



River Forest  
Public Schools

## **Process for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, Early Entrance to First Grade, Subject Acceleration, and Whole Grade Acceleration**

### **Introduction**

The mission of District 90 is “To inspire a love of learning and ensure educational excellence for every child.” District 90 strives to support the learning trajectories of all its students through rigorous instruction and appropriate academic challenge. For some students who are in need of a higher level of instruction, providing access to a curriculum and a learning environment aligned to a grade level typically associated with older students is appropriate. This document provides definitions of acceleration, describes acceleration criteria for early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, the process through which District 90 makes acceleration decisions, and how parents can determine if their child is eligible to be considered for early entrance to kindergarten or first grade, subject acceleration, or whole-grade acceleration. This procedure shall be applied equitably and systematically to all students who are referred for acceleration regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, gifted and talented status, twice-exceptionality, English language proficiency, or socio-economic background. Students who meet the locally determined criteria for participation are eligible to apply.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), “Public Act 100-0421, The Accelerated Placement Act expands services to **ALL** students, *not only those identified as gifted and talented by local policy*, who demonstrate high ability and may benefit from accelerated placement. This Act requires the development of a local policy to identify such students through a fair and equitable decision-making and multiple measure assessment process.”

Acceleration requires a high degree of academic readiness. Measurements on standardized tests, classroom-based assessments, and teacher observation can provide evidence that a student has mastered the Illinois Learning Standard benchmarks for their currently expected/assigned grade level. This evidence is required in order to determine if the student is ready for faster-paced or more challenging curricula. Student motivation and social-emotional maturity are also considered important factors in the decision-making process.

### **Definitions**

#### **Accelerated Placement**

Accelerated placement is the process of placing a student at the instructional level that best aligns with their current level of academic achievement. Students typically eligible for acceleration are performing at an academic level that requires access to a curriculum and a learning environment of older children either through early entrance to kindergarten, first grade, whole grade level acceleration, or single subject acceleration.

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten**

Early entrance to kindergarten is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will not yet be five years old by September 1 of that school year and whose birthday falls between September 2 and September 30, as documented by a certified copy of the birth certificate.

## **Early Entrance to First Grade**

Early entrance to first grade is the admission of a student to first grade who will not yet be six years old by September 1 of the school year and whose birthday falls between September 2 and December 31, as documented by a certified copy of the birth certificate. Students who are younger than six upon starting first grade but who were admitted to early kindergarten do not need to be reevaluated prior to admission to first grade.

## **Whole Grade Acceleration**

Whole grade acceleration involves assigning a student to a grade level that is higher than the child's current grade level than is typical for the student's age on a full-time basis. The purpose of this placement is to provide access to an appropriately challenging learning environment.

## **Individual Subject Acceleration**

Individual subject acceleration involves assigning a student to a higher instructional level in a specific content area than is typical at the student's age-appropriate grade level to provide access to an appropriately challenging learning environment in one or more subject areas.

Acceleration may not be appropriate for students in the following instances:

- Is sufficiently challenged by the curriculum and his/her current grade level
- Has a sibling at the grade level to which the student would be accelerated
- Would be significantly less emotionally mature than typical students at the grade level to which he/she may be accelerated
- Responds negatively to the possibility of acceleration

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten and First Grade Referral Process**

If your child meets the criteria for consideration, please download and complete the application through the link below. Please submit the form by March 31 (of the current year) to River Forest Public Schools, District 90, Attn: Dr. Alison Hawley, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, 7776 Lake Street, River Forest, IL 60305 or send a digital copy to [hawleya@district90.org](mailto:hawleya@district90.org).

Applications received after the March 31 deadline (of the current year) will not be accepted.

Individual consideration will be given to applicants that move to River Forest after March 31. No students will be considered for early entrance after June 30.

**Applicants interested in Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade must first affirm their River Forest residency with the District Office and pre-register prior to having the application processed.** Please contact Josephine Ribaud, D90 Registrar, to make an appointment at (708) 771-8282 or [ribaudoj@district90.org](mailto:ribaudoj@district90.org).

District 90 will accept outside evaluations that have been conducted within the previous 12 months by a reputable, licensed psychologist. Completed evaluations must be comprehensive and reflect the testing that would have otherwise been conducted by District 90.

## **Early Entry to Kindergarten and First Grade Application**

### **Whole Grade and Subject Acceleration Application Process**

This process may be initiated at the request of the school or parent. **Parents initiating this process should contact the school principal.**

### **Evaluation Process**

The evaluation team shall consist of the following individuals: building principal, school psychologist, instructional specialist(s), current classroom teacher(s), and parent(s) or caregiver(s).

- The deadline to submit a request for possible acceleration is March 31.
- Assessments will be administered no earlier than April 15.
- Parents or caregivers will be notified by the school principal no later than June 30.
- Students will only be considered for early entrance or acceleration once.
- The district decision is considered final.

### **Placement Measures**

#### **Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI)**

The WPPSI is an individually administered intelligence test designed for children between ages two and a half and seven years and three months old. It generates a Full-Scale IQ that presents a child's general intellectual ability. This assessment can support admissions decisions, as well as general academic evaluations. Applicants must achieve a score of 130 in order to be considered for early entrance to kindergarten or first grade.

#### **Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)**

The WISC is an individually administered intelligence test designed for children between the ages of 6 and 16 years of age. It generates a Full-Scale IQ that represents a child's general intellectual ability. This assessment can support admissions decisions, as well as general academic evaluations. Applicants must achieve a score of 130 or higher in order to be considered for whole grade acceleration.

#### **Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)**

The Iowa Acceleration Scale is a tool designed to guide educators in making important decisions regarding whether a particular student is a candidate for whole-grade acceleration. The tool is used by child-study teams to objectively determine through a series of assessment questions the degree to which whole grade acceleration would be recommended for a particular child. The assessment considers questions related to IQ, motivation, social-emotional development, and relationships.

## Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

MAP is an adaptive assessment that is administered for reading and math in grades 3-8 and is intended to assess an individual student's growth and achievement.

## Illinois Assessment for Readiness (IAR)

The IAR is a state-mandated assessment aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and grade-level benchmarks for grades 3-8 in English language arts and mathematics. This assessment determines student proficiency with grade-level standards.

## Local Assessments

Local assessments are tightly aligned to grade-level classroom instruction and are intended to assess learning based on standards-based instruction delivered across the school year. Local assessments utilize both end-of-unit assessments and teacher interview formats.

## Teacher Recommendation

Recommending teachers will be required to complete a questionnaire and provide evidence of student work.

## Early Entrance to Kindergarten Criteria

In order to be considered eligible for early entrance to kindergarten, applicants must achieve a minimum score of 130 or above on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) in order to continue with the application process.

WPPSI	Iowa Acceleration Scale
130 or above	60-80

## Early Entrance to First Grade Criteria

In order to be considered eligible for early entrance to first grade, applications must achieve a minimum score of 130 or above on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) in order to continue with the application process.

WPPSI	Iowa Acceleration Scale	Fountas & Pinnell	Local Assessment
130 or above	60-80	Level D or above	Subset of end of unit assessments in kindergarten for ELA and Math

## Subject Acceleration

Students must meet all criteria to be considered a candidate for subject acceleration.

<b>Illinois Assessment of Readiness* (IAR)</b>	<b>Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)</b>	<b>Local Assessment</b>
Exceeds score in content area	98th percentile for three consecutive test administrations	Must score at least one grade level above current placement

\*IAR required only for students in Grades 3-7 requesting subject acceleration.

## Whole Grade Acceleration

Students must meet all criteria to be considered a candidate for whole grade acceleration. Applicants must achieve a minimum score of 130 or above on the WISC.

<b>Illinois Assessment of Readiness* (IAR)</b>	<b>Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)</b>	<b>Iowa Acceleration Scale</b>	<b>Local Assessments</b>
Overall exceeds score in Math and ELA	99th percentile for three consecutive test administrations	60-80	Subset of each end of unit assessment for the year that will be skipped

\*IAR required only for students in Grades 3-7 requesting whole grade acceleration.

## Accelerated Placement Notification

Parents will be notified of placement decision through written communication no later than June 30.

Should your child meet the criteria for whole-grade or subject acceleration, a team consisting of the principal, instructional specialists, and classroom teacher will convene to develop a transition plan. The team will meet with parents or caregivers to review the plan and ensure that the child is supported while adjusting to the higher academic standards and social-emotional expectations in the new educational environment.

The accelerated placement evaluation process is designed to review the most pertinent and relevant data to determine best-fit placements for students. In some instances, grade level acceleration may not be the best fit for a student even though it is indicated by the objective data considered during the evaluation process. Monitoring the student during the transition to ensure the acceleration decision is aligned with the child's best interest is essential. Parents or caregivers may request a return to the child's prior age-appropriate placement within the first semester/trimester the change in placement is made.