
Fulton County Schools

Continuous Achievement Framework: A Manual for Instructional Leaders

Providing a Challenging
Curriculum for All



Amy Barger
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and
Teaching

Clifford Jones
Chief Academic Officer

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance on the implementation of Fulton County Schools' Continuous Achievement Framework. The Continuous Achievement Manual is a living document that is revised annually and includes:

- Fulton County Schools' Board Policy IFD – Continuous Achievement
- Fulton County Schools' Operating Guidelines IFD – Continuous Achievement
- Guidance for Determining Continuous Achievement Placement for Students in Grades K-8
- Placement Guidelines
- Guidance for Scheduling
- Parent Communication Tools
- Continuous Achievement Glossary

Policy IFD – Continuous Achievement

The Fulton County Board of Education supports our mission statement that each child should be given the opportunity to reach his/her full potential. To that end, our continuous achievement framework for advancement allows each child to progress in language arts and math at his/her optimum pace and depth, expanding and compacting the curriculum as appropriate. The framework is implemented in all elementary and middle schools and includes a process for advancement in the current grade level and an acceleration process which allows a student to advance above grade level.

While no child will be placed below their current grade level, there will be no artificial barrier to moving ahead. Students are accelerated when they demonstrate exceptional performance for their age appropriate grade level and exhibit strong skills for advancing a grade level. Overall potential and aptitude demonstrated by the collective evidence of past performance and teacher feedback will be considered, with the best interest of the students in mind.

Each student will be identified as “on-level,” “advanced,” or “accelerated” to clearly communicate their continuous achievement level. In English/Language Arts, students can expect to read or write independently and proficiently complex text beyond what is assigned in the on-grade level course. In math, the students in advanced are one semester ahead of the on-level pace, and accelerated students are one full year ahead. Teachers will teach no more than two levels (on, advanced, accelerated) during the reading/language arts and mathematics instructional period.

As an initial screening, teachers review student performance data comprised of diagnostic assessments and teacher recommendation. Students that meet the initial screening measures will proceed within the acceleration framework.

Specific criteria for placement are established to support the students' most appropriate placement for instruction. Every 18 weeks, student performance within the level at which a student is placed is reviewed to determine if the placement level continues to be appropriate in meeting the student's learning needs. Provisions are also made for students who need to be accelerated more than one grade level above the “on grade level” curriculum. These provisions include transportation to their zoned middle or high school as appropriate.

All elementary and middle schools will use universal screener assessments, BAS data, WriteScore data, and Talented and Gifted (TAG) qualification as predictors regarding the potential number of students that should qualify to participate in advanced and accelerated classes. There should be a strong alignment between the number of students receiving instruction at the advanced and accelerated levels when compared with the number of students with high achievement as evidenced in the aforementioned areas within each school. Provisions will be provided for parents of students not recommended for the advanced or accelerated levels to request a waiver for their student to be placed at these levels of instruction.

It shall be the responsibility of the senior executive for instruction to ensure effective system-wide implementation of the policy and operating guidelines regarding continuous achievement. Recommendations concerning instructional placement and progress of students shall be the responsibility of the local school teacher and other professional staff directly involved with the student. The final decision concerning placement, however, rests with the principal.

The senior executive for instruction shall submit an annual written report to the Superintendent and Board presenting the number of students at each continuous achievement level of “on”, “advanced”, and “accelerated”.

Guidance for Determining Continuous Achievement Placement for Students in Grades K-5

Knowing that students vary in their rates in learning and that students exhibit mastery of concepts at different developmental periods, the Fulton County School System has established a continuous achievement framework. Student placement in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics is reviewed at the beginning of the year and the end of each semester.

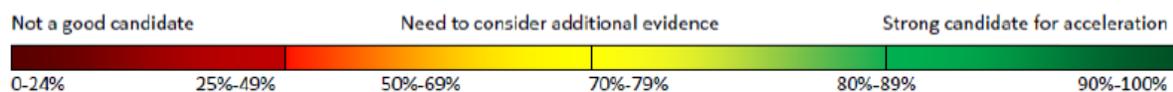
Placement Guidelines

Per FCS Policy IFD, “while no child will be placed below their [assigned] grade level, there will be no artificial barrier to moving ahead. Students are accelerated when they demonstrate exceptional performance for their age appropriate grade level and exhibit strong skills for advancing a grade level. Overall potential and aptitude demonstrated by the collective evidence of past performance and teacher feedback will be considered, with the best interest of the students in mind.

Reading/English Language Arts: Students are advanced in Grades 2-8 when they read half a year above grade level according to the BAS or universal screener assessments and have demonstrated the ability to master reading and writing standards at a more rapid rate than their grade-level peers. Students are accelerated in Grades K-8 when they read a year above grade level according to the BAS or universal screener assessments and have demonstrated exceptional performance for their age appropriate grade level and exhibit strong skills for advancing a grade level.

Mathematics: Students are advanced in Grades 1-7 when they have demonstrated the ability to master standards at a more rapid rate than their grade-level peers. Students are accelerated when and have demonstrated exceptional performance for their age appropriate grade level and exhibit strong skills for advancing a grade level.

Although the following guidelines provide screening criteria for a high percentage of mastery on the diagnostic assessments, overall aptitude demonstrated by the preponderance of evidence from past performance and teacher feedback will be considered, always bearing in mind what is in the best interests of the students. The following continuum portrays the correlation of the guidelines in terms of evidence and professional judgment.



Beginning of the Year Review

All students in grades k-8 are screened for the possibility of acceleration in reading and advancement and acceleration in math. Students in grade 1 are considered for advancement in reading at the 18-week mark and students in grades 2-8 are considered for advancement in reading at the beginning of the year.

MATH

Step 1: Access the Continuous Achievement Screening Dashboard

Step 2: Understanding the Data and Action Steps: Math

Math Data Points:

- The first column is the Prior i-Ready NPR. This score represents the highest score taken between 12/1/2019 and 2/7/2020. Scores from 85-99 are coded green. If the score is blank, it is because the student did not take the i-Ready diagnostic during the stated window.
- The second column is the Current i-Ready NPR. This score represents the highest score taken between 8/17/2020 to 9/18/2020. Scores from 85-99 are coded green. If the score is blank, the student has not yet taken the i-Ready diagnostic.
- The third column is Gifted Testing: Math Mental Ability. The Gifted testing results are restricted to July 2018 or later. Scores from 85-99 are coded green.
- The fourth column is Gifted Testing: Math Achievement. The Gifted testing results are restricted to July 2018 or later. Scores from 85-99 are coded green.

Math Action Steps:

- Continue with current placement: This action step is provided for students who are on-level or advanced with <66% green cells.
- Place in advanced math: This action step is provided for on-level students with ≥66% green cells.
- Review i-Ready grade placement to determine acceleration: This action step is provided for on-level students with 100% green cells, advanced students with ≥66% green cells, and accelerated students.

Step 3: i-Ready Grade Placement Report

- i-Ready Overall Grade Placement should be used to determine if acceleration or double acceleration is appropriate.

Step 4: Placement Decisions: Math

- For students with "continue with current placement", students maintain current placement.
- For students with "place in advanced math," place the students in advanced math.
- For students with "review i-Ready grade placement to determine acceleration," please look at the grade placement report for the student to determine if acceleration or double acceleration is appropriate.

Reading

Step 1: Access the Continuous Achievement Screening Dashboard

Step 2: Understanding the Data and Action Steps: Reading/ELA

Reading Data Points:

- The first column is the Winter BAS administered between 12/2/2019 and 1/10/2020. Advanced and Accelerated BAS scores are coded green.

BAS – Use Winter BAS

Last Year's Grade Level	Advanced Level at 18 weeks	Accelerated Level at 18 Weeks
K	Not Applicable	Level G+
1	Level J+	Level L+
2	Level M+	Level O+
3	Level P+	Level R+
4	Level S+	Level U+
5	Level V+	Level X+
6	Level X+	Level Y+
7	Level Y+	Level Z

- The second column is the Prior i-Ready NPR. This score represents the highest score taken between 12/1/2019 and 2/7/2020. Scores from 85-99 are coded green. If the score is blank, it is because the student did not take the i-Ready diagnostic during the stated window.
- The third column is the Current i-Ready NPR. This score represents the highest score taken between 8/17/2020 to 9/18/2020. Scores from 85-99 are coded green. If the score is blank, it is because the student did not take the i-Ready diagnostic during the stated window.
- The fourth column is Gifted Testing: Verbal Mental Ability. The Gifted testing results are restricted to July 2018 or later. Scores from 85-99 are coded green.
- The fifth column is Gifted Testing: Reading Achievement. The Gifted testing results are restricted to July 2018 or later. Scores from 85-99 are coded green.

Reading/ELA Action Steps:

- Continue with current placement: This action step is provided for students who are on-level or advanced with <60% green cells.
- Place in advanced reading: This action step is provided for on-level students with ≥60% green cells.
- Place in advanced reading. Administer the Diagnostic Placement Assessment for WRITING: This action step is provided for students who meet the advanced reading requirement and should be considered for acceleration, but do not have a WriteScore score.
- Review i-Ready grade placement to determine acceleration: This action step is provided for advanced and accelerated students who meet advanced reading and writing requirements.

Step 3: i-Ready Grade Placement Report

- i-Ready Overall Grade Placement should be used to determine if acceleration or double acceleration is appropriate.

Step 4: Assessing Writing

- For all students without a WriteScore score, we will need to administer the Writing DPA.

Step 5: Reviewing Assessment Data: Writing

- For students who take the writing DPA, they must get a level 3 or 4 on every bullet within the writing rubric to be advanced or accelerated.

Step 6: Placement Decisions: Reading/ELA

- For grades K-3, if the student DOES NOT meet or exceed on all elements of the Writing DPA rubric, the student continues with current placement.
- For grade K, if the student meets or exceeds on all elements of the Writing DPA rubric, place the student in accelerated.
- For grades 1-3, if the student meets or exceeds on all bullets of the Writing DPA rubric, place the student in advanced or accelerated.
- For grades 4-5: if the student DOES NOT meet the criteria for writing based on Write Score or Writing DPA, the student continues with current placement.
- For grades 4-5: if the student meets the criteria for writing based on Write Score or Writing DPA, place the student in advanced or accelerated.

Step 7: Possibility of Acceleration: Reading/ELA

- Students who meet the criteria to be placed in advanced should be considered for acceleration.
- For grades 1-5, if the student has a BAS score that is accelerated **AND** i-Ready Grade Placement that is above grade level, place the student in accelerated.

18 Week Review**36 Week Review**

Guidance for Scheduling

Per FCS Policy IFD, “teachers will teach no more than two levels (on, advanced, accelerated) during the reading/language arts and mathematics instructional period.”

As instructional leaders build the master schedule, they should adhere to FCS Policy IFD. The intent is to ensure that within one instructional period or block a teacher is preparing and delivering instruction on no more than two curricula. Schools have several options in building their master schedule that include, but are not limited to:

- Creating homerooms that include on and advanced or advanced and accelerated students in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Creating heterogeneous homerooms based on Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics placement but re-grouping at a grade level for Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics
- Creating a Reading/English Language Arts or Mathematics block for the school or a group of grade levels so that accelerated students can receive Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics instruction at the next grade level.

Parent Communication Tools

Instructional leaders should use language provided in this manual in developing local communications for parents. Along with the release of revised operating guidelines, instructional leaders will receive an updated Continuous Achievement Q & A to share with parents.

Placement Cards to communicate placement for students in Grades K-5 for the next school year are available on the FCS Employee Portal in the Continuous Achievement Resource Library.

Glossary for Continuous Achievement

As the revised operating guidelines are reviewed, the glossary may grow in order to provide all with a common understanding and ensure a more consistent implementation of the Continuous Achievement Framework. Suggestions for additional terminology to be defined should be submitted to Amy Barger (barger@fultonschools.org).

Acceleration

Accelerated Students: Students in grades K-8 who have been identified as needing an accelerated curriculum have demonstrated exceptional performance for their age appropriate grade level and exhibit strong skills for advancing a grade level.

Accelerated Mathematics: A curriculum available to students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 which consists entirely of the standards one or more years above of the assigned grade level. Following Grade 8 Math, the accelerated mathematics options require students to master the equivalent of 1.5 years of standards.

- **Accelerated GSE Algebra I/Geometry A:** A course of study that includes all GSE Algebra I standards and semester 1 GSE Geometry standards.

- Accelerated GSE Geometry B/Algebra II: A course of study that includes semester 2 GSE Geometry standards and all Algebra II standards.

Transportation to the feeder middle or high school may be provided for students accelerated two or more years.

Accelerated Reading/English Language Arts (K-8): A curriculum available to students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 which consists entirely of the standards one or more years above of the assigned grade level. Reading assignments for an accelerated course may include content that is considered sensitive for a younger student. A reading list of recommended chapter books, novels, informational texts, and digital resources should be given to parents at the beginning of the school year with the option for the parent to request an alternative but equally complex text deemed developmentally appropriate by the parent.

Advanced

Advanced Mathematics: A curriculum available to students beginning in grades 1-8. The advanced curriculum for students in grades 1-5 will consist of the second semester standards assigned for the student's grade level and first semester standards assigned for the student's next grade level. Students placed in the advanced course are half a year ahead of their grade level peers and may master standards at a more rapid rate than their age peers in order to complete 1.0 to 1.5 years of standards in one school year. In grade 6, students complete a year and a half of curriculum (6.2, 7.1, and 7.2) within the year-long course. In grades 7-8, the advanced curriculum consists of on grade level curriculum with additional standards from the next grade level standards.

Advanced Reading/English Language Arts: A curriculum available to students beginning second semester of Grade 1 through Grade 8 which consists of the on-grade level standards and is differentiated by the inclusion of some standards from the next grade level. In the advanced course, students can expect to read or write independently and proficiently complex text beyond what is assigned in the on-grade level course.

On-level

On-Level Students: Students who have been identified as ready to learn the standards for Reading/English Language Arts and/or Mathematics at the students' assigned grade level.

On-Level Mathematics: A curriculum available to all students which consists of the standards required by the state for the students' assigned grade level. Through regular assessment, students who struggle to master standards in a timely manner will be provided intervention and remediation opportunities; while those who master standards at a more rapid rate will be provided enrichment opportunities.

On-Level Reading/English Language Arts: A curriculum available to all students which consists of the standards required by the state for the students' assigned grade level. Through regular assessment, students who struggle to master standards in a timely manner will be provided intervention and remediation opportunities; while those who master standards at a more rapid rate will be provided enrichment opportunities.

Placement

Writing Diagnostic Placement Assessment: Assessment to determine if a student has mastered grade appropriate writing standards. This is a piece of evidence used to determine if advancement and/or acceleration is appropriate in Reading/English Language Arts.

Screening: A process in which all students are screened for the possibility of advancement and/or acceleration utilizing a variety of data points.

Placement Guidelines: Student achievement factors that should be considered in determining course placement. Teachers and instructional leaders should use a preponderance of student evidence to determine the course placement that best meets the needs of the student.

Placement Card: Documentation of placement data provided by teachers in May for the subsequent year's teacher.

Continuous Achievement Resource Library: A document library on the FCS Employee Portal that houses support resources for the consistent implementation of the Continuous Achievement Framework.

Senior Executive for Instruction: Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Teaching, Amy Barger, barger@fultonschools.org