



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

The Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children



Prepared by the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children
Approved September 24, 2019
Jefferson City, Missouri

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September 24, 2019

Dr. Margaret Vandeven
Commissioner of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
205 Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Dear Dr. Vandeven:

I am pleased to submit this gifted report on behalf of the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children (the Council). The focus of this report is threefold:

- (1) Updating state data about gifted students and programs
- (2) Reviewing progress on recommendations from the Council's previous reports
- (3) Reconsideration of recommendations

We streamlined this third report to focus on new data, summary of progress made, and recommendations. Due to the detailed information on the Council's website, <https://dese.mo.gov/gifted-advisory-council>, we included less background information in the report than previous reports.

The Council is prepared to present to the State Board of Education in October. We look forward to discussing the information in this report and support DESE's efforts to implement the recommendations we have included.

On behalf of the entire Council, I want to thank you for giving the Council the opportunity to positively impact the quality of education for gifted students in Missouri.

Sincerely,



Steve Coxon, PhD
Chair, Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

Cc: Christine Nobbe

Enc: Advisory Council 2017 Report

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

The Gifted Advisory Council was established in 2013 after passage 161.249, RSMo. The statute called for seven Missouri residents with expertise in gifted education to be appointed by the Commissioner of Education to serve on the advisory council. Those members were charged with the responsibility to provide advice “regarding all rules and policies to be adopted by the State Board of Education relating to the education of gifted and talented children” in Missouri.

Please visit <https://dese.mo.gov/gifted-advisory-council> for additional information on the Council’s purpose, operating procedures, accomplishments, and past reports.

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THE 2019 REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This document represents the third report from the Council since its inaugural meeting in January 2014. This report focuses on three key areas:

- New data on gifted students and programs and how that data compares to prior years
- Progress on 2015 and 2017 recommendations that have been previously approved and/or implemented
- A reexamination of 2015 and 2017 recommendations that were not addressed

This year, the Council is not making additional recommendations for action on behalf of Missouri's gifted students. Instead, we are focusing on the implementation of the remaining recommendations from the Reports to the State Board of Education in 2015 and 2017. Additionally, this report does not include the background information about the Council's formation or operations. That information was incorporated into the 2015 report and can be reviewed if questions about the Council arise.

Data for the work of the Council was obtained from a variety of sources, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), and the Davidson Institute in Nevada. The raw data on gifted programs provided by DESE was analyzed with the assistance of EducationPlus, a non-profit educational organization providing support and advocacy for school districts in the St. Louis region as well as the state as a whole. We are grateful to these entities for their assistance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. There is an increase in gifted programs in Missouri, which represents a small change, but is encouraging news. Gifted programs have risen in number for the first time since 2005-2006, from 223 districts with a state-approved gifted program in 2014 to 239 districts in 2018. This trend line reverses the precipitous decline of gifted programs documented in the Council's first two Reports to the State Board. This is certainly cause for a real, but cautious, celebration as more Missouri gifted students are being served. (See Figure A).

2. Additionally, the number of students identified and served as gifted has also increased slightly. In October 2017, there were 31,533 students identified as gifted and served, as compared to 32,432 in October 2018.

3. While gifted students in many of the state's regions are still underserved, the percentage of districts with gifted programs increased in all but one of the supervisory regions (See Figure C). Gifted students in rural parts of the state continue to be disproportionately harmed by lack of appropriate educational opportunities.

4. Funding by school districts of gifted programs decreased going from \$44,683,264 in 2015 to \$42,968,610 in 2018.

UPDATE ON COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations 3, 4, 5, 11, and 13 from the Council's 2015 and 2017 reports were approved and implemented. The Council is grateful for the support of the Missouri State Board of Education on these endeavors. Documents on best practice in identifying and serving gifted students and serving gifted students in rural areas with only one teacher of the gifted are now available on the Council's website.

Recommendations 1 and 2, which focus on gifted program data, have been approved but not yet fully implemented by DESE. The Council is working closely with the Director of Gifted Education, Christine Nobbe, and the DESE Data Department for improvements. Action still needs to be taken to generate specific information about gifted programs on an annual basis as well as to make districts' gifted program information easily accessible to the public.

Recommendation 6, requiring all Missouri school districts to have a board approved policy regarding academic acceleration, was passed as legislation by the Missouri General Assembly in 2018 in Section 162.722, RSMo.

Recommendation 11, providing guidance to school districts regarding the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and gifted education, has been approved and the supporting document is forthcoming from the Council.

In this report, we provide Problem/Recommendations/Rationale statements related to Council recommendations 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12 which are not yet approved, as well as some additional information for consideration. **We respectfully request another review of these recommendations.** The Council believes these recommendations should be approved and moved forward to enhance educational opportunities for gifted students in the years ahead. Since the 2017 report, the Council has discussed a variety of other needs related to educating gifted students in Missouri. However, we believe implementation of the previous outstanding recommendations should take precedence over making new recommendations and will support the development of gifted programs and gifted learners throughout the state.

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2015 AND 2017

Reporting Data on Gifted Students and Programs	
RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
RECOMMENDATION 1: DESE should make district information related to state-approved gifted programs readily accessible to the public.	APPROVED BUT NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED
RECOMMENDATION 2: DESE should generate an annual state data report in October on gifted students and state approved gifted programs.	APPROVED BUT NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED
Identification of Gifted Students	
RECOMMENDATION 3: DESE should eliminate the practice of reporting students as gifted based on the criterion of being enrolled in an Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) course. Additionally, AP and/or IB courses should not be counted as part of a state-approved gifted program.	APPROVED AND ACCOMPLISHED
RECOMMENDATION 4: DESE should provide a best practice model for districts to use in identifying and serving students who are traditionally underrepresented in gifted programs, the goal being to have program participants more closely reflect the ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity of individual school districts.	APPROVED AND ACCOMPLISHED See document entitled “Identifying and Serving Traditionally Under-Represented Gifted Students: Guidance for Missouri School Districts” (https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Underrepresented-document-final%20with%202019%20cover.pdf).
RECOMMENDATION 5: DESE should provide a best practice model for districts to use in identifying students who are twice exceptional (students with both learning challenges due to disabilities and/or physical impairments and exceptional learning abilities).	APPROVED AND ACCOMPLISHED with Recommendation 4

<p>RECOMMENDATION 6: DESE should require all Missouri districts to have a policy allowing acceleration for students demonstrating advanced performance or potential for advanced performance and the social/emotional readiness for such acceleration. The policy should include subject acceleration and whole grade acceleration, among other opportunities.</p>	<p>LEGISLATED</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 7: DESE should require teacher preparation programs to include a minimum of one three-credit hour course addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs.</p>	<p>NOT APPROVED – RECONSIDER AS SUBMITTED See additional rational information on page 13.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 8: DESE should require all districts to provide teachers ongoing professional development addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs. Professional development may include such options as staff development, university coursework, professional conferences, workshops, and web-based learning.</p>	<p>NOT YET APPROVED – RECONSIDER AS SUBMITTED See additional rational information on page 14.</p>
<p>Requiring and Funding Gifted Education</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 9: Gifted identification and programming should be required in Missouri.</p>	<p>NOT YET APPROVED – RECONSIDER AS SUBMITTED See additional rationale information on page 15-16.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 10: Earmarked funds should be allocated for gifted identification and programming in Missouri.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 11: DESE should be proactive in taking advantage of the new opportunities presented in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to focus on the needs of gifted students.</p>	<p>IN PROGRESS – White paper from the Council is forthcoming</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 12: DESE should change the administrative rules for gifted programs to include</p> <p>(1) an identification appeal process for parents or guardians of students applying for gifted services;</p> <p>(2) a board-approved policy allowing acceleration for students demonstrating advanced performance or potential for advanced performance and the social/emotional readiness for such acceleration; and</p> <p>(3) a plan for annual professional development for teachers of the gifted on educating gifted learners.</p>	<p>LEGISLATED – 1 and 2</p> <p>NOT YET APPROVED – 3: RECONSIDER AS SUBMITTED See additional rationale information on page 17.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 13: DESE should develop a document providing guidance to districts on best practice approaches for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. This document should incorporate key elements of Response to Intervention (RtI) for gifted students and a Levels of Services (LoS) approach that identifies a wide range of services to meet the varied and complex needs of gifted learners.</p>	<p>APPROVED AND ACCOMPLISHED See document entitled “Recommendations for Providing Levels of Services for Gifted and Advanced Students” (https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Levels-of-Services-Gifted-Council-Recommendation-2018.pdf).</p>

DATA ON GIFTED PROGRAMS

The graphs in this section show the number of gifted programs in Missouri.

Figure A shows the number of gifted programs across the last 40 years. Note that the number of gifted programs increased until funding for gifted education was no longer demarcated. An upward trend began to emerge in the 2018-2019 school year due to positive action in Missouri.

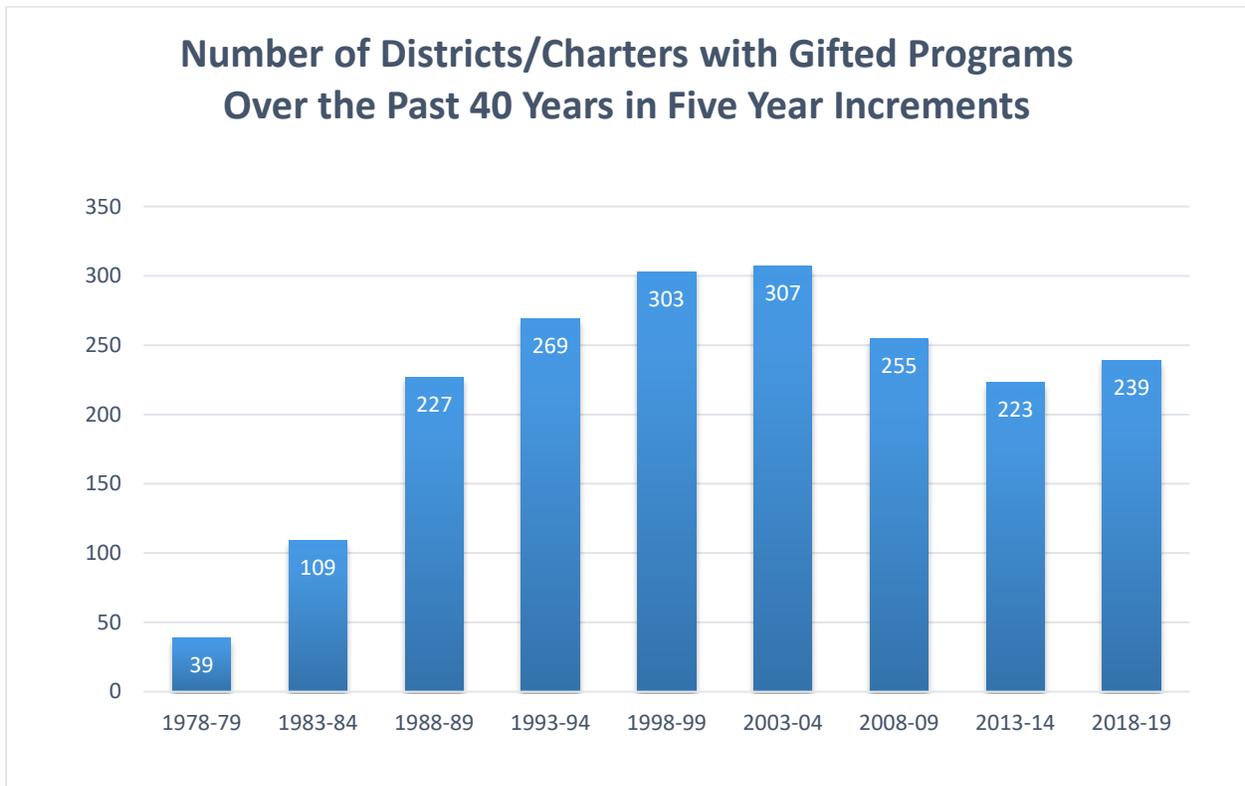


Figure A

Figure B shows counties within the regions in Figure C.



Figure B

Figure C compares the percentage of state-approved gifted programs 5 years ago and at present. In October 2017, there were 31,533 students served in state-approved gifted education programs while in 2018, that number increased to 32,432. The increase is due to positive action taken in Missouri.

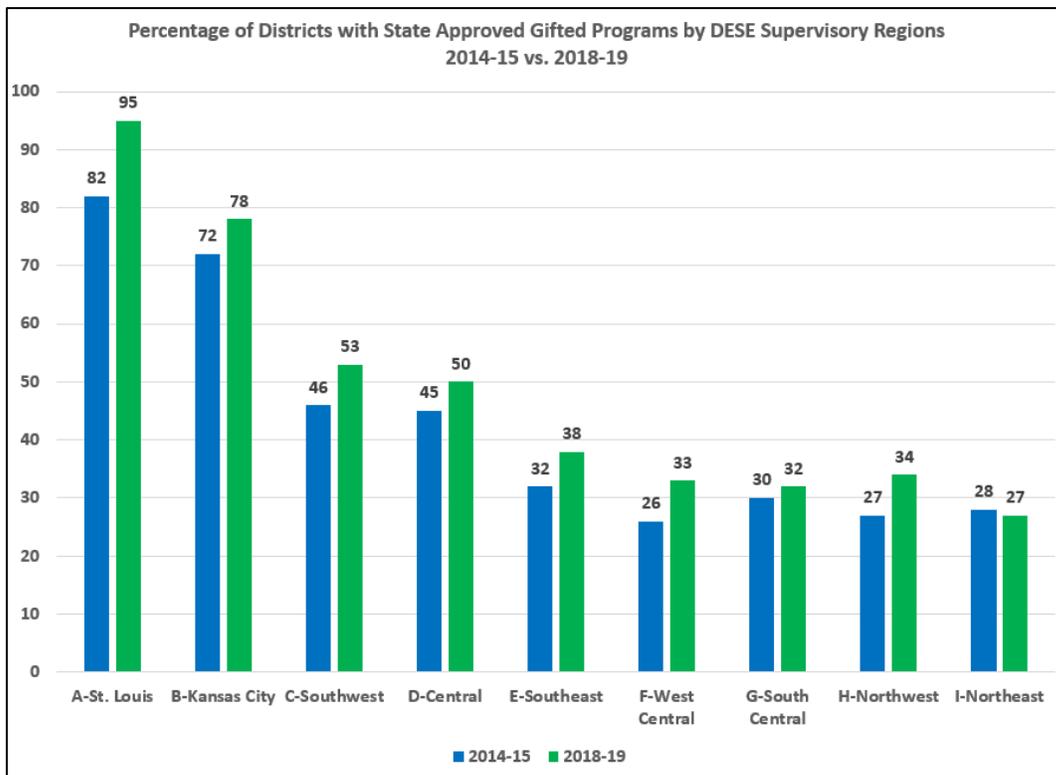


Figure C

2019 RECOMMENDATIONS REMAINING FOR ACTION: RECOMMENDATION 7

Problem: Teacher preparation curriculum does not adequately prepare teachers to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners.

Recommendation 7: DESE should require teacher preparation programs to include a minimum of one three-credit hour course addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs.

Rationale: Public school teachers are responsible for delivering instruction to a wide range of learners, including students with differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as varying levels of content readiness. In order to equip teachers to effectively tailor learning to students with different needs, the state of Missouri requires teacher candidates to receive exposure to differentiated instruction. However, there is no significant instruction required in the area of gifted education.

Without background in how to identify and respond to students who are ready for advanced curriculum and instruction, efforts to differentiate will be inadequate or misdirected. Missouri pre-service teachers are not required to receive a background on the nature and needs of gifted students or effective strategies for meeting those needs. It is necessary to give pre-service teachers the skills and confidence to adjust instruction and engage exceptional learners in appropriately challenging learning experiences.

In most university exceptional child classes, there is no more than one lecture on giftedness; course assignments oftentimes do not offer a gifted option; and textbooks may provide at best a single chapter on gifted learners. As a result, preservice teachers have an insufficient understanding of gifted students, despite the fact that the vast majority of gifted students in Missouri spend the majority of their time in regular classrooms. Thus, while we agree with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation standards calling for preparation to teach all learners, in action, advanced learners are often excluded. In the interest of these learners, it is our recommendation that a dedicated course on educating gifted students be required for all teachers in teacher preparation programs.

2019 RECOMMENDATIONS REMAINING FOR ACTION: RECOMMENDATION 8

Problem: Most teachers do not receive professional development concerning the nature and needs of gifted students or modifying curriculum and instruction to address those needs.

Recommendation 8: DESE should require all districts to provide teachers ongoing professional development addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs. Professional development may include such options as staff development, university coursework, professional conferences, workshops, and web-based learning.

Rationale: To be in compliance with Title II Professional Development requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015*, DESE should require all districts to provide teachers ongoing professional development addressing the nature and needs of gifted students and designing curriculum and instruction to meet those needs.

Most gifted students spend the majority of their school time in the regular classroom setting. Their teachers oftentimes have had no coursework in gifted education. In fact, a recent survey found that 65% of classroom teachers report that they have received little or no training on working with gifted students (Farkas & Duffett, 2008).

Working effectively with gifted students is a challenge, comparable to working with children with other special needs. In order to equip teachers to do this work well, it is important for teachers to understand the nature and needs of gifted students, and the unique ways they approach and make sense of information.

Exposure to differentiated instruction is not sufficient to be effective at this task. Teachers need a conceptual understanding of the social, emotional, and academic components of giftedness, as well as recommended approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As teachers' understanding of individual differences and instructional strategies expands to meet the needs of gifted students, all students will benefit from teachers with this broadened knowledge and skill set.

*Every Student Succeeds Act: Title II – Professional Development, including needs of gifted learners required in state Title II plans; Sec. 2101 Formula Grants to States (p 308) (d)(2) (p 326) State Application Contents: Each application described under paragraph (1) shall include the following: (J) A description of how the State educational agency will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in order to enable them to identify students with specific learning needs, particularly children with disabilities, English learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students with low literacy levels, and provide instruction based on the needs of such students. (p. 328)

2019 RECOMMENDATIONS REMAINING FOR ACTION: RECOMMENDATION 9

Problem: Many school districts in Missouri do not identify gifted students or provide programs to meet their unique needs.

Recommendation 9: Gifted identification and programming should be required in Missouri.

Rationale: Gifted children have unique characteristics that set them apart from their school-age peers, much the way children at the other end of the learning continuum have unique characteristics that set them apart from their school-age peers. Both groups of students need curriculum and instruction tailored to their learning capacity so they are challenged and supported at a level that promotes their cognitive and affective growth. The more extreme the giftedness or learning difference, the more extensive the response needs to be. When such interventions are not implemented, student motivation decreases, performance suffers, and negative behaviors oftentimes result (Colangelo, Assouline & Gross, 2004; Cross, 2011).

Equal opportunity to learn and grow does not mean providing the same services or learning opportunities for all. It means affording all children opportunities to learn according to their individual strengths, abilities, and aptitudes. While education for students with special needs is mandated by federal law, giftedness as a special need is often overlooked. Currently, over 60 percent of Missouri's school districts do **not** have a state approved gifted education program. Yet, gifted students exist in every region, district, and school in Missouri. It is time to require gifted identification and programming by all Missouri districts. The requirement would align Missouri with the best practices of neighboring states.

The National Association for Gifted Children issued a State of the States Report for 2014-2015. Fully 80% of reporting states (32 of 40) have some form of mandate related to gifted education. The authority for these mandates derived from sources ranging from state law, to state department of education policy, to administrative rule, etc. Almost all reporting states have mandates for both identification and services (28 of 32).

Based on information from the Davidson Institute, all of Missouri's border states except Illinois have a mandate for serving gifted students. Those states include Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

The Gifted Advisory Council reiterates the need for requiring identification and programming for gifted students. Missouri needs to join the ranks of states that require appropriate educational services for this identifiable group of special needs students.

2019 RECOMMENDATIONS REMAINING FOR ACTION: RECOMMENDATION 10

Problem: Earmarked funding for gifted programs was eliminated in 2006, resulting in fewer districts identifying and providing programming for gifted students.

Recommendation 10: Earmarked funds should be allocated for gifted identification and programming in Missouri.

Rationale: Categorical funding for Missouri gifted programs began in 1974. The amount of state funding increased from \$249,311 in 1974 to a high of \$24,870,104 in 2000. This level of funding remained static until 2006, when the state legislature eliminated all categorical funding, including gifted education. While gifted funding is technically still included in the annual educational funding package, it is no longer earmarked for the education of gifted students. The funds can be used for any purpose districts see fit to support. As a result of this change, many school districts have reduced or eliminated their gifted education programs. In 2015, the total number of school districts with a gifted program was at the lowest level since 1988: 211.

The decline appears to have stopped based on the most recent data. Today, 239 districts have state approved gifted programs. We believe that this is due to the positive actions taken in our state for gifted education. With dedicated funding, districts will have the incentive to identify gifted students and start or enhance gifted programs across the state.

It should be noted that Missouri is still far behind neighboring states with regard to funding gifted education. Iowa and Oklahoma fully fund their gifted programs. Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Kansas, and Nebraska offer partial, dedicated funding. Missouri and Illinois are the only states that do not offer earmarked funding for gifted education.

The Council recommends that the \$24.8 million in funds once dedicated to gifted education be spent on gifted programming.

2019 RECOMMENDATIONS REMAINING FOR ACTION: RECOMMENDATION 12

Problem: Key elements of high-quality gifted programs are missing from Missouri's administrative rules.

Recommendation 12: DESE should change the administrative rules for gifted programs to include a plan for annual professional development for gifted staff on educating gifted learners.

Rationale: Professional Development about the nature and needs of gifted students should be a planned component of each district's gifted program. State approved gifted programs should include defined efforts to build gifted program staffs' understanding of students' social and emotional needs and skill in offering content and instruction that is challenging, complex, differentiated, and personalized.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As noted in previous reports, the Council has three goals for gifted education in Missouri. The first goal is to create a data-driven understanding of the status of gifted programs in the state. The second, to make recommendations for improvement in Missouri's efforts related to gifted and talented children. Lastly, the third goal was to establish a 'baseline' for future analyses and recommendations.

These recommendations are considered priorities for strengthening and broadening high-quality educational opportunities for gifted students in Missouri. The support of the Missouri State Board of Education on these endeavors has been evidenced in the approval of multiple Council recommendations each year. This support has resulted in improvements for Missouri's gifted learners since this Council's last report, as seen in the slight increase of available services for gifted learners. However, it is still not possible to say that all of Missouri's gifted and talented students are receiving the education they need and deserve.

We have yet to commit to ensuring that all of Missouri's high-ability students have access to the specialized services they need to reach their full potential. In contrast to the majority of our neighboring states, Missouri does not require identification and services for gifted students. As a result, the specialized curriculum and services that high-ability students need to ensure success are not available in many school districts. This inequitable access to special needs services, particularly in rural districts, leaves many high-ability and high-achieving learners at a disadvantage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Council would like to thank EducationPlus for providing statistical expertise to the Council. EducationPlus is a non-profit educational organization providing support and advocacy for school districts in the greater St. Louis region as well as the state as a whole.

We would also like to thank Ms. Christine Nobbe, DESE's Director of Gifted Programs, and Kristin Davis, Administrative Assistant, for their support of Council meetings, as well as DESE's Office of Data Systems Management, for providing the Council with statewide data on student achievement and enrollment in gifted programs.

Our appreciation is extended to members of the Missouri legislature for forming the Gifted Advisory Council in 2013. Council members consider it a privilege to work with the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education to effectively address the educational needs of Missouri's gifted and talented children.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON GIFTED EDUCATION

What is Gifted Education?

Gifted education is the system by which school districts recognize and serve students with exceptional abilities and potential for high levels of achievement. The term covers identification procedures, the specific services and programs offered, as well as the teacher training necessary to provide the academic guidance gifted students need in order to thrive.

The federal definition of gifted students was originally developed in the 1972 Marland Report to Congress, and has been modified several times since then. The current definition, which is located in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is: “Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities” (nagc.org).

A similar definition of giftedness is offered by the National Association of Gifted Children (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.”

Students with outstanding aptitude and/or superior performance tend to display a number of characteristics (Renzulli, 2002):

- Superior reasoning power and marked ability to handle complex ideas
- Persistent intellectual curiosity; wide range of interests, often in considerable depth
- Learns rapidly and sees connections among diverse ideas and concepts
- Superior quantity and quality of written and/or spoken vocabulary
- Ability to sustain concentration for long periods of time

There are also affective characteristics that are prevalent in gifted individuals, and which impact student learning and social interactions (Clark, 2008):

- Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different
- Unusual sensitivity to the expectations and feelings of others
- High expectations of self and others, often leading to high levels of frustration with self, others, and situations
- Strong need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions
- Unusual emotional depth and intensity
- Earlier development of an inner locus of control and satisfaction

- Advanced cognitive and affective capacity for conceptualizing and solving society's problems

Creative capacities are also distinguishing characteristics of many gifted individuals (Colangelo & Davis, 2003):

- Individualistic; non-conforming; willing to cope with hostility, failure
- Risk-taker; adventurous and speculative
- Generates a large number of ideas or solutions to problems
- Sees humor in situations that may not appear to be humorous to others
- Imaginative, resourceful, challenges assumptions, bored by the obvious
- Tolerant of ambiguity, disorder, incongruity
- Receptive to new ideas, other viewpoints, new experiences, and growth

Since every individual has his or her own unique set of characteristics and no one individual has all characteristics at an exceptional level, the approach used to identify gifted students needs to be carefully designed and implemented. Generally, identification procedures focus on screening to establish a pool of candidates, individual evaluation of candidates based on multiple tools and criteria, and final decisions by trained professionals about the need for gifted services.

Ideally, programs and services for gifted students are multi-faceted and include many options for student learning and interaction with academic and social/emotional peers. Advanced curriculum, faster pacing, and real world problem-solving opportunities are recommended components of gifted education programs, as are opportunities for students to develop and pursue individual interests and talent areas (Clark, 2008). Providing gifted learners with responsive, engaging learning environments should begin as early as possible in their schooling (nagc.org).

Why is Gifted Education Important?

Education has a unique mission in American life. It offers all children, regardless of economic circumstances, ability, religion or heritage, the opportunity to explore and develop their skills, aptitudes and aspirations. Done properly, this effort enables young people to discover not only what their strengths are, but also what is needed to reach the level of excellence required for success in today's complex and competitive world.

The education of gifted students is a particularly heavy responsibility because these students have so much potential. They learn basic information at a rapid rate and need both more advanced and more abstract material to stimulate their interest and facilitate academic growth. Full realization of their ability requires years of increasingly challenging learning experiences and talented mentors as well as the ongoing encouragement and support of classroom teachers and parents alike.

What is the payoff of recognizing special gifts and supporting their realization? On one hand, helping individuals achieve personal and career fulfillment is payoff of its own. Individuals who are using their talents and aptitudes at high levels have a greater likelihood of finding satisfaction in their work and leading fulfilling personal lives. On the other hand, supporting superior skills and competencies in gifted students can result in a better future for all, a future where unique talents and training are used to solve society's complex problems and develop new ideas that make life better and more fulfilling for everyone.

It is the Council's contention that identifying and supporting gifted students in Missouri is both an extraordinary opportunity and a wise investment that will pay dividends long into the future. These students' journey toward excellence, if supported throughout the educational system, will propel our state and country forward in new and unexpected ways, releasing the individual creativity, innovation, and drive needed for tackling our world's complex challenges. As noted by Barbara Clark (2008), a leader in gifted education:

"The consequences of ignoring the needs of the brightest and most promising among us can be devastating. If society is to move forward, find solutions to the overwhelming problems it faces throughout the world, realize its goals for peaceful coexistence of all humankind, and ensure the very continuation of its existence on this planet, we need the ideas our brightest minds can produce, and we will continue to need them far into the future. Such minds do not come fully formed at birth; giftedness must be nurtured."

APPENDIX B: MYTHS ABOUT GIFTED STUDENTS

The concept of giftedness, and gifted education in general, is subject to a broad range of misunderstandings that can harm efforts to address these students' special needs. These misunderstandings range from the notion that gifted students will do fine on their own to the idea that gifted programs are 'elitist' and undemocratic. All too often, those ideas create an inherent bias against gifted students and gifted programs in general.

Common 'myths' about gifted students is provided below. Each myth is countered with research and statements of 'reality'. This listing is compiled by NAGC from a variety of relevant sources and is presented in somewhat abbreviated form.

Myth: Gifted Students Don't Need Help; They'll Do Fine on Their Own

Truth: Would you send a star athlete to train for the Olympics without a coach? Gifted students need guidance from well-trained teachers who challenge and support them in order to fully develop their abilities. Many gifted students may be so far ahead of their same-age peers that they know more than half of the grade-level curriculum before the school year begins. Their resulting boredom and frustration can lead to low achievement, despondency, or unhealthy work habits. The role of the teacher is crucial for spotting and nurturing talents in school.

Myth: Teachers Challenge All the Students, So Gifted Kids Will Be Fine In the Regular Classroom

Truth: Although teachers try to challenge all students they are frequently unfamiliar with the needs of gifted children and do not know how to best serve them in the classroom. A national study conducted by the Fordham Institute found that 58% of teachers have received no professional development focused on teaching academically advanced students in the past few years and 73% of teachers agreed that "Too often, the brightest students are bored and under-challenged in school – we're not giving them a sufficient chance to thrive." This report confirms what many families have known: not all teachers are able to recognize and support gifted learners.

Myth: Gifted Students Make Everyone Else In the Class Smarter By Providing a Role Model or a Challenge

Truth: Average or below-average students do not look to the gifted students in the class as role models. Watching or relying on someone who is expected to succeed does little to increase a struggling student's sense of self-confidence. Similarly, gifted students benefit from classroom interactions with peers at similar performance levels and become bored, frustrated, and unmotivated when placed in classrooms with low or average-ability students.

Myth: All Children Are Gifted

Truth: All children have strengths and positive attributes, but not all children are gifted in the educational sense of the word. The label "gifted" in a school setting means that when compared to others his or her age or grade, a child has an advanced capacity to learn and apply what is

learned in one or more subject areas, or in the performing or fine arts. This advanced capacity requires modifications to the regular curriculum to ensure these children are challenged and learn new material. Gifted does not connote good or better; it is a term that allows students to be identified for services that meet their unique learning needs.

Myth: Acceleration Placement Options Are Socially Harmful For Gifted Students

Truth: Academically gifted students often feel bored or out of place with their age peers and naturally gravitate towards older students who are more similar as “intellectual peers.” Studies have shown that many students are happier with older students who share their interest than they are with children the same age. Therefore, acceleration placement options such as early entrance to Kindergarten, grade skipping, or early exit should be considered for these students.

Myth: Gifted Education Programs Are Elitist

Truth: Gifted education programs are meant to help all high-ability students. Gifted learners are found in all cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups. However, many of these students are denied the opportunity to maximize their potential because of the way in which programs and services are funded, and/or flawed identification practices.

Myth: That Student Can't Be Gifted, He Is Receiving Poor Grades

Truth: Underachievement describes a discrepancy between a student’s performance and his actual ability. The roots of this problem differ, based on each child’s experiences. Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging classroom situation causing them to lose interest, learn bad study habits, or distrust the school environment. Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with their same-age peers and still others may have a learning disability that masks their giftedness. No matter the cause, it is imperative that a caring and perceptive adult help gifted learners break the cycle of underachievement in order to achieve their full potential.

Myth: Gifted Students Are Happy, Popular, and Well Adjusted In School

Truth: Many gifted students flourish in their community and school environment. However, some gifted children differ in terms of their emotional and moral intensity, sensitivity to expectations and feelings, perfectionism, and deep concerns about societal problems. Others do not share interests with their classmates, resulting in isolation or being labeled unfavorably as a “nerd.” Because of these difficulties, the school experience is one to be endured rather than celebrated.

Myth: This Child Can't Be Gifted, He Has a Disability

Truth: Some gifted students also have learning or other disabilities. These “twice-exceptional” students often go undetected in regular classrooms because their disability and gifts mask each other, making them appear “average.” Other twice-exceptional students are identified as having a learning disability and as a result, are not considered for gifted services. In both cases, it is important to focus on the students’ abilities and allow them to have challenging curricula in addition to receiving help for their learning disability.

Myth: Our District Has a Gifted and Talented Program: We Have AP Courses

Truth: While AP classes offer rigorous, advanced coursework, they are not a gifted education program. The AP program is designed as college-level classes taught by high school teachers for students willing to work hard. The program is limited in its service to gifted and talented students in two major areas: First AP is limited by the subjects offered, which in most districts is only a small handful. Second it is limited in that, typically, it is offered only in high school and is generally available only for 11th and 12th grade students. The College Board acknowledges that AP courses are for any student who is academically prepared and motivated to take a college-level course.

APPENDIX C: CHRONOLOGY OF GIFTED EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS IN MISSOURI

Year	Event
1973	House Bill 474 defined gifted children and authorized gifted programs: “where a sufficient number of children are determined to be gifted and their development requires programs or services beyond the level of those ordinarily provided in regular public school programs, districts may establish special programs for such gifted children” Section 162.720, RSMo.
1974	House Bill 474 established funding for Gifted at 50% reimbursement.
1984	Missouri Scholar’s Academy was launched.
1988	Senate Bill 797 increased State Aid from 50 to 75% effective July 1, 1988.
1995	Mandatory certification endorsement became effective September 1, 1995.
1996	Missouri’s Fine Arts Academy was launched.
2001	Gifted programs were at an all-time high in Missouri, with 333 districts or 64% of all districts having a state-approved gifted program.
2006	Gifted funding folded into the foundation formula. A temporary penalty clause was included to deter districts from decreasing gifted program enrollment. Number of students and teachers in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes began being included in gifted student count.
2008	The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children was enacted to facilitate transition of military children who were identified as gifted.
2012	Senate Bill 599 required districts to report on their annual report card whether the school district has a state approved gifted education program, and the percentage and number of students currently being served in the program. Effective August 28, 2012, Section 160.1990, RSMo was implemented to facilitate transition of foster children who are identified as gifted.
2013	State Statute 161.249, RSMo established the Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children (the Council). The Council’s first report was issued on March 4, 2015.

- 2016 Senate Bill 638 modified provisions related to gifted education. Beginning in 2017-2018, districts incur a reduction in funding if they experience a decrease in gifted program enrollment by 20% or more from the previous year.
- The Council publishes guidance for Missouri schools, “Identifying and Serving Traditionally Underrepresented Gifted Learners.”
- 2017 Students in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes are no longer included in gifted student count.
- Changes in gifted certification requirements become effective August 1, 2017.
- The Council’s second report was issued.
- 2018 The review policy and acceleration policy were passed into law:
- According to Section 162.720.4 RSMo, “any district with a gifted education program...shall have a policy, approved by the board of education of the district, that establishes a process that outlines the procedures and conditions under which parents or guardians may request a review of the decision that determined that their child did not qualify to receive services through the district's gifted education program.”
- According to Section 162.722 RSMo, “each school district shall establish a policy, approved by the board of education of that district, that allows acceleration for students who demonstrate: (1) advanced performance or potential for advanced performance and (2) the social and emotional readiness for acceleration. The policy shall allow, for students described in this section, at least the following types of acceleration (1) subject acceleration; and (2) whole grade acceleration.
- The Council publishes “Recommendations for Providing Levels of Services for Gifted and Advanced Students” to provide guidance to districts.
- 2019 The Council’s third report was issued.

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“Failure to help the gifted child is a societal tragedy, the extent of which is difficult to measure but which is surely great. How can we measure the sonata unwritten, the curative drug undiscovered, the absence of political insight? They are the difference between what we are and what we could be as a society.”

James J. Gallagher