EAB

Moving Toward a Talent Development Model of Gifted Education

District Leadership Forum

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1) Executive Summary

Key Observations

The talent development model represents an emerging approach to gifted education. While no profiled district has implemented this model fully, all districts seek to move toward implementation of the talent development model. The talent development model embraces the notion of different kinds of giftedness, and identifies students as gifted in specific areas (e.g., reading, art), known as domains. Administrators at District A, District C, and District G all use domain-specific identification methods, and other profiled districts provide gifted programming unique to different domains of giftedness. This more individualized conception of giftedness complements efforts to mitigate bias in gifted identification and trends toward offering more differentiated programming to all students.

Use nuanced measures of identification (e.g., checklists, referrals) as opposed to only using standardized assessments to identify students within specific gifted domains. The talent development model identifies students as gifted or talented in a specific domain or area (e.g., art, leadership, math) rather than labeling them as broadly gifted. While standardized tests can still support general gifted identification, educators can more easily identify domain-specific abilities through measures like checklists, referrals, or portfolios of student work. Administrators at District A and District C use behavioral checklists to identify gifted students, while administrators at District F incorporate teacher referrals to improve identification.

Explicitly address structural biases in the identification process to increase diversity among gifted program participants. Evaluators' implicit biases and biases inherent in assessment tools themselves can decrease equity in the gifted identification process. To ensure that a gifted program reflects the diversity of the district at large, administrators at profiled districts use more culturally-conscious evaluation methods. Administrators at District A use the Naglieri Non-Verbal Assessment specifically because of its culturally neutral framework, while administrators at District C use a point-based system that automatically assigns additional points for bilingual students and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.

Offer themed pull-out programs to serve students with diverse abilities and interests. This short-format domain-specific programming allows districts to effectively serve a broad population of students who display various types of giftedness over the course of the academic year. Instead of a weekly one-size-fits-all pull-out program, administrators at District C, District B, and District G offer short pull-out programs (i.e., less than two weeks long) tailored to specific domains for instances where in-class differentiation does not fully meet students' needs. Students only participate in pull-out programs that match their interests and talents.

Use committees and parent councils to improve communication with stakeholders before implementing a new model of gifted education. Contacts at all profiled districts note the importance of successful communication with parents and educators in the implementation of an effective gifted program. Setting up advisory committees for teachers or parent councils can help these stakeholders receive accurate information about gifted programs and can provide a forum for stakeholders to offer input into any proposed changes. This can help gifted administrators receive buy-in for program changes and improve the implementation of a new model, such as a talent development model.

2) Overview of the Talent Development Model

Elements of the Model

The Talent Development Model Suggests a More Fluid and Individualized Concept of Giftedness

The emerging talent development model reflects the general push to modernize and diversify the definition of giftedness. Traditional gifted programs emphasize the inherent nature of giftedness (i.e., that it is an immutable quality unaffected by external factors) and identify children as gifted primarily based on IQ test scores or academic achievement. This notion of giftedness creates a static binary, establishing a permanent divide between gifted children and non-gifted children, and places no emphasis on developing all students' unique talents.[1]

Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences posits that there are different types of intelligence, rather than the more general concept of intelligence embodied by IQ tests. The idea of domains in the talent development model builds upon the theory of multiple intelligences.[3]

Furthermore, traditional conceptions of giftedness and traditional assessment methods favor culturally dominant groups, overlooking giftedness in typically underserved groups. Traditional conceptions of giftedness also place value specifically on intellectual abilities alone, versus a more modern notion of multiple intelligences.[2]

The talent development model differs in several notable ways from more traditional notions of giftedness. The talent development model views giftedness as something developed over time, addresses students' full social-emotional needs, and focuses on long term student outcomes more so than traditional models.

Key Elements of the Talent Development Model [4]

Giftedness as a Process

The talent development model does not look at giftedness as an innate quality, but as something developed and enriched over time.

Domains of Giftedness

Rather than focusing on just academic or intellectual giftedness, the talent development model acknowledges that students may be gifted in different areas, such as specific academic fields, visual and performing arts, leadership, and career or technical fields.

Social-Emotional Differences are Not Inherent to Giftedness

Unlike a traditional concept of giftedness, the talent development model does not view gifted students' social-emotional difficulties as an inherent aspect of giftedness.

Importance of Outcomes and Achievement

The talent development model puts a greater emphasis on achievement and outcomes than a traditional model of gifted education. Students should show achievement within the program and successful programs should allow students to achieve eminence in their chosen field.

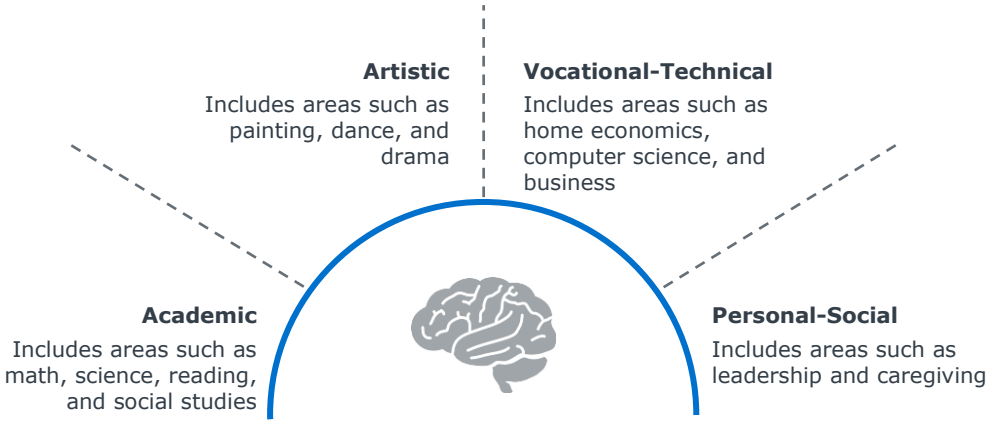
Most importantly, the talent development model incorporates numerous definitions of giftedness that account for student growth in different areas, or domains (e.g., mathematics, performing arts, leadership). The specific domains vary, but leading literature on the talent development model identifies four broad domains: academic,

1) John F. Feldhusen, "Talent Development in Gifted Education," The Davidson Institute, accessed December 10, 2019, http://www.davidsongifted.org/search-database/entry/a10356.
2) Ibid.
3) Ibid.
4) Paula Olszewski-Kubilius and Dana Thomson, "Talent Development as a Framework for Gifted Education," *Gifted Child Today* 38, no. 1 (January 20, 2015): 49–59, https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217514556531.

artistic, vocational-technical, and personal-social. Gifted and talented administrators may identify additional sub-domains within these broader categories.[5]

While the talent development model does not recognize pure cognitive ability or general intellectual giftedness as a specific domain, individual school districts may still include a domain called Intellectual or Super Cognitive ability in their identification systems as they move from a traditional model to a talent development model of gifted education.

Domains of Giftedness[6]



Due to the lack of literature on the model and the lack of districts that have implemented the model, the exact benefits and specific drawbacks of the talent development model remain unproven. Educators interested in moving toward a talent development model cite its individualized conception of giftedness, its focus on serving students in all areas of giftedness, and its emphasis on achievement and progress as the key potential benefits of the model.[7] They also note that the more diverse identification processes required by a talent development model may reduce the impact of implicit biases in gifted programming.[8]

Reach of the Model

Many Districts Incorporate Elements of the Talent Development Model into Their Gifted Programs

While no profiled district has fully implemented the talent development model, contacts at all profiled districts expressed interest in transitioning toward a talent development model for gifted education. District leaders appreciate how the talent development model can help administrators diversify gifted programs and how it can expand access to personalized education programs across the student community.

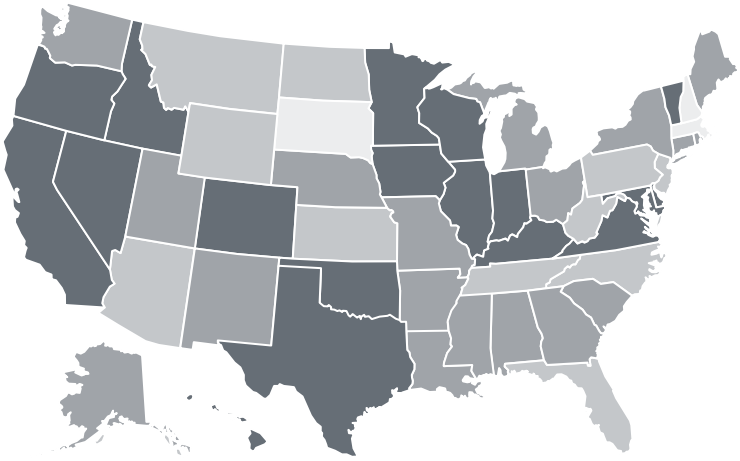
Even though no district has fully adopted a talent development model, profiled districts have already incorporated some aspects of the talent development model. For example, all profiled districts maintain a definition of giftedness that encompasses various domains. That said, districts vary widely in how extensively they provide domain-specific programming. For instance, the gifted program at District F currently only provides services for students gifted in academic areas (i.e., math and reading).

Contacts at District A, District E, and District B note that changes in state-level definitions of giftedness drove their adoption of certain domains of giftedness, and remark that many districts throughout the country use state guidelines to select the domains they serve. Over time, state-level administrators have diversified their definitions of giftedness, potentially signaling future growth for the talent development model more broadly.

5) John F. Feldhusen, "Talent Development in Gifted Education," The Davidson Institute, accessed December 10, 2019, http://www.davidsongifted.org/search-database/entry/a10356.
6) Ibid.
7) Paula Olszewski-Kubilius and Dana Thomson, "Talent Development as a Framework for Gifted Education," *Gifted Child Today* 38, no. 1 (January 20, 2015): 51, https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217514556531.
8) Ibid.

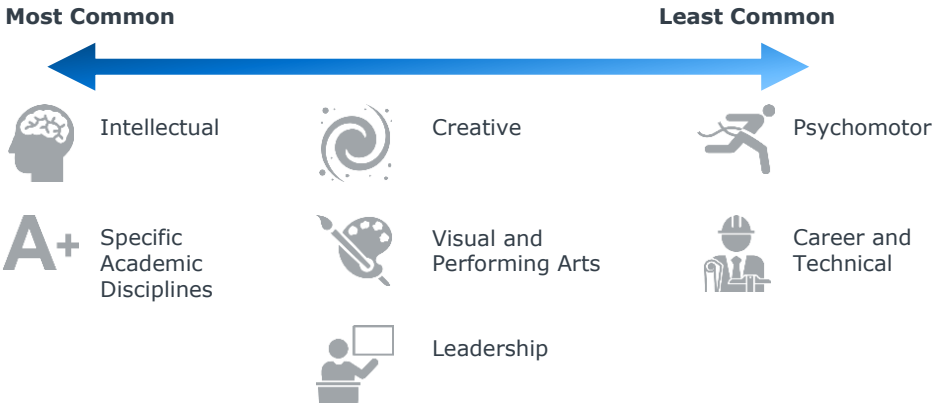
Gifted Definitions by State[9]

Domains included in official state-level definitions of giftedness



No definition	
Intellectual, academic, or unspecified only	
Intellectual, academic, and creative or artistic	
Domains beyond intellectual, academic, and creative or artistic	

Domains Mentioned in State Definitions



9) "Gifted By State," National Association for Gifted Children, accessed December 9, 2019, https://www.nagc.org/information-publications/gifted-state; "State Definitions of Giftedness," National Association for Gifted Children, accessed December 9, 2019, https://www.nagc.org/state-definitions-giftedness; State Department of Education Websites.

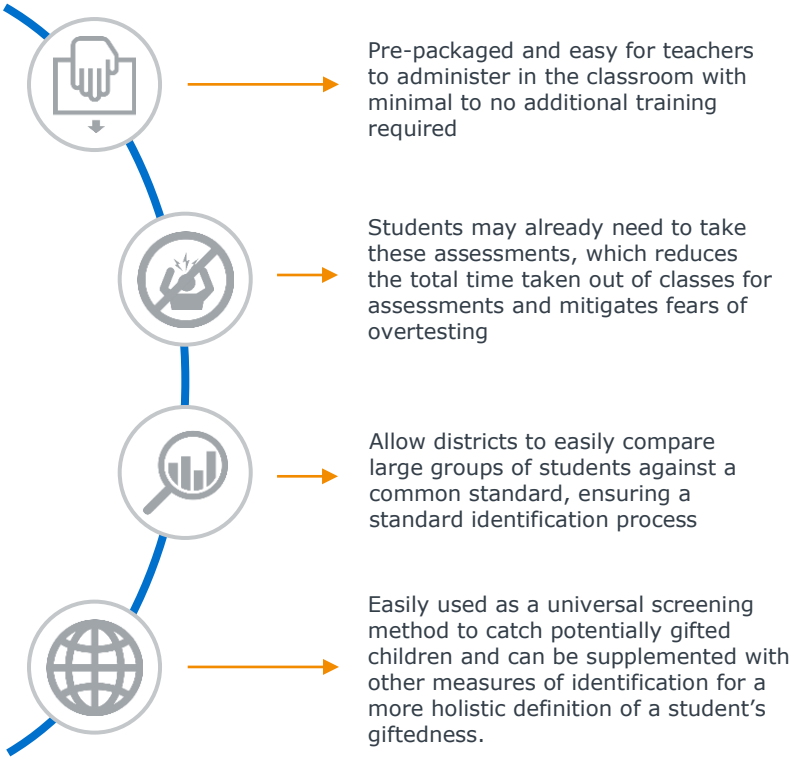
3) Modernizing Student Identification

Identification

Profiled Districts Use Standardized Assessments to Easily Compare Performance across Large Groups

All profiled districts use standardized academic or cognitive ability assessments as part of their identification process. Contacts may use nationally-normed assessments (e.g., the CogAT), state-based tests of academic ability, or a combination of the two. While these tests are limited in how well they can identify students in different domains, their ease-of-use and standardization make them a valuable tool for universal screenings or initial identification steps in a talent development model.

Benefits of Standardized Assessments



Assessments used by administrators at profiled districts include the CogAT, Naglieri Nonverbal Assessment, I-Ready, Star Assessments, the Kaufmann Brief Intelligence Test, and other state-specific tests. Administrators use these assessments to identify students as intellectually gifted or gifted in specific academic domains (most state tests, the I-Ready and the Star Assessments break down scores by math and reading proficiency).[10] At districts that adhere more closely to the talent development model, such as District C, administrators use the assessments as an initial screening to cast a wider net for further domain-specific evaluation.

10)"Assessments That Drive Instruction," Curriculum Associates, accessed December 18, 2019, https://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/i-ready/assessment; "Star Assessments – Overview," Renaissance, accessed December 18, 2019, https://www.renaissance.com/products/star-assessments/.

Use More Nuanced Assessment Methods to Evaluate Students for Giftedness in Specific Domains

Behavioral checklists or scales, referrals, and portfolios of student work allow for a more nuanced examination of a student's abilities than standardized assessments. These measures can uncover abilities, such as leadership, that standardized tests cannot detect.[11]

However, as contacts at District C mention, these measures of identification require more time and training on the part of classroom teachers than standardized assessments and can be difficult to administer to large groups. Therefore, these measures usually supplement, rather than replace, standardized tests as a part of the identification process at profiled districts.

While administrators at all profiled districts use academic or cognitive ability tests as part of gifted identification processes, they use checklists and referrals to assess giftedness in difficult-to-assess domains such as visual and performing arts or leadership. Administrators at District A, District C, and District E all use referrals or checklists in their identification process. At District A, gifted administrators use checklists developed by the **Ohio Department of Education** as part of their identification process for giftedness in the arts, while administrators District C created their own district-specific assessment rubrics for Creative Thinking, Leadership Ability, Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts. For each quality or skill listed on the rubric at District C, the evaluator can mark Not Present (zero points), Some Evidence (one point), or Many Examples (two points). Students need a total of 12 points on the checklist to indicate potential giftedness. These checklists can initially be filled out by teachers, parents, peers, or by the student themselves. Gifted administrators then review the checklists and may ask for additional evidence before including students in gifted programming.

Sample Checklist Questions for Gifted Identification in Leadership Ability from *District C*

Characteristic	Not Present (0)	Some Evidence (1)	Many Examples (2)
Finds better ways to do things		✓	
Has practical ideas of what will and won't work	✓		
Takes responsibility for outcomes			✓
Has grit and can face criticism and discouragement			✓
Earns respect of peers		✓	
Can organize people and resources to accomplish goals	✓		

11) Paula Olszewski-Kubilius and Dana Thomson, "Talent Development as a Framework for Gifted Education," *Gifted Child Today* 38, no. 1 (January 20, 2015): 56, https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217514556531.

Develop Clear Structures Around Nuanced Methods of Identification to Avoid Overidentification

Contacts at District D note that when they utilized checklists, referrals, and committees as part of their identification process in the past, they over-identified students as gifted. The more subjective nature of these identification methods led administrators to feel that there were no real guidelines for identification. Instead, they note that identification seemed more driven by parent desires rather than actual signs of giftedness. Districts transitioning to more nuanced methods of identification should develop clear structures to ensure that all stakeholders understand the criteria for inclusion in the gifted program to avoid overidentification.

Consider a Fluid Identification Process to Reflect the Variability of Giftedness in a Talent Development Model

In a talent development model, giftedness is variable over time, depending on domain and student development. To reflect this variability, the gifted program at District G does not permanently identify students as gifted. Instead, they select students separately for each cycle of their project-based pull-out program each year. Contacts note that they no longer label students as gifted alone, but rather state that their programming provides multiple opportunities for students to display giftedness throughout the year.

Gifted administrators create different criteria for inclusion in each cycle based on the topic covered. For a cycle focusing on engineering, administrators invite students displaying strong abilities in math, science, or career and technical fields to participate. Similarly, administrators may emphasize creative thinking, English achievement, or artistic abilities when selecting students for a cycle focused on creative writing. Once administrators determine the criteria for each cycle, they then draw on a database of multiple assessment measures (including standardized assessments, student work portfolios, teacher records and observations, and parent recommendations) to identify students to participate in the cycle. Since each cycle uses different criteria, a student may participate in one cycle and then not participate in the next. This method of fluid identification allows District G to more accurately reflect the variable conception of giftedness within the talent development model.

Mitigating Bias

Adopt Bias-Conscious Evaluation Methods to Ensure Equity in Gifted Identification Processes

While implicit bias impacts student outcomes across the education system, students can feel this discrimination acutely when seeking to access gifted programs. Traditional gifted programs often use IQ tests for identification, long known to be biased toward white students.[12] Many standardized tests also reflect biases—these exams' language-heavy focus puts students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and English language learners at a disadvantage. Additionally, cultural differences between teachers and students can reduce the identification of underserved groups, as these students may not display the "traditional" definitions of giftedness. These biases result in major demographic discrepancies in gifted program representation, compared to the demographics of a district as a whole.[13] While domain-specific

12) EAB, "Mitigating Bias in Gifted & Talented Programs," 2018, https://eab.com/research/district-leadership/resource/mitigating-bias-in-gifted-talented-programs/.
13) Ibid.

identification can help more students gain access to gifted services, administrators must still take additional precautions to ensure that their programs identify and serve all students equitably.

At all profiled school districts, contacts noted that their gifted programs do not reflect the diversity of their school districts. Administrators at profiled districts work to increase diversity by explicitly addressing bias in their identification process or by choosing culturally neutral identification methods. Both of these methods improve program diversity by ensuring that students from all backgrounds receive more equitable consideration by evaluators.

Administrators at District C explicitly recognize the potential biases in traditional testing methods. This district uses a point-based system of identification, with different student characteristics accounting for certain numbers of points (students need 12 points for domain-specific gifted identification). To increase representation for traditionally underserved students, administrators not only use multiple measures of giftedness (counteracting the biases of any single evaluative tool), but assign two additional points for students who receive free and reduced-price lunch, and two points for bilingual students. This supports the identification of students from underrepresented groups such as students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and English language learners.

For districts that do not use a point-based system, carefully chosen assessments and universal screenings can help mitigate bias. Contacts at District A note that they selected the **Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test** because of the assessment's culturally neutral design (i.e., it is unaffected by students' cultural background or English language abilities). Administrators at District F use universal screenings, which ensure that the program evaluates all students for giftedness. This can minimize the effects of implicit bias in teacher referrals—teachers may only refer students for testing who fit their preconceived notions of giftedness (i.e., white, English-speaking, upper-class).

Use Multiple Evaluation Tools to Further Reduce Bias in Identification

Using multiple measures (e.g., referrals, standardized test scores, **CogAT** scores, behavioral checklists such as the **Kingore Observations Inventory**) to evaluate students can help minimize the effect of potential biases present in any one measure and, in turn, can increase representation of students from traditionally underserved populations in gifted programming.[14] Similarly, contacts at District A note that using multiple evaluators (e.g., an identification committee) can also reduce the impact of implicit biases in the identification process.

Contacts at District D note that English language learners or low-income students may struggle when tests reference experiences or items (e.g., pie, snow, the beach) that they have not encountered themselves. Gifted administrators can include additional measures, such as referrals or checklists, to lessen the effects of biased testing questions.

When using multiple measures of assessment, administrators at District A present all evidence of giftedness to a school committee composed of teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors. This committee then evaluates the student holistically before determining potential placement in the district's gifted program. By including

14) EAB, "Gifted and Talented Programs," 2018, https://eab.com/research/district-leadership/resource/gifted-and-talented-programs/.

more evaluators in the identification process, the district further reduces the chance that implicit bias will unintentionally affect student placement.

4) Domain-Specific Student Programming

Student Programming

Offer In-Classroom Programming to Address the General Needs of Gifted Students

All profiled districts use differentiation within the classroom to serve gifted students on a basic level. The talent development model emphasizes that gifted students are not gifted in all areas but have individual skills and require the appropriate support in all areas of instruction which differentiation allows. If necessary, gifted programs can then supplement differentiation with more specialized pull-out programs that cater to specific domains.

At District F, when gifted coordinators are not working with their gifted center's pull-out program, they visit the schools and assist general education classroom teachers with providing differentiated instruction in general education classroom. This staffing support improves differentiation and ensures gifted students consistently receive in-class instruction tailored to their needs (e.g. a student gifted in reading can pursue more difficult literature, but still receive more remedial support in a math class where they struggle).

Use Short-Term Pull-Out Programs to Serve Students' Needs that Extend Beyond Differentiated Classroom Instruction

While differentiation can provide support to many gifted students, it cannot always provide the depth of domain-specific instruction that students need within a talent development model. The individualized nature of the talent development model makes it impossible to serve the needs of all students with a single one-size-fits-all program, but contacts note that limited staff resources can make it difficult to offer detailed instruction in every domain.

To provide scalable domain-specific instruction, District D and District G serve elementary school students identified as gifted with a rotation of short-term pull-out programs. Students only participate in programming aligned with their identified domains or areas of interest. For example, students gifted in science at District G participate in a NASA program where students create spinoff products based on NASA technology, while students gifted in writing speak to a local author and write short stories. By rotating smaller groups of students through distinct gifted programs, districts can serve a broad population of students with various types of giftedness over the course of the academic year without hiring many additional staff members. The short nature of these pull-out programs also minimizes the time that students miss in their regular classes. This short duration differs from most traditional pull-out programs, where students might miss general education classroom sessions each week throughout the entire year.

Domain-Specific Pull-Out Programs at Profiled Districts

District D

Identification

Administrators identify students as gifted through academic and cognitive testing. Gifted administrators then interview these students about their interests and ask them to pick topic areas for their pull-out seminar from a list of options.

Length

Seminars involve two full days of in-depth study on the topic of interest. Students can participate in three seminars per year.

Content

Seminars focus on topics such as fine arts, robotics, and theater. These seminars can involve field trips, guest speakers, or projects. The flexible content varies based on student interest. Gifted coordinators select between 12 and 20 students to participate in each seminar.

District H

Identification

Gifted administrators develop unique criteria for inclusion in each programming cycle (i.e., period of pull-out instruction) and then use a database of multiple identification methods to evaluate students for participation in that cycle.

Length

The district offers three to four cycles per academic year. Each cycle lasts between 6 and 12 days depending on the grade and the content of a cycle. Students spend about one hour per day in the pull-out program.

Content

Coordinators align the cycles to **National Gifted Standards** and center each cycle around a project. Each cycle serves a different domain. The specific content changes over time, based on student feedback and the interest of the gifted coordinators.

Leverage External Resources to Deliver Additional Enrichment to Students Identified as Gifted in Non-Academic Domains

Contacts at District A note that when only a few students receive identification in non-academic domains such as art or leadership, it can be difficult for the district to provide targeted services. While administrators at profiled districts work to increase the number of students identified in non-academic domains, they must still find ways to provide service to the current students with non-academic identification.

Administrators at District A, District B, District C, and District G supplement intra-school programming by directing students to existing clubs, electives, and community resources relevant to their area of giftedness. These include local music groups or theater classes, sports leagues, programs such as National History Day, and activities offered by local museums. By leveraging external resources, administrators can increase the number of domains served without increasing costs to the district substantially.

To provide more opportunities for gifted students to learn about their interests, administrators at District B invite local speakers to visit schools and discuss their professional lives. Such speakers have included professors and authors. These individuals describe their work to students, and answer questions about career paths and other field-specific opportunities.

At District C, middle school students work with their school's gifted coordinator to explore their areas of giftedness and career interests. For each student, the coordinator identifies external programs, such as engineering classes at the local university or a job shadowing opportunity, that align with a student's domain of

giftedness. Each gifted student can participate in several of these tailored activities over the course of the year.

See pages **98-102** of the report for full details.

A **report** for the Novia Scotia Department of Education on gifted and talented education includes a sample community resource survey and follow-up letter used to help identify community members or programs that could help serve gifted students.[15] Promising individuals might include local entrepreneurs, professors, and artists. Helpful organizations often include those designed to provide enrichment opportunities to unrepresented groups (e.g., Girls Who Code). Community partners can give talks, offer job shadowing opportunities, teach a class, or lead field trips to sites of interest, among other opportunities. As noted below, the survey offers volunteers space to provide additional suggestions for how they can support gifted programming in the district.

Sample Community Resources Survey from the Nova Scotia Department of Education

A Three-Part Resource

Maximize surveyed population of parents and community members

1 Introductory Letter

- Details the purpose of the survey
- Explains why the reader should want to participate in the survey and volunteer
- Provides contact information in case recipients have further questions

+

2 Survey Instrument

- Asks participants to check off areas that reflect "interests, skills, and talents that you would be willing to share with our students"
- Groups items into categories such as Science, Research, and Arts to make it easy for participants to see where they might have something to offer
- Provides space at the bottom for participants to add careers they are knowledgeable about or any additional skills they would like to share

Send only to initial survey respondents

3 Survey Follow-Up

- Asks for contact information
- Provides a list of options for involvement, which participants can use to indicate areas of potential interest
- Alerts participants that School Board Policy may require volunteers to undergo a background check
- Provides a space at the bottom for staff to write in the categories (e.g., Science, Visual Arts) where the participants identified skills, helping staff match volunteers to students' gifted domains

Evaluating Student Success

Provide Nuanced Feedback to Encourage Student Growth and Evaluate Student Success

While districts with many different models of gifted programming evaluate students and identify areas for improvement, evaluation is particularly important to the aims of a talent development model because of the model's emphasis on student growth. Gifted coordinators must provide the detailed feedback necessary to help students

15) Nova Scotia, Department of Education, and Student Services, *Gifted Education and Talent Development* (Halifax, N.S.: Dept. of Education, 2010), https://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/Gifted%20Education%20and%20Talent%20Development.pdf.

cultivate their domain-specific abilities and give them the opportunity to potentially achieve eminence in their chosen field as adults.[16] As with any type of student feedback, feedback within gifted programming should be shared with students and their parents so that parents can understand student growth and support further skill development outside of the classroom.[17] Parent support can be particularly crucial to the growth of students identified in non-academic domains, as enrichment may occur through after-school programs or community activities taking place outside of the school day.

At District G, gifted coordinators fill out one-page feedback forms for students at the end of each project-based cycle. While the cycles do not include formal grades or assessments, these feedback forms give teachers an opportunity to tell students and their parents what the students learned from the program and provide a way to measure how effectively the program served each student. When possible, the teachers also attach documentation of the student's project (e.g., copies of written work, photographs of visual art).

Elements of a Feedback Form from *District G*

Letter to Parents

Explain the project focus, desired outcomes, and skills used

Identify basis for assessment rubric

Dear Parents,

This cycle of gifted programming focused on financial literacy skills. The projects were designed to combine financial skills with mathematical concepts. First grade students were given the task of planning a birthday party. Through the party planning process, students further developed their understanding of estimating appropriately in a real-life situation. The students learned about a budget, income, expenses, and career of an event/party planner. Students brainstormed their ideas, researched a party at home and a party at a party place, estimated and found the real costs involved, and used a Google spreadsheet to create a budget.

Attached is the Student Assessment Rubric and your child's completed work. The indicators on the assessment form are based on the New Jersey 21st Century skills for Life & Careers.

Thank you for your support during this cycle!

Sincerely,

The Gifted Program Team

16) John F. Feldhusen, "Talent Development in Gifted Education," The Davidson Institute, accessed December 10, 2019, http://www.davidsongifted.org/search-database/entry/a10356.
17) Ibid.

Rubric

Comment directly to the student on what learning they demonstrated during the project

Comment: [*Student*], you did a good job calculating expenses. You collected, organized and evaluated data using Google Sheets to make good financial decisions for your client. Do not forget all parties have expenses even if they are at home.

Identify specific skills or competencies incorporated in the project

Detail ways students demonstrate the skill or competency

	Always Demonstrates	Usually Demonstrates	Occasionally Demonstrates	Needs Improvement
Collaboration, Teamwork & Leadership • Practice collaborative skills in groups and explain how these skills assist in completing tasks • Demonstrate cooperative skills when working in a group	**X**			
Creativity and Innovation • Participate in brainstorming sessions to seek information, ideas, and strategies that foster creative thinking • Demonstrate multiple strategies to solve a problem		He is encouraged to participate more and share his amazing ideas with the group.		

Include parent-facing explanations of assessment where applicable

Consider Longitudinal Assessment of Success to Evaluate the Long-Term Impact of Gifted Programming

Traditionally, administrators do not often track the impacts of gifted programs beyond a student's tenure in the program. However, the talent development model specifically focuses on long-term student outcomes.[18] A successful talent development program prepares students to achieve eminence in their field, should they desire to pursue it. To assess how effectively gifted programming helps students achieve these long-term goals, administrators need to collect long-term data from their alumni. While it is difficult to collect data from public school alumni (as they have less contact with their high schools than their colleges after graduation), one profiled district is moving closer to this ideal.

Contacts at District A are considering evaluating the success of their program by examining longitudinal outcomes for students involved in the program. Administrators are beginning to gather data on students involved in gifted programming, including tracking students' high school classes, college attendance, and post-secondary outcomes. They also want to look more qualitatively at students' social-emotional wellbeing as teenagers and young adults.

To begin this initiative, the district plans to survey a selection of students and families on their experiences within the gifted program. This survey will look at the impact of the program on parents and students and will ask students if they would participate in the gifted program again if given the opportunity. Contacts at District A hope that gathering this information can ensure the long-term efficacy of their program and inform future programmatic improvements.

Consider Borrowing Strategies from Higher Education Advancement Teams to Track Gifted Program Alumni Outcomes

Administrators may also be able to look to the work of advancement teams at higher education institutions to help develop methods of tracking student outcomes beyond high school. EAB's research in this area recommends starting any efforts at tracking alumni by obtaining accurate contact information while they are still students, as detailed in our study **Creating a Culture of Giving Among Current Students**. Administrators can then use this contact information to reach out students and track long-term student outcomes. Like higher education advancement shops, district leaders can also take advantage of alumni-populated events like football games and reunions to collect data from alumni of the gifted program using surveys or questionnaires.

18) Paula Olszewski-Kubilius and Dana Thomson, "Talent Development as a Framework for Gifted Education," *Gifted Child Today* 38, no. 1 (January 20, 2015): 54-55, https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217514556531.

5) Stakeholder Engagement

Communicating with Educators

While no profiled district has fully implemented a talent development model, contacts explained how they effectively implemented pieces of the model, or how they gained buy-in from stakeholders for other related changes made to their gifted programs. Contacts at profiled districts note that they plan to extend the use of these practices as they continue to move toward adoption of a complete talent development model.

Involve Stakeholders Early in the Model Implementation Process to Ensure Buy-In

To effectively change the model of gifted programing, district leaders need the cooperation of many stakeholders. Contacts at District F note that without buy-in from all stakeholders, even well-designed changes rarely achieve in the desired impact. A lack of buy-in generally causes stakeholders to half-heartedly implement new procedures and fail to adequately address potential issues in a new model.

Contacts at District F state that to ensure the successful implementation of a talent development model, districts should involve all stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, gifted coordinators, administrators) in the process from the beginning. This involvement allows stakeholders to understand the rationale for changes, provide input into the process, and feel ownership over the final results. All of these factors increase buy-in and thus the chance of a successful implementation.

To involve stakeholders in the shift toward a model more closely aligned with the talent development model, the director of the gifted program at District F created a committee comprised of gifted teachers, classroom teachers, building administrators, and counselors. As the district seeks to begin serving students in more domains, committee members can provide regular input and feedback to adjust the model to align with the needs of each key stakeholder group.

Administrators hope that providing this structured avenue for input will increase staff support for the more talent development-related model and will, in turn, ease the transition toward this new structure for gifted education. Contacts note that this committee will also improve inter-departmental communication and help ensure that all teachers and administrators fully understand their role in the new program.

Support Classroom Teachers' Role in Gifted Identification to Increase the Efficacy of the Identification Process

Contacts at multiple profiled districts emphasized the importance of effectively communicating with classroom teachers about the gifted program. They note that classroom teachers comprise a key part of identification efforts, as they have the most opportunity to observe student growth and identify students that routine screenings may have missed.

Contacts at District G mention that while classroom teachers often understand the traditional conceptions of giftedness, they need additional training and support to recognize and engage with students in unique domains of giftedness. Contacts at District F state that classroom teachers may also require additional support to properly serve gifted students with in-class differentiation. Districts should offer trainings and provide resources to support classroom teachers and fully engage them in the implementation of the talent development model.

To communicate with teachers about the gifted program, the director of the gifted program at District F conducts professional development sessions with teachers. Every semester, the director offers schools presentations on gifted program identification, the services offered through the program, and how teachers can support these efforts in the classroom. Though this training is not mandatory, contacts report that most schools provide these presentations to teachers.

Rather than provide specific trainings, administrators at District G are in the process of creating Gifted Characteristic Sheets specific to each grade level. These sheets, created through collaboration between gifted teachers and classroom teachers, spell out what signs of giftedness students might display at each grade level. While the sheets currently focus on assessment scores, administrators could also incorporate behavioral information into this type of resource. Within a talent development model, this resource should also include additional information related to domains other than academic or intellectual giftedness. Training teachers to be aware of artistic talent or leadership ability may increase identification in these non-academic domains.

Form Professional Learning Communities or Consortia to Help Gifted Coordinators Share Ideas and Improve Skills

Changes in gifted programming require that gifted coordinators fully understand the nuances of the new model and the value of the proposed changes. When programming switches from a more established model to a more theoretical model of gifted education (i.e., moving toward the talent development model), time for professional development becomes particularly important, as coordinators may not be very familiar with the structure of the new model. In addition to trainings and conferences, three profiled districts provide time for gifted coordinators to share implementation strategies and solve common problems collaboratively.

At District D, the gifted coordinators formed a gifted education-specific Professional Learning Community (PLC). This dedicated professional development group composed of teachers affiliated with the gifted program meets regularly and provides a dedicated time for gifted coordinators to work together on common problems. The director of the gifted program also uses the PLC as a time to discuss new developments in gifted education and to learn new instructional skills. As the district moves closer to a talent development model, the consistent communication facilitated by the PLC can ensure that the model's implementation remains standardized and coordinated across the district.

To gain a broader perspective on gifted programming, gifted coordinators at District C work with a state-wide consortium of gifted educators, while coordinators at District G participate in a smaller, county-wide consortium. Both consortia hold monthly meetings where coordinators address broad issues facing all gifted programs, such as lack of diversity. As districts move closer to a talent development model, these consortia can help teachers highlight proven strategies for gifted student identification or service delivery.

The consortium coordinators at District G participate in also maintains a group email chain. There, members can pose questions to one another and source help from their peers in between regular meetings.

Communicating with Parents

Use Parent Councils to Disseminate Information About the Gifted Program and Solicit Feedback

Contacts at District G note that communicating changes to gifted programs to parents can often present challenges as every parent wants their child to receive additional educational supports. Parents may be especially inclined to raise issues with the talent development model because, like teachers, they probably lack extensive familiarity with this emerging program structure. To improve communication with parents and ensure that they feel they have input into changes that impact their children's education, administrators at District B, District C, and District G all operate

parent committees for their gifted programs, while District A hopes to add parent members to their advisory committee next year.

At these profiled districts, administrators or parents nominate individuals to serve on these committees. To make the committee representative of all parents within the district, the director of gifted education at District C assesses the diversity of the committee as a whole and nominates additional representatives as needed. This ensures that the committee includes diverse voices, particularly from historically underrepresented groups (i.e., African American parents, parents of lower socioeconomic status, parents with disabilities or whose children have disabilities).

Administrators meet with these councils regularly to discuss the development of the program, ask for input, and communicate proposed changes. Contacts at District B note that speaking with parents helped them to see deficits in their current program. After talking with parents about current gifted programming, administrators created additional social-emotional programming (i.e., interventions to combat perfectionism and teach students how to handle disappointment and failure in productive ways). This responsiveness to parent concerns increases buy-in for the gifted program, and can help facilitate the introduction of new programing, such as the talent development model.

6) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member district approached the Forum with the following questions:

- What is the talent development model of gifted education and how does it differ from other models designed to serve high-performing students?
- What do educators see as the main effects of moving to this model of gifted education?
- How do contact districts identify high-aptitude students within a talent development model?
- How did contact districts decide which domains to include in their model of gifted education?
- How do contact districts mitigate bias in the gifted identification process?
- What challenges do contact districts encounter with their current student identification process and how did they navigate these challenges?
- How do contact districts structure gifted services for students?
- How do contact districts differentiate services between different domains of talent?
- If applicable, how did contact districts implement the shift from a traditional gifted programming model to a talent development model?
- What professional development do teachers and gifted specialists receive as part of the talent development model?
- How do contact districts assess the success of their talent development program?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

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Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed directors of gifted programs at public school districts which stated they identify students considering different domains, or areas, of giftedness.

A Guide to Districts Profiled in this Brief

District	Location	Number of Students
District A	Midwest	2,500
District B	Midwest	24,000
District C	South	16,000
District D	Midwest	12,000
District E	Mid-Atlantic	7,500
District F	Mountain West	21,000
District G	Mid-Atlantic	9,000