

Gifted and Talented Education Policy

International guidelines on suitability for accelerated progression

International guidelines to assist in determining gifted students' suitability for accelerated progression include:

- It is not necessary for every gifted student to be psychometrically tested. However, in the case of students who are being considered for accelerated progression, there should be a comprehensive psychological assessment of their intellectual functioning, academic skill levels and social-emotional adjustment by a trained psychologist.
- Academically, the student should demonstrate skill levels above the average of the class they desire to enter.
- Socially and emotionally, the student should be free of any serious adjustment problems. Principals should be aware, however, that in some gifted students social or emotional difficulties may have been caused by inappropriately low grade placement. In such cases the situation may be alleviated by accelerated progression.
- The student should be in good physical health. The student's physical stature, however, should not impact on the decision regarding acceleration except in competitive sport.
- It is important that the student should not feel unduly pressured by parents/guardians. The student themselves should be eager to move ahead.
- The receiving teacher must have positive attitudes towards the grade advancement and must be willing to help the student adjust to the new situation.
- Judgments about the student's social and emotional maturity should include input from the student's parents/carers and the psychologist. Gifted students are sometimes rejected by their classmates. It is important that teachers do not confuse the absence of close peer relationships with social immaturity.
- Ideally, grade advancement should occur at natural transition points, such as the beginning of the school year. However, mid-year advancement may sometimes be desirable if the student's current teacher and receiving teacher agree that it would be a smooth transition.
- All cases of accelerated progression should be arranged on a trial basis of at least six weeks. The student should be aware that if the trial period is not a success, they will return to the

original grade placement. It is important that in such a circumstance the student should not be made to feel that they have 'failed'.

- Care should be exercised not to build up excessive expectations from grade advancement. A small minority of gifted students is so far advanced in their intellectual or academic development that one year of accelerated progression may still leave them bored at school. For such students further advancement may be advisable at a later period in their schooling.
- Decisions regarding accelerated progression should be based on facts rather than myths. The research literature on acceleration reveals that accelerated progression benefits the gifted student both academically and socially. Conversely, failure to advance a highly gifted student may result in poor study habits, apathy, lack of motivation and maladjustment.

Adapted from Feldhusen, J.F., T.B & Black, K.N., (1986). *Guidelines for grade advancement of precocious children*, *Roeper Review*, 9(1), 25-27,