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PREFACE

The *Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS), 2nd Edition* is NOT A TEST. It is not something that a student can pass or fail, or that a teacher can use to prepare a student for more challenging academic work. Rather, the IAS is a *tool* for use by a team of school professionals when a whole-grade acceleration is being considered. For the purpose of this IAS Manual, the terms “grade-skip” and “whole-grade acceleration” are used interchangeably.

The IAS was designed for use with *students in grades K-8*. It is also an appropriate guide to be used for decisions about *early entrance to kindergarten or first grade*. The IAS was not developed to facilitate decisions regarding early entrance to college.

The IAS was developed over a 15-year period from the research and clinical experiences of professional staff at The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. Since 1998, it has already been used for successful acceleration decisions with several hundred students in school districts throughout the United States, as well as in other countries. Ongoing research conducted by staff at the Belin-Blank Center reflects continuing efforts to seek ways to improve the educational options for gifted and talented children.

The IAS is meant to be used in a child study team meeting to discuss strengths and potential difficulties for a child being considered for acceleration through data such as test scores, school history, observed adult and peer relationships, attitudes toward learning, and other factors that have bearing on a decision to accelerate. Team members will typically consist of the child’s parents, one or more teachers, a counselor or school psychologist, an administrator, and a gifted teacher or coordinator.

The IAS is designed to bring objective data to the discussion and thus minimize any potential bias for or against whole-grade acceleration. The team approach ensures that all who have relevant knowledge of the child will have input in rating the child on various questions about important factors such as ability, attendance, motivation, attitude toward learning, etc. The IAS also requires input from the student, although the student does not sit in on the team meeting, but rather gives his or her opinion about acceleration to a member of the team.

The actual IAS Form (the tool noted above) consists of a 16-page survey with items in 10 different areas to guide the team’s discussion in systematically considering each potentially relevant aspect regarding whole-grade acceleration. For each item under consideration, the team must reach consensus on the

most appropriate rating scale response. In the case of academic self-concept (Item 7), for example, team members will choose the best response out of three choices:

- ❖ Student’s academic self-concept is weak (under-estimates abilities).
- ❖ Student’s academic self-concept is inflated (over-estimates abilities).
- ❖ Student’s academic self-concept is positive and realistic.

The response values have been weighted according to research results obtained from pilot testing the IAS with more than 150 students at the Belin-Blank Center and subsequently refined by further field testing.

When the child study team has completed all sections of the instrument, numerical responses from all of the sections are added together, and a final score is obtained. This score then becomes the primary guideline for predicting how successful the student will be as a candidate for grade-skipping. In some cases, the student will not score high enough to be an “excellent” or “good” candidate to skip a grade, but will be a “marginal” or a “poor” candidate. In such cases, the team should continue the discussion and use the IAS as a tool to determine whether other accommodations might be made for the student. These could include mentoring, single-subject acceleration, enrichment, or perhaps no special accommodation at this time.

The IAS scale thus provides educators and parents with a systematic and defensible way to generate recommendations and guidelines that will help make educated and appropriate placement decisions for students who demonstrate high ability and who have the capacity to process greater amounts of information and knowledge than they are able to acquire in their present learning environments.

The IAS Manual is an easy-to-read monograph designed for use as a reference guide in conjunction with an IAS Form. This Manual contains explanations, case examples, and instructions for completing each item on the Form. Although the intention is to use the Manual and Form together, *it is critical that the entire Manual be read carefully prior to filling out the IAS Form* so that the user is completely familiar with all sections of the Form.

In addition to the IAS Form, readers will find an IAS Summary and Planning Record that succinctly summarizes the IAS process. This IAS Summary and Planning Record is meant for school and parent use in monitoring the child’s progress, as well as for keeping in the child’s cumulative folder. This IAS Summary and Planning Record can be copied. (The IAS Manual and IAS Form may *not* be copied without prior permission from the publisher.) In order to help us improve services to school personnel and families concerning grade-skipping, you have the opportunity to participate in the ongoing validation study. Your feedback will be used to continue validating the instrument and to further our research efforts.

**The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center
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SECTION VII: SCHOOL AND ACADEMIC FACTORS

Please circle the number to the right of the statement that best describes the student.

1. Grade Placement Under Consideration

Please circle one

- | | |
|--|---|
| Acceleration would result in a change in building at the beginning of the first semester of the academic year (e.g., elementary to junior high).
In this case, a plan for transition is needed. | 0 |
| Acceleration would require the student to attend some classes in another building. | 1 |
| Early entrance would be to kindergarten. | 2 |
| Early entrance would be to first grade. | 3 |
| Acceleration would be within the same school building during an academic year. | 4 |

Comments or concerns: _____

2. Current Grade Level of Siblings (see Section II, Critical Items)

Please circle one

- | | |
|---|---|
| Sibling is one grade below the student's current grade. | 1 |
| Sibling is two or more grades above or below the student's current grade. | 2 |
| Student has no siblings. | 3 |

Comments or concerns: _____

3. Attendance at School

Please circle one

- | | |
|---|---|
| Student has a history of excessive unexcused absences and tardiness. | 0 |
| Student has a history of frequent excused absences (e.g., due to illness or family issues). | 1 |
| Absences and tardiness are average for same-age children. | 2 |
| Student has excellent attendance. | 3 |

Comments or concerns: _____

4. Motivation

Please circle one

- | | |
|---|---|
| Student does not complete assignments and appears disinterested in schoolwork. | 0 |
| Student completes those tasks that are of interest to him/her. | 1 |
| Student completes virtually all assignments on time and shows a positive attitude. | 2 |
| Student completes most assignments more quickly and more comprehensively than other classmates. | 3 |

Comments or concerns: _____

5. Attitude toward Learning

Please circle one

- | | |
|---|---|
| Student is disinterested and/or frustrated when presented with new academic challenges. | 0 |
| Student completes assignments competently but inconsistently. | 1 |
| Student completes assignments, but rarely seeks additional challenges. | 2 |
| Student is receptive to and enthusiastic about new academic challenges. | 3 |
| Student actively seeks and persists in new and rigorous academic challenges. | 4 |

Comments or concerns: _____

6. Participation in School-Sponsored Extracurricular Activities (e.g., athletics, music programs, clubs)

Please circle one

- | | |
|---|---|
| School activities are available for the student's age or grade level, but student does not participate. | 0 |
| Student shows limited participation in available activities. | 1 |
| Student participates in two or more activities and does well, but has not received special recognition. | 2 |
| Student has a leadership role or has received recognition in one or more activities. | 3 |

Comments or concerns: _____

7. Academic Self-Concept

Please circle one

- | | |
|---|---|
| Student's academic self-concept is weak (under-estimates abilities). | 1 |
| Student's academic self-concept is inflated (over-estimates abilities). | 1 |
| Student's academic self-concept is positive and realistic. | 2 |

Comments or concerns: _____

Add all of the numbers circled to calculate the School and Academic Factors Subtotal:

SCHOOL AND ACADEMIC FACTORS (SECTION VII) SUBTOTAL



SECTION VIII: DEVELOPMENTAL FACTORS

Please circle the number to the right of the statement that best describes the student.

8. Age

Please circle one

- | | |
|--|---|
| Student is among the youngest in his/her present grade. | 1 |
| Student is of average age for his/her present grade level. | 2 |
| Student is among the oldest in his/her present grade. | 3 |

Comments or concerns: _____

SCALE SUBTOTALS, IAS GRAND TOTAL, AND GUIDELINES

Calculating the IAS Grand Total

Please refer back to Sections IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X (*pages 7-12*) to fill in the blanks below.


Is the Academic Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement (AAAA) Subtotal Score ≥ 10 ?

- Yes
- No

If the answer is “no” and the AAAA Subtotal score is <10 , do not consider whole-grade acceleration.

Academic Ability, Aptitude, and Achievement Subtotal (AAAA) (<i>see page 7</i>)	_____ of a possible 22 points
School and Academic Factors Subtotal (<i>see page 9</i>)	_____ of a possible 22 points
Developmental Factors Subtotal (<i>see page 10</i>)	_____ of a possible 9 points
Interpersonal Skills Subtotal (<i>see page 11</i>)	_____ of a possible 16 points
Attitude and Support Subtotal (<i>see page 12</i>)	_____ of a possible 11 points

Add the above five scale subtotals together to yield the IAS Grand Total:

IOWA ACCELERATION SCALE GRAND TOTAL  of a possible 80 points

Interpreting the Iowa Acceleration Scale Grand Total

60-80 total points	<p>Excellent candidate for whole-grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">❖</p>
46-59 total points	<p>Good candidate for whole-grade acceleration. Acceleration is recommended.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">❖</p>
35-45 total points	<p>Marginal candidate for whole-grade acceleration. There is no clear recommendation. Review materials closely and carefully consider curricular alternatives.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">❖</p>
34 or fewer total points	<p>Whole-grade acceleration is not recommended. Consider single-subject acceleration, mentoring, enrichment, or other alternatives.</p>