

## Executive Summary

### *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students*

America's schools routinely avoid academic acceleration, the easiest and most effective way to help highly capable students. While the popular perception is that a child who skips a grade will be socially stunted, fifty years of research shows that moving bright students ahead often makes them happy.

Acceleration means moving through the traditional curriculum at rates faster than typical. The 18 forms of acceleration include grade-skipping, early-entrance to school, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. It is appropriate educational planning. It means matching the level and complexity of the curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student.

Students who are moved ahead tend to be more ambitious, and they earn graduate degrees at higher rates than other students. Interviewed years later, an overwhelming majority of accelerated students say that acceleration was an excellent experience for them.

Accelerated students feel academically challenged and socially accepted, and they do not fall prey to the boredom that plagues many highly capable students who are forced to follow the curriculum for their age-peers.

For the first time, this compelling research is available to the public in a bold new initiative to get these findings into the hands of parents, teachers, and principals. The report is available at no cost to schools, the media, and parents requesting copies.

You'll find information about entering school early, skipping grades in elementary school, the Advanced Placement program, and starting college ahead of time. You'll read the comments of accelerated students, Deans of Colleges of Education, a school superintendent, and a school board member. Every sentence in this volume is culled from the research of America's leading education experts. If you'd like more research information, see Volume II of this report.

With all this research evidence, why haven't schools, parents, and teachers accepted the idea of acceleration? *A Nation Deceived* presents these reasons for why schools hold back America's brightest kids:

- Limited familiarity with the research on acceleration
- Philosophy that children must be kept with their age group
- Belief that acceleration hurries children out of childhood
- Fear that acceleration hurts children socially
- Political concerns about equity
- Worry that other students will be offended if one child is accelerated.

This report shows that these reasons are simply not supported by research. By distributing thousands of copies and launching a public-awareness campaign, the *Nation Deceived* report provides teachers and parents the knowledge, support, and confidence to consider acceleration.

The cost of the report, both online and print, has been covered by the John Templeton Foundation. *A Nation Deceived* hopes to change the conversation about educating bright children in America. A website [www.nationdeceived.org](http://www.nationdeceived.org) has been established to encourage dialogue across the nation.

We invite you to learn more about why acceleration is so important for America's children. For further information and to download the report go to [www.nationdeceived.org](http://www.nationdeceived.org). This interactive website also allows you to give your opinion on the report.

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