

California Association for the Gifted

A Position Paper

The California Association for the Gifted (CAG) periodically publishes position papers that deal with issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. All position papers approved by the CAG Board of Directors are consistent with the organization's philosophy and mission, and the current research in the field.

The position papers support the organization's belief in the value and uniqueness of all individuals, its respect for diversity present in our society, and its commitment to honoring the similarities and differences among all students. CAG encourages the provision of educational opportunities that are appropriate to challenge and nurture the growth of each child's potential. The organization is especially mindful of the need for advocacy for individuals who have developed or show the promise of developing intellectual abilities and talents at high levels.

Acceleration

Acceleration is a strategy that adjusts the pace of instruction to the gifted student's capability for the purpose of providing an appropriate level of challenge. Acceleration can take many forms, including: (1) early entrance to formal schooling, which can occur at kindergarten, high school, or university levels; (2) moving through age-graded classes in less time by grade skipping, moving through cross-age grouped or non-graded classes in 2 rather than 3 years, or advanced placement; and (3) moving through curriculum materials and concepts at an accelerated rate by curriculum compacting, telescoping content, or receiving credit by examination. Students may be accelerated in one discipline or across disciplines. However acceleration is implemented, it should result in a match between appropriate learning opportunities and student abilities, and in the completion of formal schooling in less time than is usually required.

When acceleration has been effective in achieving these goals, highly capable individuals are prepared to begin contributing to society at an earlier age. For students, acceleration offers the opportunity to select an educational program that is challenging and that meets both their academic and emotional needs. For schools, acceleration offers a way to meet the needs of highly able students when other forms of differentiation at grade level do not provide enough challenge.

Research documents the academic benefits and positive emotional outcomes of acceleration for gifted students when the needs of the student are carefully matched with the form of acceleration used.

Appropriate opportunities to learn must be offered to all children as such opportunities are necessary for their continued educational and intellectual growth and development. Therefore, CAG is committed to the position that highly able students with capability and motivation should be provided the opportunity to enroll in intellectually appropriate curriculum, classes, and educational settings beyond traditional age/grade parameters.

References:

California Association for the Gifted. (2003). *Meeting the challenge: A guidebook for teaching gifted students*. Whittier, CA: Author.

Colangelo, N., Assouline, S. G., & Gross, M. U. M. (Eds.). (2004). *A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students*. Vols. I & II. The Templeton National Report on Acceleration. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa.

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