The State of Our State

Benchmarking Illinois in Educating Advanced Learners

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Why Benchmark?

- Creates an opportunity to explore how other states are approaching similar concerns to identify promising, potentially transferable, approaches.
- Creates an opportunity to monitor our own progress over time in comparison to objective outcomes.
Our Focus

- How does Illinois compare to other states through the lenses of:
  - Policies supporting evidence-based practices in gifted education
  - Funding for gifted education
  - Educational outcomes for gifted students

- Where are we making progress?
- In what areas is advocacy needed to ensure Illinois students have opportunities to reach their potential?
United States Overall: NAGC “State of the States” 2014-15

- 38 states have funding specifically for gifted education
- At least 32 states plus the Department of Defense Schools have mandates for gifted identification
- At least 28 states have mandates for gifted education services in at least some grade levels and talent areas
- At least 16 states require local acceleration policies. (At least two more have pending legislation.)
- At least 18 state departments of education employ at least one staff member fully dedicated to supporting gifted education
Nationally, Too Many “High Flyers” Are Losing Altitude

Fordham analysis of NWEA MAP data examined whether students who had earned a MAP score above the 90th percentile remained in the top quartile.

- 43% early high flying elementary students subsequently fell below the 75th percentile overall in Math before or during middle school.
Nationally, Too Many “High Flyers” Are Losing Altitude

- 44% elementary and middle school subsequently fell below the 75th percentile in reading before leaving middle school.
Early high flyers attending high poverty schools were 26% more likely to descend categories vs. early high flyers in low poverty schools in math.
Early High Flyers At Risk in High Poverty Schools

Early high flyers attending high poverty schools were 24% more likely to descend categories vs. early high flyers in low poverty schools in reading.

Steady High Flyers and Descenders - Reading

- Steady High Flyers
- Descenders

Low Poverty

High Poverty

Reading
Minority students were more likely to lose altitude.

In reading, 64% of minority students who attended high poverty schools descended vs. 41% of non-minority students in low poverty schools.
Minority Early High Flyers At Greater Risk of Descent

- 57% of minority high flyers lost altitude in math.
- 64% of minority early high flyers descended in high poverty schools.
“A coherent set of state policies not only define issues and practices that are essential to the delivery of high-quality programs for gifted students; they also provide parents, teachers, and other gifted education advocates with leverage to demand appropriate services for gifted and talented students in their communities.

Well-crafted state policies also serve as tools for local policy development, assisting boards of education, educational leaders, and parent advocates as they seek to improve their own policies.”

Sally Krisel
Gifted Education in Illinois:

- Where Have We Been?
- Where Are We Now?
Illinois Policy - History

- Illinois has a proud history in gifted education.
  - Illinois, led by ISBE, was the first state to conduct research into how state policy could support gifted education beginning in the 1950s.
    - Gifted education was a top priority in the wake of Sputnik.
    - Governor Otto Kerner convened leaders from educational, civic, professional, labor, industrial, and social service circles to make recommendations. The governor himself as well as Lt. Governor Shapiro then travelled the state to keynote conferences focused on the issue attended by thousands of Illinoisians throughout the summer of 1962.
Illinois Policy - History

- A report by James Gallagher, commissioned by the State Superintendent, benchmarked Illinois against other states.
  - Finding little in the way of state-level models, Illinois turned to study local innovations. The 1966 report also blasted Nebraska for its backward policy of incorporating an absolute age requirement for students to enter kindergarten despite overwhelming evidence of the success of early school entrants admitted on the basis of assessment rather than age.
  - NEA and ASSA convened a summit of teacher-leaders, school leaders, and scholars from across the nation in Chicago to learn about Illinois’ groundbreaking work.

- Illinois was among the first states to adopt legislation and develop a strategy for cultivating a system of gifted education. “The Illinois Plan” (1963) preceded the federal government’s Marland Report (1972) by almost a decade.
Gifted Education in Illinois declined in the No Child Left Behind Era, where federal policy prioritized basic grade level proficiency.

In 2003, Illinois distributed $19 million to districts for gifted education. ($24.7 million in today’s dollars.)

- While the statute for distributing gifted education funding has been regularly updated, no state grant funds have been allocated since 2003.
## Illinois vs. Our Neighbors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IL</th>
<th>IA</th>
<th>IN</th>
<th>KY</th>
<th>MO</th>
<th>WI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Funding</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>$37 Mil</td>
<td>$12.5 Mil</td>
<td>$6.3 Mil</td>
<td>$24.9 Mil</td>
<td>$0.24 Mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate to Identify Gifted Students</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate to Provide Services</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceleration Policy Requirement</td>
<td>Yes (New!)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subgroup in Accountability</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of Policy and Funding Created Opportunity Gaps

- In 2003, 85% of IL school districts offered programs for gifted and advanced students in elementary grades, and 78.9% of districts offered programs in middle school (ISBE).

- In 2016, only 27% of districts reported providing such programs (Dwyer & Welch, 2016).
  - Schools that serve lower income communities disproportionately eliminated programming.
### Benchmarking Opportunity Gaps - Access to Gifted Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Illinois</th>
<th>Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Percentage of Schools with Gifted Programs</strong></td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Percentage of High Poverty</em> Schools with Gifted Programs</em>*</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Low Poverty</strong> Schools with Gifted Programs</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*High Poverty = 75% or more of students qualify for free/reduced lunch
**Low Poverty = 25% or less of students qualify for free/reduced lunch
Opportunity Gaps Contributed to “Excellence Gaps”

- “Excellence gaps” are the “other half” of the “achievement gap”
  - Proficiency gap: *Overrepresentation* of low income and some minority subgroups among students not proficient
  - Excellence gap: *Underrepresentation* of low income and minority student subgroups among students achieving at high levels
IL Data Snapshot: % of Students at “Exceeds” Level

Grade 3 Math, Grade 8 Math and Grade 11 Math (2018 PARCC & SAT)
IL Data Snapshot: % of Students at “Exceeds” Level

Grade 3, 8, and 11 Mathematics (2018 PARCC & SAT)

- Low Income
- Non Low Income

Grade 3 Math
Grade 8 Math
Grade 11 Math
IL Data Snapshot: % of Students at “Exceeds”

Grade 3 ELA, Grade 8 ELA and Grade 11 ELA

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Multiracial
- White
- EL
IL Data Snapshot: % of Students at “Exceeds” Level

Low Income vs. Non-Low Income - ELA (PARCC and SAT, 2018)

- Low Income
- Non Low Income

Grade 3 ELA: Low Income vs. Non-Low Income
Grade 8 ELA: Low Income vs. Non-Low Income
Grade 11 ELA: Low Income vs. Non-Low Income
IL Data Snapshot: NAEP Mathematics

% of Students at Advanced Level

NAEP Composite Math Grade 4 (2015) and Math Grade 8 (2017)

IL FRL  IL Non-FRL

IL Data Snapshot: NAEP Reading
% of Students at Advanced Level

Reading Gr. 4 (2015) and Reading Gr. 8 (2015)

IL FRL  IL Non-FRL

20
15
10
5
0

High Flyers - Benchmark Yourself

- You can replicate this analysis in your school district using your local MAP data.
- If your local early high flyers are maintaining their altitude, that likely bodes well for how your gifted students will impact your growth score in the new accountability framework.
- If early high flyers are descending, it might be time to take a look at opportunities for bright kids in your district.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellence Policies</td>
<td>Policies requirements for identification, services, acceleration, advanced HS course participation</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>IL praised for growth model recognizing growth beyond proficiency. Grade will improve with incorporation of new acceleration requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence Participation Indicators</td>
<td>% of students identified as gifted, % of Class of 2013 taking at least one AP exam</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>IL earned high marks for AP participation, but low marks for gifted identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence Outcomes</td>
<td>% of students at advanced levels on NAEP, % students scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>IL was mid-pack in overall NAEP achievement, but above average on AP metrics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence Gaps</td>
<td>Accountability system values growth. Policies and funding address opportunity gaps&quot;</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>IL will gain points with its new growth model. But, lack of support for gifted services and lack of progress in narrowing economic achievement gap hurt IL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How IL’s JKCF Grades will Improve

Excellence Policies:
- State produces an annual report on gifted and talented programs (Report Card Act, PA 100-0364)
- State policy allowing early entrance to kindergarten
- State policy on acceleration (Accelerated Placement Act, PA 100-0421)
- State policy on dual enrollment and high school credit earned (Dual Credit Act, PA 100-0792)

Policies to Close Excellence Gaps:
- 50% or more of state K-12 accountability rating based on growth for all students (IL ESSA Plan)
The ESSA Era

New Opportunities for States:

- Shift from almost exclusive focus on basic proficiency
- Include non-test indicators of school quality
- Leverage Title funding to support talent-development (non-remedial) learning opportunities, including gifted programs
- Support professional learning in gifted education using Title II
IAGC Advocacy is Yielding Progress

- **Accelerated Placement Act**
  - Requires schools to provide options for early entrance to kindergarten and 1st grade, whole grade acceleration, acceleration in individual subject areas

- **New ESSA growth model values growth beyond “proficiency”**

- **Passage of report card bill and APA will make data on access to gifted education services and acceleration and other outcomes visible.**

- **School Quality Indicators on Access to Enrichment and Acceleration**
Illinois Earns “Strong” ESSA Accountability Rating

- The Fordham Institute’s *Rating the Ratings* Report analyzed all states’ ESSA Accountability Plans.
- Illinois was one of only 8 states that earned a perfect score, with a “strong” rating in each of the three accountability areas considered:
  - Assigning annual ratings to schools that are clear for parents, educators, and the public;
  - Encouraging schools to focus on all students, not just low performers [due to IL’s new growth indicator weighted at 50%]; and
  - Fairly measuring all schools, including those with high rates of poverty [also due to weight of growth].
Why The New Growth Model Is Good for Gifted

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 ⅓ of IL students already proficient.

Similarly, districts were not rewarded when students starting far below proficiency made great strides but didn’t cross the threshold score.
Why The New Growth Model Is Good for Gifted

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.
What is IAGC Doing Next?

- 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 – get these funds to trigger the gifted program requirements in School Code.

- Investigate how many Title II dollars are going to **gifted education professional development** as required by ESSA.
What Can You Do?

- **Raise awareness**
  - Model and share with local stakeholders data on:
    - Your local “opportunity gaps”
    - Your local “excellence gaps”

- **Get informed**
  - Learn about the Accelerated Placement Act
  - Share best practice information from IAGC with stakeholders in your school
  - Follow @iagcgifted

- **Advocate**
  - Share information about recent policy changes with local stakeholders and make sure they are aware and taking action
  - Talk about gifted education with your local school board
  - Communicate your priorities to your state representatives
Resources

- Is There a Gifted Gap? Gifted Education in High Poverty Schools (Fordham Institute, 2018)
- Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities Report (Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, 2018)
- Rating the Ratings: An Analysis of the 51 ESSA Accountability Plans (Fordham Institute, 2017)
- Do High Flyers Maintain Their Altitude (NWEA & Fordham Institute)
- Accelerate Illinois Report; IAGC Model Acceleration Policy/Procedures (IAGC Accelerated Placement Act webpage and resources)
- NEW from NAGC: Developing Academic Acceleration Policies: Whole Grade, Early Entrance, and Single Subject (Lupkowski-Shoplik, Behrens, Assouline, 2018)
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