

Acceleration in the Middle School (2008 -2009 School Year)

Middle school students progress through developmental stages. Those who progress beyond their age peers may pursue accelerated academic courses. Accelerated academic courses should represent instruction that is differentiated to provide increased rigor and challenge for highly motivated students while preserving and nurturing the joy of learning. Accelerated academic courses should not be significantly more work in terms of quantity, but rather more demanding to the extent that students will be required to use higher level thinking skills and be more independent, creative, and extensive in the pursuit of topics and concepts. This differentiation can be achieved by modifying the content selected, the process emphasized, and the products developed.

Accelerated academic courses should differ in at least four ways:

- Rate faster pacing with less guided practice;
- Depth deeper exploration of concepts and topics, use of primary and specialized resources, opportunity to focus on aspects of particular interest or complexity;
- Breadth expansion of topics for greater analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as well as exploration of related issues and disciplines;
- Methodology more guided student decision making regarding goals, activities, materials, resources, and products, as well as independent study, use of inquiry and problem-solving approaches, and creative and open-ended assignments.

Target Student Population

Carroll County Public Schools offers two blocks of accelerated academic courses: a mathematics and science block, and a reading language arts and social studies block (see below). Students should be recommended for accelerated academic courses on a course by course basis, with careful guidance and review of each grade level beginning with entry to 6th grade. Entrance or exit from accelerated academic courses should be flexible and timely to guard against academic misplacement. Care should be taken to judge students’ abilities in specific academic areas, recognizing that some students will not excel in all areas and therefore should be selective about accelerated academic courses. That is to say, some students might only be recommended for the mathematics and science block, others for only the reading language arts and social studies block, and yet others for both blocks. Accelerated academic courses are intended for highly motivated students. Typically, these students learn more rapidly, have a greater capacity for making generalizations and understanding abstract concepts, are creative and original, and are curious and driven to uncover more information about a topic of interest.

Sequence of Middle School Accelerated Academic Courses:

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Accelerated Math 6	Honors Algebra I Accelerated Math 7	Honors Geometry Honors Algebra I
Accelerated Science 6	Accelerated Science 7	Accelerated Science 8
Accelerated RLA 6	Accelerated RLA 7	Honors English I
Accelerated Social Studies 6	Accelerated Social Studies 7	Accelerated Social Studies 8

Students enrolled in accelerated courses are expected to:

Learn

- Abstract concepts
- Content beyond the essential outcomes
- At a faster and more detailed pace
- Independently and collaboratively
- Through questioning, problem solving, investigating, and exploring

Manage

- A more demanding workload
- Multiple tasks
- Personal learning goals
- Above grade-level work

Demonstrate

- Effective work and study habits
- Responsibility and organization
- An unusual attention and interest span
- Higher level thinking skills
- Initiative and motivation
- High quality completion of assignments
- A deep understanding of content
- Refined reading and writing ability
- The ability to apply learned content to new situations
- Leadership skills
- Above average achievement throughout the course

Awarding Credit for High School Courses Completed in Middle School

Effective September 2001, students shall receive credit for high school courses completed in middle school. The full high school curriculum shall be taught in these courses, and all required county or state assessments shall be given to the students at the time the course is taken. The student's grade in these courses shall become part of their high school transcript and shall be part of the student's high school Grade Point Average calculation. However, at the request of a parent, student or teacher, the principal may withdraw a student up to the end of the first semester (18 weeks) with no grade appearing on the permanent record. Students who are withdrawn after the first semester shall receive a grade of WP (Withdraw-Passing) or WF (Withdraw-Failing). Students who successfully complete the following courses shall receive the corresponding high school credit:

- ⌚ Honors Algebra I (Level 8) (with a weighted GPA option)
- ⌚ Honors Geometry (Level 8) (with a weighted GPA option)
- ⌚ Honors English I (Level 8) (with a weighted GPA option)
- ⌚ Spanish I (Level 6 – Academic)
- ⌚ French I (Level 6 – Academic)
- ⌚ Fundamentals of Spanish 8 (Level 6 – Academic)
- ⌚ Algebra I – Part A (Level 6 – Academic)

Students enrolled in Honors Algebra I must take and pass the Maryland High School Assessment for Algebra/Data Analysis as a requirement for earning a high school diploma.