

IAGC Advocacy: Progress Report

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Introduction

- This is a change era!
- IAGC is raising its voice on behalf of gifted students, educators, and families at this pivotal time
 - ESSA State Plan
 - Acceleration Bill
 - Untapped Potential Act
 - Illinois Report Card Bill
- Session Preview:
 - Where have we been?
 - What are we doing now?
 - How can IAGC members get involved?

History of Gifted Education in Illinois

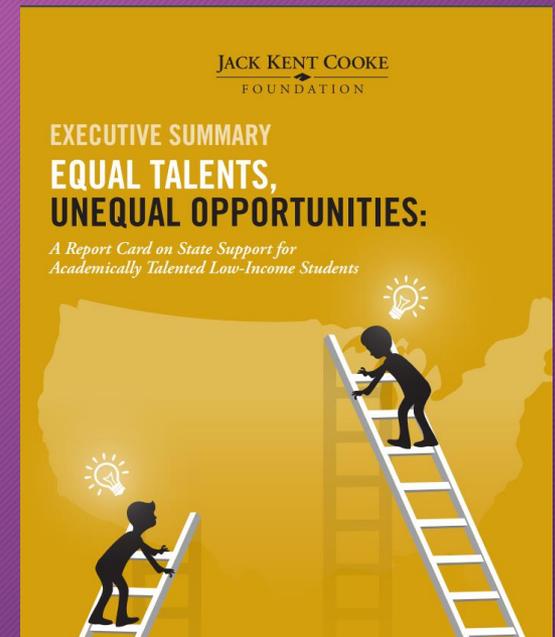
- No mandate for providing or funding gifted education
- 2003: Last year schools received funds (\$19 million) to meet the needs of gifted students. Budget is \$0 now.
- Schools decide if and how they will identify and serve gifted students
- In the absence of funding:
 - ISBE does not collect info about gifted programming
 - No accountability for the growth of high-ability students

Negative Consequences of Proficiency-Based Accountability

- NCLB created strong incentives for schools to focus on students below the minimum proficiency bar and inadvertently neglect the growth of advanced students
- 30% to 48% of U.S. students scoring in the NAEP top 10% on reading or math tests descend out of the top decile as they continue through school (Xiang et al., 2011)
- Disadvantaged students who are dependent on the schools to identify and nurture their potential are most likely to lose ground

Current Gifted Education Landscape in IL

- Most districts do not offer gifted programming (27% in 2016; 80+% in 2003)
- Illinois received a D- in the Jack Kent Cooke report that graded states in gifted education policies and support
- Lack of access to gifted programming during the school day is most detrimental to economically disadvantaged students whose families lack resources for supplementation
- Excellence gaps are pronounced—talent is left on the table



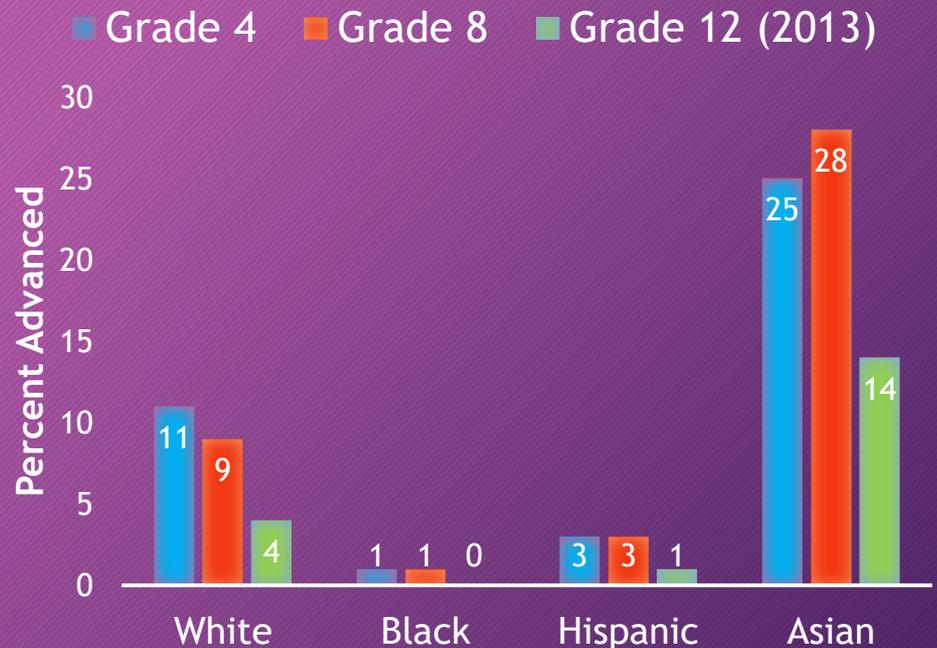
http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_ETUO_Executive_Final.pdf

Illinois Excellence Gaps

2013 NAEP Math by Lunch Status



2015 NAEP Math by Race



Plucker, J. A. (2016, February). *Excellence Gaps: What they are, why they're bad, and what you can do about them*. Session presentation at the Illinois Association for Gifted Children Annual Convention, Naperville, IL. Reprinted with permission.

Significance of ESSA

- New provisions in ESSA won by gifted advocates:
 - Opportunity to move past single-minded focus on basic proficiency in accountability plan
 - Require an additional academic indicator (measure of student growth) for elementary and middle schools
 - Require at least one indicator of school quality or student success (e.g., access to and completion of advanced coursework)
 - Permit use of Title I funds for identifying and serving gifted and talented students
 - Require that teacher training to meet needs of gifted students is addressed in state plans for Title II funds
 - Require disaggregation of student subgroups by achievement level
 - Reauthorize Javits grant program

ESSA Implementation Timeline

- Most provisions go into effect in 2017-18 school year
- ISBE State Plan Timeline (<http://www.isbe.net/essa>):
 - **March-Dec 2016:**
 - 3 rounds of Listening Tours; stakeholder meetings
 - State Plan Drafts #1 and #2 posted for public comment
 - **Jan-March 2017:**
 - Final recommendations issued by Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee, P-20 Council, ISBE Accountability Work Group
 - Governor Approval
 - ISBE Board Approval
 - **April 2017:**
 - Submit State Plan to US Department of Education

Importance of Measuring the *Growth* of High Achievers

- 33% of students in Illinois already meet or exceed proficiency (Illinois 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 currently has among the largest academic excellence gaps in the country: 15% of 4th graders and 12% of 8th graders who did not qualify for free or reduced price lunch in Illinois scored at the advanced levels on the 2013 NAEP math test, while only 2% of students who qualified for free or reduced price lunch scored at advanced levels (Plucker, 2016)

IAGC ESSA Accountability Recommendations

- Adopt a “true” growth model based on individual student growth across the entire achievement spectrum, and do not diminish weight for students moving to achievement levels beyond proficient. Weight growth more heavily than the proficiency/attainment indicator
- Prioritize and incentive closing “opportunity” and “excellence gaps” between economic and racial subgroups by adding a school quality indicator that looks at access to a broad curriculum, including enrichment and advanced academic opportunities.
- Make students who have scored within the top 10% in one or more years a disaggregated subgroup for reporting. Create a dedicated page in the Illinois Report Card to display the achievement and growth of this group.

Advocacy Efforts and Results

- Educate policy makers and stakeholder groups about the importance of accounting for high ability students
- Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure Committee
 - IAGC represented the voice of high ability students at biweekly meetings; presented on growth models
 - Committee recently voted to recommend a growth model and school quality indicator in line with our recommendations, and to weight the growth indicator more heavily than proficiency
- ISBE Listening Tour Meetings and ESSA draft plan feedback
- Congressional ESSA hearings
- Monitor final revisions of state plan prior to submission to U.S. Dept. of Ed in April

Acceleration

Illinois Association for Gifted Children +
Untapped Potential Project

Acceleration

- Acceleration report—available at the conference; under the name of IAGC, conducted with UPP
- Acceleration legislation—supported by IAGC
- One pager on acceleration for promotion and wide distribution

Components of Acceleration Legislation

- Expand access to assessment for possible accelerated placement
- Require policies addressing early entrance to kindergarten and first grade, subject acceleration, whole grade acceleration, and early high school graduation and allow other forms of acceleration
- Require research-based procedures to ensure good decisions about acceleration and successful transitions for accelerated students

Components of Acceleration Legislation

Referral and Evaluation

- Multiple ways for students to be referred
- Reasonable timeframe for assessment
- Parents informed about assessments used
- Specifies an appeals process
- Limits cost to families

Acceleration Evaluation Committee

- Multiple members of committee including sending and receiving teacher
- Must use a process approved by state Gifted Advisory Committee
- Mandates written acceleration plan
- Designation of someone to monitor plan implementation

Components of Acceleration Legislation

Accelerated Placement

- Specifies a “hold harmless” transition period
- Accelerated placement can be revised after implementation
- Acceleration plan follows student to ensure continuous progress
- Students admitted early to kindergarten or first grade shall be treated like age-typical students in the allocation of state funding

State Board Responsibilities

- Gather and report data on:
 - number of students evaluated and placed in accelerated settings;
 - The number of students participating in an enrichment program or advanced academic course taught by a teacher with a gifted education endorsement.
- Develop and disseminate guidance to districts regarding state testing for accelerated students

Untapped Potential Report 2016

Once Chance Illinois:

- Contacted all schools districts in Illinois to get information on demographics of identified gifted students
- Looked at the disparity between the demographics of gifted population to that of the school/district population regarding race, income and gender—found wide disparities for race and income
- Gifted identification was dependent upon teacher referral and parent advocacy

Untapped Potential Act-Signed into Law, July 2016

- Updated existing law on gifted education to:
 - Expand reporting on gifted education, including:
 - Identification
 - Services provided for gifted and advanced students
 - Achievement and growth of gifted students
 - Support steps to increase identification of students from underrepresented populations
 - Use of appropriate assessment instruments
 - Use of multiple and valid criteria
 - Support parent communication and involvement
 - Ensure curriculum in gifted education programs is meaningfully differentiated
 - Help ensure educators providing instruction and services to gifted students receive appropriate training and support
- Contingent on provision of gifted funding to districts

State Report Card Bill

- Directs state board to gather and report for each district and charter school
 - % of students participating in a formal gifted program or advanced coursework disaggregated by low income status
 - % of teachers who hold a gifted education endorsement
 - % of students receiving instruction from a teacher with a gifted endorsement
 - % of students exceeding the proficient level on state assessments disaggregated by low income status

Big Themes

- Expand access *now* to low cost service options such as acceleration
- Enable future advocacy for resources and support by:
 - Ensuring gifted students are no longer invisible in state data
 - Measuring and valuing growth for all students
 - Highlighting opportunity gaps that hold back bright low income and minority students
 - Highlighting effective practices

Get Involved

- Maintain your membership and encourage colleagues to join IAGC
- Educate local school leaders about gifted provisions in ESSA
- Start a discussion about acceleration in your district using NAGC Policy Guide
- Follow ISBE updates regarding ESSA implementation and share your ideas and comments
- Volunteer for IAGC's state initiatives committee

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