NATIONAL CENTER FOR
RESEARCH ON GIFTED EDUCATION

Supporting Academic Acceleration in Schools
Fall 2021 – Spring 2025

The National Center for Research on Gifted Education is seeking school districts interested in **expanding their use of subject and full-grade acceleration** as a way to meet the needs of advanced learners. Academic acceleration is the intervention for advanced learners that has shown the greatest effect on learning and achievement. This project seeks to a) provide professional learning around what acceleration actually is and how it can be used, b) develop a universal screening process to determine which students should be considered for acceleration, and c) provide resources and professional learning to schools to help them implement subject and grade acceleration decisions for students who meet the criteria.

What you would get from us:
1. Face-to-face and/or virtual professional learning on how to implement subject and grade acceleration at no cost to your district,
2. Access to online professional learning modules for educators who would be involved in acceleration decisions,
3. Technical support implementing a universal screening system with your existing data to determine who should be considered for grade acceleration,
4. Access to the Integrated Assessment System (Acceleration Institute, University of Iowa) for making acceleration decisions,
5. Funding necessary to purchase any additional assessment tools,
6. Limited funds to support teachers in completing the professional learning modules,
7. Ongoing facilitation of accelerated placement decision making.

What we would want from you:
1. A commitment to have teachers in grades <u>2 through 5</u> and <u>administrators</u> work through 1 to 3 hours of professional learning related to acceleration. The amount of time depends on your role.
2. Academic achievement data for all district grade 2 and grade 3 students disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and ideally free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL), language, and special education status,
3. Willingness to work through the IAS process for talent pool students (approximately 45 minutes – with our support); any decision to accelerate students is determined by the district,
4. A willingness to administer a school ability test to talent pool students as part of the IAS process. We will pay for those tests if they are not already given - this should take about two hours.
5. A commitment to have teachers in grades 2 through 5 and other school personnel provide feedback about the acceleration process,
6. Data on how often acceleration is used in subsequent years of the project.

District requirements:
1. Must have at least two elementary schools in the district participate,
2. Must currently administer an academic achievement test to all students in grades 2–5 – ideally a computer-adaptive test such as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), STAR, or iReady. Preference given to districts that administer the MAP,
3. Must be willing to accept random assignment of schools to receive the professional learning in Fall 2021 - Spring 2023 (Group 1) or Fall 2023 – Spring 2005 (Group 2) - ultimately all participating schools will receive the training and resources.

Timeline

<u>Spring and Summer 2021</u>: Researchers share information on the project with schools. Interested schools are randomly assigned to participate in Fall 2021 to Spring 2023 (Group 1) or Fall 2023 to Spring 2025 (Group 2).

<u>Fall 2021</u>: Group 1 school staff begin professional learning modules. Researchers and school personnel collaborate to implement the talent pool universal screening process using existing data. Group 2 schools continue standard practice until Fall 2023.

<u>Spring 2022</u>: Group 1 conduct IAS meetings on talent pool students and collect data on stakeholder experiences. Schools and families make acceleration decisions for Fall 2022. Staff complete modules. Staff complete feedback assessments.

<u>Fall 2022</u>: Based on district decision, Group 1 identified students are subject- or whole-grade accelerated

<u>Spring 2023:</u>

<u>Fall 2023</u>: Group 2 school staff begin professional learning modules. Researchers and school staff collaborate to implement the talent pool universal screening process using existing data.

Frequently Asked Questions
1. What will be expected of teachers?
   - Teachers in grades 2 through 5 will
     - Complete three, one-hour modules related to academic acceleration,
     - Complete brief surveys about their views of subject and grade acceleration.
2. What will be expected of students?
   - Students who score in the top 10% of their school (in math or reading/English language arts [ELA]) will be considered for acceleration via the IAS process. This is similar to an IEP meeting where a team discusses whether or not an accelerated placement would be appropriate for the student the following school year.
3. Will we be required to actually grade-skip students?
   - No. Talent pool students will go through the IAS process, but the decision on whether to accelerate a student is up to the district and families.
4. What is included on the IAS? How will acceleration decisions be made?
   - The IAS is not a "test" – it is a guided decision-making process using achievement test scores; ability test scores; and information on student interpersonal skills, learning, attitude, and support for an accelerated placement.
5. Does acceleration have negative academic and social-emotional outcomes?
   - Overwhelmingly, acceleration results in positive academic and social-emotional outcome. Similar to any practice in education, students can have a range of experiences; however, research supports the positive outcomes of acceleration.
6. How would acceleration work in virtual learning environments?
   - For full-grade acceleration, a student might be involved in a virtual grade 2 classroom in 2021 – 2022 to a virtual or face-to-face grade 4 classroom in 2022 – 2023. For subject-acceleration, a grade 2 student in 2021 – 2022 could participate in grade 4 math the following year, but stay with grade-level peers the rest of the time.