



Illinois Gifted Education Law & Policy:

Background and Recent Changes

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Overview of Presentation

- ▶ History of IL gifted education policy framework and IAGC advocacy through the years
- ▶ Impact of changes in law and funding on the availability of gifted services and advanced learning opportunities in IL
- ▶ Significance of changes in federal law and IL ESSA Plan
- ▶ New 2017 state laws – Accelerated Placement Act and Report Card Act
- ▶ Next steps in continuing to build a stronger policy framework and advocacy network

History of Gifted Education in Illinois

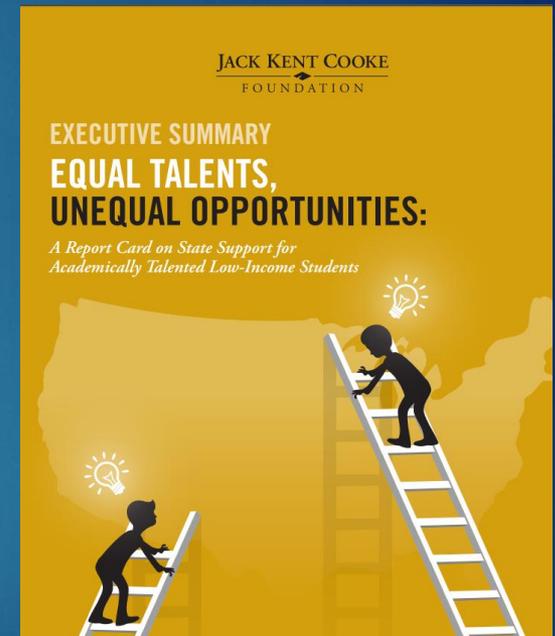
- ▶ No legal mandate for identifying or serving gifted students
- ▶ 2003: Last year schools received grant-based funds (\$19 million) to meet the needs of gifted students; Over 80% of elementary and middle schools provided gifted services that year (IL leading state back then)
- ▶ In the absence of funding (prior to recent changes):
 - ▶ ISBE does not report info about gifted programming
 - ▶ Last gifted education stats reported on ISBE website were from 2003: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/gifted_stats_02-03.pdf
 - ▶ No accountability for the growth of high-ability students

IAGC Timeline

- ▶ **1989**: Educators established IAGC
- ▶ **1989–2003**: IAGC helped Illinois to become a leader in gifted education. \$19 million was provided for gifted education programs in the IL budget prior to changes in 2003
- ▶ **2001**: NCLB passed with exclusive focus on students below proficiency
- ▶ **2003**: Gifted education provisions were removed from the Illinois School Code and funding for gifted was eliminated
- ▶ **2006**: Collaborated with legislators to restore gifted language in School Code
- ▶ **2008–2010**: Partnered with ISBE to produce the Gifted Education Seminar (GES) & six Companion Modules and delivered GES to 5000 Illinois educators.
- ▶ **2011–Now**: IAGC provides GES across Illinois
- ▶ **2013**: Successfully advocated for the establishment of a Gifted Endorsement for IL teachers.
- ▶ **2016**: Passed the Untapped Potential Act which updated 14A's gifted identification practices
- ▶ **2017**: Passed the Accelerated Placement Act and the Report Card Act
- ▶ **2017-18**: IL ESSA Plan development participation; inclusion of accountability indicators supporting growth and advanced learning opportunities for high-ability students

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 4th graders and 12% of 8th 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



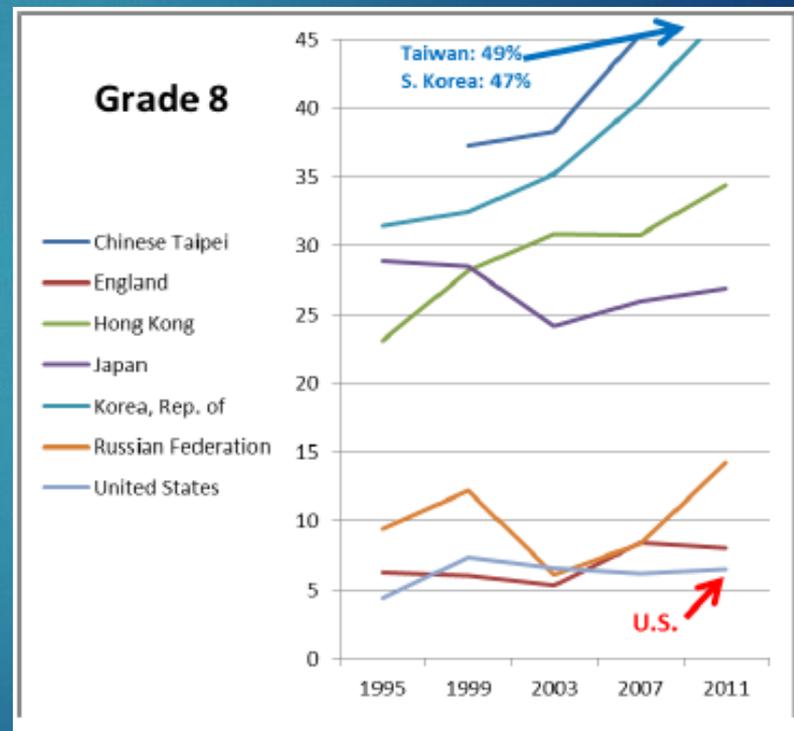
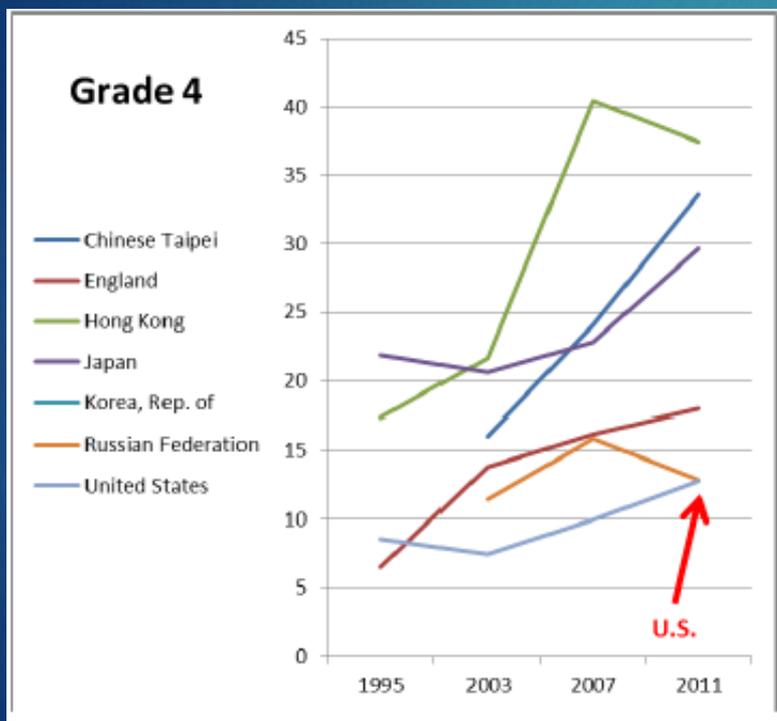
http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_ETUO_Executive_Final.pdf

Why Does this Matter?

- ▶ At least **100,000 Illinois students should be receiving gifted services**
 - ▶ 2 million students are enrolled in IL public schools
 - ▶ Illinois School Code defines gifted children as the top 5% of students using local norms.
- ▶ 54% of students in Illinois are low-income, so **over 50,000 high-potential low-income students** should be identified as gifted
- ▶ 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

International Excellence Gaps

Percent of Advanced Scores (625+) on International TIMSS Math Assessments

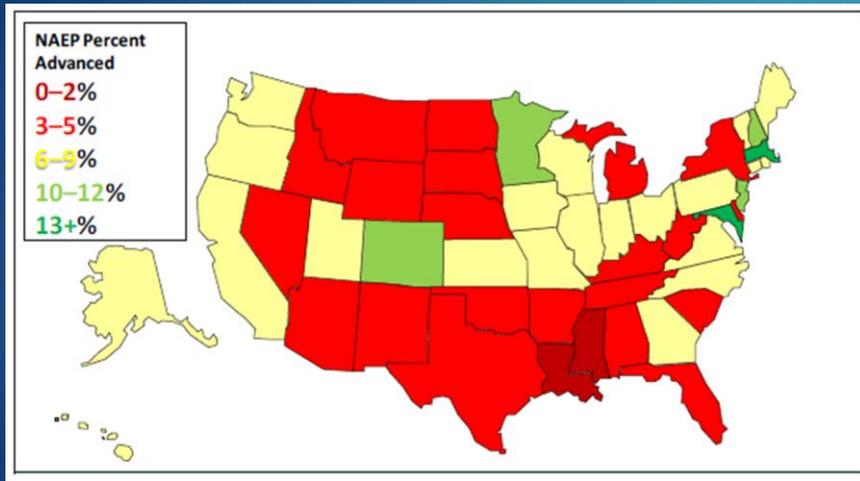


Plucker, J. A., & Clarenbach, J. (2014, March). *Using excellence gap data in advocacy*. Session presentation at the meeting of the National Association for Gifted Children, Arlington, VA. Reprinted with permission.

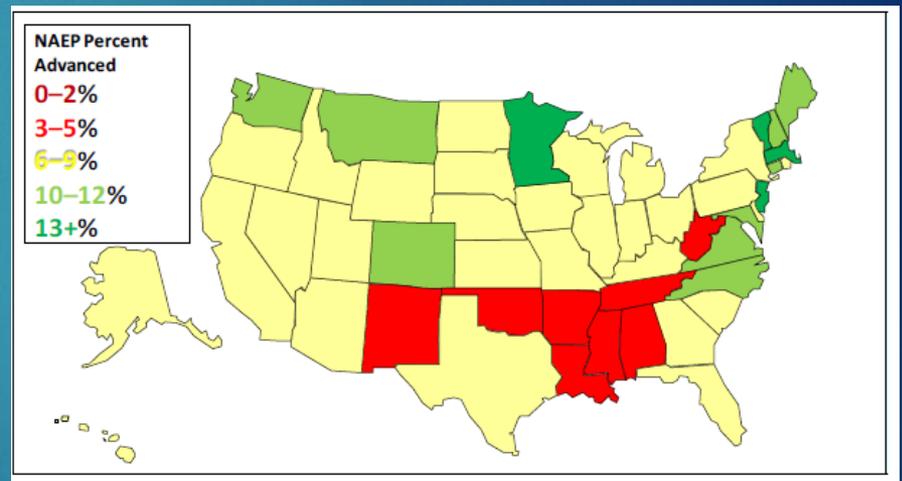
National Excellence Gaps



Advanced Scorers 2011
NAEP Grade 4 Math



Advanced Scorers 2011
NAEP Grade 8 Math



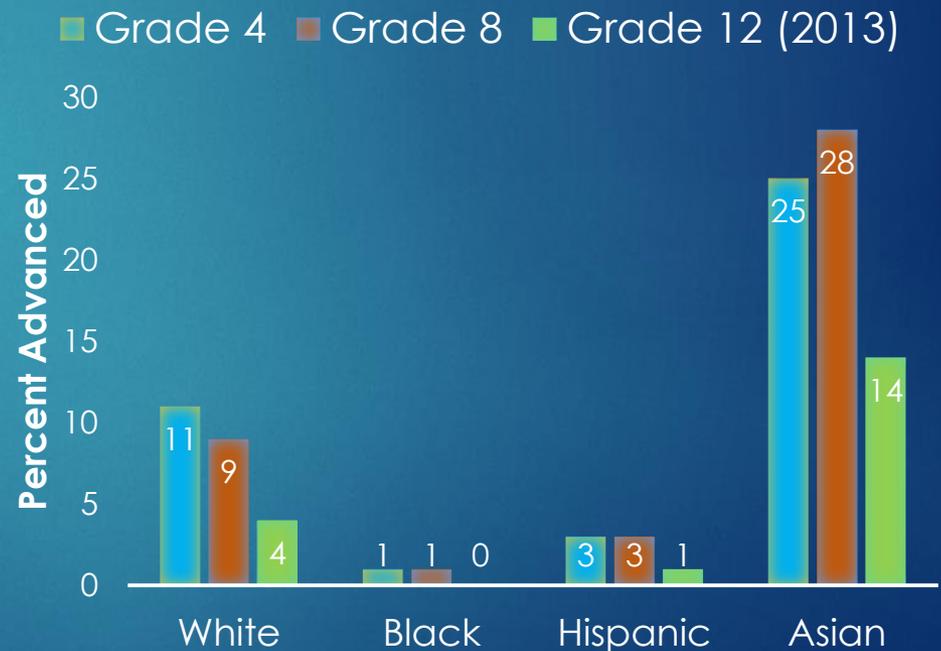
Plucker, J. A., & Clarenbach, J. (2014, March). *Using excellence gap data in advocacy*. Session presentation at the meeting of the National Association for Gifted Children, Arlington, VA. Reprinted with permission.

Illinois Excellence Gaps

2013 NAEP Math by Lunch Status

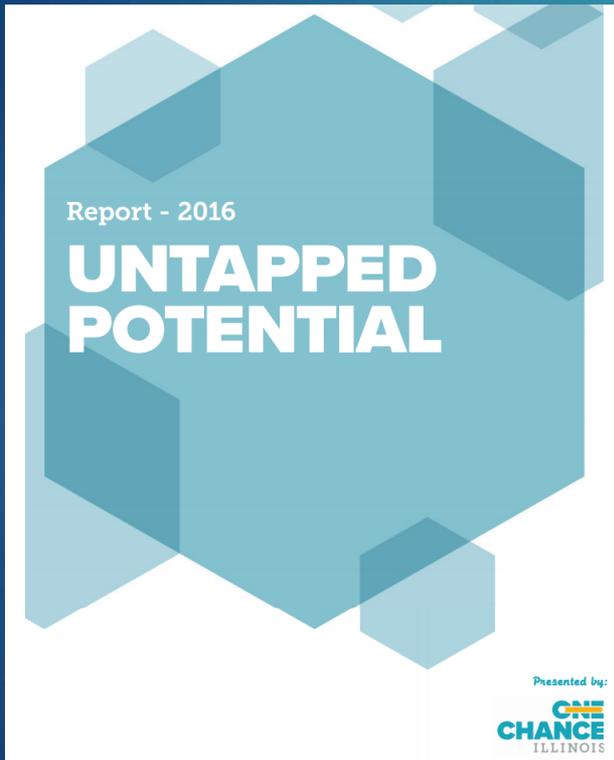


2015 NAEP Math by Race



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.

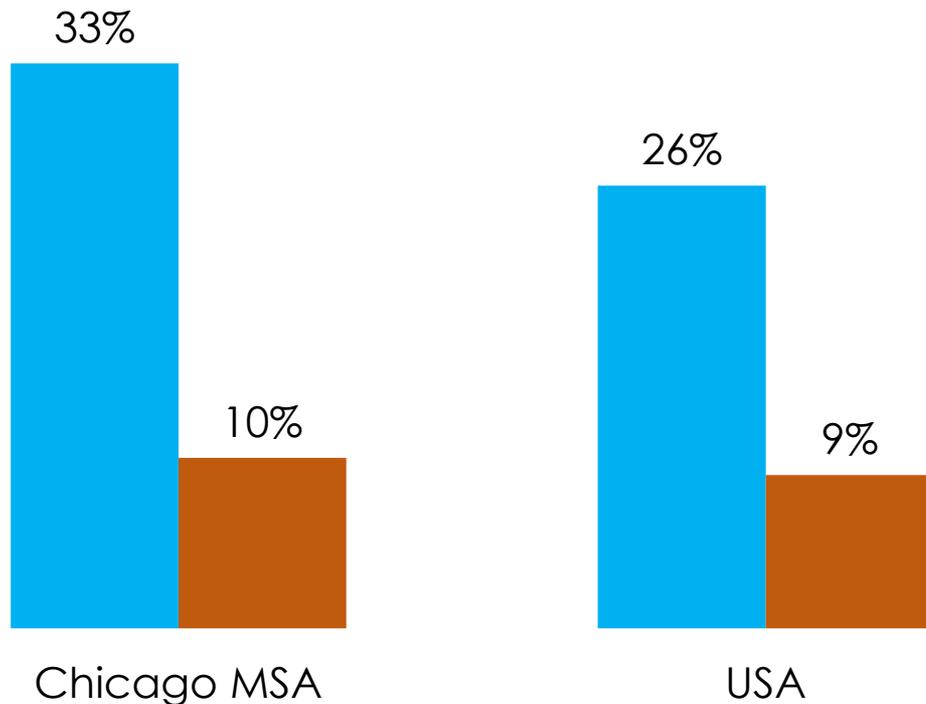
Unequal Access: Low-Income Gifted Children



- ▶ 2016 Untapped Potential Report showed that low-income students are severely underrepresented in gifted programs.
- ▶ For the 45 districts analyzed, 56% of the general student population was low-income, but only 33% of those identified as gifted were low-income.
- ▶ http://onechanceillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/OCI_Report_UP_Mar2016.pdf

Talent Shortage: Gap Between STEM Job Openings and Qualified Workers in Chicago and US

- Percentage of job openings requiring STEM Skills & BA
- Share of population aged 25 and older with STEM BA degree



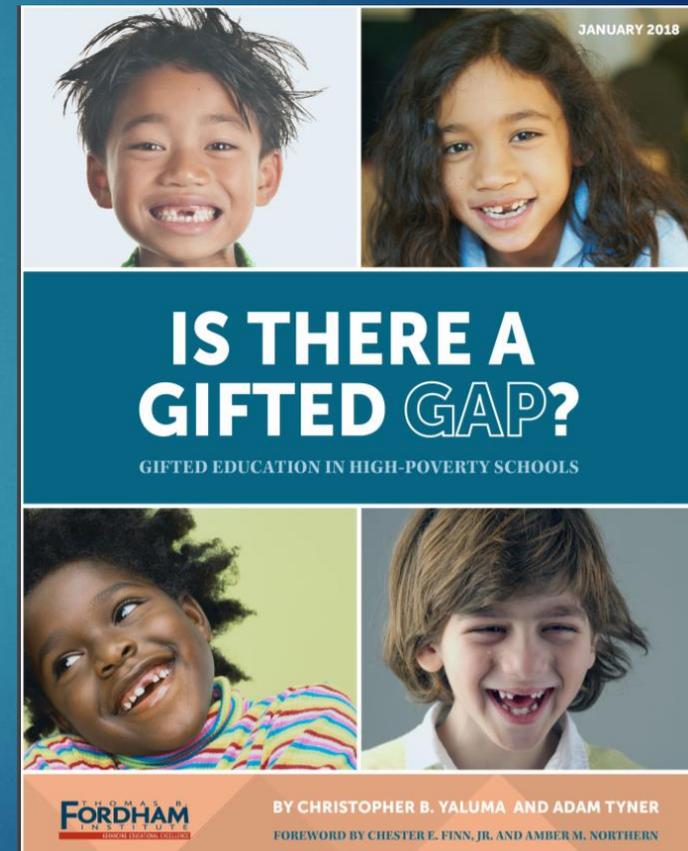
STEM and degree requirements for job openings versus STEM degree attainment for adult population, Chicago MSA, 2013

A STEM occupation is one that requires a well-above average level of knowledge in one or more core STEM fields (Science, Computing Technology, Engineering, and Math).

Source: Brookings analysis of 2013Q4 Burning Glass data, O*NET, and 2009-2012 American Community Survey

New Report: Gifted Gap in High Poverty Schools

- ▶ 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>

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:
 - ▶ 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 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
 - ▶ Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants emphasize providing advanced and “accelerated learning programs” to “students who are often underrepresented in enriching subjects”
 - ▶ Reauthorize Javits grant program which provides research grants (\$12 million for FY2018) with a focus on underrepresented gifted and talented students

IL's ESSA Accountability Plan

- ▶ Opportunity to move past the single-minded focus on proficiency under NCLB and articulate the impact of neglecting high-ability students
 - ▶ 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)
- ▶ Growth Indicator
 - ▶ Measuring growth of all students across the achievement spectrum and not diminishing weight for students above proficiency
 - ▶ Advanced Students in Growth Models Presentation (Calvert & Welch, 2016)
- ▶ School Quality Indicator
 - ▶ Reporting student participation in acceleration and enrichment
 - ▶ Proposed threshold is 5% of students participating in acceleration and/or enrichment
 - ▶ Acceleration and Enrichment School Quality Indicator Presentation (Calvert & Welch, 2017)

Article 14A of IL School Code

Definitions

- ▶ Article 14A now entitled “Gifted and Talented Children and Children Eligible for Accelerated Placement”
- ▶ Section 14A-20: “Gifted and Talented Children” Definition
 - ▶ Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment
 - ▶ A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and, specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude
- ▶ Section 14A-17: “Accelerated Placement” Definition
 - ▶ Placement of a child in an educational setting with curriculum that is usually reserved for children who are older or in higher grades than the child.
 - ▶ Shall include, but need not be limited to, the following types of acceleration: early entrance to K/1st grade; single subject acceleration; and whole grade acceleration

Gifted Education Program

Requirements (Section 14A-30)

- ▶ Identification: Updated via “Untapped Potential Act” in 2016
 - ▶ Use of multiple valid assessments that are culturally/linguistically appropriate, applied universally to all students
 - ▶ Use of appropriate score ranges for assessments, including local norms for identifying high potential
 - ▶ Fair and equitable selection process that allows multiple pathways into the program
- ▶ Services
- ▶ Teacher Training/Professional Development
- ▶ All dependent on funding and an application process

Accelerated Placement Act (ISC Section 14A-32)

- ▶ SB 1223/Public Act 100-0421: Signed into law August 2017; Effective date is July 1, 2018
- ▶ Requires each school district to have policy allowing accelerated placement that includes:
 - ▶ Fair and equitable decision making process involving multiple persons and includes a student's parent/guardian
 - ▶ Assessment process including multiple valid, reliable indicators
 - ▶ Procedures for notifying parents/guardians about decision
 - ▶ Open to all students who demonstrate high ability and may benefit from accelerated placement (not limited to those identified as gifted and talented)
- ▶ Requires ISBE to collect and report data about accelerated placement

Report Card Act (HB2461 / Public Act 100-0364)

- ▶ Signed into law August 2017
- ▶ Amends School Code Section 10-17a: State, School District and School Report Cards
- ▶ Requires State Board of Education to collect and publish data on number and subgroup demographics of students receiving gifted services
- ▶ Requires reporting of numbers of teachers with gifted endorsements
- ▶ Seeking a designated tab on the IL Report Card for all data regarding “Advanced Students”
- ▶ Importance of data collection

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 in the bottom third 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 included in the new school funding formula to the requirements of Article 14A (identification of and services for gifted students, teacher training, accelerated placement policy implementation)
- ▶ Rulemaking and guidance in connection with new laws (Accelerated Placement Act and Report Card Act)
- ▶ ESSA accountability plan monitoring
- ▶ Respond to action alerts calling for public comment, outreach to legislators, submitting witness slips in favor of bills, etc.

Resources

- ▶ 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>
- ▶ 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>

Questions?

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