



The Whole Gifted Child Task Force

Report to the NAGC Board of Directors

March 2018

National Association for Gifted Children

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Background

The National Association for Gifted Children's Whole Gifted Child (WGC) Task Force was the Presidential initiative of Dr. George Betts (NAGC President 2015-2017). The Task Force was comprised of 22 professionals with wide-ranging and diverse experiences who work in K-12 programs, higher education, research centers, and in the social sciences. The WGC Task Force reflects a collective of expertise related to gifted children, gifted education, counseling the gifted, and talent development. NAGC President George Betts charged the Task Force "to present knowledge and research about the diversity of gifted children, their needs, development, and the importance of providing alternatives for their ongoing growth in school, home, and community."

Introduction and Scope of Work

The WGC Task Force set out to identify what we currently know about the multi-dimensional nature of gifted individuals, consider how what we know might affect gifted individuals' experiences, and begin to conceive of ways we might use our combined understanding to bring practical and proactive recommendations to foster the development of emotional health, engagement, achievement, relationships, and meaning in life.

The driving principle of the Whole Gifted Child Task Force was to build on strengths and areas of consensus within the field of gifted education to provide actionable recommendations

for serving the needs of gifted children. Best practices for serving gifted and talented students are clearly defined by NAGC in the Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards and guidance for identification is provided through a series of NAGC Position Papers. The WGC Task Force sees these existing resources as important but incomplete. Therefore, the Whole Gifted Child Task Force set out to explore giftedness with an eye toward valuing the perspectives of all constituencies within the organization including parents, consultants, educators, counselors, academics, and advocates.

Understanding that supporting all aspects of a gifted child's development will enable him or her to bring their talents to bare on solving the most pressing problems that humanity faces, the WGC Task Force believes the following broad recommendations should inform identification practices, programs, and services for gifted students.

- Recognize that giftedness in children exists as part of the human experience and can be demonstrated in a variety of contexts.
- Recognize the compatibility of developing healthy coping strategies, well-being, and a strong sense of self alongside talent areas.
- Recognize that gifted children have the right to an identity beyond their talent area.
- Provide universal screening with valid and reliable measures of verbal and nonverbal reasoning. These screeners should be administered to all students as a first step in the identification process.
- In addition to universal screeners, utilize identification procedures that provide a holistic profile.

- Provide programs and services that match specific areas of gifts and needs in a manner that are thoughtfully planned in advance and address a variety of factors, including non-cognitive and co-cognitive factors that affect the development of a gifted child.
- Provide programs and services that are unique relative to those provided by curricular approaches in regular classroom settings.
- Develop opportunities, time, and resources for personalized learning to support the deep exploration of individual interests, passions, and ideas.
- Ensure the focus of programs and services is on developing strengths rather than solely addressing deficits.

These core beliefs about the support and services gifted children need to achieve a truly satisfying life, one that allows them to fulfill their potential, were the foundation for the work of the task force. These beliefs helped to inform the trajectory of the work conducted by the task force and informed the products of that work. In an effort to advance understanding about giftedness and serving the whole gifted child the task force addressed three primary outcomes:

1. The Total Child—an effort to consider the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains for development while also recognizing that development occurs within myriad contexts, many of which are outside the school setting.
2. Synthesis—a thorough review of existing definitions of giftedness used by NAGC and other policy-making entities with an analysis of the ways language within those definitions reflects foundational knowledge about giftedness.
3. Crowdsourcing—a collection of knowledge and perceptions from multiple stakeholder groups for understanding the concept of the whole gifted child.

Part One: The Total Child

Understand Me: Giftedness in Context

Complex interactions of environment, identity group, and development define the experiences of all children. There are a variety of settings within which all children experience daily life. School and home are common among these settings, but there also exist competitive environments, collaborative environments, within peer group settings, and time alone to name a few. All children go through similar developmental stages as well, and have important areas of development to contend with such as emotional, social, cognitive, and physical. Moreover, a child develops self-awareness and defines identity through a variety of communal and relational interactions (e.g. cultural, geographic, ethnic, racial, linguistic, etc.). These multi-dimensional interactions make up experience. Meaning is made of these experiences through an individual's unique perceptual lens. The meaning making occurs within the child and because the experience is so personal and influenced by values and beliefs, to date, the human experience has not been completely defined, modeled, or understood.

Being gifted creates an additional layer of complexity for this human experience. Gifted children perceive the world differently than their average peers. Whether it is having a deep intellectual understanding of circumstances without the requisite experience to effectively process emotional responses to the circumstances (uneven development), awareness that those around them do not have the same complexity or depth of comprehension on a given topic or in a given setting (peer relationship), or the capacity to visualize the ideal without the capacity to actualize it (perfectionism), the lens through which gifted children experience the world is fundamentally different than the vast majority of their peers.

What we currently know about the experience of being gifted does not adequately inform professionals and parents to optimize the development of young people across the wide spectrum of abilities and circumstances embraced by this population. While research to date has not produced extensively generalizable results, it has focused on the child providing unique insights for improving services and advancing understanding about what a child might benefit from given his or her unique circumstances.

Following is a summarized review of what is known about particular areas of concern for gifted populations. This review is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather illustrates areas of particular importance when considering the nature of giftedness as an individual human experience. Task force members focused their reviews within the unique lens of their own area of expertise. The reviews provided by task force members were designed to:

1. Identify an important topic for consideration and provide a brief evidence-based “what is known” about the topic
2. Describe how the topic informs the whole gifted child
3. Include a short bibliography of the major research/thought leaders on the topic (see References)

Participating Task Force members were urged to keep future practice in mind as they conducted their reviews of the extant research.

Teach Me: Developing Psychosocial Competencies

Serving the whole gifted child requires more than intensive and challenging academic or talent development experiences. Of paramount importance is the need to develop the psychosocial competencies of a child alongside the processes that support talent development. Unfortunately, programs for gifted students often focus on developing the talents of a gifted

child with no or little explicit attention to developing psychosocial competencies. When psychosocial competencies are included in programming for gifted students, they often narrowly focus on competencies like persistence, strategic risk-taking, and building self-confidence, that support the development of the talent, not necessarily the child.

There is a large body of literature about the unique psychological issues associated with high ability and the attitudes, competencies and beliefs necessary to optimize wellbeing and develop talent. We know that such competencies can be systematically strengthened through targeted interventions. Developing a well-integrated and personalized program of affective support can seem a daunting task, but the research literature points to a few selected areas for initial focus and ongoing development. Key domains for intervention and support include self-understanding, interpersonal effectiveness, self-management, and decision making, in addition to specific psychosocial skills necessary for talent development. Without nurturing and supporting optimal well-being alongside talent development, gifted children may miss the opportunity to develop their capacity to understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Empirical studies from four different fields inform the development of affective curriculum for gifted students. These four fields include a) research on the social and emotional development of gifted children, b) research on social emotional learning (SEL), c) positive psychology research focusing on children's wellbeing and resilience, and d) studies of talent development and expertise.

Studies of gifted children's social and emotional development tell us that although gifted children have the same social and emotional needs as other children, they also experience several unique psychological issues for which they need intervention and support. Overall, they

demonstrate good adjustment, but may require assistance to help them cope with peer relationships, uneven development, or perfectionism. Gifted children learning in settings where they face a great deal of challenge, a lot of competition, or too little challenge may struggle with negative social self-concepts. Because gifted children tend to be more similar socially and emotionally to older children than to same age peers, academic acceleration of some kind can often provide a better social and intellectual match with peers.

Well-being. Empirical studies (e.g. Neihart, 1999) suggest that adults are often unaware of gifted students' psychological distress because gifted students tend to achieve even when they are struggling psychologically. Common sources of stress include challenging coursework, competition, high stakes assessments, developmental transitions, and college admissions processes. In addition, over commitment arising from their multiple talents and interests can also be a source of stress. Research on perfectionism in gifted children estimates that between 20-30% of gifted students experience anxiety arising from self-critical, evaluative concerns. Studies of twice exceptional children's adjustment indicate that these children often have more emotional difficulties in school due to frustrations arising from extreme differences in their development. Especially during adolescence, twice exceptional children may often feel frustrated, anxious, angry or depressed. Similarly, those children with the most superior abilities may be challenged with negative social self-esteem, loneliness and isolation, despite their exceptional talent, due to the great dissimilarity between their interests and abilities and those of their age peers. This struggle is especially pronounced in settings where services are not available or provided, which is likely if this struggle is perceived as a lack of interest or motivation or underdeveloped psychosocial skills.

Talent development. Expertise research and talent development studies point to specific psychosocial competencies associated with high performance and with wellbeing in the face of competition and challenges. The competencies include the ability to manage anxiety and stress, to regulate energy, emotion and motivation, to maintain optimistic mindsets even in the face of setbacks or failure, and to set actionable goals with frequent feedback, among others. Overall, the research on talent development and expertise points to three broad findings. First, no one realizes their potential without these psychosocial competencies. Second, it is possible to teach these skills and to systematically strengthen them through targeted supports and experiences. Third and most importantly, the value of these psychosocial skills varies across developmental stages, across cultures and by domain of talent. This research indicates that affective curriculum for gifted children should be explicitly developmental in its approach and provide a scope and sequence of instruction, intervention and supports that build these skills.

Developing the psychosocial competencies of a child to ensure that they are whole, that they achieve a state of wellbeing, does not exclude the development of talent. To the contrary, developing one's talent can be a highly meaningful experience that engenders a satisfying life experience, but if one does not develop a state of wellbeing by developing psychosocial competencies they will never be able to *enjoy* their achievements, or worse, may never develop their talents at all.

See Me: Identifying Underrepresented Populations

Giftedness crosses all cultures, races, and socio-economic groups yet the students we serve in gifted programs rarely proportionally reflect this scenario. Obstacles toward providing equitable services include social and political concerns that may not further our goals of serving all children who need gifted services.

Ethnicity and race. Inequitable or unjust resources and opportunities contribute to and promote educational disparities, and create a vicious cycle in which Black students (and other underrepresented populations) are denied access to school programs that are essential to reaching their academic, intellectual, socio-cultural, and fiscal potential and that can help close achievement gaps. Peters and Engerrand claim, “The current level of economic, racial, and ethnic inequality [in gifted education programs] is a problem not only for political and advocacy reasons but also because students from these subgroups represent the fastest growing segments of the K-12 population, and many of their talents are going overlooked and underdeveloped” (2016).

Twice exceptional learners. Students who are otherwise capable of gifted behaviors but who have concomitant disabilities are at special risk of educational and life challenges because their disabilities can mask their superior abilities and vice-versa: giftedness camouflaging disabilities. These hidden disabilities may prevent students with advanced cognitive abilities from being recognized as having a talent to be developed and achieving their potential. Furthermore, the array of mixed messages twice-exceptional students likely receive (e.g., “You have challenges that demand attention, time, and work that may not allow equivalent attention, time, and work on your areas of interest and strength.”) may contribute to the foundation for developing psychosocial problems and increase the likelihood for them to become involved in peer victimization either as the perpetrators or as the victims.

Many, though not all, twice-exceptional youths enjoy reasonably happy, contented lives outside of the school setting where emphasis on the disabling challenges tends to dominate. Unfortunately, some of the brightest, most creative, most independent thinking children are incorrectly diagnosed as having behavioral, emotional, or mental disorders, and sadly,

characteristics and behaviors better explained by giftedness are wrongly attributed to pathology and disorder. Even if they are identified, twice-exceptional students seldom receive services appropriate for both their giftedness and their disabilities. If they do receive services, the stress imposed by competitive learning environments on twice-exceptional students is not worth the social-emotional toll required for them to perform acceptably. As a byproduct of misidentification and insufficient or inappropriate educational accommodations, the confluence of giftedness and disabilities too frequently yields psychosocial problems.

Poverty. The actual number of gifted students from poor families is difficult to determine due to identification malpractice and the dearth of gifted programs in the schools in which many of these students attend, but a conservative estimate would suggest that of the approximately 15.5 million students who live in poverty, 775,000 should be identified and served if only 5% of these students were recognized. Embarrassingly, in actual practice less than half of these students are likely identified (Callahan, Moon, & Oh, 2014).

Maslow's basic physiological and safety needs can be greatly impacted by poverty. Poverty can lead to food and clean water insecurity, lack of affordable and safe housing, inability to pay utilities, etc. These factors lead to and exacerbate poor health. Many poor children (17%; Wight, Chau & Aratani, 2010) lack health insurance, which leads to inconsistent health care, lack of immunization, and other preventative care. They may also "continue unhealthy intergenerational patterns of early pregnancy, drug abuse including smoking and alcohol, and mental health problems" (VanTassel-Baska, 2007, p. 1). Moreover, it is estimated that 21% of children living in poverty suffer from mental health issues (Wight, et al., 2010).

Research points to the critical impact society and "opportunity to learn" (OTL) have on students' cognitive development, both of which contribute to underrepresentation of various

groups of gifted students (Peters & Engerrand, 2016). Gifted children of poverty often come from homes lacking books, puzzles, internet, or other stimulating, literacy-rich opportunities for learning. Likewise, they have less access to stimulating early learning programs. “Severity, duration, and timing of poverty are critical variables in determining effects on cognition, with extreme poverty throughout the first four years of life significantly depressing IQ scores” (Kitano, 2007, p. 31).

The child, not the talent. Focusing strictly on academic achievement or talent development can draw our attention away from considering the fully encompassing learning needs of the whole child. Children are influenced by communal relationships and external expectations that are directly stated or perceived by significant people in their life. A sense of self-awareness is nurtured through positive and/or negative influences and impacts a child’s self-esteem and self-worth throughout his or her adult life. Enfranchising the whole gifted child requires that we look beyond a child’s performance and instead look at the unique characteristics that enable him or her to leverage efforts toward achieving well-being, a state of being which may, or may not, be centered around the talent.

When gifted children feel understood, accepted and appreciated for who they are, not solely for what they can do at the time, children are more likely to take academic risks, accept academic challenges and feel confident with their efforts. Building self-esteem within gifted children opens endless opportunities, which is critically important for children who come from populations that are typically underrepresented in gifted education and talent development programs. Doing so embraces, enfranchises and empowers gifted students from all populations.

Challenge Me: Addressing Underachievement

Underachievement is the discrepancy between potential and actual performance. This discrepancy persists over time and is generally considered not to be a result of a learning disability. Underachievement is typically considered to be a phenomenon that occurs within the school setting; however, underachievement can be demonstrated in any domain, in a variety of environmental contexts, and among multiple relational groupings.

In a school setting, gifted children may underachieve while still meeting grade-level standards. Unfortunately, simply meeting grade-level standards may mask their true potential. In the school setting, underachievement may manifest as disengagement, disruptive, or even combative behavior. Generally, it is believed that the interaction of individual factors (e.g., poor motivation) and environmental factors (e.g., lack of academic challenge) influence students' engagement and achievement in school. While research in the field is moving toward the development of interventions that address the underlying causes of underachievement, students who lack interest or motivation or have underdeveloped psychosocial skills may be considered a poor fit for talent development programs. In these cases, a gifted child's opportunity to develop his or her talent may be lost. Gifted students who underachieve are most likely capable of high levels of achievement, but for myriad reasons, academically perform at a level that is not commensurate with their ability. Underachieving gifted students may still meet grade-level standards, but fail to be recognized for the purposes of talent development or inclusion in gifted programs.

The factors that contribute to underachievement are generally known, however the focus of attention for services needs to be on helping educators and parents meet the individual needs of underachieving children. Seeing the child as an individual will allow us to look beyond

academics and help us to more fully understand the various reasons why a child is disengaging from school.

Support Me: Empowering Parents

Parental influence can have positive and negative impacts on a child's educational success and affective development. Different parenting styles impact a child's creativity, various types of perfectionism, and academic achievement. Parental involvement can also have a positive impact on students' attitudes toward school. Warm, responsive parenting coupled with setting boundaries and reasonable expectations on children tends to result in better outcomes than unresponsive parenting and unreasonable expectations.

There is limited empirical research on the experiences of parents of gifted learners. Most research on parenting the gifted focuses on educational support and outcomes rather than affective outcomes. Some of the literature on gifted learners indicates they may be at a greater risk of developing behavioral or emotional problems due to such factors as asynchronous development, extremely high or unrealistic expectations of parents and teachers, lack of access to cognitive peers, heightened sensitivities and intensities, nonconformity, and a mismatch between their abilities and educational environment. These issues may pose additional demands and stress not only on the gifted learner, but on the parents or caregivers as well. Parents of gifted children face unique challenges and often feel unsupported and may feel a heavy burden of responsibility compared to parents of non-gifted learners.

Parenting practices can influence the gifted child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development through nurturing and responsive behavior. Parents are the first teachers and can help foster the development of talents in their children. Parents tend to be good at

identifying their child's gifted behaviors and are reasonably accurate in their evaluation of their child's ability. As a result, not only do they need support, but they also need a voice at the table.

Part Two: Whole Gifted Child Concept Synthesis

Gathering Data

To facilitate the task of reviewing existing definitions of giftedness used by NAGC and other policy-making entities, the Delphi method was utilized to investigate current definitions and conceptions about giftedness. In the first round of exploration, theories by eminent scholars were reviewed and national and state definitions were collected (Appendix A). Review of national and state definitions demonstrated that the theoretical conceptions by eminent scholars were embedded within those definitions. Therefore, the WGC Synthesis Group chose to focus on existing definitions that often drive policy-making, identification practices, and programming services. Additionally, WGC Task Force members crafted language that defined the “whole gifted child” by utilizing their particular lens of qualified expertise. The WGC Task Force member definitions ($N = 11$), along with the federal definition ($N = 1$) and state definitions of gifted children/students ($N = 47$), were analyzed to identify specific language used to describe giftedness and gifted individuals.

As a result of analysis, three categories emerged: (a) concepts of gifted and talented children, (b) characteristics of gifted and talented children, and (c) program needs or required services for gifted and talented children. The language from the definitions was organized by category into a 62-item questionnaire.

In the second round of exploring an understanding of giftedness, a subcommittee of the WGC Task Force was asked to consider the extent to which each questionnaire item (language from the definitions) contributed to foundational concepts about gifted and talented children. The subcommittee was comprised of the 11 individuals who contributed to the WGC definitions. Eight individuals worked in institutions of higher education, four educators represented K-12 programs, and one professional practiced in the field of social sciences.

Each questionnaire item utilized a 5-point Likert scale where respondents specified a level of agreement. The choices were 5: = *Strongly Agree*, 4 = *Agree*, 3 = *Neutral*, 2 = *Disagree*, and 1 = *Strongly Disagree*. Each item allowed participants to comment. The questionnaire was emailed to the WGC Subcommittee electronically, and responses were anonymous. All 11 individuals responded.

The resulting responses for each questionnaire item and comments were collected, organized into a spreadsheet, and then redistributed electronically to the respondents. Members were given the opportunity to modify their responses in light of knowing how the group responded. In this third round of building an understanding of current ideas about giftedness, no respondent made changes to his/her original responses.

This We Agree

The questionnaire identified several areas of agreement. From the language found in the WGC Task Force definitions and state definitions of giftedness, all respondents ($N = 11$) strongly agreed (a) gifts and talents exist across genders and across all identity groups, (b) gifts and talents exist in non-English speakers and in English Language Learners, (c) gifted and talented children require services to reach their potential and develop their ability, (d) gifted and talented

children require meaningful learning experiences, and (e) gifted and talented children require services to reach their potential.

The respondents also agreed the following language contributes to the foundational concepts of gifted and talented children:

- Demonstrates high potential and has the potential for high (exceptional or outstanding) levels of performance, ability or capability,
- Demonstrates exceptional intellect/intelligence,
- Exists across all cultures, in all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor,
- Is influenced by environment (i.e. learning, classroom, home, etc.) and by social issues,
- Can be twice exceptional or have multiple exceptionalities,
- Requires challenging or rigorous learning experiences that are healthy and engaging,
- Requires social and emotional support, creative and critical thinking experiences, and opportunities to explore interests or areas of passion, and
- Requires personalized learning experiences.

A low scoring questionnaire item indicated respondents “agreed” to disagree with language associated with conceptualizing giftedness in children. Specifically, respondents agreed that an individual’s giftedness or talent is *not* (necessarily) determined by percentile rank. Results indicated that exceptional psychomotor ability was *not* strongly connected to understanding a child’s giftedness. Comments associated with this item suggested the term “psychomotor” was too broad or applied to some children but not all. Respondents also recognized that “demonstrates advanced awareness of consistency” (a concept associated with sense of fairness) as *not* particularly relevant to a foundational understanding of gifted and talented children.

Differing Viewpoints

Questionnaire results revealed that several items registered a full range of agree/disagree responses regarding the defining language used to understand concepts associated with giftedness. Because the terms “students (years 4-21; school-age)” and “children” were found in both state and WGC Task Force definitions, respondents were asked to identify the preferable term when defining giftedness in youth. Interestingly, the responses indicated the full range of agreement, disagreement, and neutrality toward each term. An associated comment indicated a preference for the word “individual.” Responses also varied widely regarding the language “demonstrates talent; is talented.” The same variance of agreement was reflected in responses to the concept “academically gifted/talented.” The range of agree/disagree responses indicated an inconsistent association by the respondents of the terms “talent” and “high academic ability” to foundational understandings of giftedness in children.

Summation

The participating gifted education experts agreed more than disagreed with the language used to understand giftedness. According to results, much of the conceptual language used to define giftedness, establish policy, assist with identification, and guide services was still relevant and contributed to understanding the complex nature of advanced children. The low scores associated with certain questionnaire items, however, indicated some conceptual language may no longer be strongly associated with giftedness in today’s children.

Because specific language from existing and emerging definitions of giftedness was utilized in the investigation, the areas of agreement and areas of varied agreement were noteworthy. Concepts about giftedness guide political and financial support and educational practice. They also provide the foundation for programs, opportunities, and services for advanced learners. Identifying and exploring the areas of agreement and areas of discord

between conceptual language and the subsequent operationalization of these concepts will greatly assist policy makers and educators who serve gifted and talented children. In order for the field of gifted education to remain inclusive and relevant, it is critical that language used to express conceptual understanding of giftedness accurately reflect the needs of today's whole gifted child.

Part 3: Crowdsourcing the Whole Gifted Child Concept

Inclusive Consideration

The purpose of the Whole Gifted Child Crowdsourcing Survey was to investigate perceptions about the concept of the “whole gifted child” among gifted education supporters. It was not the purpose of the WGC Crowdsourcing Survey to create or propose a new definition or conception of giftedness.

All too often, the concept of considering the notion of “giftedness” is an intellectual exercise among academics or a process undertaken to define the term for the purposes of providing specialized services within school settings. Many of these approaches do not consider the perspectives of parents or the children as they seek to define giftedness. Rather than remaining insular, the WGC Task Force felt that it would be beneficial to gain input from the widest possible audience with regard to the meaning of the term “whole gifted child”. Supporters of gifted children and gifted education were surveyed using a “crowdsourcing” strategy. Crowdsourcing is the practice of obtaining information by soliciting contributions from a large group of people especially from the online community rather than from a smaller more select group of individuals.

A survey was disseminated using a variety of means including social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook as well as the NAGC website and various email lists. More traditional paper and pencil surveys were also distributed at various local and state gifted conferences. Participants were encouraged to share the survey via word of mouth.

The survey contained two items:

1. What is your primary role in relation to gifted and talented children?
2. What does it mean to be a “whole gifted child”?

Results

There were a total of 511 responses. The WGC Crowdsourcing Team reviewed the responses to item 1, “What is your primary role in relation to gifted and talented children?” After discussion, it was determined that the responses for the first question could be best categorized into three groups. Group 1 was comprised of individuals whose primary role was that of teacher. This group also included a number of gifted coordinators at the school and district level. Group 2 were individuals who are a parent of a gifted child. It should be noted that many of the responses in the parent group also indicated that they were teachers or educators who worked with the gifted, however, the role of parent was listed first. Group 3 was categorized as Other Professionals. This group included primarily university faculty, but it also included counselors, consultants, and administrators. Table 1 displays the number and percentage of each of the groups.

Table 1.

Summary of group categories

| Group | Group ID | Number | Percentage |
|-------|----------|--------|------------|
|-------|----------|--------|------------|

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------|------------|-------------|
| Teacher/Coordinator | Group 1 | 128 | 25% |
| Parent | Group 2 | 310 | 61% |
| Other Professional | Group 3 | 73 | 14% |
| Total | | 511 | 100% |

The responses to the second question, “What does it mean to be a “whole gifted child”?”, were reviewed by members of the WGC Crowdsourcing Team individually to identify common themes for the purposes of categorizing responses. Categories identified by individuals were then discussed as a group and compared for similarities and differences. There was extensive overlap between the categories identified by the individuals and one category structure was identified for best fit. The finalized categories and definitions are available in Table 2.

Table 2.

Survey response categories

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | DEFINITION |
|------|---|--|
| 1 | Multipotentiality | Response indicates child exhibits strong abilities (including cognitive, social-emotional, and physical functioning) across multiple disciplines. Focus is on demonstrated or exhibited academic behaviors. May be well-rounded. |
| 2 | Multidimensional Considerations / Development | Response refers to the consideration of child's abilities/needs/development across multiple areas (including cognitive, academic, social, emotional, spiritual, executive function, etc.). Focus is on potential and areas beyond academics. |
| 3 | Self-Awareness / Intrapersonal Cognizance / Unique Affective Capabilities | Response indicates that child has unique affective capabilities and/or unique abilities in the way that they perceive learning and living, including a heightened sensitivity to develop their potential in cognitive, emotional, social and physical domains. |
| 4 | Well Being | Response mentions the mental, physical, and/or spiritual well-being of the child. May be demonstrated by happiness. |
| 5 | Identity | Response refers to who the child is. The whole gifted child is valued as an individual or unitary being beyond their gifted |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| | | capabilities. |
| 6 | Affective Needs | Response emphasizes the recognition, development, and education of the affective needs of the child. |
| 7 | Opposed to Term | Response includes a negative connotation and/or indicates an opposition to, or rejection of, the concept of the "whole gifted child" |
| 8 | Can Not Discern | Response suggests that the concept of "whole gifted child" is indistinguishable from that of a "whole child" |
| 9 | Lack of Understanding | Response indicates confusion about, or misunderstanding of, the question or term |
| 99 | Not Classified | Response cannot be categorized into any of the specified codes |

All responses to the survey were reexamined across the three groups (teacher/coordinator, parent, other professional) and compared with the newly established categories. Percentages were calculated for each of the three groups by category and then all of the responses by each category. Table 3 displays the number of responses for each of the categories in each of the group as well as the total number of responses.

Table 3.

Summary of the number and percentage of responses for each category by group and total

| Category | Group 1 | | Group 2 | | Group 3 | | Total | |
|---|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Multipotentiality | 24 | 18.75 | 83 | 26.77 | 6 | 8.22 | 113 | 22.11 |
| Multidimensional Considerations / Development | 33 | 25.78 | 43 | 13.87 | 19 | 26.03 | 95 | 18.59 |
| Self-Awareness / Intrapersonal Cognizence / Unique Affective Capabilities | 25 | 19.53 | 58 | 18.71 | 9 | 12.33 | 92 | 18 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|-------|----|------|---|-------|----|-------|
| Well Being | 2 | 1.56 | 11 | 3.55 | 5 | 6.85 | 18 | 3.52 |
| Identity | 4 | 3.13 | 16 | 5.16 | 3 | 4.11 | 23 | 4.5 |
| Affective Needs | 27 | 21.09 | 28 | 9.03 | 7 | 9.59 | 62 | 12.13 |
| Opposed to Term | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0.97 | 8 | 10.96 | 11 | 2.15 |
| Cannot Discern | 2 | 1.56 | 7 | 2.26 | 5 | 6.85 | 14 | 2.74 |
| Lack of Understanding | 7 | 5.47 | 53 | 17.1 | 6 | 8.22 | 66 | 12.92 |
| Not Classified | 4 | 3.13 | 8 | 2.58 | 5 | 6.85 | 17 | 3.33 |

Discussion

Results indicated differences across groups. The largest percentage (26.77%) of parent responses were coded in the multipotentiality category. This percentage was much higher than the teacher responses (18.75%) and the other professional responses (8.22%). The multipotentiality category focuses more on demonstrated academic abilities in multiple disciplines. Consequently, the multidimensional considerations / development category was much lower for parents (13.87% vs. 26.77%), which focuses more on potential across multiple domains and extends beyond academics.

As a group, teachers had a much higher percentage (21.09%) of responses in the affective needs category than either the parent responses (9.03%) or the other professional responses (9.59%). The parent responses had a surprisingly high percentage (17.1%) of responses that were coded as “lack of understanding”. There were numerous parent responses that stated, “I don’t know.” The other groups responded with a lack of understanding at much lower rates (teacher = 5.47% and other professional = 8.22%). This seems to indicate that there exists an understanding about the term “whole gifted child” among professionals, but that parents may benefit from

additional information or content knowledge. Contrarily, it may also indicate that parents do not conceive of determinant aspects of the child (e.g. environmental influences, developmental stages, identity affiliation, etc.) as being separable.

Perhaps the biggest area of disagreement across the three groups was in the “opposed to term” category. For the other professional group 10.96% of the responses were coded in this category. By comparison less than 1% were coded this way for the other two groups. Similarly, the other professional group had 6.85% of their responses coded in the “cannot discern” category compared to 1.56% for the teacher responses and 2.26% for the parent responses.

The work of the WGC Crowdsourcing Team concluded with recognizing some potential future directions for use of these data and for the Whole Gifted Child Task Force or other work groups. In many of the responses there existed a dichotomy between internal and external factors. While the question asked, “What does it mean to be a whole gifted child?”, a great number of the responses from the teacher group focused on what should be done for gifted students. Likewise, the parent group had many similar responses that focused on external forces impacting and assisting the whole gifted child. This is a stark contrast to the idea and responses that a whole gifted child was something that was internal to the individual and was defined simply as, “Who the child is”.

A second area for future exploration is the number of myths and misconceptions presented related to giftedness throughout the responses. A common response was that a whole gifted child was someone who was good at everything. Of grave concern to the team were responses that stated that a whole gifted child was someone who was not twice exceptional nor had any deficiencies. There was also a misconception among some of the responses from other

professionals that indicated that the Whole Gifted Child Task Force was designed to be anti-talent-development and was divisive for the field.

While few answers may have emerged from this very simple survey perhaps the biggest finding that the crowdsourcing project revealed is that even among a group of supporters of gifted education there remains a great deal of work to be done in understanding what it means to be gifted.

Serving the Needs of the Whole Gifted Child

Pertinent Issues

Many existing programs and services for gifted and talented children focus solely on the cognitive or intellectual gifts of a child versus addressing the unique, comprehensive needs of these individuals. The Whole Gifted Child Task Force believes that gifted children are, by definition, different from the norm and require specialized approaches to supporting the comprehensive development of these individuals. To ensure that we serve the *whole* gifted child we must address intellectual, social, emotional, and physical strengths and developmental needs.

Many current programs tend to miss the opportunity to serve a variety of strengths due to a lack of inclusive identification practices. Perhaps worse, once students are identified to receive educational services, such accommodations often narrowly focus on providing support for cognitive abilities and addressing deficit needs rather than the development of talents. More specifically, while most perspectives suggest that programs for gifted children should be inclusive and represent the diversity found in school populations, discomfort with embracing diversity in all of its forms, at all levels, continues to be a barrier to true inclusivity.

Additionally, programs that focus on academic competencies and addressing deficit “needs” in the pursuit of advancing the talent domain miss the opportunity to support gifted children as they develop their capacity to understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. By developing this capacity alongside skills within the domain of talent, gifted children increase their ability to enjoy and share their talents in ways that benefit both the individual and society.

Recommendations

The Whole Gifted Child Task Force offers the following recommendations designed to engender consensus and ensure inclusiveness in organization processes as NAGC moves forward in its efforts to support those who enhance the growth and development of gifted and talented children.

1. First, and foremost: Research, publications, initiatives, and programs set forth by the organization maintain a balanced and inclusive view of giftedness.
 - a. Viewpoints presented in this report should be explicitly considered alongside other viewpoints and be able to answer the question: *How is the whole gifted child being addressed within the work?*
 - b. Representation from the WGC Task Force membership be included on committees or other task force efforts that help to set the direction of the organization or define the field. Representation of the WGC Task Force should be included on any such committee or task force created through January of 2020.

2. Authorize the development of position papers and/or white papers on developing talent in gifted children that explicitly includes cultivating psychosocial competencies comprehensively (i.e. the full spectrum of competencies that support well being, not just those competencies that serve to develop the talent).

Conclusion

Gifted children are different from the norm and require special learning opportunities to serve their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical strengths as well as their developmental needs. It will greatly assist those who support gifted children if the factors associated with gifts and talents continue to be explored, operationalized, and tested with the purpose of identifying and supporting the implementation of effective *child* development practices in service of developing the talents of those children.

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Task Force Members

George Betts, NAGC President, University of Northern Colorado
Angela Housand, Chair, University of North Carolina Wilmington
Dina Brulles, Paradise Valley (AZ) Unified School District #69
Robin Carey, Highlands Ranch, CO
Christine Deitz, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Tom Hébert, University of South Carolina
Ellen Honeck, Laurel Springs School (CO)
Brian Housand, East Carolina University
Tracy Inman, Western Kentucky University
James Moore, Ohio State University
Maureen Neihart, National Institute of Education – Singapore
Rick Olenchak, Purdue University
Jonathan Plucker, Johns Hopkins University
Steve Protenga, iPerformance Consultants
Jennifer Ritchotte, University of Northern Colorado
Elizabeth Shaunessy-Dedrick, University of South Florida
Keri Guilbault, Notre Dame of Maryland University
Theresa Newsom, Children with Promise Educational Services

NAGC Support Staff

Jane Clarenbach
René Islas

Appendix A: Definitions and Conceptions of Gifted

National Definitions

Federal Definition (No Child Left Behind Act)

"The term 'gifted and talented,' when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities."

(No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110 (Title IX, Part A, Definition 22) (2002); 20 USC 7801(22) (2004))

Marland Report (1972)

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differential educational programs and/or services beyond those provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and the society.

Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership ability
- Visual and performing arts
- Psychomotor ability

Columbus Group

Giftedness is 'asynchronous development' in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.

(The Columbus Group, 1991, in Morelock, 1992)

Regulations for the Educational Security Act of 1984

Gifted student is defined as a "student, identified by various measures, who demonstrates actual or potential high performance capability in the fields of mathematics, science, foreign languages, or computer learning. Gifted students come from historically underrepresented and under-served groups, including females, minorities, handicapped persons, persons of limited English-speaking proficiency, and migrants.

Jacob J. Javits

Gifted and talented students are defined as "children and youth who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities.

NAGC:

“Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).”

State Definitions

Alabama

Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

Alaska

“‘[G]ifted’ means exhibiting outstanding intellect, ability, or creative talent.” (4 Alaska Admin. Code §52.890)

Arizona

In this article, unless the context otherwise requires: "Gifted pupil" means a child who is of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs appropriate gifted education services, to achieve at levels commensurate with the child's intellect and ability

Arkansas

Gifted and talented children and youth are those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services. Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above average intellectual ability, task commitment and /or motivation, and creative ability.

Colorado

Gifted children means those persons between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted and talented children are hereafter referred to as gifted students. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood

special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e., twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic, ethnic, cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness: • General or specific intellectual ability • Specific academic aptitude • Creative or productive thinking • Leadership abilities • Visual arts, performing arts, musical or psychomotor abilities

Connecticut

"Gifted and talented" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as (1) possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and (2) needing differentiated instruction or services beyond those being provided in the regular school program in order to realize their intellectual, creative or specific academic potential. The term shall include children with extraordinary learning ability and children with outstanding talent in the creative arts as defined by these regulations. "Outstanding talent in the creative arts" means a child identified by the planning and placement team as gifted and talented on the basis of demonstrated or potential achievement in music, the visual arts or the performing arts. The term shall refer to the top five per cent of children so identified. Conn Regulations 10-76a-2

Delaware

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination: general intellectual ability; specific academic aptitude; creative productive thinking; leadership ability; visual and performing arts; psychomotor ability

Florida

6A-6.03019 Special Instructional Programs for Students who are Gifted. (1) Gifted. One who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance. (2) Criteria for eligibility. A student is eligible for special instructional programs for the gifted if the student meets the criteria under paragraph (2)(a) or (b) of this rule. (a) The student demonstrates: 1. Need for a special program. 2. A majority of characteristics of gifted students according to a standard scale or checklist, and 3. Superior intellectual development as measured by an intelligence quotient of two (2) standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized test of intelligence. (b) The student is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in programs for gifted students. 1. For the purpose of this rule, under-represented groups are defined as groups: a. Who are limited English proficient, or b. Who are from a low socio-economic status family.

Georgia

Gifted Student - a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific

academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities. (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-38, and as defined in the state resource manual for gifted education services (p. 23 of 34))

Hawaii

Gifted and talented are children and youth whose superior performance or potential indicates possible giftedness in intellectual, creative, or specific academic abilities, leadership capability, psychomotorability, or talent in the performing and visual arts.

Idaho

"Gifted and talented children" mean those students who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of high performing capabilities in intellectual, creative, specific academic or leadership areas, or ability in the performing or visual arts and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop such capabilities (Idaho Code 33-2001).

Illinois

Sec. 14A-20. Gifted and talented children. For purposes of this Article, "gifted and talented children" means children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other children and youth of their age, experience, and environment. A child shall be considered gifted and talented in any area of aptitude, and, specifically, in language arts and mathematics, by scoring in the top 5% locally in that area of aptitude.

Indiana

The Indiana Code defines a "high ability student" as one who: (1) performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, an outstanding level of accomplishment in at least one domain when compared to other students of the same age, experience, or environment; and (2) is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests (IC 20- 36-1-3).

Iowa

"Gifted and talented children" are those identified as possessing outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance. Gifted and talented children are children who require appropriate instruction and educational services commensurate with their abilities and needs beyond those provided by the regular school program. Gifted and talented children include those children with demonstrated achievement or potential ability, or both, in any of the following areas or in combination: 1. General intellectual ability. 2. Creative thinking. 3. Leadership ability. 4. Visual and performing arts ability. 5. Specific ability aptitude. (Iowa Code 257.44)

Kansas

"Gifted and talented children" are those identified as possessing outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance. Gifted and talented children are children who require appropriate instruction and educational services commensurate with their abilities and needs beyond those provided by the regular school program. Gifted and talented children include those children with demonstrated achievement or potential ability, or both, in any of the following

areas or in combination: 1. General intellectual ability. 2. Creative thinking. 3. Leadership ability. 4. Visual and performing arts ability. 5. Specific ability aptitude. (Iowa Code 257.44)

Kentucky

“‘Gifted and talented student’ means a pupil identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts.” (Kentucky Rev. Stat. Ann. § 157.200(1)(n))

Louisiana

“Gifted children and youth” are students who demonstrate abilities that give evidence of high performance in academic and intellectual aptitude.” (Louisiana Admin. Code title 28 § 901) <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v101/28v101.doc> National Association for Gifted Children □ 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 1001 □ Washington, DC 20005 □ 202.785.4268 □ www.nagc.org “Talented” means possession of measurable abilities that give clear evidence of unique talent in visual or performing arts or both. (Title 28 § 901)

Maine

"Gifted and talented children" shall mean those children in grades K-12 who excel, or have the potential to excel, beyond their age peers, in the regular school program, to the extent that they need and can benefit from programs for the gifted and talented. Gifted and talented children shall receive specialized instruction through these programs if they have exceptional ability, aptitude, skill, or creativity in one or more of the following categories: 1. General Intellectual Ability as shown by demonstrated significant achievement or potential for significant accomplishment above their age peers in all academic areas 2. Specific Academic Aptitude as shown by demonstrated significant achievement or potential for significant accomplishment above their age peers in one or more academic area(s) 3. Artistic Ability as shown by demonstrated significant achievement or potential for significant accomplishment above their age peers in the literary, performing, and/or visual arts (Maine Education Rules, Chap. 104)

Maryland

In this subtitle, "gifted and talented student" means an elementary or secondary student who is identified by professionally qualified individuals as: (1) Having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with other students of a similar age, experience, or environment; (2) Exhibiting high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas; (3) Possessing an unusual leadership capacity; or (4) Excelling in specific academic fields. (Annotated Code of Maryland Title 8 § 201)

Michigan

(a) The "gifted and/or academically talented" means elementary and/or secondary school students who may be considered to be (1) intellectually gifted, (2) outstanding in school achievement, and/or (3) those who have outstanding abilities in particular areas of human endeavor, including the arts and humanities. (Mich. Compiled Laws § 388.1092(2))

Minnesota

Gifted and talented children and youth are those students with outstanding abilities, identified at preschool, elementary, and secondary levels. The potential of gifted students requires differentiated and challenging educational programs and/or services beyond those provided in the general school program. Students capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability in any one or more of the following areas: general intellectual, specific academic subjects, creativity, leadership and visual and performing arts.

Mississippi

"Gifted children" shall mean children who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intellect, and/or academic, creative or artistic ability. (MS Code § 37-23-175)

Missouri

"Gifted children," children who exhibit precocious development of mental capacity and learning potential as determined by competent professional evaluation to the extent that continued educational growth and stimulation could best be served by an academic environment beyond that offered through a standard grade-level curriculum. (Missouri Rev. Stat. § 162.675(2))

Montana

"Gifted and talented children" means children of outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance and require differentiated educational programs beyond those normally offered in public schools in order to fully achieve their potential contribution to self and society. The children so identified include those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability in a variety of worthwhile human endeavors. (Montana Code Ann. § 20-7-901)

Nebraska

"Learner with high ability" means a student who gives evidence of high performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, or artistic capacity or in specific academic fields and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programs in order to develop those capabilities fully. (Nebraska Rev. Stat. § 79-1107(3))

Nevada

"Gifted and talented pupil" means a person under the age of 18 years who demonstrates such outstanding academic skills or aptitudes that the person cannot progress effectively in a regular school program and therefore needs special instruction or special services. (Nevada Rev. Stat. § 388.440(2))

New Jersey

"Gifted and talented students" means students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability in one or more content areas when compared to their chronological peers in the local school district and who require modifications of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities. <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap8.pdf> National Association for Gifted Children □ 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 1001 □ Washington, DC 20005 □ 202.785.4268 □ www.nagc.org (NJ Admin Code 6A:8-1.3 Definitions)

New Mexico

(1) “gifted child” means a school-age person as defined in Sec. 22-13-6(D) NMSA 1978 whose intellectual ability paired with subject matter aptitude/achievement, creativity/divergent thinking, or problem-solving/critical thinking meets the eligibility criteria in 6.31.2.12 NMAC and for whom a properly constituted IEP team determines that special education services are required to meet the child’s educational needs. (2) Qualifying areas defined: (a) “Intellectual ability” means a score two standard deviations above the mean as defined by the test author on a properly administered intelligence measure. The test administrator must also consider the standard error of measure (SEM) in the determination of whether or not criteria have been met in this area. (b) “Subject matter aptitude/achievement” means superior academic performance on a total subject area score on a standardized measure, or as documented by information from other sources as specified in Paragraph (2) of Subsection C of 6.31.2.12 NMAC. (c) “Creativity/divergent thinking” means outstanding performance on a test of creativity/ divergent thinking, or in creativity/divergent thinking as documented by information from other sources as specified in Paragraph (2) of Subsection C of 6.31.2.12 NMAC. (d) “Problem-solving/critical thinking” means outstanding performance on a test of problemsolving/critical thinking, or in problem-solving/critical thinking as documented by information from other sources as specified in Subparagraph (b) of Paragraph (2) of Subsection B of 6.31.2.12 NMAC. (New Mexico Admin. Code title 6 § 31.2.7(D))

New York

“Gifted pupils are those who show evidence of high performances capability and exceptional potential in area such as general intellectual ability, special academic aptitude and outstanding ability in visual and performing arts. Such definition shall include those pupils who require educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their full potential.

North Carolina

Academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) students perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experiences or environment. Academically or intellectually gifted students exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in both the intellectual areas and specific academic fields. Academically or intellectually gifted students require differentiated educational services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor. (NC Gen. Stat. § 115C-150.5)

North Dakota

“Student who is gifted” means an individual who is identified by qualified professionals as being capable of high performance and who needs educational programs and services beyond those normally provided in a regular education program. (North Dakota Cent. Code § 15.1-32-01(3))

Ohio

"Gifted" means students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience or environment

and who are identified under division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of section 3324.03 of the Revised Code. OH Admin. Code 3301-51-15

Oklahoma

"Gifted and talented children" means those children identified at the preschool, elementary and secondary level as having demonstrated potential abilities of high performance capability and needing differentiated or accelerated education or services. For the purpose of this definition, "demonstrated abilities of high performance capability" means those identified students who score in the top three percent (3%) on any national standardized test of intellectual ability. Said definition may also include students who excel in one or more of the following areas: creative thinking ability; leadership ability visual performing arts ability, and specific academic ability. A school district shall identify children in capability areas by means of a multicriteria evaluation. Provided, with first and second grade level children, a local school district may utilize other evaluation mechanisms such as, but not limited to, teacher referrals in lieu of standardized testing measures (Oklahoma Statutes Title 70 § 1210.301)

Oregon

"Gifted and talented children" means those children identified at the preschool, elementary and secondary level as having demonstrated potential abilities of high performance capability and needing differentiated or accelerated education or services. For the purpose of this definition, "demonstrated abilities of high performance capability" means those identified students who score in the top three percent (3%) on any national standardized test of intellectual ability. Said definition may also include students who excel in one or more of the following areas: creative thinking ability; leadership ability visual performing arts ability, and specific academic ability. A school district shall identify children in capability areas by means of a multicriteria evaluation. Provided, with first and second grade level children, a local school district may utilize other evaluation mechanisms such as, but not limited to, teacher referrals in lieu of standardized testing measures (Oklahoma Statutes Title 70 § 1210.301)

Pennsylvania

"Gifted students" (i) A student who is exceptional under section 1371 of the School Code (24 P. S. § 13-1371) because the student meets the definition of "mentally gifted" in this section, and needs specially designed instruction beyond that required in Chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment).; (ii) The term applies only to students who are of "school age" as defined under § 11.12 (relating to school age). "Mentally gifted" Outstanding intellectual and creative ability the development of which requires specially designed programs or support services, or both, not ordinarily provided in the regular education program. (Pennsylvania Code § 16.1)

Rhode Island

"Gifted and Talented students" 1. possess superior capabilities in one or more of the following categories of gifts and talents: a. General intelligence. b. Specific academic aptitude, c. Creative thinking, d. Visual, literary or performing arts; and 2. require an educational program and/or services which is different from that normally provided in the standard school program and which is educationally, personally, and socially beneficial. (General Laws of RI 16-42-1)

South Carolina

“Gifted and talented students” are those who are identified in grades 1-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore require educational programming beyond that normally provided by the general school programming in order to achieve their potential. Gifted and talented abilities for these regulations include (a) Academic and Intellectual Ability: Students who have the academic and/or intellectual potential to function at a high level in one or more academic areas. (b) Visual and Performing Arts: Students who have the artistic potential to function at a high performance level in one or more of the fine arts. (SC State Board of Education Regulation 43:220)

Tennessee

“Intellectually Gifted” means a child whose intellectual abilities and potential for achievement are so outstanding the child’s educational performance is adversely affected. “Adverse affect” means the general curriculum alone is inadequate to appropriately meet the student’s educational needs... (TN BOE Rules 0520-01-09-.02(11))

Texas

“Gifted and talented student” means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who: (1) exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area; (2) possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or (3) excels in a specific academic field. (Texas Education Code 29.121)

Utah

B. "Accelerated students" means children and youth whose superior academic performance or potential for accomplishment requires a differentiated and challenging instructional model that may include the following: (1) Advanced placement courses: rigorous courses developed by College Board. Each course is developed by a committee composed of college faculty and AP teachers, and covers the breadth of information, skills, and assignments found in the corresponding college course. Students who perform well on the AP exam may be granted credit and/or advanced standing at participating colleges or universities. (2) Gifted and talented programs: programs to assist individual students to develop their high potential and enhance their academic growth and identify students with outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance in the following areas: (a) general intellectual ability; (b) specific academic aptitude; and (c) creative or productive thinking (3) International Baccalaureate (IB) Program; a program established by the International Baccalaureate Organization. The Diploma Program is a rigorous pre-university course of study. Students who perform well on the IB exam may be granted credit and/or advanced standing at participating colleges or universities. The Middle Years Program (MYP) and Primary Years Program (PYP) emphasize an inquiry learning approach to instruction. <http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-707.htm#T1> National Association for Gifted Children □ 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 1001 □ Washington, DC 20005 □ 202.785.4268 □ www.nagc.org (Utah Admin. Code Rule R277-707-1 Definitions)

Vermont

““Gifted and talented children’ means children identified by professionally qualified persons who, when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment, exhibit

capability of high performance in intellectual, creative or artistic areas, possess an unusual capacity for leadership or excel in specific academic fields.” (Vermont Stat. Ann. title 16 § 13)

Virginia

"Gifted students" means those students in public elementary, middle, and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten through twelfth grade who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show the potential for higher levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. Their aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. These students will be identified by professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria as having potential or demonstrated aptitudes in one or more of the following areas: 1. General intellectual aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers. 2. Specific academic aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression beyond their age-level peers in selected academic areas that include English, history and social science, mathematics, or science. 3. Career and technical aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent technical curiosity; advanced use of technical language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression beyond their age-level peers in career and technical fields. 4. Visual or performing arts aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior creative reasoning and imaginative expression; persistent artistic curiosity; and advanced acquisition and mastery of techniques, perspectives, concepts, and principles beyond their age-level peers in visual or performing arts. (VA Admin Code Title 8 § 20-40-20 Definitions)

Washington

Highly capable students are students who perform or show potential for performing at significantly advanced academic levels when compared with others of their age, experiences, or environments. Outstanding abilities are seen within students' general intellectual aptitudes, specific academic abilities, and/or creative productivities within a specific domain. These students are present not only in the general populace, but are present within all protected classes according to chapters 28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW. (WAC 392-170-035)

West Virginia

Giftedness is exceptional intellectual abilities and potential for achievement that requires specially designed instruction and/or services beyond those normally provided in the general classroom instruction

Wisconsin

“Gifted and talented pupils” means pupils enrolled in public schools who give evidence of high performance capability in intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic

areas and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided in a regular school program in order to fully develop such capabilities. (Wisconsin Statutes § 118.35)

Wyoming

Gifted and talented students identified by professionals and other qualified individuals as having outstanding abilities, who are capable of high performance and whose abilities, talents and potential require qualitatively differentiated educational programs and services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. (Wyoming Stat. Ann. 21-9-101(c)(ii))

No existing state definition:

- California,
- Massachusetts,
- New Hampshire, &
- South Dakota

Theories and Conceptions by Eminent Scholars

Gagné

The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent proposes a clear distinction between giftedness and talent. In his model, the term giftedness designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts) in at least one ability domain to a degree that places a child among the top 10% of his or her age peers. By contrast, the term talent designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places a child's achievement within the upper 10% of age-peers who are active in that field or fields. His model presents five aptitude domains: intellectual, creative, socio-affective, sensorimotor and "others" (e.g. extrasensory perception). These natural abilities, which have a clear genetic substratum, can be observed in every task children are confronted with in the course of their schooling. (Gagné, F. (1985). Giftedness and talent: Reexamining a reexamination of the definitions. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 29, 103-112.)

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

1. Verbal-linguistic intelligence (well-developed verbal skills and sensitivity to the sounds, meanings and rhythms of words)
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence (ability to think conceptually and abstractly, and capacity to discern logical and numerical patterns)
3. Spatial-visual intelligence (capacity to think in images and pictures, to visualize accurately and abstractly)
4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (ability to control one's body movements and to handle objects skillfully)
5. Musical intelligences (ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch and timber)
6. Interpersonal intelligence (capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, motivations and desires of others)

7. Intrapersonal (capacity to be self-aware and in tune with inner feelings, values, beliefs and thinking processes)
8. Naturalist intelligence (ability to recognize and categorize plants, animals and other objects in nature)
9. Existential intelligence (sensitivity and capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence such as, “What is the meaning of life? Why do we die? How did we get here?”)

Renzulli

Gifted behavior occurs when there is an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits: above-average general and/or specific abilities, high levels of task commitment (motivation), and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those who possess or are capable of developing this composite of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. As noted in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, gifted behaviors can be found "in certain people (not all people), at certain times (not all the time), and under certain circumstances (not all circumstances)."

Sternberg's Theory of Successful Intelligence

- **Analytical thinking:** focuses on planning, monitoring, reflection, and transfer.
- **Creative thinking:** focuses on developing, applying new ideas, and creating solutions.
- **Practical thinking:** focuses on selecting and shaping real-world environments and experiences.

