

ADVANCED STUDENTS IN SCHOOL QUALITY INDICATORS

ERIC CALVERT, ED.D.

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR TALENT
DEVELOPMENT**

CAROLYN WELCH, J.D.

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

REVIEW:

OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN ILLINOIS

- *Excellence gaps are products of 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).
 - Districts with *highest* percentages of minority and low-income students were *least likely* to provide programming. As a result, many low-income gifted students lack access to challenging coursework and appropriately trained teachers throughout their academic careers.
- *Guiding question: How can school quality indicator help narrow opportunity gaps across our state?*

Proposal Overview

- **Recognize districts for providing access to quality opportunities for academic enrichment and acceleration**
 - Support quality *enrichment* options to better ensure access to a broad (and more personalized) curriculum and incentivize the creations of opportunities, especially for students with *emerging* ability. (Reduce opportunity gaps now to reduce excellence gaps tomorrow.)
 - Support *acceleration* options to ensure appropriate challenge and maintain student engagement for advanced learners
- **Create infrastructure to help identify effective models**
 - Better achievement and growth measures can only help effective local models spread when *outcomes* can be connected to *inputs*
- **Raise expectations gradually over time**
 - Expectations that districts do not believe they can meet with effort are unlikely to incentivize change, especially in districts where enrichment and acceleration opportunities are most limited or non-existent today
 - Avoid unintentionally widening opportunity and excellence gaps through six year phase-in

Phase 1: 2019-2020 School Years	K-8: At least 5% of students are participating in one or more of the following:	9-12: At least 10% of students are participating in one or more of the following:
Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An enrichment program featuring advanced academic content for a minimum of 90 minutes per week during the regular school day (on average across the school year) taught by a teacher who holds a gifted education endorsement, master's degree in gifted education, or who has received at least 15 documented clock hours in professional development in gifted education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An enrichment program featuring advanced academic content for a minimum of 90 minutes per week during the regular school day (on average across the school year) taught by a teacher who holds a gifted education endorsement, master's degree in gifted education, or who has received at least 15 documented clock hours in professional development in gifted education
Acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A course to which students are assigned based on advanced cognitive ability or advanced achievement compared to local age peers and in which curriculum is substantially differentiated from the general curriculum to provide appropriate challenge and pace ● A documented accelerated course placement (e.g. early admission to kindergarten, single subject acceleration) in a setting with older students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least one IB or College Board-approved Advanced Placement (AP) course ● At least one non-remedial college-level course for dual high school and college credit from an accredited college, university, or community college.

Phase 2: 2021-2022 School Years	K-8: At least 5% of students are participating in one or more of the following:	9-12: At least 10% of students are participating in one or more of the following:
Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An enrichment program featuring advanced academic content for a minimum of 90 minutes per week during the regular school day (on average across the school year) taught by a teacher who holds a gifted education endorsement, master's degree in gifted education, or who has received at least 30 documented clock hours in professional development in gifted education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An enrichment program featuring advanced academic content for a minimum of 90 minutes per week during the regular school day (on average across the school year) taught by a teacher who holds a gifted education endorsement, master's degree in gifted education, or who has received at least 15 documented clock hours in professional development in gifted education; or,
Acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A course to which students are assigned based on advanced cognitive ability or advanced achievement compared to local age peers and in which curriculum is substantially differentiated from the general curriculum to provide appropriate challenge and pace ● A documented accelerated course placement (e.g. early admission to kindergarten, single subject acceleration) in a setting with older students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least one IB or College Board-approved Advanced Placement (AP) course ● At least one non-remedial college-level course for dual high school and college credit from an accredited college, university, or community college.

Phase 3: 2023-2024 School Years	K-8: At least 10% of students are participating in one or more of the following:	9-12: At least 15% of students are participating in one or more of the following:
Enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An enrichment program featuring advanced academic content for a minimum of 90 minutes per week during the regular school day (on average across the school year) taught by a teacher who holds a gifted education endorsement, master's degree in gifted education, or who has received at least 30 documented clock hours in professional development in gifted education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An enrichment program featuring advanced academic content for a minimum of 90 minutes per week during the regular school day (on average across the school year) taught by a teacher who holds a gifted education endorsement, master's degree in gifted education, or who has received at least 30 documented clock hours in professional development in gifted education; or,
Acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A course to which students are assigned based on advanced cognitive ability or advanced achievement compared to local age peers and in which curriculum is substantially differentiated from the general curriculum to provide appropriate challenge and pace ● A documented accelerated course placement (e.g. early admission to kindergarten, single subject acceleration) in a setting with older students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least one IB or College Board-approved Advanced Placement (AP) course ● At least one non-remedial college-level course for dual high school and college credit from an accredited college, university, or community college.

Evidence: Acceleration Works

- A recent study that comprehensively reviewed almost 100 years of acceleration research, covering nearly 172 empirical studies, found that when high-ability students were accelerated they exceeded the academic achievement of their non-accelerated, but similar high-ability peers by nearly one-year on a grade-equivalent scale (Steenbergen-Hu, Makel, & Olszewski-Kubilius, 2016)
- Despite popular beliefs, acceleration has not been found to be detrimental to students social and emotional well-being or growth and in fact, has small to moderate benefits (Steenbergen-Hu & Moon, 2011)
- Acceleration is an intervention shown to work in schools of all sizes and populations (Southern & Jones, 2007) and that aids teachers in differentiating more effectively.
- Some forms of acceleration can enhance challenge for advanced students without narrowing economic and cultural diversity in the classroom

Evidence: *Quality* Enrichment Opportunities Work

Recent Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Enrichment Programs on Gifted Students (Kim, 2016)

- Enrichment programs had a positive effect on both gifted students' academic achievement and social emotional development
- Effect sizes of positive impact on academic achievement are large:
 - high school (2.02)
 - middle school (1.37)
 - elementary school (0.57)
- Effect sizes of positive impact on social emotional development:
 - middle school (0.93)
 - elementary school gifted students (0.44)
 - high school (0.29)

Flexible cluster grouping of students by academic readiness (Pierce et al., 2011) benefits *all* students in math achievement

Caveat: Quality Counts

- **What do we know about enrichment programs that produce measurable benefits?:**
 - Curriculum is differentiated from general curriculum
 - Challenging content
 - Conceptually rich
 - Dose matters
 - Little evidence that enrichment opportunities for only a few minutes per week enhance academic growth or raise academic trajectories
 - Intentional grouping catalyzes impact
 - Programs are designed and delivered by educators with content expertise and specific training in gifted education pedagogy

Goals Are Achievable

- Accelerative options can be provided at low cost
 - Effective evaluation processes used to determine accelerated placements can leverage assessment data most districts already collect
 - Acceleration can actually save money vs. doing nothing
 - Early entrance and whole grade acceleration can reduce the number of years students spend in school
 - Advanced Placement and dual enrollment programs can reduce college tuition costs while increasing likelihood of college graduation
- Enrichment options support quality but are minimally prescriptive regarding structure to allow for district customization to meet local priorities
- Recommendations include low initial thresholds for reaching indicators and realistic ramps that promote excellence while recognizing current conditions

Support is Available to Build Capacity

- IAGC and Illinois higher education institutions already offer a wide array of research-based professional development in flexible formats. Scalable capacity exists to support teachers and districts if incentives are in place.
- Illinois has already established a gifted education endorsement based on National Association for Gifted Children standards
 - But, there are currently few incentives for educators to pursue endorsement
- ESSA presents an opportunity to address opportunity gaps in access to adequately trained educators for gifted and talented students:
 - Title II reforms in ESSA *require* states to address gifted education professional development in implementation plans
 - Title II funds may be used to support gifted education professional development

Access to Enrichment/Acceleration Narrows Excellence Gaps

- Zip code and socioeconomic status should not be the determining factors for receiving a challenging education. Illinois has among the largest excellence gaps in the country.
- Illinois can be a leader in identifying and supporting successful program models and interventions that work with low-income, high-ability students from different geographical, cultural, and racial backgrounds (Unlocking Emergent Talent, Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012)
- Excellence gaps can be addressed if schools view their closure as a priority worthy of investment. Examples of successful programs for low-income, high potential students:
 - Young Scholars Program - Fairfax County Schools
 - Miami-Dade School District - 10 year transformation
 - Paradise Valley Unified School District

Access to Broad Curriculum Indicator Needed for Balanced Accountability

- There are only two K-8 school quality indicators in the state accountability plan currently: chronic absenteeism and climate surveys
- 9-12 has significantly more school quality indicators than K-8, with Career and College Readiness and 9th Grade On Track in addition to chronic absenteeism and climate surveys
- More focus on inputs is needed to allow schools to tell their stories and help the state to connect effective practices to student outcomes, especially at K-8
- Advanced coursework is only one way for a school to satisfy the Career and College Readiness indicator, and a K-8 corollary is lacking

Next steps: Work group (Plan Draft 3) to determine how components of indicator fit together

Questions?

Eric Calvert: eric.calvert@northwestern.edu

Carolyn Welch: carolynwelch@comcast.net