

## **641 STUDENT ACCELERATION TO HIGHER-LEVEL ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES POLICY**

It shall generally be the practice of School District No. 518 not to accelerate students from Middle School (grades 7-8) athletic programs to High School (grades 9-12) athletic programs.

### GUIDELINES:

Participation by students on athletic teams representing the secondary school of District No. 518 will normally be limited to those students representing the school, which they attend for regular classes. Such teams constitute an integral part of the total education program and are primarily designed to serve the needs of the students of that school. This represents a basic guideline for athletic participation in our school district. However, on rare occasions, a middle school athlete in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade may be physically and emotionally mature, as well as athletically gifted, that consideration should be given to allowing that student to leave his/her middle school team and compete at the high school level. Proposals for acceleration of 7<sup>th</sup> grade participants will only be considered for acceleration upon completion of their 7<sup>th</sup> grade season. If a proposal for a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student was accepted it would only go into effect during the student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade season. Such a decision requires a thoughtful and critical look at:

- 1) The needs of the student/athlete and concern for his/her physical, mental and emotional well-being.
- 2) The effect on the student/athlete's current grade level team.
- 3) The displacement of student/athletes currently on the team of the proposed acceleration.

At the middle school level, emphasis shall be placed on participation, competition and skill development as compared to the philosophy of stronger competitiveness and playing to win at the high school level.

### DEFINITIONS:

- Grades 9-12 shall be considered as the high school programs.
- Grades 7-8 shall be considered as the middle school programs.

### EXCEPTION:

1. Some activities are considered to include grades 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, acceleration will be allowed by following a specific established procedure which must include written parent permission for the acceleration. Activities, which currently fall into this category, are dance, cross country, gymnastics, track, golf, tennis, soccer, wrestling and girl's hockey.
2. Some 9<sup>th</sup> grade activities may have limited participants. A 9<sup>th</sup> grade activity that has limited participants, may temporarily accelerate 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants, on an as needed basis, provided the varsity coach of the activity has expressed the need to temporarily accelerate 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants in writing to the High School Activities Coordinator and parent permission is received. The acceleration is not permanent; 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants playing on an as needed

basis will continue to play at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. The acceleration of 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level will only be allowed in order to field a team with an appropriate number of substitute players. At no time will the 8<sup>th</sup> grade student be allowed to accelerate past the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, except when participating in dance, cross country, gymnastics, track, golf, tennis, tennis, soccer, wrestling and girl's hockey. The Activities Coordinator will make the determination, in writing if temporary acceleration of 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants is necessary. A parent permission form will be signed by a parent of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade participant playing at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. The parent permission slip must be turned into the Activities Coordinator prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade participant being allowed to participate at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. The varsity coach is responsible to verify that this permission slip has been turned into the Activities Coordinator.

3. Boy's Hockey – Due to the structure of squads varsity boy's hockey is considered grade 10-12, with 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students considered at the Bantam level of play. Bantam players may be considered for varsity participation by following the district's policy for acceleration unless a Junior Varsity program is implemented. The restriction of watching two games will not be a part of acceleration consideration. Other criteria for potential acceleration will be a try-out by potential participant and communication with the Worthington Hockey Association. The District's decision will be final based on all factors surrounding the potential acceleration (must be in writing). It will be the responsibility of the Activities Coordinator to address acceleration of the student athlete.

#### PROCEDURE FOR ACCELERATION:

In rare instances where accelerations will be considered from 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade to high school the following procedure must be followed:

1. The student/athlete and parents will be contacted when the Activities Coordinator deems appropriate during the review/discussion of the potential acceleration.
2. The student/athlete participates for a minimum of 2 contests with his/her current grade level.
3. The head varsity coach will initiate in writing the proposed acceleration to the Activities Director.
4. All coaches affected (grade level coach previous year, grade level coach current year, proposed grade level coach and the head coach) will meet with the Activities Coordinator to discuss the proposed acceleration. All circumstances (academics, ability, displacement, etc) surrounding the potential acceleration will be discussed in order to determine if the student/athlete will be able to handle the acceleration.
5. The Activities Coordinator will contact parents and present the possibility of acceleration. If the parent(s) and student wish to pursue acceleration, a request for a meeting to discuss the acceleration will be made by the Activities Coordinator. The Activities Coordinator will schedule a meeting which includes the parents, student, Middle School or High School Principal and one member of the Coaches' Advisory Board. The focus of the meeting will be the effect on:
  - 1) The needs of the student/athlete and concern for his/her physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

- 2) The effect on the student/athlete's current grade level team.
- 3) The displacement of student/athletes currently on the team of the proposed acceleration.

Within one week, the parent(s) will be notified by the Activities Coordinator of their decision regarding the acceleration.

6. The Activities Coordinator will then set up a meeting with the High School Principal or Designee and the Middle School Principal or designee, and a member of the Coaches' Advisory Board to review this request. After a reading of the guidelines and discussion, a vote will be taken. The decision will be based on the majority vote.
7. Once the student has been accelerated to a proposed level a continued monitoring and evaluation as to the affect of this acceleration on the student (grades, interaction and so on). Also, a conversation with parent(s) will be required two (2) weeks after acceleration in order to ensure that this is in the best interest of the student. This student may be returned to their current grade level program at any point in time by either the district or the parent(s).
8. The district will look at development of some evaluative method in order to monitor the participation and success of this student.

## ACCELERATION OVERVIEW

Items that need to be considered during a potential acceleration of a student:

- The need to challenge student athletes by playing with and against better competition.
- The opportunity to participate in more athletic contests.
- The opportunity to eliminate frustrations at different skill levels. All athletes have different abilities that can create frustrations at a higher or lower level.
- The creation of more playing time for others at different levels of play. Other students may gain greater skills or more opportunities.
- More or better competitive intensity and skill development.
- Opportunity to advance their own skill level in a team or individual sport.
- The need to address any potential displacement of students at the higher level due to the acceleration.
- The need to review any potential socialization issues in school and the community related to the acceleration in both the activity as well as the classroom.
- The review/monitoring of any feelings regarding disconnection of the student athlete due to an acceleration.
- The role that the student/athlete plays as a role model for others at current level or a higher level.
- The expectations will be greater for the athlete by coaches, parents, and fans, which may not be realized, thus a sense of failure may emerge just as the sense of success may be felt.
- The increased time commitment, longer seasons, split shifts in practice, transportation issues, etc. need to be addressed to avoid a negative impact on school, work and define the parental responsibility.
- The potential exists to open this student up to scrutiny by parents, classmates and community members that could create a negative impact on the student.
- The potential exists for students to become injured in any sporting activity. This may be increased due to participation against bigger, faster and stronger athletes when these individuals compete at a higher level.

At this time your son/daughter has excellent skills and potential. We believe they have the social and mental capabilities to be accelerated. However, this in no way guarantees them a starting position on a team at any time. Physical growth, maturity, determination, work ethic and other player's development can impact future opportunities.

The acceleration of your child has been presented and discussed with you and we give our approval/disapproval to the acceleration of our child. The signature below represents our decision regarding acceleration.

**Date:**

**Signature:**

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First Reading: 3/15/11, 6/16/09, 11/20/07, 11/18/03  
Second Reading: 4/19/11, 7/21/09, 12/18/07, 12/16/03  
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