# **Summer Acceleration Academy Guidebook**

# **Table of Contents**

**Sections** **Page**

Overview of Acceleration Academy Model ……………………………………………………………....…….………….. 3

Instructional Guidance ………………..…….……………………………………………………………….………..…………..... 4

Early Literacy Academy ……..……………………………………………………………..……………………....…... 5-6

Math Academy.………………………………….……………………………………………..…….…...................... 7-9

Student Selection …………………..….……………………………………………………..…..….………………………………… 10-11

Teacher Recruitment and Selection ………….…………………………………………..……………………………..…..… 12

Final Grant Reporting ……………………..…………………………………………………………………………………….….... 13

# Disclosure Statement

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# **Overview of Acceleration Academy Model**

An Acceleration Academy is a week-long academic program designed to accelerate student learning through engaging, standards-aligned lessons that meet the specific academic needs of students participating in the program. Each Acceleration Academy focuses on a specific content area and students who attend an Academy receive the equivalent of approximately one extra month of learning in one week. Acceleration Academy classes can either provide students with targeted supports to master grade-level standards or provide accelerated learning opportunities for advanced learners.

Acceleration Academy teachers should be selected through a rigorous application process to ensure all classes are taught by highly effective teachers. Teachers should be selected based on their ability to positively impact student learning and achievement through thoughtful planning, relationship-building, and creative, efficient instruction. The combination of more, highly-focused, instructional time led by exceptional teachers has resulted in positive student outcomes in several districts that have implemented the Acceleration Academy model with fidelity.

**In-Depth Case Study of Acceleration Academies**

* <http://goldenticketlawrence.newprofit.org/> - An in-depth case study of the Acceleration Academy program in Lawrence, MA, commissioned by [New Profit](https://www.newprofit.org/). The online case study includes videos of interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

**Research on Acceleration Academies**

* A study focused more generally on the turnaround efforts in Lawrence, MA, [*Can States Take Over and Turn Around School Districts? Evidence From Lawrence, Massachusetts*](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/schueler/files/schuelergoodmandeming_lps_eepa_2017.pdf), specifically highlighted the Acceleration Academies as a strategy that had a significant impact on student achievement, as measured by MCAS
* A study of the program in Springfield, MA, [*Making the Most of School Vacation*](https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/edfp_a_00269), also showed positive effects on student outcomes

**Key Components of Acceleration Academy Model**

* Instruction is provided in-person
* Lessons are tailored to the specific needs of students and should involve engaging, hands-on learning experiences
* Students are invited to participate in an Academy based on specific metrics
* Students receive at least 20 hours of in-person instruction in the same content area (early literacy or math) during the Academy
* Students in elementary and middle school grades attend at least 1 specials or enrichment class each day (highly recommended but not required)
* Class sizes are small (10-12 students per content teacher)
* Students are taught by the same content teacher for the duration of the Academy
* Classes are taught by highly effective teachers who are hired through a selective application process (See “Teacher Recruitment and Selection” for guidance/recommendations)
* Teachers are given the autonomy to create lessons based on their students' specific needs and/or focus standards set by the district or school (See the “Instructional Guidance” section of this document for guidance/recommendations)

# **Instructional Guidance**

DESE has developed **instructional guidance** (more on this below) for the Early Literacy Academy and Math Academy to help districts and teachers plan for the Academies. Districts should consider using this guidance to help develop an instructional planfor the Acceleration Academy week. Districts/schools should also consider sharing parts of this guidance (for instance, the “Guidelines for Instruction”) with teachers selected to teach in an Academy.

In order for Acceleration Academy teachers to have a targeted **instructional focus** for the week, districts should analyze student assessment data to determine areas of greatest need (more on this below). However, teachers should be given the autonomy to draw from their own expertise to develop high-quality units and lessons (i.e., no mandated instructional materials or curriculum) to meet the specific needs of their students.

If districts and/or schools have **high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)** that align to the instructional focus for the week, the districts/schools should provide these materials to teachers to either use or adapt as appropriate based on students’ academic strengths and needs, as evidenced by assessment data.

## **Early Literacy Academy Instructional Focus**

For the Early Literacy Academy, instruction should focus on the following components of the core literacy block:

* [Foundational Skills](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/) – Foundational skill focus areas will vary by grade level and student need as indicated by district screening data.
* [Engaging with Complex Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/) – All students will have daily access to complex text. Read aloud vs. independent reading will vary by grade and student need.

Teachers should choose complex texts that share a common topic of high interest to students. This will provide students the opportunity to build topic-specific knowledge for the week. Teachers should also consider planning grade appropriate projects to either synthesize and/or capture student learning throughout the week to allow students to reflect on their learning and growth.

To help teachers plan for the week, districts should identify high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) that align with the instructional focus. These materials should be shared with teachers for them to either use outright or adapt for the week. If a district does not have HQIM for teachers to use during the Academy week, districts should refer teachers to openly accessible HQIM resources (See “Early Literacy Resources” below for examples).

Once a district has gathered HQIM that align with the instructional focus and selected teachers for the Academies, the district should either schedule planning meetings to review the instructional focus and HQIM, or email teachers this essential information to help them plan for the week. District should also consider providing teachers instructional expectations (see “Guidelines for Instruction”) for the week.

**Guidelines for Instruction**

During the Academy week, teachers should ensure the following elements are incorporated into their daily instruction:

* Foundational Skills – Systematic and explicit instruction with active practice in foundational skills every day, with the specific skills determined by student data
  + Phonological awareness
  + Phonics and decoding
  + Fluency
* Engaging with Complex Text – Students reading or listening to authentic and meaningful texts every day
  + Read aloud and/or independent reading, depending on students’ reading strengths and needs
  + Discussion
  + Responding to text verbally and/or in writing

Each day should begin with a focus on foundational skills with the latter half of the day focused on engaging with complex texts. Lessons should include direct instruction, guided practice with corrective feedback, and independent practice, with informal and formal assessments taking place throughout the day in order to inform instruction.

**Early Literacy Academy Sample Schedule**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sample Student Schedule** | **Sample Teacher Schedule** |
| 7:30 AM – 8:00 AM | Breakfast | Monitor breakfast |
| 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM | Foundational Skills Practice  Small group work, centers, independent skills practice. | Set the theme/focus and objectives for the day.  Direct instruction of specific foundational skills and guided practice with corrective feedback. Collect formative assessment data through conferring and observations. |
| 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM | Specials class | Planning |
| 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Lunch | Lunch |
| 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM | Engaging with Complex Texts  Read aloud and/or independent reading (if appropriate), discussion, and verbal or written response to text-based questions. | Read aloud and/or independent reading of texts related to the theme for the week.  Text-based discussion and questions. |
| 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM | Daily wrap-up, reflection on the learning of the day, and next steps | Synthesize the learning of the day, encourage setting personal learning goals for tomorrow, highlight student work from the day. |

\* Teachers should build in movement breaks during long teaching blocks

**Planning Resources**

* Components of the Core Literacy Block [for Pre-K through Grade 3](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/) – This link provides grade specific guidance for teaching early literacy across all components of the core literacy block
* Engaging with Complex Text – The links below provide guidance for the three main components of engaging with complex text.
  + [Choosing and Using Complex Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/choosing-using.html)
  + [Reading for Understanding](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/understanding.html)
  + [Responding to Text](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/complex-text/responding.html)

**High-Quality, Open Source Instructional Materials**

* [EL Education](https://curriculum.eleducation.org/)
* [Core Knowledge Language Arts](https://www.coreknowledge.org/curriculum/download-curriculum/)

**Foundational Skills Resources**

* [Decodable Text Sources, from The Reading League (link to multiple resources)](https://www.thereadingleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Decodable-Text-Sources-updated-Feb-2019.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1ly0vp2nL9nI-3H0Uqa6zA8GvGOODXsVpKnl5rADD3UOAhrjrMDjXwSkg)
* [Decodable Readers Protocol, from Achieve the Core (instructional resource)](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Decodable%20Reader%20Protocol_2018.pdf)
* [Teaching with Decodable Text, from 95% Group (recorded webinar)](https://info.95percentgroup.com/decodables-webinar-replay?submissionGuid=6ca2b22f-d103-4f77-9483-07ef3da3a8ad)
* [Free online decodable texts, from Flyleaf Publishing](https://portal.flyleafpublishing.com/)
* [Florida Center for Reading Research (activities)](https://www.fcrr.org/student-center-activities)

**Language Comprehension and Read Aloud Resources**

* [Language and Reading Research Consortium](https://larrc.ehe.osu.edu/) curricular materials
* [Achieve the Core Read Aloud Project K-2 (lessons and resources)](https://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter_cat=788&g%5B%5D=1&sort=name)

## **Math Academy Instructional Focus**

To determine the instructional focus(i) for the week, districts should analyze preliminary MCAS data (if available), benchmark/interim assessment data, and/or other curriculum-based assessment data. Based on the analysis, districts should narrow the instructional focus(i) for the week to key concepts and/or standards that will prepare students for the grade they will be attending in the upcoming school year. Depending on the level of data available, districts should determine an instructional focus in one of two ways:

* **Targeted instructional focus by grade level** – Identify multiple instructional foci (different groupings of concepts/standards) for the Academy week and assign a particular instructional focus (i.e., group of concepts and/or standards) to individual teachers who will then be grouped with students who require additional support or acceleration in that focus area.
* **General instructional focus by grade level** – Determine trends for each grade level and assign teachers from the same grade level the same set of concepts/standards for that grade level to focus on for the Academy week.

Once the district has determined the instructional focus for the week it should identify high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) that align to the instructional focus. **(IMPORTANT NOTE: Many vendors have created summer specific program materials so please consider reaching out to your vendors to see if any materials have been developed and are available.)** These materials should be shared with teachers for them to either use outright or adapt for the week. If a district does not have HQIM for teachers to use during the Academy week, districts should refer teachers to openly accessible HQIM resources (See “Math Resources” below for examples).

Once a district has determined the instructional focus(i) for the week, gathered HQIM that align with the instructional focus, and selected teachers for the Academies, the district should either schedule planning meetings to review the instructional focus and HQIM, or email teachers this essential information to help them plan for the week. District should also consider providing teachers instructional expectations (see “Guidelines for Instruction”) for the week.

**Guidelines for Instruction**

During the Academy week, teachers should balance instructional time around the three aspects of Mathematical Rigor:

* **Conceptual Understanding** – Students should demonstrate their understanding of concepts in a variety of ways, such as number sentences, models, and written and verbal explanations.
* **Application** – Students should practice solving a wide range of problems in various contexts by reasoning, thinking, and applying the mathematics they have learned.
* **Procedural Fluency** – Students should be honing their computational skills and number sense.

Teachers are encouraged to begin lessons with the [application of math](https://robertkaplinsky.com/two-ways-integrate-problem-based-learning-unit-another-avoid/) in a realistic context (i.e., lessons should integrate problem-based learning). This allows students to contextualize the learning for the day, identify the skills necessary in real time, and make connections with other concepts. This also allows the teachers to collect formative assessment data in real time related to procedural fluency and conceptual understanding. Teachers should also use “just in time” scaffolds when students demonstrate a need for support, rather than “just in case” scaffolds that focus on what students *might* need support with.

**Math Academy Sample Schedule**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sample Student Schedule** | **Sample Teacher Schedule** |
| 7:30 AM – 8:00 AM | Breakfast | Monitor breakfast |
| 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM | Daily problem solving #1  Small group work, centers, independent skills practice. | Set the theme/focus and objectives for the day.  Activator to establish the context for problem solving.  Direct instruction of concepts and procedures. Collecting formative assessment data through conferring and observations. |
| 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM | Specials class | Planning |
| 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Lunch | Lunch |
| 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM | Daily problem solving #2  Small group work, centers, independent skills practice. | Activator to establish the context for problem solving.  Direct instruction of concepts and procedures. Collecting formative assessment data through conferring and observations. |
| 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM | Daily wrap-up, reflection on the learning of the day, and next steps | Synthesize the learning of the day, encourage setting personal learning goals for tomorrow, highlight student work from the day. |

\* Teachers should build in movement breaks during long teaching blocks

**Math Resources**

* *Mathematics Core Instructional Materials* - DESE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials, then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult. See [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/?section=math) for Math reports.
* *Prioritizing and Understanding the Math Frameworks* - Use the [Standards Navigator](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/search/) to understand the connections between standards from one grade to the next. See what skills and concepts will be vital to learning in the next grade level. Use the Quick Reference guides and other resources on the [DESE STEM page](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/math/?section=resources#resources) to learn more about the development of procedural fluency through key grade spans.
* *Establishing Context for the Day* - Consider using tasks such as 3-act math (see more information [here](https://gfletchy.com/3-act-lessons/)) that are accessible yet also use relatable context and authentic application of math.
* *Conceptual Development and Procedural Fluency* - Consider accessible and interesting problems such as [open middle](https://www.openmiddle.com/) style problems that allow students to use their understanding of number systems and operations creatively.
* *Student Discussion* - Students must learn and apply the Standards for Mathematical Practice (see QRGs [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/math/?section=resources#resources)) to be successful doers and learners of Mathematics. Structured student discussion and debate is an excellent means to encourage deep conceptual understanding and engagement. Use NCTMs 5 Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematics Discussions (see resources [here](https://www.nctm.org/Publications/Mathematics-Teacher/2018/Vol111/Issue5/mt2018-03-366a/#:~:text=The%20five%20practices%20are%20the,%2C%20and%20(5)%20Connecting.) and [here](https://illustrativemathematics.blog/2018/01/09/the-5-practices-framework-explicit-planning-vs-explicit-teaching/)).
* *Illustrative Math Units - Putting It All Together* - Example lessons/units that can either be used outright (if the standards/concepts covered in a “Putting It All Together” unit aligns with the Academy’s instructional focus for a specific grade level) or can be used as a structure for teachers to work from as they plan problem-based lessons for the week.
  + [Grade 2, Unit 9](https://im.kendallhunt.com/k5/teachers/grade-2/unit-9/lessons.html) (for rising 3rd graders) - Themes: Fluency with 20 and Measurement, Numbers to 1000, Create and Solve Story Problems
  + [Grade 3, Unit 8](https://im.kendallhunt.com/k5/teachers/grade-3/unit-8/lessons.html) (for rising 4th graders) - Themes: Fraction Fun, Measurement and Data, Multiplication and Division Games, Create and Design
  + [Grade 7, Unit 9](https://im.kendallhunt.com/MS/teachers/2/9/index.html) (for rising 8th graders) - Themes: Running a Restaurant, Making Connections (about estimating and exactness – would be a great place to bring in 3 act examples), Designing a Course (5k walkathon)

# **Student Selection**

Once an instructional focus has been identified for the week, district leaders should work with participating schools to analyze available sources of student data to determine which students would benefit the most from extra instruction in these areas.

**Student Selection for Early Literacy Academy**

Districts should use data from, when available, a [valid and reliable screening assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments.html#approved) to determine which students would benefit most from attending a week-long program focused solely on early literacy.

**Student Selection for Math Academies**

After a district has identified focus standards for the week, districts and schools should analyze multiple sources of student-level data to determine which students would benefit the most from a high dose of targeted instruction during an Academy week. Because an Acceleration Academy should only focus on a few, key standards/concepts, students who, based on data gathered throughout the school year, would benefit the most from targeted instruction to solidify their understanding of these key concepts and/or focus standards should be considered first for invitation to a Math Academy. Students who, based on multiple data points, may require more prolonged interventions to master these concepts/standards should be considered for other, longer-term interventions.

As mentioned in the “Math Academy Instructional Focus” section, districts can identify multiple instructional foci (groups of key concepts/standards) to be taught during the Academy week and assign a particular instructional focus to individual teachers who will then be grouped with students who require additional support and/or acceleration in that focus area.

**Student Recruitment and Attendance**

Student participation in the Acceleration Academies will require a concerted effort by school administrators, teachers, and district leaders to inform students and parents about the accelerated learning opportunities provided by the Academies. Invitation to the Acceleration Academies should be viewed as a celebration of a student’s hard work and desire to learn, not as a required intervention.

* **Outreach:** The district and participating schools should inform both students and their families about the Acceleration Academies and promote the program as an opportunity for students to receive engaging, small group instruction led by exceptional teachers that will accelerate student learning.
* **Securing Commitment:** Invited students and their families should commit to attending for the duration of the program, and schools should clearly identify how and whether students will be able to get to and from school during the Academy week.
* **Creating a Waitlist:** This program’s effectiveness rests on students attending for at least 80% of the available instructional hours (at least 4 out of 5 days or 16 out of 20 instructional hours). If there are more students interested in attending, or if there are more students identified for intervention/acceleration than there are seats available, the district should create a waitlist to draw from if originally selected students drop out prior to, or in the first two days of, the Academy.
* **Incentivizing Student Attendance:** Consider engaging with the local business community and philanthropists to provide incentives for students who have perfect attendance. Students who choose to attend an Academy during their summer break should be celebrated and, if possible, rewarded for their commitment to learning.
* **Attendance Monitoring:** Getting students to attend on the first day will greatly impact attendance for the remainder of the Academy and missing even one day of instruction is almost equivalent to missing a week of instruction in one content area. Site facilitators and clerks/parent liaisons should closely monitor student attendance and call families of absent students each morning. If students withdraw from the program on Monday, site facilitators should invite waitlisted students to attend for the remainder of the week.

# **Teacher Recruitment and Selection**

Recruiting and selecting highly effective educators is paramount. To ensure classes are taught by highly effective teachers, districts should consider:

* Advertising the opportunity, and the stipend, as widely as possible to attract the largest number of highly effective educators
* Selecting teachers through an application process that ensures highly effective teachers are chosen to teach during the Academy week. Criteria to consider:
  + Number of years of experience teaching the specific content area of an Academy
  + SEI endorsement (especially if the district is planning to invite a high percentage of English Learners)
  + Professional development and/or accolades related to the specific content area of an Academy
  + If available, SGP of students taught by the educator over several years
  + Experience planning and teaching intensive, engaging, hands-on or project-based lessons
  + Experience teaching an [early literacy curriculum](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/literacy-block/) (for Early Literacy Academy)
* Conducting classroom walk-throughs/observations throughout the Academy week to ensure instruction meets expectations and to provide feedback, if needed.

**Teacher Observations**

Site facilitators and/or academic coaches should observe teachers several times throughout the week and complete a teacher observation form for each teacher. The observation form can be used to inform planning and hiring decisions for subsequent Summer Acceleration Academies.

Site facilitators and/or academic coaches should also provide teachers constructive feedback throughout the week if they feel the feedback will help the teachers alter their instruction to better meet the needs of their students.

# **Final Grant Reporting**

As stated in the Grant Assurances document, districts awarded Summer Acceleration Academies Grant funding are required to participate in grant monitoring and reporting. Outlined below are the monitoring and reporting requirements for this grant. Please note, DESE will provide templates and directions to collect the required information prior to reporting deadlines. Please reach out to [Thomas Zorich](mailto:thomas.zorich@mass.gov) if you have any concerns about meeting a particular deadline.

**Final Grant Reporting Requirements**

Districts must prepare and submit to DESE the following materials **by late September/early October.**

* daily attendance rosters for the Summer Acceleration Academies (Absent, Present, Tardy) including students’ names, SASID, AY2022 grade level, and class assignment for the Academy week
* the observation rubric used to facilitate coaching throughout the week