

IAGC Policy & Advocacy: 2018-19 Updates

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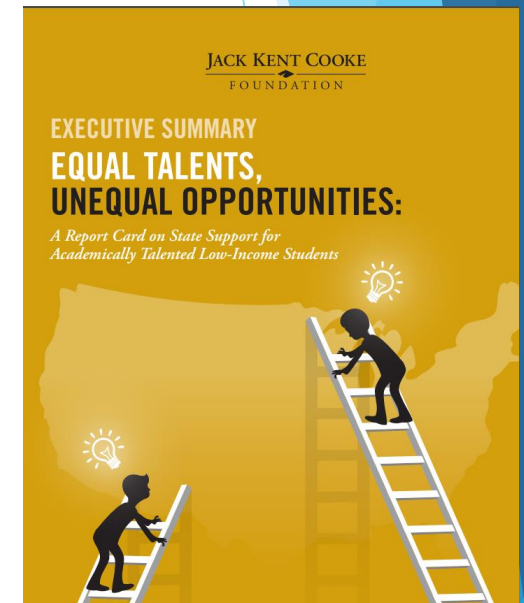
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Overview

- ▶ Background on IL Gifted Education Law & Policy
- ▶ Opportunities Created by ESSA: Growth and School Quality Indicator
- ▶ Recent IL Laws Passed: Accelerated Placement Act, Report Card Act, and Dual Credit Legislation
- ▶ Accelerated Placement Act Implementation and Rulemaking
- ▶ Requirements and Key Features of Acceleration Policies
- ▶ National Gifted Ed Advocacy Update
- ▶ IAGC Advocacy Priorities for 2019-2020
- ▶ Q & A

Background on Gifted Education Policy in Illinois & its Impact

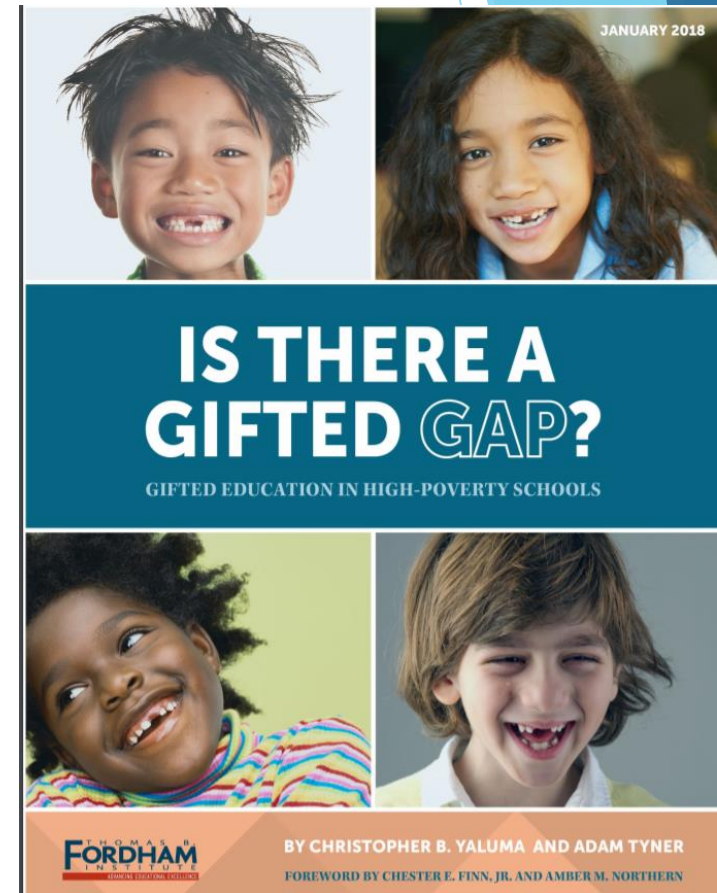
- ▶ No legal mandate for identifying or serving gifted students; no accountability for the growth of high-ability students before new IL ESSA Plan
- ▶ 2003: Last year schools received grant-based funds (\$19 million) to meet the needs of gifted students - Over 80% of elementary and middle schools provided gifted services that year
https://www.isbe.net/Documents/gifted_stats_02-03.pdf
- ▶ 2016: Only 27% of districts still offer gifted services in 2016, down from 80+% in 2003 (Dwyer & Welch, 2016). Low-income districts less likely to retain gifted programs after state cuts
- ▶ Illinois received a D- in the 2015 and a D in the updated 2018 Jack Kent Cooke report that grades states in gifted education policies and support



http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_ETUO_Executive_Final.pdf

2018 Report: Gifted Gap in High Poverty Schools

- ▶ Illinois Gifted Education Statistics:
 - ▶ Overall, 35.2% of schools offer gifted services, which is far below the national average of 68.3%
 - ▶ High poverty schools (at least 75% FRL students) are far less likely to have gifted programs than low poverty schools (high poverty = 32.8%; low = 57%)
 - ▶ High poverty schools in Illinois are much less likely to have gifted programs than the national average (69.1%)
- ▶ Nationally, high and low poverty schools are equally likely to offer gifted programs (unlike IL), but low-income, black and Hispanic students are less likely to participate in them (like IL)



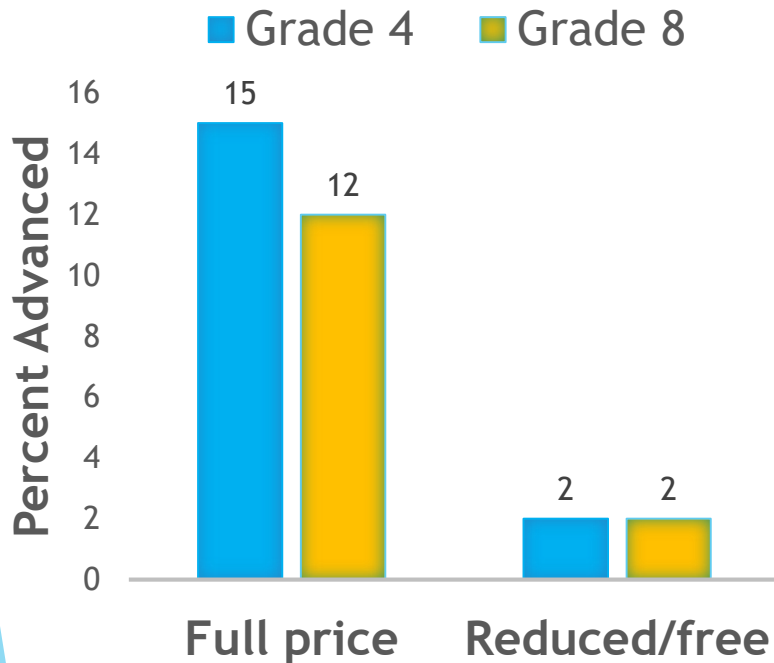
<https://edexcellence.net/publications/is-there-a-gifted-gap>

Why Does this Matter?

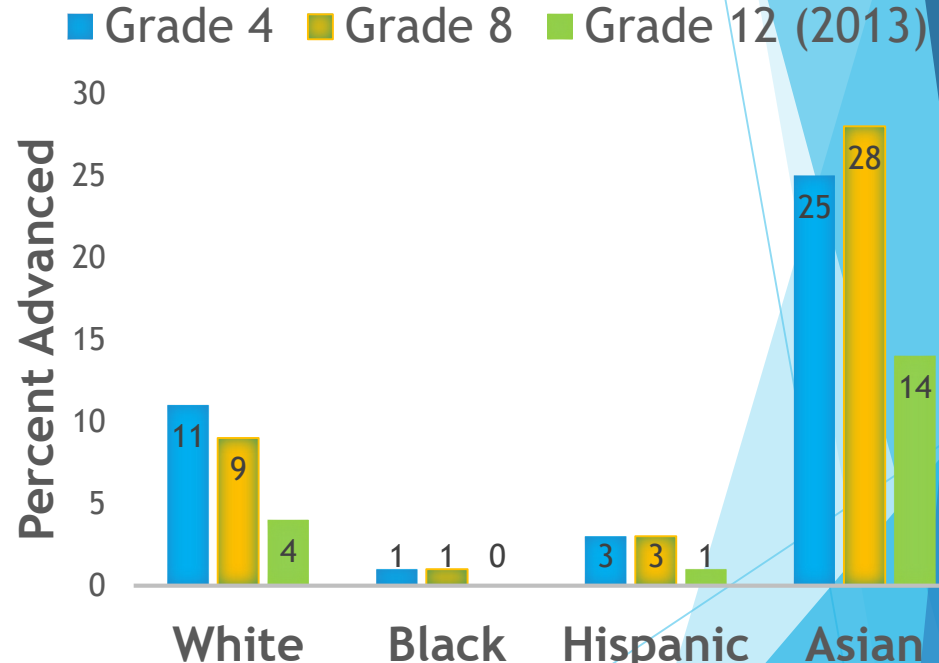
- ▶ At least **100,000 Illinois students should be receiving gifted services**
 - ▶ 2 million students are enrolled in IL public schools
 - ▶ Illinois School Code defines gifted children as the top 5% of students using local norms.
- ▶ 54% of students in Illinois are low-income, so **over 50,000 high-potential low-income students** should be identified as gifted
- ▶ Lack of access to gifted programming during the school day is most detrimental to economically disadvantaged students whose families lack resources for supplementation
- ▶ Excellence gaps are pronounced—talent is left on the table. Funding and sound policies that support gifted education in public schools make the world less (not more) elitist by expanding opportunities to for all students.

Illinois Excellence Gaps

2015 NAEP Math by Lunch Status



2015 NAEP Math by Race



Plucker, J. A. (2016, February). *Excellence Gaps: What they are, why they're bad, and what you can do about them*. Session presentation at the Illinois Association for Gifted Children Annual Convention, Naperville, IL. Reprinted with permission.

Leveraging the Every Student Succeeds Act



- ▶ **ESSA’s statutory requirement to involve stakeholders afforded frequent access to IL’s major education policy makers**
 - ▶ Illinois State Board of Education Listening Tours throughout state; regular public comment periods
 - ▶ Regular Illinois Accountability Committee meetings; other committee meetings addressing specific areas of IL ESSA plan development
 - ▶ ESSA legislative hearings
- ▶ **ESSA’s primary focus on equity and civil rights allowed us to regularly highlight the inequitable access to advanced learning opportunities and excellence gaps in IL**
 - ▶ Purpose Statement: “to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.”

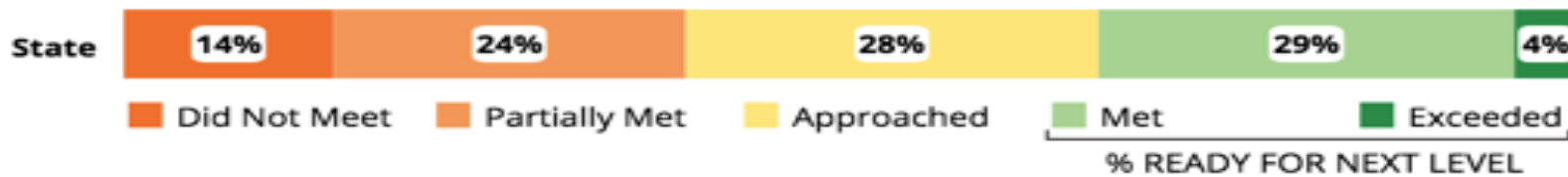
Accountability Opportunities Under ESSA

Opportunity to move past single-minded focus on basic proficiency in accountability plan

- ▶ An **additional academic indicator** (measure of student growth) for elementary and middle schools is *required*
 - ▶ IAGC position on the growth indicator: Adopt a “true” growth model based on individual student growth across the entire achievement spectrum, and do not diminish weight for students moving to achievement levels beyond proficient.
 - ▶ IAGC position on weighting: Weight the growth indicator more heavily than achievement/proficiency levels
- ▶ **At least one indicator of school quality or student success** (e.g., access to and completion of advanced coursework) is *required*
 - ▶ IAGC position on the school quality indicator: Prioritize and incentive closing “opportunity” and “excellence gaps” between economic and racial subgroups by adding a school quality indicator that looks at access to a broad curriculum, including enrichment and acceleration opportunities.

Importance of Measuring the Growth of High Achievers

- ▶ **Data support the need to move beyond proficiency:**
 - ▶ 33% of students in Illinois already meet or exceed proficiency (Illinois Report Card)
 - ▶ Among U.S. elementary and middle school students, 20% to 49% in English Language Arts and 14% to 37% in mathematics scored 1 year or more above grade level (Peters et al., 2017)
 - ▶ Illinois currently has large achievement gaps at the advanced level based on income and race.



- ▶ **A key design goal in ESEA reauthorization was to change the carrots and sticks that encourage a “race to the middle.”**
 - ▶ States are required to disaggregate achievement levels by subgroup; Title funds to support gifted & talented students

Capitalizing on the School Quality Indicator Opportunity

- ▶ During these accountability meetings, major education policy makers proposed the idea of a school quality indicator that would measure students' access to a “broad and rich curriculum”
- ▶ Because we were present at the meetings, we were able to get **access to enrichment and acceleration opportunities** included in the to-be-developed school quality indicators that were included in the ESSA plan submitted to the feds.
- ▶ We asked to be included in the work group that would then develop specifics on this school quality indicator.

ISBE Submits Final ESSA Plan with our Recommendations

- ▶ Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee voted to submit ESSA recommendations to ISBE, including a growth model and school quality indicator in line with our recommendations, and weighting growth more heavily than proficiency
- ▶ IAGC submitted comments during ISBE public comment period
- ▶ Final Illinois ESSA plan submitted to U.S. Department of Education in April 2017, which included:
 - ▶ Recommended growth indicator (weighted at 50% of the entire summative rating, even more than recommended by the accountability committee)
 - ▶ Grades P-2 School Quality Indicator (weighted at 5%)
 - ▶ Grades 3-8 School Quality Indicator (weighted at 5%)

ISBE's ESSA School Quality Indicator Work Group

FALL 2017-WINTER 2018

- ▶ ISBE invites IAGC to serve on the Work Group tasked with recommending what schools should be held accountable for under the P-2 and 3-8 school quality indicators (each weighted at 5% of the accountability system)
- ▶ IAGC argues that **student participation in acceleration and enrichment opportunities** should be included in both school quality indicators
 - ▶ Proposed threshold is 5% of students participating in acceleration and/or enrichment
 - ▶ Proposed definition of enrichment: 90 min/week on average of advanced academic content taught by a teacher with at least 15 hours of PD, an endorsement, or masters in gifted
- ▶ The data collection and reporting requirements of the newly passed Accelerated Placement Act and Report Card Act strengthen our arguments

ISBE Approves Acceleration & Enrichment Indicator as Report-Only

APRIL 2018

- ▶ The P-2 and 3-8 Work Groups both formally recommend to ISBE that “student participation in acceleration and enrichment” is included in the school quality indicators.
- ▶ IAGC mobilizes to request that members submit public comments and the vast majority of comments received by ISBE are supportive of the acceleration/enrichment indicators.
- ▶ IAGC organized a variety of stakeholders to testify at five State Board of Education monthly meetings in 2018. They testified about the importance of the acceleration/enrichment ESSA indicator, valuing the growth of advanced students equally, and acceleration rulemaking.
- ▶ ISBE voted in April 2018 to report student participation in acceleration and enrichment as part of the ESSA accountability framework starting in 2018-19, and to reevaluate for weighting after three years of data collection/reporting.

ISBE's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): SPRING 2018

- ▶ TAC is tasked by ISBE with determining the technical details and metrics of the growth indicator
- ▶ TAC is composed of different people, many from outside IL, who were not privy to the discussions about the growth indicator during the development of IL's ESSA Plan
- ▶ TAC begins discussing the possibility of weighting the growth of students who are below proficiency more heavily than those who are above proficiency
- ▶ IAGC Policy & Advocacy team mobilizes, attend TAC meetings, speaks during public comment at TAC meetings, testifies at ISBE meetings, and successfully derails any effort to build proficiency back into the growth indicator

Significance of the New Growth Model for Advanced Students

- ▶ In the outgoing NCLB era growth model, there was no accountability for early high flyers losing altitude.
 - ▶ Therefore, there was little incentive to address the needs of the $\frac{1}{3}$ of IL students already proficient but whose growth was stagnating or declining.
 - ▶ Similarly, districts were not rewarded when students starting far below proficiency made great strides but didn't cross the proficiency threshold score.
- ▶ In the new model, all growth is weighted equally.
 - ▶ Schools will be recognized for helping struggling students advance significantly.
 - ▶ Growth/declines of advanced learners already proficient will be given value, too.

Accelerated Placement Act & Report Card Act Go Into Effect

- ▶ After the IL ESSA plan was finalized, the Accelerated Placement Act and the Report Card Act passed with strong bipartisan support. Having repeatedly shared our message about the importance of policy supports for gifted and advanced students in the context of ESSA helped us pass the acceleration law.
- ▶ **Accelerated Placement Act (Public Act 100-0420) - Effective 7/1/18:**
 - ▶ Requires all districts to establish policies allowing early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, individual subject acceleration, and whole grade acceleration
 - ▶ Requires ISBE to report data collected from districts on the numbers/demographics of students participating in these different forms of acceleration
- ▶ **Report Card Act (Public Act 100-0364) - Effective 1/1/18**
 - ▶ Requires ISBE to collect and report data on availability of gifted programming, numbers/demographics of students receiving gifted services, and numbers of teachers with gifted endorsements

Accelerated Placement Act Background

- ▶ Acceleration works and is backed by 100 years of research (Hu, Makel, & Olszewski-Kubilius)
 - ▶ Highly effective for promoting academic growth for gifted and advanced students
 - ▶ Most studies find social-emotional impact is neutral or positive
 - ▶ Acceleration is cost-neutral and possible everywhere
- ▶ 33% of IL students are at or above proficiency (IL Report Card); 20% to 49% in English Language Arts and 14% to 37% in mathematics scored 1 year or more above grade level (Peters et al., 2017)
- ▶ Yet, few students are accelerated, and many Illinois schools lack policies to encourage and guide acceleration (*Accelerate Illinois* Report, Untapped Potential Project and IAGC)



<https://www.iagcgifted.org/IL-Acceleration-Act>

Article 14A of IL School Code

Definitions

- ▶ Article 14A now entitled “Gifted and Talented Children and Children Eligible for Accelerated Placement”
- ▶ Section 14A-20: “Gifted and Talented Children” Definition
 - ▶ Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment
 - ▶ A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and, specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude
- ▶ Section 14A-17: “Accelerated Placement” Definition
 - ▶ Placement of a child in an educational setting with curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the child.
 - ▶ Shall include, but need not be limited to, the following types of acceleration: early entrance to K/1st grade; single subject acceleration; and whole grade acceleration

Gifted Education Program

Requirements (Section 14A-30)

- ▶ Identification: Updated via the Untapped Potential Act (Public Act 099-0706) in 2016
 - ▶ Use of multiple valid assessments that are culturally/linguistically appropriate, applied universally to all students
 - ▶ Use of appropriate score ranges for assessments, including local norms for identifying high potential
 - ▶ Fair and equitable selection process that allows multiple pathways into the program
- ▶ Services
- ▶ Teacher Training/Professional Development
- ▶ Gifted programming requirements in Section 14A-30 are dependent on state funding and an application process

Report Card Act (HB2461/Public Act 100-0364)

- ▶ Signed into law August 2017; Effective date January 1, 2018
- ▶ Amends School Code Section 10-17a: State, School District and School Report Cards
- ▶ Requires State Board of Education to collect and publish data in the Illinois Report Card on number and subgroup demographics of students receiving gifted services
- ▶ Requires reporting of numbers of teachers with gifted endorsements
- ▶ Seeking a designated tab on the IL Report Card for all data regarding “Advanced Students”
- ▶ Importance of data collection



Accelerated Placement Act (ISC Section 14A-32)

- ▶ SB 1223/Public Act 100-0421: Signed into law August 2017; Effective date was July 1, 2018
- ▶ Requires each school district to have policy that allows for accelerated placement. These policies *must* specify:
 - ▶ Fair and equitable decision making process involving multiple persons and includes a student's parent/guardian
 - ▶ Assessment process including multiple valid, reliable indicators
 - ▶ Procedures for notifying parents/guardians about decision
 - ▶ Open to all students who demonstrate high ability and may benefit from accelerated placement regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency. ***Not limited to those identified as gifted and talented.***
- ▶ Requires ISBE to collect and report data about accelerated placement

Whole Grade Acceleration: Key Policy Features

- ▶ Entire process to obtain acceleration is detailed in policy (awareness; referral and screening; assessment and decision making; implementation planning)
- ▶ Appropriately qualified professionals involved throughout
- ▶ Decisions made by a team, not a single gatekeeper that considers multiple valid indicators (multiple pathways)
- ▶ Team generates a written acceleration plan that follows child
- ▶ Specifies monitored transition period within which decision can be reversed (e.g., 30 days)
- ▶ Provides guidelines on administrative matters (e.g., which grade level for state assessment) and prevention of non-academic barriers (e.g., extracurricular activity participation)
- ▶ See Checklist for a Whole-Grade Acceleration Policy (p. 15):

<https://www.nagc.org/blog/developing-academic-acceleration-policies>

http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/resources/policy_guidelines/

Early Entrance to K or 1st: Key Policy Features

- ▶ Most features are the same as whole grade acceleration. Additional features include:
- ▶ Policy specifies when, where, and how a student may be assessed as well as who is responsible for payment. Payment should not be a barrier for underserved students.
- ▶ Evaluation process aligned to state kindergarten/1st grade expectations
- ▶ Multiple appropriate instruments to assess cognitive, social, and emotional development; parent report and teacher observations
- ▶ Specifies a timeline for initiation of request for early entrance, data collection/assessment timeframe, and deadline for parents to be notified of decision
- ▶ See Checklist for Early Entrance to K or 1st Grade Policy (p. 17):

<https://www.nagc.org/blog/developing-academic-acceleration-policies>

http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/resources/policy_guidelines/

Subject Acceleration: Key Policy Features

- ▶ Many features are the same as whole-grade and early entrance. Additional features include:
- ▶ Clarifies student's grade designation for the purposes of state's grade-level achievement test
- ▶ Specifies teacher of record for reporting grades
- ▶ Specifies how subject accelerated classes will be reported on student cumulative file/transcript
- ▶ Clarifies any transportation issues
- ▶ Addresses class rank issues
- ▶ See Checklist for a Subject Acceleration Policy (p. 19)

<https://www.nagc.org/blog/developing-academic-acceleration-policies>

http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/resources/policy_guidelines/

Acceleration Law Rulemaking & Guidance

- ▶ IAGC and the Illinois Gifted Advisory Council submitted comprehensive rulemaking and guidance around the Accelerated Placement Act and the Report Card Act in March 2018
- ▶ ISBE released guidance on implementing the acceleration law to districts in May and then draft rules in June 2018
- ▶ Rules were posted for public comment in July 2018
- ▶ Final rules that were included on ISBE's consent agenda for September 2018 contained an error in the definition of early entrance to 1st grade
- ▶ IAGC/Gifted Advisory Council representatives testified about the error and ISBE pulled the rules from the agenda for revision. ISBE fixed the definition of early entrance to 1st grade to remove any age restrictions.

ISBE Finalized Acceleration Rulemaking Dec. 12

- ▶ Includes definitions for early entrance to kindergarten, early entrance to first grade, whole grade acceleration, and individual subject acceleration
- ▶ Includes details on data collection and reporting:
 - ▶ Districts must post acceleration policies on their websites
 - ▶ Districts must report the following information to ISBE through the Student Information System for each student receiving acceleration:
 - ▶ gender, ethnicity, English language status, special education status, low-income status, and which of the four types of acceleration they are receiving
 - ▶ ***This information shall be entered upon identifying a student as eligible for accelerated placement, but no later than July 31 of each year, beginning with the 2018-19 school year***
 - ▶ ISBE will publish this data annually

Supporting Schools & Families with Acceleration Implementation

- ▶ As a tool for districts to use in implementing the law, IAGC Policy & Advocacy Committee created a Model Acceleration Policy based on NAGC research/guidelines and other states' established policies, aligned to the IL law.
- ▶ Throughout the last year, IAGC has provided workshops to schools and guidance to families seeking support with respect to acceleration in their districts.
- ▶ A webpage devoted to the Accelerated Placement Act is maintained on IAGC's website which features:
 - ▶ Description and links to the law, background research, and reports
 - ▶ IAGC Model Acceleration Policy
 - ▶ Other key resources related to acceleration, including NAGC's newly updated [*Developing Academic Acceleration Policies: Whole Grade, Early Entrance, and Single Subject*](#) publication

Dual Credit Legislation Passed in 2018 (PA 100-0792)

- ▶ IAGC supported a bipartisan bill chief-sponsored by Senator Weaver (R) and Senator Bertino-Tarrant (D) amending the dual enrollment and dual credit section of the IL School Code
- ▶ The bill was signed into law in August 2018 and went into effect on January 1, 2019
- ▶ The law provides that “a qualified student shall be allowed to enroll in an unlimited amount of dual credit courses and earn an unlimited amount of academic credits from dual credit courses if the courses are taught by an Illinois instructor, as provided under the Dual Credit Quality Act”

Illinois Gifted Advisory Council Updates

- ▶ IAGC and the Illinois Gifted Advisory Council (GAC) submitted recommended rulemaking and guidance around the Accelerated Placement Act and the Report Card Act to ISBE in March 2018
- ▶ ISBE said that it would provide to the GAC in January 2019 a draft of additional (more specific) guidance for districts dealing with acceleration (PA 100-0420) and Report Card Act (PA 100-0364) data collection and reporting
- ▶ The GAC is established by Section 14A-40 of the Illinois School Code and requires the following:
 - ▶ State Superintendent must consult with GAC regarding all rules and policies to be adopted by the State Board regarding gifted children
 - ▶ Meets at least three times a year - meetings are open to public
 - ▶ The ISBE gifted coordinator must attend these meetings

Updates on Advocacy at the National Level

- ▶ IAGC representatives met with federal legislators on Capitol Hill in March
- ▶ The Administration proposed eliminating FY19 funding for the Javits Gifted & Talented Education Program, the only federal funds designated specifically for gifted students.
- ▶ Our U.S. Senators from Illinois, Duckworth and Durbin, both signed a Dear Colleague letter at our request, following meetings with both offices. They were two of only 16 total Senators to sign this letter supporting funding for the Javits grants provided for under Title IV of ESSA. Congress voted to maintain Javits funding at \$12 million for FY19.
- ▶ Carolyn serves on the NAGC Legislative & Advocacy Committee, which is currently working to empower advocates in key federal legislative districts

IAGC Advocacy Priorities for 2019-2020

- ▶ Seek a **full-time ISBE Gifted Education Coordinator position** to manage the data collection and reporting requirements of the Accelerated Placement Act and the Report Card Act, as well as to provide support to schools and families related to acceleration, gifted services, and teacher training.
- ▶ Create a **designated tab on the Illinois Report Card for all data regarding “Advanced Students”** including access to acceleration and gifted services, disaggregated by student subgroup.
- ▶ Monitor the implementation of the ESSA accountability plan and ensure visibility of data related to the growth of advanced students from all backgrounds.
- ▶ **Restore funding for gifted programming** to \$24.7 million (which is the \$19 million distributed in 2003 by ISBE for gifted programs before funding was cut, adjusted for inflation). Alternatively, the new school funding law includes \$40 times Average Student Enrollment for “gifted investments” as an adequacy target - amend Section 14A-30 such that these funds trigger the gifted programming requirements therein.
- ▶ Continue outreach to school districts regarding adoption of acceleration policies and share resources, e.g., IAGC model policy/procedures and NAGC guide to developing acceleration policies (see below).

IAGC Advocacy Priorities for 2019-2020

- ▶ Educate decisionmakers and seek to leverage other ESSA provisions related to gifted and talented students, including:
 - ▶ **Title I funds** *may* be used for identifying and serving gifted students
 - ▶ **Title II funds** *must* be used to train teachers/school leaders in gifted education
 - ▶ **Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants** emphasize providing advanced and “accelerated learning programs” to “students who are often underrepresented in enriching subjects”
- ▶ Continue to reach out to members and supporters with future action alerts. Please respond to our calls for public comment, outreach to legislators, submitting witness slips in favor of bills, etc. Thank you - your support makes a difference!
- ▶ We are considering legislation to expand access to dual credit and advanced coursework for low-income students

Resources

- ▶ [IAGC Model Acceleration Policy/Procedures](#)
- ▶ New NAGC Resource!
 - ▶ [*Developing Academic Acceleration Policies: Whole Grade, Early Entrance, and Single Subject*](#) (Lupkowski-Shoplik, Behrens, Assouline)
 - ▶ Features sample policies, checklists, and referral forms
- ▶ Acceleration Institute at University of Iowa Belin-Blank Center (www.accelerationinstitute.org)
 - ▶ A Nation Empowered (2015); A Nation Deceived (2004); Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition
- ▶ IAGC website resources (www.iagcgifted.org):
 - ▶ [Accelerated Placement Act](#) & [General Advocacy Resources](#) webpages
- ▶ [Is There a Gifted Gap? Gifted Education in High Poverty Schools](#) (Fordham Institute, 2018)
- ▶ [Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities Report](#) (Jack Kent Cooke Foundation)

Questions?

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