

# **What Do Parents Need to Know About Academic Acceleration?**


**Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank Center for  
Gifted Education and Talent Development**

Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D.

April 2023

[acceleration@belinblank.org](mailto:acceleration@belinblank.org)

# Presenter



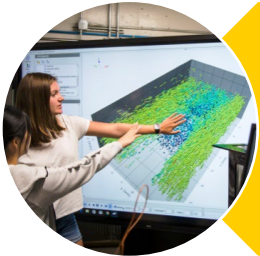
**Dr. Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik,**  
Administrator,  
Acceleration Institute and Research,  
Belin-Blank Center

[acceleration@belinblank.org](mailto:acceleration@belinblank.org)

# Acceleration is...



a progression through an educational program



in a **shorter** time



or at a **younger** age than is typical.





**When you think about  
acceleration for your child,  
what worries you?**

# What Worries Parents?

---

Socialization:  
will my child  
have friends?

Inappropriate  
conversations  
on the bus?

Will my  
child be  
well-  
rounded?

Going away  
to college  
when very  
young?

What  
about  
athletics?

Missing  
academic  
competitions &  
college  
scholarships?

# What Do Parents Need to Know?



Acceleration works.  
We have a strong research base.



Well-researched methods can  
help make decisions



Acceleration helps students to be  
presented with new material



Acceleration raises expectations  
for the student



Accelerated students do just fine  
socially

# Will Acceleration Cause Academic Harm?

High-ability students engage in abstract thinking at a younger age

Acceleration leads to higher levels of achievement

Accelerated students will not run out of courses before high school graduation thanks to online courses, dual enrollment

# Why Accelerate?

## Equity

-all students have the right to learn something new

A better match between a student's abilities & the curriculum

Research supported

Accelerated students do well academically and socially

Low Cost



# Forms of Acceleration

---

## Subject-Based Acceleration

Student moves up for one or more subjects, stays in regular grade for others

## Grade-Based Acceleration

Moves up a grade to be with older students full-time

# Acceleration Works: Short-Term Benefits

Accelerated students are more challenged and therefore more engaged in school.

Accelerated students must work harder, learning good “habits of mind”

Academically talented students who enter K or college early do very well compared to their older classmates.

Students accelerating in math and science often continue studying those subjects (no burnout)

# Acceleration Works: Long-Term Benefits

Acceleration has long-term beneficial effects, both academic and social.

Accelerated students tend to be more ambitious, earning graduate degrees at higher rates.

Students who skipped a grade performed even better when acceleration was accompanied by other educational opportunities

...higher rates of productivity, work in more prestigious occupations, are more successful and earn more money and increase income faster than older, similar ability, non-accelerated peers

Looking back, an overwhelming majority of accelerated students say acceleration was the right decision for them.

# Acceleration Supports Students' Social Development

Placed with academic peers with similar interests & intellectual level

Research on social development and academic acceleration is positive overall

2020 Bernstein, Lubinski, & Benbow. Soc/emo concerns are "fruitless"



# Where do I find the research?

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

**Acceleration  
Institute** at the  
Belin-Blank Center

Menu 

"Had I known just how far ahead I was and how much better things would be, I wouldn't have been nearly so nervous. Sure it was awkward because classmates were perplexed why I left that class after Christmas. But it has been good... maybe not fifth grade, but this year it has been awesome."

*Student  
More Stories*



## First time here?

[Parents](#) [Educators](#) [Policymakers](#) [Researchers](#)

## Resources

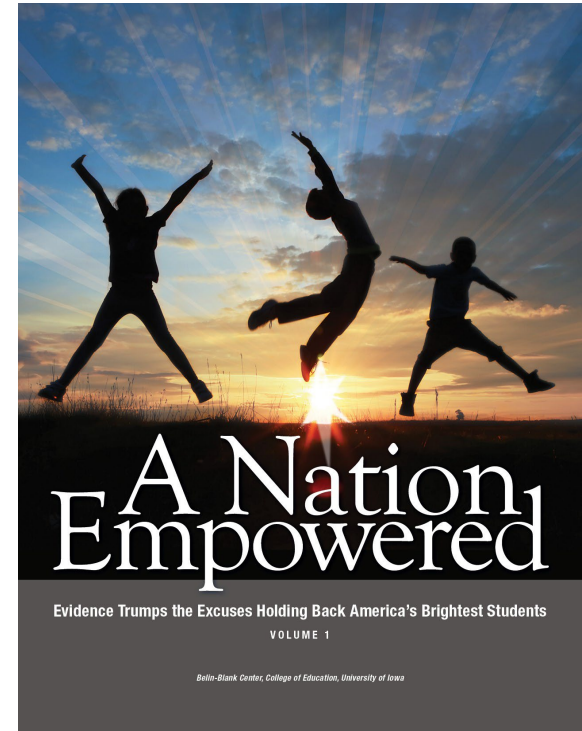


**IOWA**

Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development

# A Nation Empowered

---



→ Free download

→ Volume 1: Stories of acceleration

→ Volume 2: The research

→ [www.nationempowered.org](http://www.nationempowered.org)

# How Will Decisions About Acceleration Be Made?

Use of objective information to make decisions

Who participates in the decision?  
How are parents included?  
No gatekeepers

Trial period

Communication strategies: How are parents kept informed?

Measures of success:  
How do we know it's working?

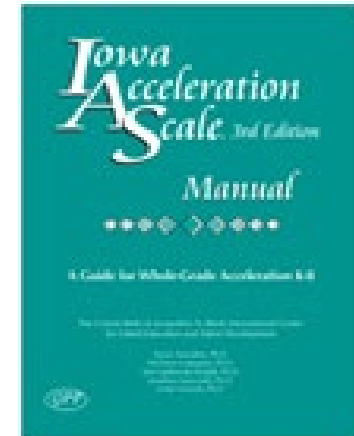
# ***Iowa Acceleration Scale (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2009)***

---

Authors: Susan Assouline, Ph.D.  
Nicholas Colangelo, Ph.D.  
Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D.  
Jonathan Lipscomb, B.A.  
Leslie Forstadt, B.A.

Available from Gifted Unlimited

Paper and pencil survey to assist with  
acceleration decisions



Required by the state of Ohio for grade-skipping decisions



[www.accelerationsystem.org](http://www.accelerationsystem.org)



# Integrated Acceleration System

A new (2021) **online** tool designed to assist educators and families through the decision-making process about acceleration

**IOWA**

Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development

## The *Integrated Acceleration System* focuses on 4 forms of acceleration:

Grade  
Skipping

Early  
Entrance to  
Kindergarten

Subject  
Acceleration

Early  
Entrance to  
College

→ The experts from the Belin-Blank Center are available to assist with acceleration questions for students who are twice-exceptional

# The Integrated Acceleration System...

- Gathers information in one place
- Facilitates discussion of important questions.
  - For example:
    - Questions/hesitation expressed by student
    - Social/emotional aspects
- Ensures the team discusses all important factors
- Produces a recommendation and report about the student
- Assists in developing a plan for transition to the accelerated grade



# Things for Parents to Consider

- Especially with whole-grade acceleration, there is an adjustment period.
- Student might no longer feel like the “big fish”
- Issues of dating, being too young to drive are later seen as “temporary inconveniences,” but they are very real at the time!



# Other Things to Consider

---

- How will we resolve “gaps” in the student’s background?
- Preparing the receiving teacher and students
- Younger students may have more issues (for example, handwriting, stamina)
- Preparing the parents: Homework may take longer
- Helping the parents prepare the child

# What Happens if We Don't Accelerate?

---

- This is an extremely important question to investigate and discuss.
- Not only should we consider what the research tells us (acceleration is highly successful for carefully selected students), but we should also understand the **consequences of inaction**
- “Doing nothing” is still a decision
- If we don't accelerate now, we can still consider this option in the future



The background of the slide is a teal color with a repeating pattern of colorful speech bubbles. Each bubble is a different color (yellow, pink, red, white) and contains a dark teal question mark. The bubbles are scattered across the entire page, creating a busy, question-oriented visual.

# RESOURCES



NATIONAL  
CENTER  
FOR  
RESEARCH  
ON  
GIFTED  
EDUCATION

*Is your school interested in  
doing acceleration better?*

NCRGE is seeking schools serving  
grades 2-5 interested in ***FREE  
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES*** and *assistance  
in making acceleration  
decisions.*

**[ncrge.uconn.edu/acceleration](https://ncrge.uconn.edu/acceleration)**





# Resources for Educators & Families

---

NAGC Tip Sheet for Parents on acceleration:  
<https://tinyurl.com/NAGCaccel>

NAGC Position Statement on Acceleration  
<https://tinyurl.com/NAGCaccelerate>

Hoagies Gifted blog hop:  
<https://tinyurl.com/HoagiesAcceleration>

Davidson Institute: Search “acceleration”

# Would you like to receive updates about the Integrated Acceleration System?

→ Sign up here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SignUpAcceleration>



# Above-Level Testing

---

---

Give a test developed for older students to younger, bright students

---

Raises the “ceiling” and extends the yardstick

---

Discovers exceptionally talented students

---

Helps us to tailor educational opportunities to the students

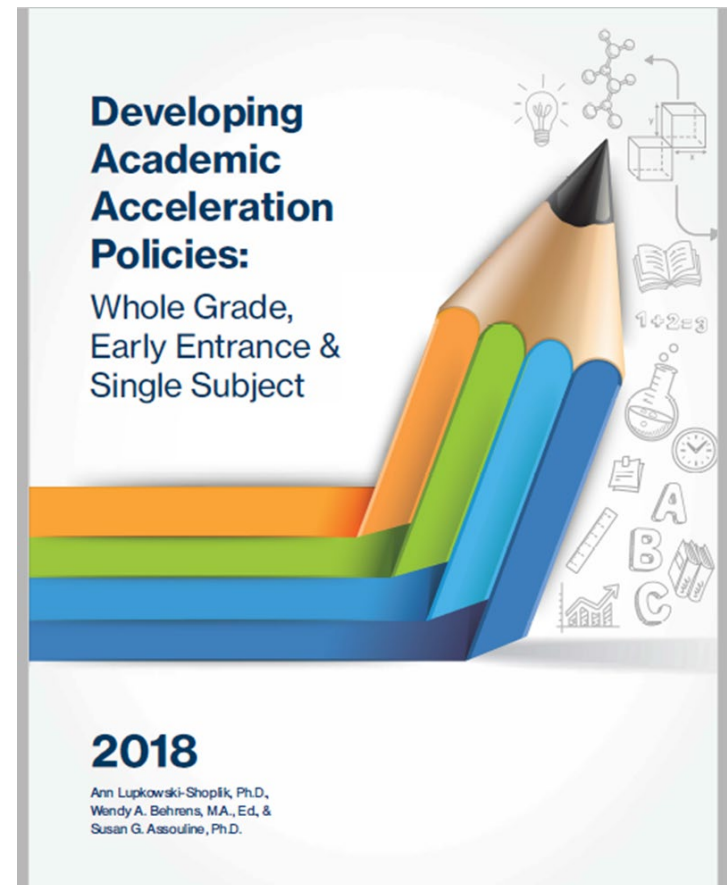


© Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development

# ***Developing Academic Acceleration Policies***

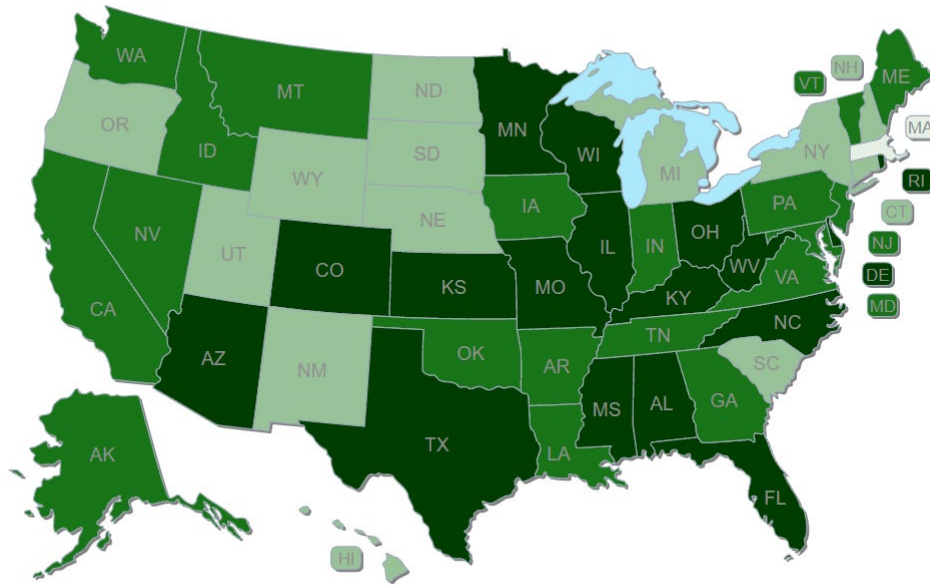
---

- Checklists for developing policies:
  - Whole grade acceleration
  - Subject acceleration
  - Early entrance to kindergarten or first grade
- Authors:
  - Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik
  - Wendy A. Behrens
  - Susan G. Assouline
- Online. Free.
- Sample policies on the website
  - [www.accelerationinstitute.org/guidelines](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/guidelines)



# State Policy information on the Acceleration Institute website

<https://tinyurl.com/StateAccelPolicy>



# We teach a whole course on academic acceleration

---

Academic Acceleration (PSQF:4123)

Usually meets in the summer

Entirely online, asynchronous

For more info, email:

[acceleration@belinblank.org](mailto:acceleration@belinblank.org)



# IOWA

**College of Education**

Belin-Blank Center

*An important catalyst for work on  
academic acceleration*

[www.belinblank.org](http://www.belinblank.org)

**IOWA**

Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education & Talent Development

# Connect with us!

---

→ Twitter

- @belinblank
- @AnnShoplik

→ [facebook.com/BelinBlank](https://facebook.com/BelinBlank)

→ [belinblank.wordpress.com](http://belinblank.wordpress.com)

→ [www.belinblank.org/newsletter](http://www.belinblank.org/newsletter)

→ [acceleration@belinblank.org](mailto:acceleration@belinblank.org)

