

## **Harry Held Back: A Case of Non-Acceleration**

“Harry” is determined, outgoing and assertive. The first signs of giftedness were a large vocabulary and the expression of adult-like thoughts and reasoning skills. He is a non-stop talker, shows great interest in mental math, learned music and math in patterns, and is adept at solving puzzles. He is persistent in completing tasks which interest him. Harry had a difficult entrance into school life. In kindergarten he was accused of manipulating other students, being unkind, immature and overly aggressive, while getting good academic grades.

In 1st grade, he was easily frustrated, challenged authority, reacted strongly to any perceived injustices, had frequent outbursts at school and often lost recess time due to behavior issues. He was definitely not interested in reading (although he noticed that he could read signs when riding in the car). In both Kindergarten and 1st grade, anytime his parents mentioned that Harry might be bored at school, teachers denied it and said that there was nothing unusual in his skills. They focused on his emotional and behavioral issues. These were fine, experienced, dedicated teachers – but they didn’t know how to evaluate what they were seeing.

Frustrated with the school system, his parents gave him a book a couple grades harder than those his class was allowed to take out of the library at school. He finished it and said, “This was a good book.” He asked to get this genre of books from the school library. He had to prove to the staff that he could read them first before they’d let him take them out.

Harry developed low self-esteem and began to express suicidal thoughts. His parents took him to a private psychologist. In the first session, the psychologist asked if anyone had ever suggested having him tested for giftedness, because his thoughts and reasoning were way ahead of where other children his age would be. Further evaluation indicated that Harry had an IQ of 132.

At his school a gifted pull-out program was implemented for second-graders for the first time. Harry thrived in the gifted environment (a couple of hours a week) and his self-esteem grew, although he hated that the gifted program was scheduled during gym. He routinely stated that he learned nothing in the rest of his class time (although he made good grades) but could keep himself amused, and his behavior improved considerably.

At the beginning of 2nd grade, Harry could multiply, knew beginnings of division, and double-digit addition and subtraction. His parents asked if Harry could be accelerated in math. The request was denied due to scheduling problems. His parents then asked if Harry could curriculum compact in math. This request was also denied. Enrichment was promised, but very little evidence was seen.

In 3rd grade, Harry participated in the gifted pull-out program (4 hrs. per week). The gifted intervention specialist was incorporated in the regular classroom at times, which provided a small amount of in-class enrichment. Harry looked forward to this, in addition

to the pull-out gifted class. By March of 3rd grade, he had completed all 25 levels of hands-on equations in gifted class.

Harry routinely states he learns nothing at school, except during gifted. Once the state standardized tests were completed he was allowed to do some math assignments with 4th grade. He and the other gifted students finished ahead of the rest of the class doing the regular assignment.