

Math Acceleration

Is math acceleration for my student?



The Blue Valley School District provides an enriched mathematics experience for all students in grades K-8 with opportunities for extension. For some students, acceleration may be considered. Acceleration in math impacts the student's future instruction in all subsequent grades and is not an action to be taken lightly. The profile of a strong acceleration candidate would include the following characteristics:

- Scores that are consistently *well above* the class average on daily work and assessments
- Interest in and successful completion of classroom enrichment/extension opportunities
- Social and emotional maturity
- Exemplary work and study habits
- Strong interest in math and motivation to do challenging work

Rigor & The Acceleration Process

Because acceleration in math results in a student skipping an entire year of grade-level mathematics instruction, the acceleration process is rigorous. The process in Blue Valley evaluates a student's mastery of the skills in the level to be skipped. The acceleration process requires a significant level of performance so that accelerated students can be successful in their next math course. Because mathematical skills build on one another from one year to the next, gaps in knowledge can be amplified for inappropriately accelerated students and their level of success in advanced high school mathematics can be affected.

Candidates for Acceleration

Not all students who do well in mathematics are good candidates for acceleration. Not only should a student consistently outperform grade-level standards, they should also enjoy math, be socially and emotionally mature, be self-motivated and desire the challenge. Students who are good candidates for acceleration meet all of the benchmarks to the right.

Daily Schedule Impacts

Students who are accelerated often attend math class at another physical location than their home school. Fifth grade students attend math at their middle school, while eighth grade students attend at their high school building. Schedules at the different levels do not match perfectly and accelerated students' daily schedule is typically impacted; students may miss portions of the morning activities or class periods at their home school. For more information about how this would affect your child, contact their school to learn about how this is handled at your student's specific school site.

The Final Word

Acceleration is great for some students, but not for everyone. It should not be taken lightly given the long-term ramifications for students. Families and school staff have the collective goal of students' success over the course of their entire educational career in Blue Valley, therefore both short-term and long-term ramifications of acceleration should be weighed in the process. Decision making around acceleration should always include the consideration of long-term goals, career interest and the need to take advanced calculus in high school.

KS State Assessment Score	4 (for multiple years preferred)	
i-Ready Winter Diagnostic Composite Score	3rd - 512 4th - 521	5th - 535 6th - 541
i-Ready Winter Diagnostic	At or above grade level performance in All Four Domains indicating at or above grade level performance in all grade-level math domains.	
Classroom Performance	Consistently performing well-above grade-level peers. Grade reports reflect highest possible scores.	
Student Disposition	The student is interested in being challenged and committed to hard work in mathematics.	

Secondary Mathematics Programming

Middle School & Course Self-Selection

Middle school standards have changed over the years and now integrate challenging algebra much earlier. There are current 6th and 7th grade standards which were part of the 8th grade or Algebra curriculum in the past. Current Algebra I standards previously were in Algebra II classes. The rigor has been ramped up significantly, making middle school mathematics challenging for even very successful students. Acceleration should be considered very carefully for this reason.

Students self-select their math course in middle school. Sixth and seventh grade students can choose to take Integrated Math or Advanced Integrated Math in middle school. Eighth grade students can opt into Integrated Math 8 or Algebra I. Students who want to switch from an Integrated course to an Advanced course or Algebra I can opt to take a summer school course that prepares students for that challenge. Students with winter i-Ready diagnostic scores to the right are good candidates for the advanced courses.

i-Ready Winter Diagnostic Score
 5th 521
 6th 535
 7th 541

High School & Calculus

Students' high school math experiences prepare them for their career and college choices. They are courses that require a solidified foundation of number sense and algebraic thinking. Below outlines typical, but not all, math progressions.

Students who take Algebra I in 8th grade with no acceleration are on track to potentially take AP Calculus BC. This can be accomplished by taking Honors Geometry as a freshman, a common path for students who take Algebra I as 8th graders, as noted in the bottom row of the chart below.

