

BELIN-BLANK

Grade-Skipping, Subject Acceleration, and Early Entrance to Kindergarten: Developing Academic Acceleration Policies

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

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Introduction:

What are we talking about?

Definition of Acceleration:

1949, Pressy's monograph:

“Progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than conventional.”

NAGC (n.d.):

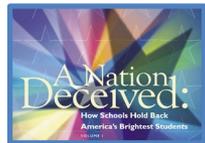
Acceleration occurs when students move through traditional curriculum at rates faster than typical.

Brief Timeline of Formalized Acceleration Resources

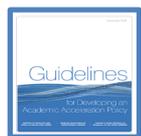
- **1998-2009**



Iowa Acceleration Scale



A Nation Deceived



Acceleration Institute
Policy Guidelines

2010-2018



Acceleration Institute
updated



A Nation Empowered



New Policy Guidelines

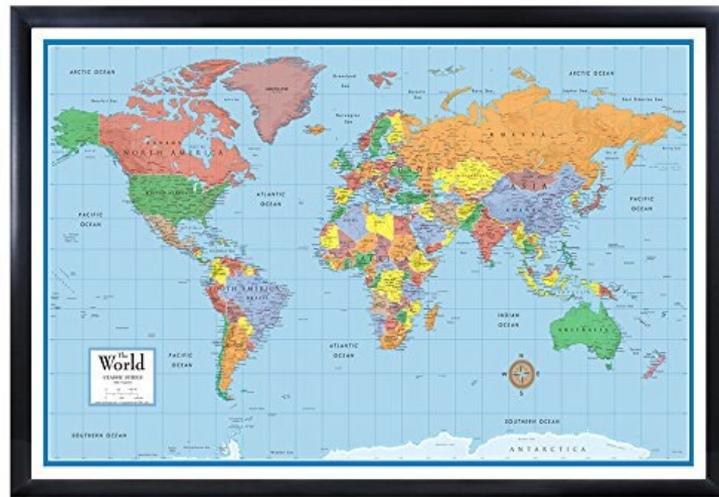
Then and Now

State of the States

Questions re: acceleration	2008-2009	2014-2015
State policy allows	8	15
State policy allows LEAs	7	11
No State policy; only LEAs	28	20
No response/information		1
Does Not permit		0

Are there international considerations for policy?

- Acceleration policies vary widely throughout the world.
- When policies are in place, students have more opportunities for acceleration.



Other Topics to Consider

- Subject Acceleration
- Early entrance to K/1st grade
- AP Dual Enrollment

Developing Academic Acceleration Policies:

Whole Grade,
Early Entrance &
Single Subject



2018

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NEW!

www.accelerationinstitute.org/policies

Whole-Grade Acceleration

Recommended Elements of Whole Grade Acceleration Policy

- The process to obtain acceleration services is detailed in **written** policy
- **Qualified** professionals are involved in all aspects of the process
- Decisions are made by a child study **team**
- Guidelines ensure **fair and systematic** use of accelerative opportunities and recognition for participation in those opportunities

- The policy prevents nonacademic barriers to the use of acceleration as an educational intervention e.g.,
 - Extracurricular opportunities
 - Sports
 - Academic competitions



What short-term and long-term issues should be addressed?

- At what grade level will the student take the state achievement test?*
- Who is responsible for monitoring the acceleration, including academic and social-emotional aspects?
- How will students be allowed to maintain their accelerated standing?*
- How will class rank be determined?
- What additional guidance may be needed?

Further considerations for state policy makers:

Does the policy impact on school funding?

Accountability systems?

Teacher rating systems?



Checklist for a Whole-Grade Acceleration Policy

Some of the items:

- Fair, objective, systematic process?
- Comprehensive data-informed student evaluation plan?
- Child study team?

CHECKLIST FOR A WHOLE-GRADE ACCELERATION POLICY

An ideal acceleration policy will have a "yes" answer to each question.

Is the policy characterized by accessibility, equity, and openness?			Notes
Is access to referral for consideration of acceleration open to all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, school building attended, and previous acceleration?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Are all student populations served, including English learners, at-risk, low socioeconomic status, profoundly gifted, and twice exceptional?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Is the process of student evaluation fair, objective, and systematic?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify a comprehensive data-informed student evaluation plan that:			
a. uses multiple valid and reliable instruments to assess cognitive, social-emotional, and developmental domains?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
b. includes a parent report and teacher observations of the student's knowledge, skills and abilities?			
Are channels of communication among parents/legal guardians, school officials, and/or students clearly delineated and available in an accessible format?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the community have access to the policy document? Is the policy accessible in the languages served by the school?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the acceleration policy provide guidelines for implementing whole-grade acceleration?			
Is the process for consideration of acceleration clearly outlined:			
a. awareness of options			
b. referral & screening			
c. assessment & decision making	Yes	No	Under Consideration
d. planning for acceleration implementation			
e. alternative options for students who are not good candidates for whole grade acceleration			
Are the appropriately qualified professionals involved in determining the process for referral, screening, assessment, etc., identified?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify that child study teams, not individuals, consider acceleration cases?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify the creation and long-term record-keeping of a "Written Acceleration Plan"?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify a monitored transition period with adequate supports in place to increase the likelihood of success?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the acceleration policy provide guidelines on administrative matters?			
Does the policy address short-term issues, such as:			
- specifying which grade level achievement test the student should take?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
- indicates who is responsible for monitoring the acceleration, including academic and social-emotional aspects.			
Does the policy address long-term needs, such as:			
- Maintaining accelerated standing throughout the K-12 years?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
- Determining student class rank?			
Does the acceleration policy provide guidelines for preventing non-academic barriers?			
Are procedures in place to ensure participation in extracurricular activities, including sports?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Have funding formulae been reviewed to prevent unintended disincentives?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the acceleration policy include features that prevent unintended consequences?			
Is an appeals process detailed?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Will the policy be regularly evaluated for its effectiveness?	Yes	No	Under Consideration

Early Entrance to Kindergarten/ 1st Grade

Checklist for an Early Entrance to Kindergarten/ 1st Grade Policy

Some of the items:

- Child study team?
- Comprehensive evaluation?
- Written early entrance plan?

CHECKLIST FOR AN EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN OR FIRST GRADE ACCELERATION POLICY

An ideal acceleration policy will have a "yes" answer to each question.

Is the policy characterized by accessibility, equity, and openness?				Notes
Is access to referral for consideration of early entrance to kindergarten or first grade open to all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and school building attended?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Are all student populations served, including English learners, at-risk, low socioeconomic status, profoundly gifted, and twice exceptional?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Is the process of student assessment comprehensive, fair, objective, and systematic?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Are channels of communication among parents/legal guardians, school officials, and/or students clearly delineated and available in an accessible format?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the community have access to the policy document? Is the policy accessible in the languages served by the school?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the acceleration policy provide guidelines for implementing early entrance to kindergarten or first grade?				
Is the process for consideration of acceleration clearly outlined: a. awareness of options b. referral & screening c. assessment & decision making d. planning for acceleration implementation e. planning for alternative options when early entrance is not recommended	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Are the appropriately qualified professionals involved in determining the process for referral, screening, assessment, etc., identified?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy specify that child study teams, not individuals, consider early entrance to kindergarten or first grade cases?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy specify the creation of a "Written Early Entrance Plan"?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy require that early entrance to kindergarten or admission to first grade be based on a comprehensive evaluation to determine the child's ability to meet kindergarten expectations and progress to first grade the following year?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy specify when, where and how a student may be assessed as well as who may be responsible for payment?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy specify a comprehensive evaluation plan that: a. aligns with state kindergarten expectations b. uses multiple valid and reliable instruments to assess cognitive, social, and emotional developmental domains c. includes a parent report and teacher observations of the child's knowledge, skills and abilities	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy specify a monitored transition period?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the policy specify the timeline for information gathering and review of the decision?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Does the acceleration policy include features that prevent unintended consequences?				
Is an appeals process detailed?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	
Will the policy be regularly evaluated for its effectiveness?	Yes	No	Under Consideration	

Subject Acceleration

Subject 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

Checklist for a Subject Acceleration Policy

Some of the items:

- Transportation?
- Determining class rank?
- Process for credit and placement?
- Options for students who “run out” of content?

CHECKLIST FOR A SUBJECT ACCELERATION POLICY

An ideal acceleration policy will have a “yes” answer to each question.

Is the policy characterized by accessibility, equity, and openness?			Notes
Is access to referral for consideration of acceleration open to all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, school building attended, and previous acceleration?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Are all student populations served, including English learners, at-risk, low socioeconomic status, profoundly gifted, and twice exceptional?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Is the process of student assessment comprehensive, fair, objective, and systematic?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Are channels of communication among parents/legal guardians, school officials, and/or students clearly delineated and available in an accessible format?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the community have access to the policy document? Is the policy accessible in the languages served by the school?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the acceleration policy provide guidelines for implementing subject acceleration?			
Is the process for consideration of acceleration clearly outlined: a. awareness of options b. referral & screening c. assessment & decision making d. planning for acceleration implementation e. planning for alternative options for students who are not good candidates for subject acceleration	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Are the appropriately qualified professionals involved in determining the process for referral, screening, assessment, etc., identified?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify an evaluation plan that: • uses multiple valid and reliable instruments to assess achievement (grade-level testing) and aptitude (above-level testing) in the relevant content area? • includes parent and teacher observations of the child's knowledge, skills and abilities in the content area?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify that child study teams, not individuals, consider acceleration cases?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify the creation of a “Written Acceleration Plan”?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy specify a monitored transition period?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy address short-term needs?			
Clarify grade indicated when student takes the state's grade-level achievement test?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Allow for subject acceleration in multiple courses without having a whole-grade acceleration?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Allow for independent study or an online or hybrid course?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Specify the teacher of record for reporting grades?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Specify how subject accelerated classes will be reported on student cumulative files and on transcripts?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Clarify transportation issues for students who need to travel between buildings?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Specify whether students may participate in academic competitions and with age-mates or grade-peers?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Specify how the student's class rank and/or honors designation will be determined on the transcript?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Specify a timeline for the review of the decision to determine effectiveness?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Provide a process for determining credit and placement for students who have completed advanced work outside of school?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the policy address long-term needs?			
Identify options for students who may run out of advanced content within their building in the future.	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Does the acceleration policy include features that prevent unintended consequences?			
Is an appeals process detailed?	Yes	No	Under Consideration
Will the policy be regularly evaluated for its effectiveness?	Yes	No	Under Consideration

Sample Policies

Example: Kent School District for whole-grade and subject acceleration

Key Points in the Procedure:

- An acceleration evaluation committee will determine the most appropriate and available learning environment for the students.
- This possibility extends to all students and is reserved only for identified gifted students.
- The Building Principal is designated to take the lead in the process and may choose to designate another to manage the process.
- The ONLY instrument approved for acceleration is the Iowa Acceleration Scales (IAS), to be followed for referrals for whole-grade acceleration, subject acceleration, and Early Entrance Kindergarten. The information gathered is considered by the committee in deciding for or against acceleration. For subject acceleration it is acceptable to utilize multiple data points pertaining to the subject and readiness for acceleration; a complete IAS is not required.

Procedure

1. Referral is made to Principal
2. Principal/ designee secures permission from parents to evaluate for acceleration
3. Principal convenes an Acceleration Evaluation Committee with at least the following: parent/ guardian, gifted coordinator/ specialist and/or school counselor and/ or school psychologist, current principal, a current teacher, and a teacher at the proposed level.
4. Information is gathered and discussed using the IAS, and any other pertinent sources, and the committee utilizes this information to make an acceleration decision.
5. The decision will be written and provided for the principal and parent, including description of the appeal process

6. In cases where acceleration placement is made:

A Written Acceleration Plan will specify:

- A. placement of the student in an accelerated setting;
- B. strategies to support a successful transition to the accelerated setting;
- C. requirements and procedures for earning high school credit prior to entering high school (if applicable); and,
- D. an appropriate transition period for accelerated students. This plan designates the staff responsible for overseeing the transition.

B. The student will be coded as “accelerated” for reporting purposes and will take required state assessments for the course/ grade level at which instruction is delivered.

c. A student may be removed from the acceleration setting during the stated transition time upon parent written request.

Appendices: On the Website

- Appendix A: Definition of Acceleration Interventions (from Southern & Jones, 2015)
- Appendix B: Survey of State Acceleration Policies. 2014-15 information
- Appendix C: Implementing Acceleration
- Appendix D: Example Language from State Acceleration Policies
- Appendix E: Example Referral Forms and Written Acceleration Plans

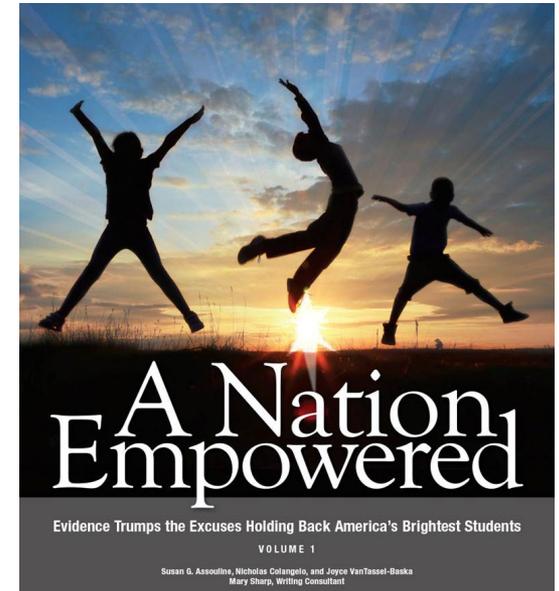
Submit your policies to:

[www.accelerationinstitute.org/
policies](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/policies)

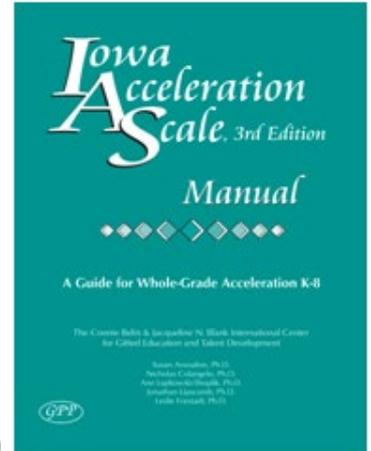


Where Can I Find the Research?

- www.nationempowered.org
- www.nationdeceived.org
- www.accelerationinstitute.org
- Google: Hoagies gifted acceleration
- <http://www.davidsongifted.org/Search-Database/topic/105164/entryType/2>



Some of the Decision-Making Tools



- *Iowa Acceleration Scale:*

This is not a test; it is a tool to help guide the decision-making process

- *Above-level testing*

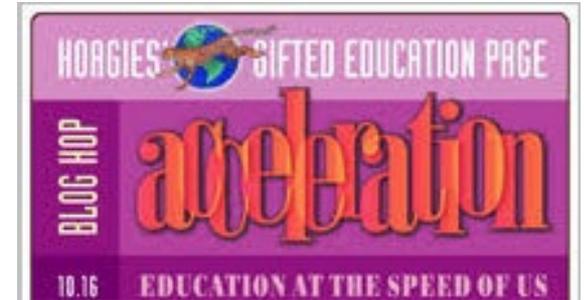
- Participate in a Talent Search (for example, a university-based talent search)
- Above-level testing in school using available instruments or through a university program. For example, www.i-excel.org

Resources for Families

- www.accelerationinstitute.org/parents.aspx
- NAGC Tip Sheet for Parents on acceleration:
<http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/Publication%20PHP/NAGC%20TIP%20Sheet-Acceleration-FINAL.pdf>

Additional Resources for Families

- Hoagiesgifted.org (Google “Hoagies Gifted Acceleration”).
- Hoagies Gifted blog hops:
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/blog_hop_acceleration.htm and
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/blog_hop_acceleration_2.htm
- ditd.org. Google: Davidson Acceleration Resources



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www.belinblank.org/newsletter

For Discussion

1. International considerations: Share information with others about your policies
2. What are the best arguments for making a whole grade acceleration policy for your school/district?
3. Advancing the agenda: What can I do to support my colleagues in developing an acceleration policy?
4. How do we respond to concerns about the social-emotional impact of acceleration?
5. What are the challenges of implementing subject acceleration in a district, and how do we implement policies that minimize these challenges?

