Making Informed Decisions
Is Acceleration Right for My Child?

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Presentation Outline:

- **Presentation**
  - Introduction
  - Acceleration Talk (*NAGC handout*)
  - IL Accelerated Placement Act (*Overview*)
  - Iowa Acceleration Scale

- **Q & A**
Purpose of our meeting includes:

• Review highlights of research on acceleration
• Examine the Accelerated Placement Act
• Explore next steps
• Answer questions
The backstory: 2004

• The paradox:
  
  *Policy and practice were not aligned with research.*

• Students with the strongest Needs were least likely to receive the correct intervention.

• Although well-intentioned, the reasoning underlying this paradox is false.

• The focus of *Nation Deceived* was to start the conversation and dispel the myths.
Myths/Excuses (from Volume 1, A Nation Deceived)

• Teachers lack familiarity.
• Confidence in the value of the intervention is low.
• This intervention runs counter to personal beliefs (concerns about equity, etc.).
• Age trumps aptitude.
• It will lower the self-esteem of the student or other students.
• It’s bad to push kids.
• They will have trouble making friends.
• It’s not fair to the other kids in a classroom.
20 different types of acceleration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early admission to K</th>
<th>Distance learning courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early admission to first</td>
<td>Dual enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>grade</td>
<td>Advanced Placement</td>
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<td>Grade-Skipping</td>
<td>International</td>
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<td>Continuous progress</td>
<td>Baccalaureate program</td>
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<td>Self-paced instruction</td>
<td>Accelerated/Honors HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject-matter acceleration</td>
<td>or STEM Residential HS</td>
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<td>Combined classes</td>
<td>Credit by examination</td>
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<td>Curriculum compacting</td>
<td>Early entrance to MS, HS, or college</td>
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<td>Telescoping curriculum</td>
<td>Early graduation from high school or college</td>
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<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Acceleration in college</td>
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<td>Extracurricular programs</td>
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From Deception to Empowerment

Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America’s Brightest Students

Editors:
Susan G. Assouline,
Nicholas Colangelo,
Joyce VanTassel-Baska, &
Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik
Published April 2015

www.nationempowered.org
Big picture: What did we learn from *A Nation Empowered*?

- **Acceleration works.** An extensive research base supports acceleration.
- Methods have been developed to evaluate candidates for acceleration *systematically* and guide educators through the process.
- Acceleration can be provided in many ways, including content acceleration, grade-skipping, and dual enrollment. Acceleration can be **tailored to individual students’ needs**.
What did we learn from *A Nation Empowered*? (Continued)

• Acceleration supports the **social/emotional** development of gifted students by placing them with other like-minded students.

• Acceleration is an **inexpensive** option.

• Acceleration supports the **continuous** academic development of students by providing academic challenges & stimulation.

• **Resources** for making decisions are available in *Nation Empowered* and at [www.accelerationinstitute.org](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org)
Accelerate Illinois
Illinois Association for Gifted Children
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Academic Acceleration

Presentation offered through the Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration (IRPA) at the University of Iowa’s Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education

Nurturing Potential  Inspiring Excellence
“Acceleration is one of the most curious phenomena in the field of education. I can think of no other issue in which there is such a gulf between what research has revealed and what most practitioners believe. The research on acceleration is so uniformly positive, the benefits of appropriate acceleration so unequivocal, that it is difficult to see how an educator could oppose it.”

James H. Borland, Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University
Planning and Implementing Programs for the Gifted, 1989 (p. 185)
What is acceleration?
“Progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than conventional.”

Pressey, 1949

“… allowing a student to move through traditional educational organizations more rapidly, based on readiness and motivation.”

National Association forGifted Children
Position Paper, Sept. 2004
www.nagc.org
Why accelerate?
• It’s a matter of equity: All students have the right to learn.

• Acceleration is a successful, low-cost intervention. Accelerated students do well in the academic and social-emotional domains.

• See the evidence at: www.accelerationinstitute.org
Myths about acceleration
• Myths about acceleration are discussed and refuted in *A Nation Deceived*.
  (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004)

• Why does there continue to be such resistance to acceleration?
  - Personal beliefs that run counter
  - Teachers are not aware of the research
  - Colleges of Education do not teach about it
  - There are concerns about the social-emotional development of accelerated students

• However, the evidence is clear that acceleration works.
Forms of acceleration
• 20 forms of acceleration identified in *A Nation Deceived*

• Those 20 forms fall into one of two broad categories

  Subject-based acceleration - students typically remain with peers of same age and grade
  (Southern & Jones, 2004)

  Grade-based acceleration (‘grade skipping’) - students do not remain with same-age peers.
  Appropriate for the most highly talented students
  (Rogers, 2004)
Subject-based acceleration
Provides student advanced content, skills, and understandings before expected age or grade level.

Forms include:

• Single-subject acceleration
• Compacted curriculum
• Distance learning
• Talent search programs
• Independent study/Mentoring
• AP courses
Grade-based acceleration
Shortens the number of years a student remains in the K-12 school system

Forms include:

• Early entrance to kindergarten or first grade
• Grade skipping
• Multi-grade classrooms
• Grade telescoping (2 years in one)
• Early entrance to college
Grade skipping works!

“Not only was academic achievement more positive for the grade skipped learners, but also their social adjustment and academic self-esteem were more positive.”

Karen B. Rogers
University of St Thomas (Minnesota)
The *Iowa Acceleration Scale* (3rd Edition)

Authors: Susan Assouline, Ph.D.
        Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D.
        Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D.
        Jonathan Lipscomb, B.A.
        Leslie Forstadt, B.A.
• Instrument to help schools make effective decisions regarding a grade-skip

• The *IAS* and manual (3rd edition) are available from Great Potential Press (www.giftedbooks.com)
The main purpose of the IAS is to guide educators through a discussion of the academic and social characteristics of the student.

A secondary purpose is to help educators avoid the danger of making a decision based upon selected biased recall of past events.
Advantages to using the IAS

- A more objective look at the student
- An analysis of the major factors to be considered in making a decision
- Guidelines for weighting the relative importance of the major factors
- Documentation of the student’s strengths and concerns
- A numerical range to guide the discussion and decision of acceleration
- A standard of comparison with students who have had successful accelerations
The *IAS* form

Ten Sections

- General Information
- Critical Items
- School History
- Assessment of Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement
- School and Academic Factors
- Developmental Factors
- Interpersonal Skills
- Attitude and Support
Advocacy
• Know the research
• Consider types of acceleration
• Assess personal attitudes & system policies
• Make decisions objectively
What can you do?
• Use the Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration at the Belin-Blank Center as a resource for research and advocacy (www.accelerationinstitute.org)

• Download a free copy of *A Nation Deceived* and *A Nation Empowered* (www.nationdeceived.org)

• Become familiar with other organizations and Websites concerned with giftedness, for example,
  
  National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
  The Davidson Institute for Talent Development
  Hoagie’s Gifted Education Page
  Illinois Association of Gifted Students
Accelerated Placement Act
Making Decisions about Whole-Grade Acceleration

- Iowa Acceleration Scale
  - Developmental factors
  - Interpersonal Skills
  - Attitude & support of student, parent, school
  - Critical issues for grade skipping (attitude of student, level of ability, grade level of siblings)
Content-Based Acceleration

• For students who:
  – Demonstrated academic ability in one or more academic areas
  – Are not recommended for whole-grade acceleration

• Benefits students with uneven academic profiles who need acceleration in the area of their strength

• May have already skipped a grade but need additional acceleration in extreme strength area
All students deserve to learn something new each day, and if academically talented students desire to be accelerated and are ready for it, the long-term evidence clearly supports the intervention.

#NationEmpowered
Why do gifted students need something different?
# Levels of Giftedness

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Giftedness Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>180+</td>
<td>Profoundly Gifted</td>
<td>1 in 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160-180</td>
<td>Exceptionally Gifted</td>
<td>9 in 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145-160</td>
<td>Highly Gifted</td>
<td>7 in 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135-145</td>
<td>Moderately Gifted</td>
<td>3 in 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120-130</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>11 in 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110-120</td>
<td>Bright</td>
<td>27 in 100</td>
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