

# **An Important Tool in the Toolkit: Academic Acceleration**


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

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October 2022

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# Presenter



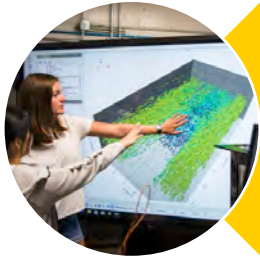
**Dr. Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik,**  
Administrator,  
Acceleration Institute and Research,  
Belin-Blank Center

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# Acceleration is...



a progression through an educational program



in a **shorter** time



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



# Acceleration is...

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“...one of the **cornerstones** of exemplary gifted education practices,

with *more research* supporting this intervention than any other in the literature on gifted individuals.”

**National Association for Gifted Children  
position statement on acceleration**

# Acceleration is...

“...one of the **cornerstones** of exemplary gifted education practices,

with *more research* supporting this intervention than any other in the literature on gifted individuals.”

**70 years of research!**

**National Association for Gifted Children  
position statement on acceleration**

# 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

# When should acceleration be considered?

The first intervention for bright, highly capable students.

Consideration of all other interventions (e.g., enrichment; differentiation) should follow after considering accelerative options.

*Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska*

# Forms of Acceleration

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## 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

# Subject Acceleration Examples

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**MOVE UP A  
GRADE FOR  
MATH/SCIENCE**



**ADVANCED  
PLACEMENT  
COURSES**



**TALENT  
SEARCH  
PROGRAMS**



**ONLINE  
LEARNING**



**INDEPENDENT  
STUDY OR  
MENTORSHIPS**



**COMPACTED  
CURRICULUM**

# Grade-Based Acceleration Examples

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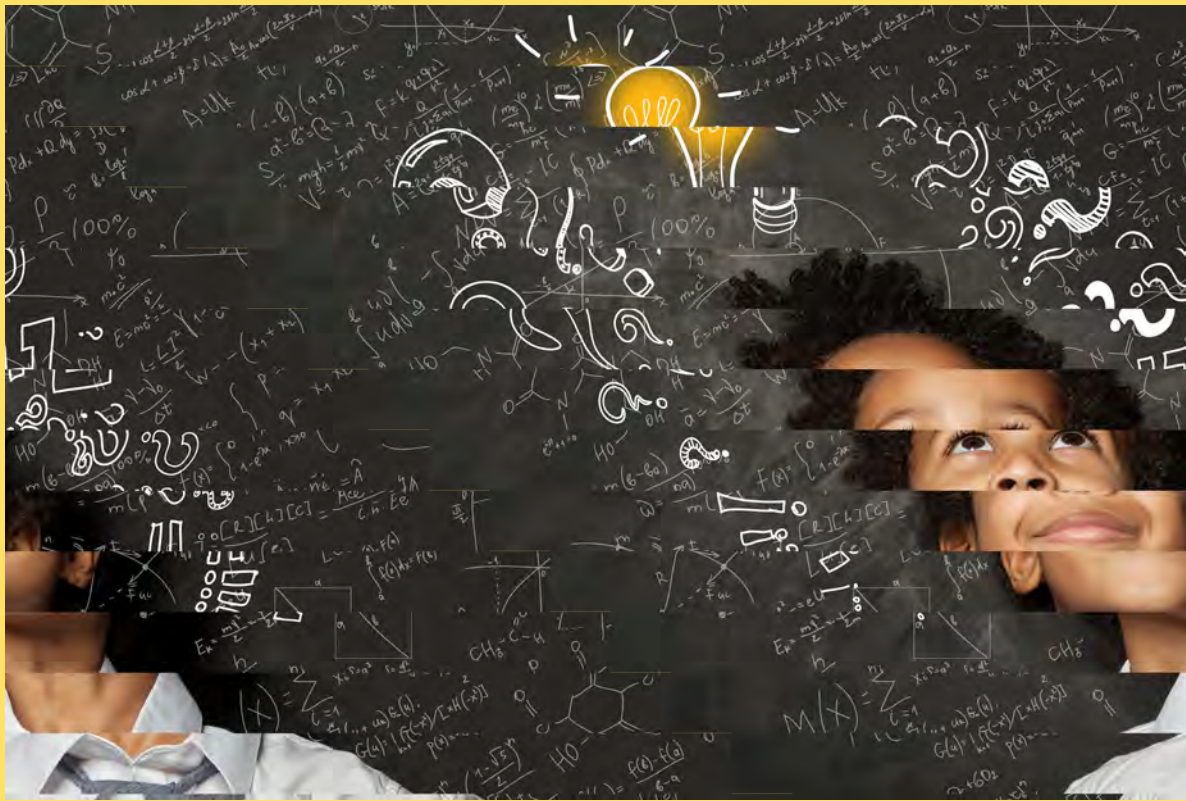
Grade-skipping

Multi-grade  
classrooms

Early entrance  
to kindergarten/  
first grade

Grade  
telescoping  
(2 years in one)

Early entrance  
to college



# Myths about Acceleration

Can you think of some?

# Myths about Acceleration

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- Acceleration is “bad” for students, esp. for social development
- Students will miss something (academic or social)
- People focus on one negative story and ignore research on thousands of students
- Many teachers and administrators did not learn about acceleration in pre-service training
- “Gifted students will make it on their own” without an intervention
  
- As we will see, the evidence is clear that *acceleration works*.

# 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)



# Grade skipping works!

“Not only was academic achievement more positive for the grade skipped learners, but also their social adjustment and academic self-esteem were more positive.”

Karen B. Rogers

# 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?

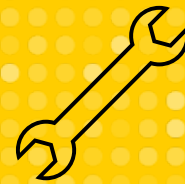
[Parents](#) [Educators](#) [Policymakers](#) [Researchers](#)

## Resources



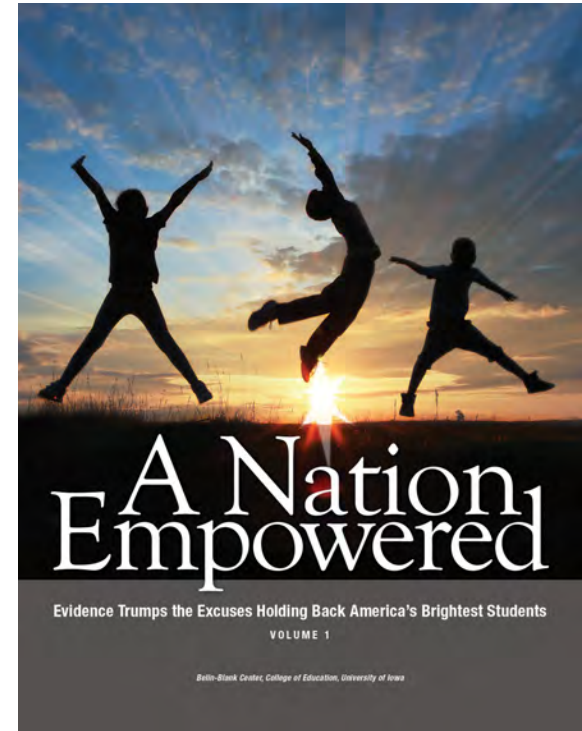
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# More Tools for Acceleration



# A Nation Empowered

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→ Free download

→ Volume 1: Stories of acceleration

→ Volume 2: The research

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

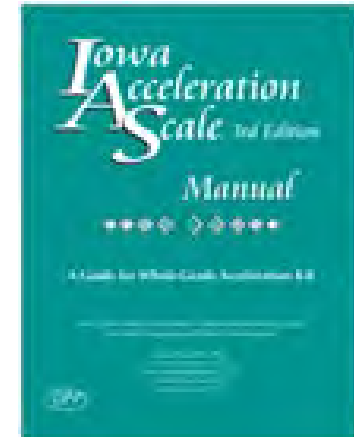
# ***Iowa Acceleration Scale (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2009)***

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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



# Integrated Acceleration System

**A new (2021) 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 Skip

A student moves to a grade that best matches ability rather than age.

[Learn More!](#)



## Early Entrance to Kindergarten

A child starts school at a younger age than typical.

[Coming Soon](#)



## Subject Acceleration

A student needs additional challenge in a particular subject area.

[Coming Soon](#)



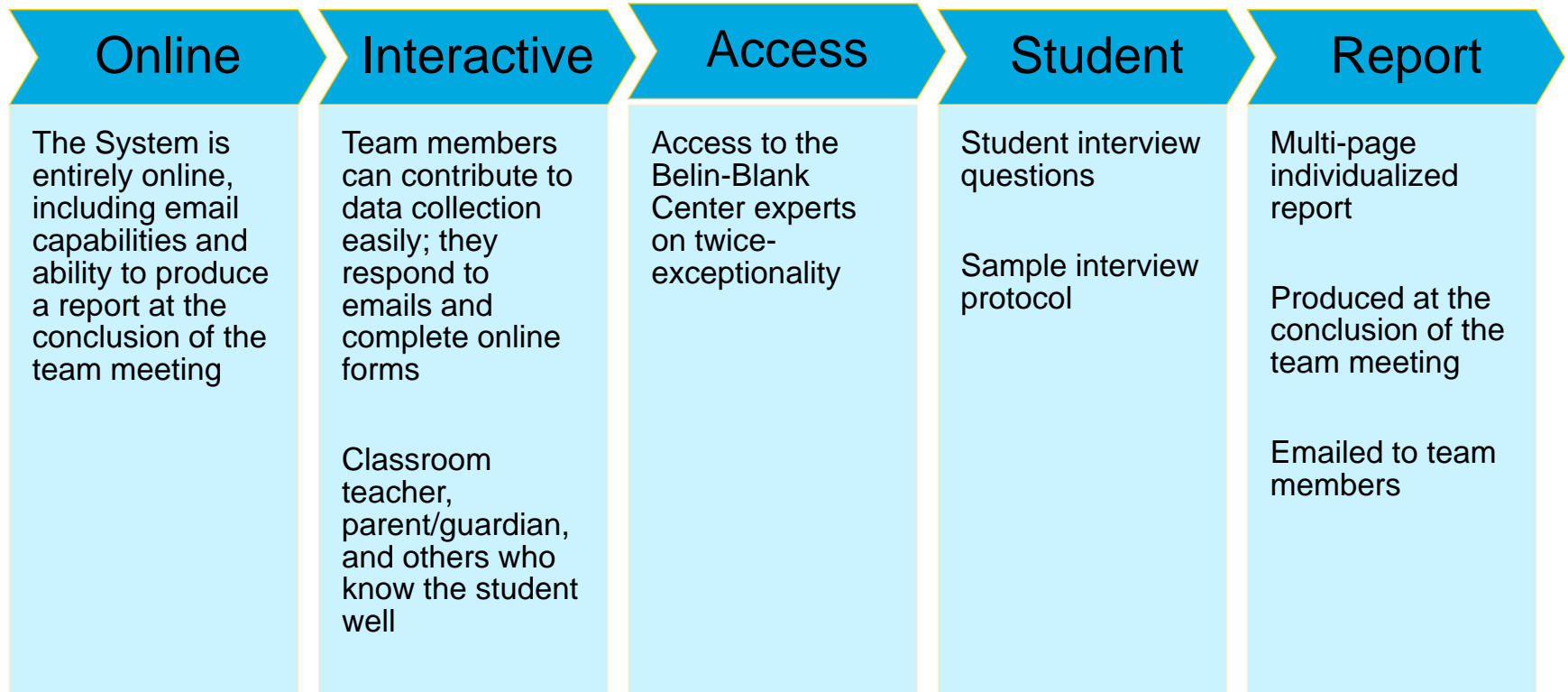
## Early Entrance to College

A student begins college a year or more early.

[Coming Soon](#)

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

# The Integrated Acceleration System



## Building the Case for: Luisa TestStudent Modules

A. Getting Ready	Go	✓
B. Build Your Team	Go	✓
C. Demographics and Related Student Information	Go	✓
D. School Information	Go	✓
E. Student Answers	Go	✓
F. Current Grade Level Performance	Go	✓
G. General School Ability (IQ) Test Results	Go	✓
H. Indicators of Performance in the Next Grade	Go	✓
I. The Meeting	Go	✓
J. The Report	Go	⊘

# The *Integrated Acceleration System* Survey includes items addressing...

Student's performance in school

Friendships

Motivation

Physical development (small and large motor skills, size)

Student's attitude about being challenged in school

Communication between parent/school

Student's ability, aptitude, and achievement

# Acceleration Meeting Agenda (sample)

- Review information previously provided
- Discuss important questions.
  - For example:
    - Questions/hesitation expressed by student
    - Social/emotional aspects
- Answer additional questions as a group, come to consensus
- Review information
- Produce and review report and recommendations
- Develop plan for transition to the accelerated grade

# The Power of the Process

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## Gathering

Gathering the appropriate information and making an informed decision

## Trusting

Trusting the participants who provide information

## Empowering

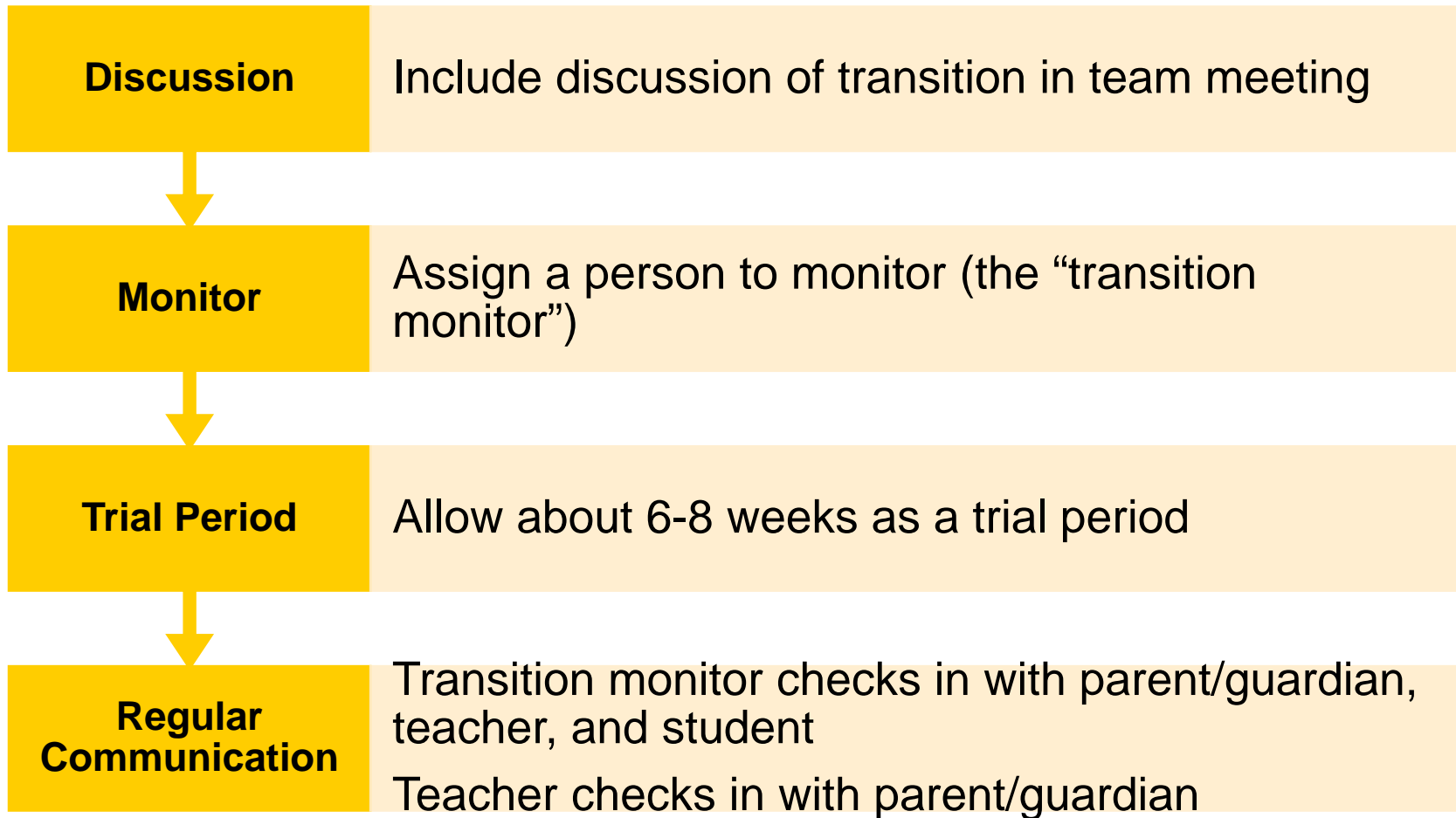
Empowering the team members

## Documenting

The *Integrated Acceleration System* produces a written report.

Team develops a written *Plan for Transition to the Accelerated Grade*

# Transition Procedures: Pointers



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

→ Sign up here:

<https://tinyurl.com/SignUpAcceleration>



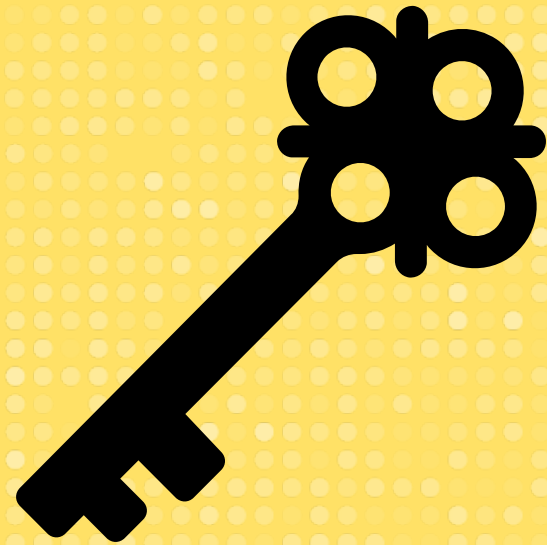
**Training  
video and  
upcoming  
webinars  
about the  
*Integrated  
Acceleration  
System***

<https://tinyurl.com/accelerationwebinar>



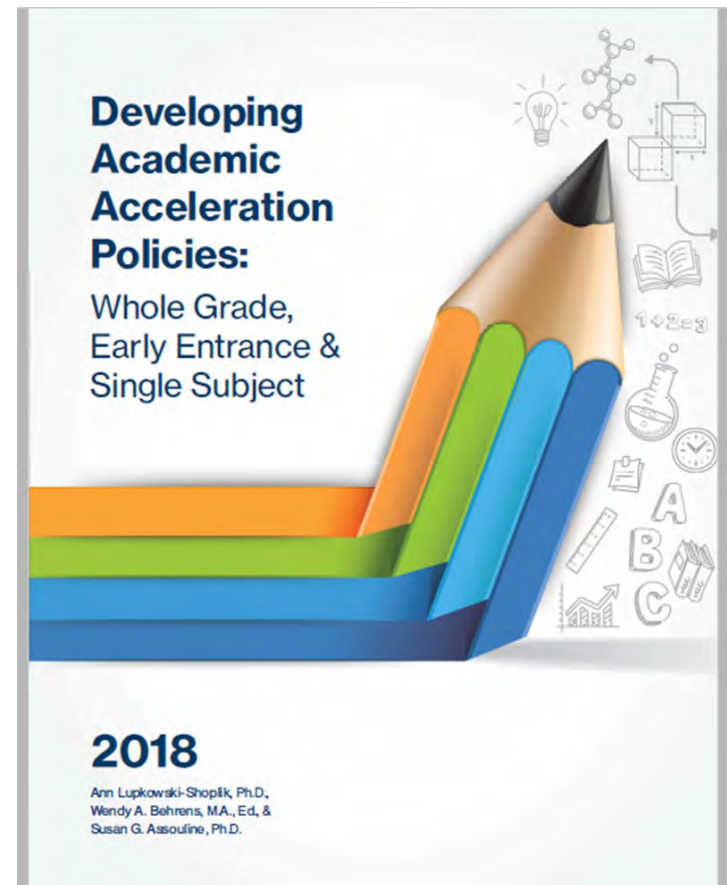
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# **Acceleration Policies: Key to Equity**



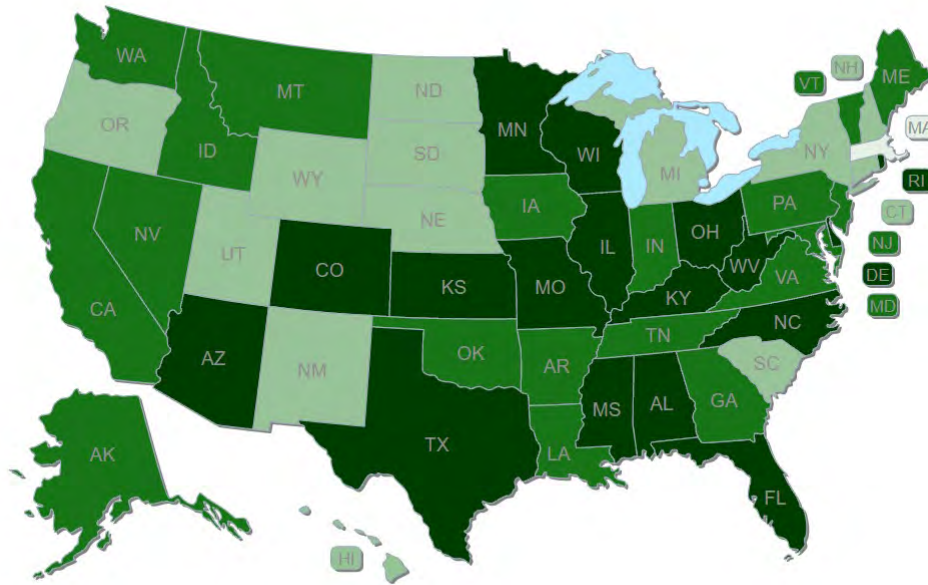
# *Developing Academic Acceleration Policies*

- 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>



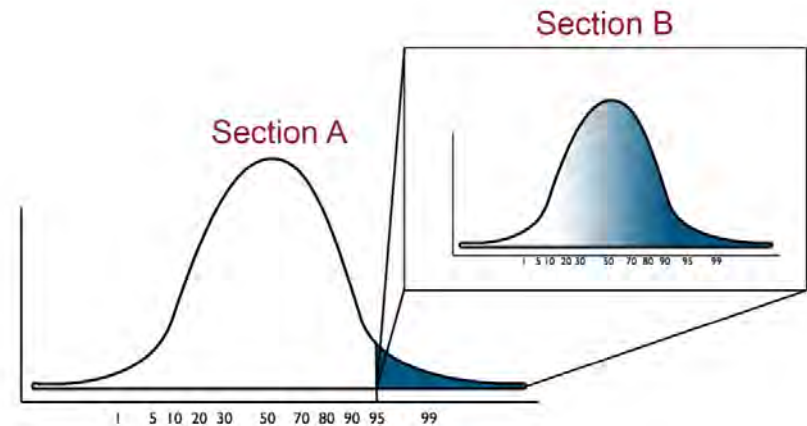

**College of Education**

Belin-Blank Center

**An important catalyst for work on  
academic acceleration**

**IOWA**

# Above-Level Testing: Discovering High-Ability Students



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

[www.i-excel.org](http://www.i-excel.org)

4th – 6th graders take I-Excel

7th-9th graders take ACT

<https://tinyurl.com/GiftedBestKeptSecret>

# Resources for Educators & Families

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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”

# We teach a whole course on academic acceleration

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Academic Acceleration (PSQF:4123)

Usually meets in the summer

Entirely online, asynchronous

For more info, email:

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





NATIONAL  
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FOR  
RESEARCH  
ON  
GIFTED  
EDUCATION

*Is your school interested in  
doing acceleration better?*

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OPPORTUNITIES*** and *assistance  
in making acceleration  
decisions.*



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

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