

An Introduction to the Iowa Acceleration Scale

A Guide for Whole-Grade Acceleration K-8

The following information, used by permission, is excerpted from the Templeton National Report on Acceleration.

Deciding whether or not to skip a grade is always a complex decision. Faced with an increasing number of individual requests to assist in the decision-making process regarding whole-grade acceleration (grade skipping), a guidance tool was conceptualized to standardize the process. This guidance tool, now known as the *Iowa Acceleration Scale* (IAS), has proven itself as a systematic and defensible way to generate recommendations and guidelines for whole-grade acceleration. The *Iowa Acceleration Scale* (IAS), now in its third edition, is used by schools in all 50 states as well as Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The IAS has ten sections, and it takes all kinds of factors into account-like the age of the child, the offerings of the school, and whether a sibling will be in the same grade. The ten-part scale starts with general school and family information, moves to IQ, sibling information, and the student's personal feelings about acceleration. Then school history and various ability, aptitude, and achievement tests are included. The IAS includes 20 items that are rated and categorized into five subtotals that include the most salient issues for consideration by educators and parents. The subtotals are: (1) Academic Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement; (2) School and Academic Factors; (3) Developmental Factors; (4) Interpersonal Skills; and (5) Attitude and Support. Finally, a cumulative score from all of these factors is calculated.

The IAS was developed after several decades of clinical work with students considered for whole-grade acceleration. One of the important considerations in whole-grade acceleration, and an especially strong feature of the IAS, is systemizing the decision-making procedures in order to improve the probability that adequate information is gathered and objective decisions are made.

The IAS can be a tremendously helpful guide to parents, teachers, and principals who are trying to weigh all the factors in a decision to accelerate. The IAS comes with a detailed manual that explains all ten sections, and it includes case studies and samples of completed forms. The IAS also comes with a summary of the relevant research for educators and parents who would like to read more about how to decide whether to accelerate. The clear format of the Iowa Acceleration Scale lets schools collect all the relevant data in a structured way. The IAS is easily affordable for all districts.

The *Iowa Acceleration Scale* and the *Iowa Acceleration Scale Manual, Third Edition*, are available from Great Potential Press.

About the authors of the *Iowa Acceleration Scale, Third Edition* (2009):

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