

The Edwards Middle School extended learning time program is supplemented with math and ELA Acceleration Academies twice each year. Approximately 100 students are invited for an intensive week of ELA support in February or math support in April from 7:30am-1:30pm. Staffed by a group of exemplary teachers, or 'Edwards Fellows', Acceleration Academies target individual student needs in small group settings (12:1 teacher student ratio). Based on the school's success, Acceleration Academies are being replicated at middle schools across Boston.

Selection Process

In addition to MCAS and other assessment data, Edwards chooses students who display great effort, good attendance, and strong parent support. Teacher cluster leaders also look for students who are on the cusp of an MCAS level, with the hopes that the additional time will push them to the next tier.

Entrance into the Academy is seen as a learning opportunity, instead of a punishment. When students are selected for this Academy, they are presented with a congratulatory letter regarding their acceptance. Furthermore, students who display good effort and perfect attendance for the Academy receive a gift card to the local mall for \$50-\$75; school staff report that nearly all students receive the gift card at the end of the week. This prize rewards students for their extra dedication to the Academy during vacation time.

School administrators and Academy staff analyze data to determine student groups based on shared areas of weakness. In addition, if students perform well with their current teacher, they stay with them during the Academy. Otherwise, students are assigned to another teacher if the year-round instructor feels that is more beneficial to the student. Edwards' priority is that both students and teachers are satisfied with their groups.

Staff Support

To ensure instructional quality, Edwards' Principal and Director of Instruction interview and select only exemplary teachers, not all of whom teach at Edwards. All teachers are held to extremely high expectations, providing strong instruction to students, being data-driven, and meeting individual student needs. Each year, approximately 70% of Acceleration Academy teachers come from Edwards while the remaining 30% are chosen from neighboring schools and districts. The latter are recruited through district-wide postings as well as advertisement through large teaching organizations. Teachers selected to staff at an Acceleration Academy, referred to as 'Edwards Fellows', view the experience as a professional development opportunity, and are compensated at a rate slightly higher than their regular salaries.

The Schedule

During an Acceleration Academy, students participate in three subject-specific classes with their teacher; each student has the same teacher for all periods. An additional period is dedicated to enrichment activities, such as sports or music, to break up the intensive studies. This time also allows content teachers to collaborate with one another

**Sample ELA Acceleration Academy Schedule
(February Vacation)**

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wed | Thursday |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 7:25-7:55 | Breakfast | Breakfast | Breakfast | Breakfast |
| 8:00-9:10 | Mood & Theme | Context Clues | Main Idea | Conflict |
| 9:10-10:15 | PE | Computer s | PE | Computer s |
| 10:15-11:30 | Mood & Theme | Context Clues | Main Idea | Conflict |
| 11:30-12:00 | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 12:05-1:30 | Open Response | Open Response | Open Response | Open Response |

**Sample Math Acceleration Academy Schedule
(April Vacation)**

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 7:25-7:55 | Breakfas † | Breakfast | Breakfas † | Breakfast |
| 8:00-9:10 | Patterns in Algebra | Patterns in Algebra | Statistics and Data | Msrmnt |
| 9:10-10:15 | PE | Computer s | PE | Compute rs |
| 10:15-11:30 | Patterns in Algebra | Number Sense | Statistics and Data | Geometr y |
| 11:30-12:00 | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 12:05-1:30 | Patterns in Algebra | Number Sense | Msrmnt | Geometr y |

and analyze student progress. This time helps each Edwards Fellow to create their day-by-day guides, with occasional support from the Director of Instruction.

Costs and Funding

The most recent Acceleration Academy in 2009-2010 cost \$533 per student. The majority of the funds are allocated towards personnel wages, transportation, food, and other supplies.

All funding came through grants, independent of the school's per pupil allocation. This effort is mainly led by the principal of the school, whose focus on development work enables the Acceleration Academies to run twice a year.

| Size of Cost | Cost |
|------------------|--|
| Primary | Personnel Wages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 15 content area teachers o 2 specialty teachers o 2 full time administrators o 2 cafeteria workers o 1 secretary/logistics coordinator o 1 security school resource officer o 1 custodian |
| Secondary | Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o AM and PM Busing o Food o Breakfast, Lunch, Snack |
| Tertiary | Student Gift Certificates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Gift certificates for students to local mall o Classroom Resources o Curriculum development aligned to state standards o Instructional Supplies o School supplies for all students and teachers |

