

Gifted Acceleration

Acceleration, advancing one or more grade levels in a subject or "skipping" one or more grade levels, sometimes proves a viable option for gifted learners. However, before making the decision to accelerate, a team of individuals – including the student, the parents, one or more administrators, the school psychologist, and – possibly – the student's current and potential teacher(s) – must assemble to assess the student's readiness for acceleration, most often utilizing the formal *IOWA Acceleration Scale*.

Before initiating the referral, it is essential that both the student and his/her family think carefully through the many areas as objectively as possible, including:

- ~ the student's current academic achievement;
- ~ the student's relationships with family, peers, teachers, and administrators;
- ~ the student's academic potential;
- ~ the student's involvement (or potential involvement) in extracurricular activities; and
- ~ the potential impact of "skipping ahead" in terms of family, peer, and other significant relationships.

Acceleration is a wonderful option for many gifted students; however, for some students, other options – such as enrichment, honors courses, and classroom-based differentiation – are better. The Belin-Blank Center has an extensive list of questions and considerations for students and parents considering acceleration listed here:

<http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/Resources/QA/>

If you have thoughtfully and strongly considered the ramifications of acceleration for your student and your family and would like more information; or, if you would like to initiate the acceleration process, please contact Erica Baer, Director of Student Achievement, at ebaer@mresc.org. As another option, print the *Gifted Referral Form* linked on your school district's gifted information page. You can then mail the document (via "snail mail") to:

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