |

| Grade 5 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes<br>Content Based: Advanced Math & Advanced ELA | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Choice and varied reading levels with novels,<br>    ScootPad, WIN<br>Math: Differentiated problem solving, MAP to Khan, pre-assessments and learning paths<br>Science: Leveled texts, extension activities<br>Social Studies: Leveled texts | Art: "Choice and Challenge" in subject matter, materials, and art-making techniques<br>Spanish: Utilize higher proficiency levels on assignments |
| *Enrichment* | Summer School: Chemistry and Hands-on Engineering and Design, What do Scientists and Engineers do?, Games Galore, History on Film | Art Club<br>Summer school: Art |

| Grade 6 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas:* <br> *Math, Literacy, Science, Social Studies* | *Other Area(s):* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes <br><br> Content Based: Advanced ELA & Advanced Math | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: novels, writing, word study, centers <br> Math: problem solving, STEM, MAP to Khan, pre-assessments <br> Science: Leveled texts, stations, interactive labs <br> Social Studies: Leveled texts, projects, virtual field trips, games | |
| *Enrichment* | ELA: Millionaire's Club, Great America Reading, Read to Succeed, Battle of the Books <br> Math: Math Club <br> Math/Science: Project Lead The Way (STEM) <br> Science: WSCAE Science Fair, Science Club, online contests, local events and programs <br> NUMATS: SAT, ACT, and subsequent NUMATS courses <br> Summer School: Chemistry and Hands-on Engineering and Design, What do Scientists and Engineers Do?, Games Galore, History on Film, STEM | Summer school: Art <br> Art Club <br> WSCAE Art Fair <br> Tech Club <br> Musical <br> Band/orchestra: Master Class, Band Camp, Local Contests, Vandercook School of Music Contest |

| Grade 7 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes <br><br> Content Based: Advanced ELA & Advanced Math | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Novel choices, MAP strand activities, and Writing Units <br> Math: Problem solving, stations, leveled assignments, task projects <br> Science: Labs & articles <br> Social Science: process, products, assessments, and articles | World Languages: Variety and choice on novels, utilize appropriate proficiency levels for writing speaking and listening |
| *Enrichment* | Math/Science: Project Lead The Way <br> ELA: Millionaire's Club, Battle of the Books, What's the Buzz <br> Math: Math Team <br> NUMATS: SAT, ACT, and subsequent NUMATS courses and Civic Weekend <br> Science: Tech club, Science club <br> Summer School: Chemistry and Hands-On Engineering and Design, What do Scientists and Engineers Do?, Games Galore, History on Film, STEM <br> Springfield Trip: State Capitol, Lincoln Sites, and National Cemetery | WSCAE Art Fair <br> Cultural Trips: Costa Rica (2018), Paris (2019) |

| Grade 8 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Core Content Areas* | *Other Area(s)* |
| *Acceleration* | Grade Based: Yes<br><br>Content Based: Advanced ELA and Advanced Math, LTHS Geometry | |
| *Differentiation Practices, Strategies, and Tools* | ELA: Choice assignments, supplemental readings, flexible grouping, leveled texts, student choice, visuals and graphic organizers<br>Math: Differentiated task projects, assessments<br>Science: Student-led discussions, develop questions for peers, flexible grouping, graphic organizers, leveled tasks, assignments<br>Social Studies: project choices, leveled tests and quizzes, leveled texts/readings, leveled instructional techniques | World Languages: novels, proficiency levels for writing speaking and listening |
| *Enrichment* | ELA: What's the Buzz, Battle of the Books, writing contests<br>Math: Math Team<br>Math/Science: Project Lead The Way (STEM)<br>NUMATS: SAT, ACT, and subsequent NUMATS courses and Civic Weekend<br>Washington, D.C. | WSCAE Art Fair<br>Art Club<br>Cultural Trips: Costa Rica (2018), Paris (2019) |

# APPENDICES

Note: These criteria are routinely evaluated and revised as needed. This document represents the current practices and protocols. If and when changes are made, the updated document will be posted to the district website and dated.

### *Early Admittance to Kindergarten (EAK) and First Grade (EA1)*
Students wanting early admittance into kindergarten or 1st grade should show emotional maturity, good social adjustment, exceptional academic skills, and superior intelligence. The decision to enter school early can have a profound effect on a student's academic and social performance throughout his/her school career.

Parents interested in early admittance must submit a completed Request for Acceleration Application prior to August 1st for 2018 and May 1st for 2019.

### *Early Admittance to Kindergarten (EAK)*

Criteria to qualify:
- Score in the 75th percentile (fall norms) on AIMSweb early numeracy and literacy probes
- Score at the 75th percentile on ESGI ( Educational Software for Guiding Instruction) assessments
- Read and comprehend at or above a level C passage at the independent or instructional level using Fountas and Pinnell's benchmark leveled literacy system.
- Score 2.5 or above on the district's kindergarten writing (narrative, informational, and/or opinion/argument) assessment
- In addition, the Iowa Acceleration Guide will be used to collect more information and inform the conversation.

### *Early Admittance to First Grade (EA1)*

Criteria to qualify:

- Score in the 75th percentile (fall norms) on AIMSweb early numeracy and literacy probes for 1st grade
- Able to read and comprehend a level F passage at the independent level using Fountas and Pinnell's benchmark leveled literacy system
- Score a 3.5 or better on the kindergarten grade writing (narrative, informational, opinion/argument) assessment
- Scores a 95% or better on math assessment (end of kindergarten)
- The Iowa Acceleration Guide will be used to collect more information and inform the conversation.

## <u>Whole Grade Acceleration for Students Enrolled in Grades 1-7</u>

A teacher, administrator, or parent may initiate the request for consideration by completing the *Request for Acceleration Application.*

To be considered for acceleration the student must demonstrate:

- Test scores in the 95$^{th}$ percentile for reading **and** mathematics on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- Receive a scaled score of at least 3.5 on local writing (narrative, informational, opinion/argument) assessments
- Score a 95% or better on end of year math assessment
- State assessment: ? (new assessment in development, anticipated Spring 2019)
- The Iowa Acceleration Guide may be used to collect more information and inform the conversation
- A commitment to the opportunity and challenge of acceleration.

## <u>Subject Level Acceleration</u>

**Math**
- Test scores in the 95$^{th}$ percentile for mathematics on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- Score 95% or better on classroom assessments
- Double acceleration: score 85% or higher on appropriate and designated end-of-year assessment
- State assessment: ? (new assessment in development, anticipated Spring 2019)
- The Iowa Acceleration Guide may be used to collect more information and inform the conversation.
- A commitment to the opportunity and challenge of acceleration.

**ELA**
- Test scores in the 95$^{th}$ percentile for mathematics on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
- Receive a scaled score of at least 3.5 on local writing (narrative, informational, opinion/argument) assessments
- Score 95% or better on classroom assessments
- State assessment: ? (new assessment in development, anticipated Spring 2019)
- The Iowa Acceleration Guide may be used to collect more information and inform the conversation.
- A commitment to the opportunity and challenge of acceleration.

### Process

- Once the *Request for Acceleration* Application is received, the Director of Teaching and Learning will contact the parents or guardians to explain the process and procedures.
- Students will be assessed within 30 days of request.
- Teacher questionnaire submitted by current teacher.
- A team of teachers and administrators will analyze student assessment scores and data no later than 15 days after the conclusion of the last assessment or screener. Team members will vary depending upon the age of the student and the type of acceleration request. In most cases, however, the team will be comprised of the building principal, director of teaching and learning, director of student services, teacher(s), and/or other support personnel (e.g., school psych, interventionist, instructional coach) as needed.
- Within 60 days of the initial request, a meeting will be scheduled with parents or guardians to discuss the results and a recommendation will be made.
- If acceleration is recommended, a transition plan will be developed.
- If acceleration is not recommended, parents or guardians may appeal to the Superintendent within 30 days.
- Students may only be recommended for acceleration one time within a 12-month period.