

Skipping a Grade? You Need a Policy for That.

The Illinois School Code has been amended to codify the practice of accelerating students in certain subjects or grades. Public Act 100-421 amends Article 14A of the Illinois School Code by requiring school districts to adopt a policy regarding the accelerated placement of students. Pursuant to the new law, “accelerated placement” means, but is not limited to, early entrance into kindergarten or first grade, accelerating a student in a single subject, and grade acceleration. Each district’s policy must contain certain components:

1. A provision which provides that participation in accelerated placement is not limited to those children who have been identified as gifted and talented, but rather is open to all children who demonstrate high ability and who may benefit from accelerated placement.
2. A fair and equitable decision-making process that involves multiple persons and includes a student’s parents or guardians.

3. Procedures for notifying the parents or guardians of a child of a decision affecting that child's participation in an accelerated placement program.
4. An assessment process that includes multiple, valid reliable indicators.

The policy may also contain certain other components such as:

1. Procedures for annually informing the community at-large, including parents or guardians, about the accelerated placement program and the methods used for the identification of children eligible for accelerated placement.
2. A process for referral that allows for multiple referrers.
3. A provision which provides that children participating in an accelerated placement program and their parents or guardians will be provided a written plan detailing the type of acceleration the child will receive and strategies to support the child.

The Act is effective July 1, 2018. We expect that IASB's Policy Services will soon issue a PRESS model policy which satisfies the requirements of this new law. However, the law appears to

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leave considerable discretion to districts to develop policies aligned to the district's mission and vision for accelerating students. We therefore recommend that districts carefully review the model policy before adopting it. In addition to the policy itself, districts will need to adopt and implement procedures and processes required by the policy and this public act.

If you have questions about this topic, please contact one of our attorneys in Oak Brook (630.928.1200) or Flossmoor (708.799.6766).