

Blue Valley School District  
Math Acceleration FAQs



1) What is the purpose of math acceleration?

The purpose of math acceleration is to identify students who already possess a deep knowledge of the next grade level's material. A student who computes quickly, but does not understand why their computations work and does not possess deep understanding of the next grade level's material is not a good candidate for acceleration.

2) When can a student accelerate?

There is a district acceleration process for students whose are currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade math through 7<sup>th</sup> grade math. The process occurs each spring in order to have students set up in their math coursework for the fall.

3) My student is performing very well at grade level standards. Is acceleration the right option for my child?

Potentially. If a student has deep knowledge of the next grade level's curriculum, acceleration may be the right option. However, if a student gets 100% on every test at the current grade level, there is no guarantee that the child knows the next grade's curriculum. If you have questions about whether pursuing acceleration may be a good option for your student, your child's teacher may be a helpful resource.

4) Last year, I heard that some students were automatically invited based on MAP score. Is this still true?

No. Our data from the 2017 acceleration testing indicated little to no correlation between MAP score and a student's ability to pass the acceleration exams. This is because the MAP exams are largely skill-based and our acceleration tests focus on a combination of skill mastery and conceptual understanding.

5) What is the timeline?

The timeline is best described by utilizing the following link:

<https://district.bluevalleyk12.org/ParentsAndStudents/Pages/MathAcceleration.aspx>

6) How does my child enter the acceleration process?

A student can enter the acceleration process in one of two ways, via parent recommendation or via teacher recommendation.

If a teacher believes that a student is a candidate for acceleration, the teacher fills out a Google Form, and the math coordinators notify the family.

For a parent to recommend a student for acceleration, the parent needs to e-mail the district math coordinator indicating interest. Holly McCarty – [hamccarty@bluevalleyk12.org](mailto:hamccarty@bluevalleyk12.org)

7) We are transferring into Blue Valley, and my son/daughter has been previously accelerated in another district. Can we assume that our child will be automatically accelerated in Blue Valley?

No. Curricula differs widely from district to district and from state to state. If a child has been accelerated in another district, we are happy to test that child for acceleration in Blue Valley.

8) Are any reviews or study guides available for the acceleration tests?

We provide the curriculum, which can be found here:

<https://district.bluevalleyk12.org/ParentsAndStudents/Pages/MathAcceleration.aspx>

We do not provide any other resources. We believe that students should not study for acceleration exams, as studying for such exams only allows the student to skim the surface of the content. If a student were to pass acceleration exams without possessing depth of the skipped grade's curriculum, curricular gaps will occur.

9) What happens if my child doesn't pass the acceleration exams?

If a student doesn't pass the acceleration exams, it means that the student does not possess a deep enough understanding of the subsequent grade's curriculum in order to be accelerated. At that point, the family and classroom teacher will work together to find opportunities to go deeper within the current grade level's standards.

Furthermore, we ask that you consider the mental and emotional toll that not passing an acceleration exam may have on your child before pursuing it.

10) Will my child lose curricular opportunities without math acceleration?

Non-accelerated students can participate in advanced math classes starting in middle school, meaning that a non-accelerated 6<sup>th</sup> grader could take 6<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Math without taking any sort of test. All Advanced Placement (AP) courses (Calculus AB, Calculus BC, and Statistics) are accessible to any Blue Valley student without acceleration.

11) How will results be communicated and permissions be given?

All communication is done via e-mail. In order for a child to test, parents have to provide permission by completing the link to a Google Form, which can be found in the e-mail.

12) What do the acceleration exams test?

The acceleration exams test the complete curriculum that the student is trying to skip. For example, if a student wants to skip 4<sup>th</sup> grade math, the acceleration exams will test the entirety of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade math curriculum.

13) If I want my child to take 6<sup>th</sup> grade advanced math as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, do I need to have them participate in this process?

No. A student may participate in an on-grade-level advanced math course without any acceleration testing.

14) What happens to accelerated 5<sup>th</sup> graders and 8<sup>th</sup> graders?

A student who is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, but has accelerated to take 6<sup>th</sup> grade math will go to the feeder middle school to take 6<sup>th</sup> grade math. This could result in the student missing some component of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade school day, possibly including specials. For further specifics, please contact the elementary school and/or the feeder middle school.

A student who is actually in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but has already taken Algebra 1 or accelerated out of Algebra 1, will go to the feeder high school to take Honors Geometry. This will result in the student missing some component of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade school day. For further specifics, please contact the middle school and/or the feeder high school.

15) How does transportation work for accelerated students?

Transportation for accelerated students is coordinated between the two schools affected. If an elementary student is going to middle school for math, the elementary and middle schools would coordinate transportation. For middle school students going to high school for math, the middle and high schools coordinate transportation.

16) Once my child is accelerated, is this forever?

Ideally, yes – this is why our process is so thorough and detailed. It is important to keep this in mind as families make decisions about math acceleration. There are certainly social factors to consider as well as academic coursework options before graduation. Please consider long-term decisions and the possible positive and negative consequences as you determine if the process is best for your child. In the end, if a child accelerates and later needs to decelerate, the acceleration probably should not have happened in the first place.

17) Can my child be accelerated be more than once?

Yes, but we don't recommend it. If you want a child to be accelerated more than once, ask yourself the reasons why. Consider whether the student desires to be accelerated to this extent and whether the student is equipped for any social, emotional, or logistical challenges brought about by multiple accelerations. Furthermore, a double accelerated student is usually taking a calculus course during their sophomore year of high school. Even though we offer a multivariable calculus course, a twice accelerated student would have at least one year without calculus before heading to college. This is potentially problematic if the student heads into any math related field.

18) When can my child test?

All screening tests are done shortly after spring break. Students that pass the screening exams have their second round of testing (battery testing) in mid-April. All tests are given at the child's home school during a school day.

19) Can my child test again?

The district testing process happens each spring. No re-testing occurs.

20) Will there be other students accelerated in math from my child's current grade level?

This is possible, but not guaranteed.

21) Does my child need to bring anything on the day of testing?

Only a writing utensil – we provide scratch paper and a calculator when necessary.

22) Does the district provide feedback on how students do on acceleration exams?

We will provide the scores only. Our exams are for acceleration purposes and cannot be used as diagnostic to identify what a child still need to learn.

23) Do we need to inform the schools that our child is testing?

No. This communication all happens between the district and the school.

24) Once I submit acceleration forms online, how do I know the district has received them?

After submitting the Google Form, a screen will display that says something to the effect "We have received your form." As long as you see this message, we have received the form.

25) How does taking accelerated math affect my child's schedule?

The impact of taking math at a different grade level will vary by building. Please contact your child's building to figure out how exactly this will work with your child's schedule.

26) Will my child lose access to high school courses if they do not participate in accelerated math?

Students do not lose access to any College Board approved Advanced Placement (AP) course. The only course a student cannot take in this situation is Multivariable Calculus, which does not come with AP credit, is the equivalent of college Calculus III, and is usually taken by college sophomores.

27) What if we don't agree with the results of the acceleration exam?

The results of the acceleration exam are final. Acceleration is a decision with significant educational impact. As a result, we do not allow a student to skip a math level if significant curricular gaps exist at that level.

28) What scores are needed to pass the exams?

We consider the combined mistakes and patterns of errors that students make in deciding whether or not to accelerate a student. For that reason, we don't set particular scores.

29) How can we help our child prepare for each of these assessments at home?

Additional practice should not be required to demonstrate mastery of grade level standards for those students who are ready for acceleration. For parents or students who wish to become more familiar with the Blue Valley curriculum, please visit the following link:

<https://district.bluevalleyk12.org/ParentsAndStudents/Pages/MathAcceleration.aspx>

30) How does high school acceleration work?

Per board policy, high school acceleration is handled within each building. Please contact your building's high school if this applies.