

# IAGC Policy & Advocacy Update



IAGC Convention February 2018

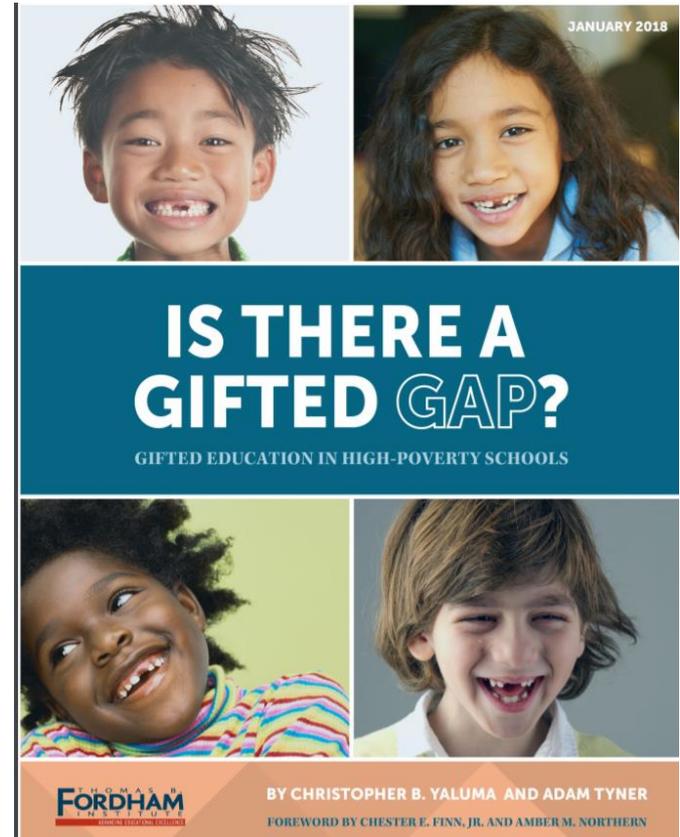
IAGC Policy & Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs

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# New Fordham Report: Gifted Gap in High Poverty Schools (January 2018)

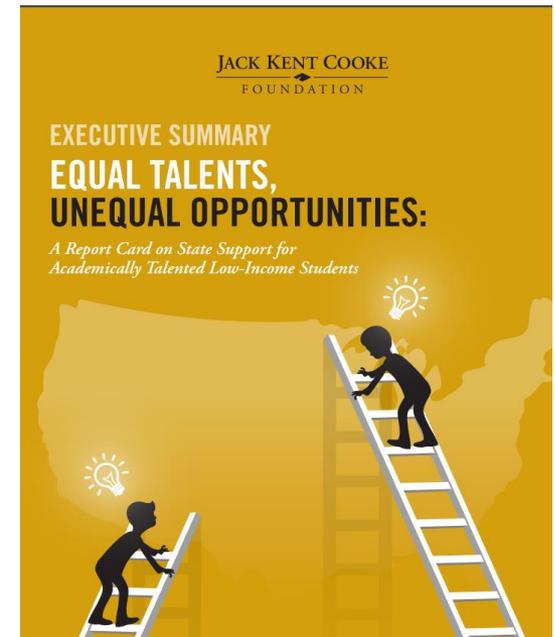
- Illinois Gifted Education Statistics:
  - Overall, 35.2% of schools offer gifted services, which is far below the national average of 68.3%
  - High poverty schools (at least 75% FRL students) are far less likely to have gifted programs than low poverty schools (high poverty = 32.8%; low = 57%)
  - 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>

# Current Gifted Education Landscape in IL

- Most districts do not offer gifted programming (27% in 2016; 80+% in 2003)
- Some districts formerly w/stronger gifted programs have reduced or eliminated services due to funding cuts; lack of investment in teacher PD
- Due to these opportunity gaps, Illinois currently has large academic excellence gaps: 15% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 12% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who did not qualify for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) in Illinois scored at the advanced levels on the 2013 NAEP math test, while only 2% of students who qualified for FRL scored at advanced levels (Plucker, 2016)
- Illinois received a D- in the 2015 Jack Kent Cooke report that graded states in gifted education policies and support



[http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF\\_ETUO\\_Executive\\_Final.pdf](http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_ETUO_Executive_Final.pdf)

# Accelerated Placement Act

- Public Act 100-0421 signed into law August 2017
- Will take effect July 1, 2018
- Requires local school boards to adopt policies on acceleration that address opportunities for (at a minimum):
  - Early entrance to kindergarten
  - Early entrance to 1st grade
  - “Whole grade” acceleration (AKA “grade skipping” or “early grade promotion”)
  - Opportunities for acceleration in individual subject areas (e.g. a 3rd grader taking 5th grade math but studying other subjects at her regular grade level)

# Accelerated Placement Act

## Background

- Acceleration works! (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 possible everywhere
  - Low cost
- Yet, few students are accelerated, and many Illinois schools lack policies to encourage and guide acceleration (Accelerate Illinois Report)

Presented by  
IAGCG  
Illinois Association  
for Gifted Children

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- Michael Matthews, PhD, Professor and Director of the Academically & Intellectually Gifted graduate programs, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- Scott Peters, PhD, Associate Professor of Educational Foundations, University of Wisconsin - Whitewater
- Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, PhD, Professor and Director of Center for Talent Development, Northwestern University
- Jonathan Plucker, PhD, Julian C. Stanley Professor of Talent Development, Johns Hopkins University

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

# Accelerated Placement Act

## Key Required Elements of Local Policies:

- Statement that acceleration is not limited to those students who have been formally identified as gifted
- A fair and equitable decision-making process that involves multiple persons (no “single gatekeepers”) and includes a student’s parent(s) or guardian(s)
- Assessment process that includes “multiple valid, reliable indicators”
- Procedures for notifying parents or guardians of a decision regarding participation in an accelerated placement

# Accelerated Placement Act

## Other Provisions:

- Procedures for annually informing community about opportunities for acceleration and methods for referral and evaluation
- A process for referral that allows for multiple referrers, including a child's parent(s) or guardian(s)
  - Referrers may include licensed educators, preschool educators, pediatricians, or psychologist
- A written plan specifying the type of acceleration the student will receive and transitional support strategies that will be provided

# Accelerated Placement Act

## Other Provisions:

- The act requires the Illinois State Board of Education to collect and public data on academic acceleration



# Report Card Act

## Background

- Dearth of data on gifted and advanced students in Illinois:
  - How many students are identified?
  - How many of these students have access to an enrichment program or accelerated curriculum?
  - How many teachers have completed a gifted education training program?
  - How are gifted students doing in schools across Illinois?
  - Where are pockets of excellence?

Nobody knew!

# Report Card Act

## Legislation

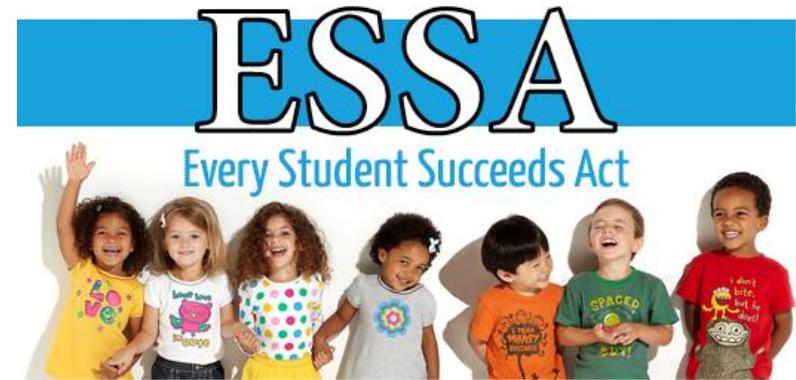
- Signed into law summer 2017
- Requires ISBE to report:
  - Number and demographics of students assessed for gifted identification in each district
  - Number of students receiving instruction from a teacher with a gifted endorsement
    - The % of these students who are low-income
    - The % of these students scoring at the “exceeds” level on state assessments

# Where are we now?

- ISBE developing implementation details, including rulemaking
- IAGC is seeking to provide input to this process through the Gifted Advisory Council
- We will need your help to share comments on draft rules when they become available from ISBE
- Coming availability of data is already having benefits!

# Significance of ESSA

- Before reauthorization in Dec 2015, the federal law (ESEA/NCLB) made no mention of gifted & talented students.
- New provisions in ESSA won by gifted advocates:
  - Opportunities to move past single-minded focus on basic proficiency in accountability plan
    - Requires an additional academic indicator (e.g., “measure of student growth”) for elementary and middle schools
    - Requires at least one indicator of school quality or student success (e.g., “access to and completion of advanced coursework”)
    - Requires disaggregation of student subgroups by achievement level
  - Permits use of Title I funds for identifying and serving gifted students



# Significance of ESSA

- Other new provisions built into the federal law due to advocacy on behalf of high-ability students:
  - Requirement that state and district plans for Title II funds address how teachers and school leaders will be trained in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students
  - Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants emphasize providing advanced and “accelerated learning programs” to “students who are often underrepresented in enriching subjects”
  - Reauthorization of the Javits grant program which provides research grants (\$12 million for FY2018) with a focus on underrepresented gifted and talented students

# Illinois' ESSA Plan Development

- ISBE provided many opportunities for public participation
- IAGC engaged in the process in multiple ways:
  - Submitted comments on plan drafts
  - Organized gifted education supporters to attend and testify at listening tour meetings throughout the state
  - IAGC representatives attended Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee meetings
  - Educated policy makers about the negative effects of neglecting advanced students during the NCLB years in IL



**Illinois**  
**State Board of**  
**Education**

# Illinois' ESSA Accountability Plan

- Key Messaging -- Seizing the opportunity educate policy makers about the equity and excellence problems arising from neglecting high-ability students under NCLB so as not to repeat the mistake:
  - **EQUITY PROBLEM:** Opportunity gaps lead to excellence gaps
    - Illinois has large gaps between subgroups at advanced levels of achievement because only 27% of districts currently offer gifted programming (Dwyer & Welch, 2016); over 80% had gifted programs in 2003 (ISBE)
    - High poverty districts are much less likely to provide gifted services; black, Hispanic, and low-income students are underrepresented in existing gifted programs
  - **EXCELLENCE PROBLEM:**
    - 33% of students in IL already at or above proficiency (IL Report Card)
    - 20%-40% of students are achieving one full grade level or more beyond their age peers in reading and 11%-30% are doing so in math (Makel et al., 2016)

# Illinois' ESSA Accountability Plan

- Results
  - Growth Indicator
    - Measuring growth of all students across the achievement spectrum and not diminishing weight for students above proficiency
  - School Quality Indicator
    - Reporting student participation in acceleration and enrichment as part of the accountability framework, initially unweighted
    - 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

# Federal Advocacy Efforts and Successes

- IAGC representatives attend the annual NAGC Legislative & Advocacy Conference in March each year and meet with federal legislators to advocate for high-ability students
- Advocated for the inclusion of provisions supporting gifted students in ESSA
- Helped defeat 2017 effort to eliminate Javits funding for research into better supporting underserved gifted students
- Responded to NAGC requests from the state affiliate organizations to submit public comments (e.g., expressing support for the US DOE's proposed prioritization of gifted education in the awarding of discretionary grants)



# Funding for Gifted Education

- Illinois was respected as national leader in gifted education when we had funding in 2003
- Drastic reduction in availability of gifted programs since the elimination of grant funding has left us toward the bottom of states in meeting the needs of advanced learners
- Promising development in the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act: an adequacy target was established for “gifted investments” in the new funding formula (\$40 per Average Student Enrollment) – now we need to make sure that money gets spent on gifted and advanced students
- Advocate for the use of federal ESSA funds at the district/school level so that all students grow and progress
  - Title I/IV funds for identifying and serving gifted students
  - Title II funds to train teachers/administrators in gifted education best practices

# What's Next and How Can You Help?

- Funding: Connect the “gifted investments” in the new school funding formula to Article 14A of the School Code to ensure that schools spend their gifted formula funding in a way that benefits advanced learners, whether through identification of and services for gifted students, teacher training, or acceleration.
- Rulemaking and guidance in connection with new laws (Accelerated Placement Act and Report Card Act)
- Outreach to local school boards in connection with adoption of acceleration policies and share resources, e.g., IAGC model policy/procedures, NAGC guide to developing acceleration policies
- ESSA accountability plan monitoring
- Respond to action alerts calling for public comment, outreach to legislators, submitting witness slips in favor of bills, etc.

# Resources

- Resources on the Policy & Advocacy Pages of the IAGC Website:
  - Acceleration resources, including IAGC Model Acceleration Policy and Procedures: <https://www.iagcgifted.org/IL-Acceleration-Act>
  - Other resources, including the ESSA Acceleration and Enrichment School Quality Indicator Presentation (Calvert & Welch, 2017) and the ESSA Growth Model Presentation (Calvert & Welch, 2016): <https://www.iagcgifted.org/General-Advocacy-Information>
- Article 14A of the Illinois School Code (Gifted and Talented Children and Children Eligible for Accelerated Placement)
  - <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs>
- Accelerated Placement Act
  - <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=100-0421>
- Report Card Act
  - <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=100-0364>
- The Gifted Gap in High Poverty Schools Report (Fordham Institute, 2018)
  - <https://edexcellence.net/publications/is-there-a-gifted-gap>

# Questions?

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