Strategies to Increase Equity: What We Are Learning from Research

(NCRGE’s First Three Years Findings)

Del Siegle
Director, NCRGE

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problem is universal
IS THERE A GIFTED GAP?

GIFTED EDUCATION IN HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS

BY CHRISTOPHER B. YALUMA AND ADAM TYNER

FOREWORD BY CHESTER E. FINN, JR. AND AMBER M. NORTHERN
Data Collected by NCRGE in Phase 1

- 133 Variables for 293 State District Gifted Plans
- 362,254 Current 10th-Grade Students’ Math and Reading Achievement in Grades 3, 4, and 5
- 2 Comprehensive Literature Reviews
- 202 Interview Transcripts
- 2419 School Survey Responses (53% [45-68%] Response - 80% Title 1)
- 332 District Survey Responses (78%-90% Response)
States are concerned about under-identification.
- Gifted services are not equally distributed across schools within districts.
- Underserved populations are not being identified at the same rates as non-underserved students even after controlling for student achievement.
- Very few districts reassess students.
- Very few districts offer programs to identify and recruit potentially gifted students.
- Extensive use of cognitive tests to identify students.
- Third grade achievement is directly related to identification gaps.
- Practices such as universal screening and nonverbal tests do not appear to be panaceas.
- Universal screening with modification shows promise at reducing under-identification.
- Majority of schools use pull-out classes for gifted instruction.
- Greater focus on critical thinking and creative thinking than Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Gifted programs seldom focus on core curriculum such as math and reading.
- Gifted students start ahead in reading and mathematics achievement but don’t grow any faster than other groups.
- Teacher autonomy positively influences academic achievement.
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- Talent scouts are effective in finding gifted English learners; don’t wait for EL students to surface.
- High level of agreement between district and teacher reports of practice and curriculum.
80% of states that responded to the 2015 State of the States survey indicated underrepresentation is an important or very important issue in gifted education in their state.
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• **Percentage of Gifted Students**: 29% of the variance is between districts; 71% is between schools (within district)

• **Percentage of Free and Reduced Price Lunch Students**: 21% of the variance is between districts; 79% is between schools (within district)

• **Percentage of Underserved Students**: 48% of the variance is between districts; 72% is between schools (within district)

• **Average Reading**: 23% of the variance is between districts; 77% is between schools (within district)

• **Average Math**: 24% of the variance is between districts; 76% is between schools (within district)
What is the relationship between the % of free and reduced lunch students in a school and the % of students identified as gifted?

-0.31
-0.56
-0.64

This research from the National Center for Research on Gifted Education (NCRGE – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018
Gifted services are not equally distributed across schools within districts and poverty appears to be a key factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Schools with No Gifted Students in Our Cohort</th>
<th>Number of Schools with No Free and Reduced Lunch Gifted Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State 1</td>
<td>1,177</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State 2</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State 3</td>
<td>1,495</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State 1</th>
<th>State 2</th>
<th>State 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for FRPL students</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for African Americans</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for Hispanics</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for ELs</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for Whites</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for Asians</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of identification for students NOT FRL, Afr. Am., Hispanic, or Native American</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Probability of identification as gifted for reference students and students who are EL, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Underserved after controlling for Reading and Math scores and school SES and school percentage of gifted students.
Possible reasons...
1. No gifted program is some schools with high numbers of underserved students
2. High academic achievement isn’t enough
3. Hurdle approach with multiple criteria
4. Students are not being nominated
5. Students and parents are choosing not to participate
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Teacher autonomy positively influences academic achievement.

EL reclassification is linked to gifted identification.

Talent scouts are effective in finding gifted English learners; don’t wait for EL students to surface.

High level of agreement between district and teacher reports of practice and curriculum.
We also found that districts frequently do not reassess identified students once they are identified. Only slightly more than half of the districts reassess non-identified students at regular intervals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State 1</th>
<th>State 2</th>
<th>State 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-identified students are reassessed at regular intervals</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-identified students are reassessed upon request</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified students are reassessed at regular intervals</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified students are reassessed upon request</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identification

Grade First identify in...

• Kindergarten - .9%
• 1st – 2.8%
• 2nd – 27.8%
• 3rd – 53.6%
• 4th – 12.0%
• 5th – 1.6%
• None of the above – 1.3%

Identified in what...

• Global – 41%
• Reading/LA – 69.1%
• Mathematics – 66.6%
• Other – 44.2%
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools for Identification</th>
<th>State 1</th>
<th>State 2</th>
<th>State 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents can nominate</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers can nominate</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use cognitive tests</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use non-verbal tests</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use creativity tests</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision process for identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee of teachers and administrators decide</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a matrix to decide</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use cut scores to decide</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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### Amount 3rd Grade Academic Achievement
Accounts for Under Identification Gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State 1</th>
<th>State 2</th>
<th>State 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRPL (compared to non-FRPL)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL (compared to non-EL)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (compared to White)</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (compared to White)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Structure of Identification</th>
<th>State 1</th>
<th>State 2</th>
<th>State 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal identification</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify identification for underrepresented groups</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program to identify underrepresented groups</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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19.3% use Universal Screening. With Universal Screening, they most often use

- Group Cognitive – 77.7%
- Non-verbal – 37.5%
- Achievement – 22.3%
- Teacher Rating Scale – 11.7%
Take home message...

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The gap in identification rates for high achieving FRPL vs. non-FRPL almost disappears in districts that use universal screening with modification policies.
46% modify the identification for underserved populations with...

- 33.9% Native Language
- 50.3% Non-Verbal Test
- 62% More Flexible Score
- 23.9% Different Weighting of Criteria
- 49.4% Different Criteria or Cutoff
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grouping/Service Options</th>
<th>Acceleration Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 73.2% of schools use pullout (2.81 hs/wk)</td>
<td>• 29.2% of schools do not accelerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 53.4% of schools use cluster grouping (50% Sometimes or less)</td>
<td>• 34.8% of schools subject accelerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 45.3% of schools use homogenous grouping</td>
<td>• 26.1% of schools whole grade accelerate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 33.1% of schools use push-in (1.87 hs/wk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Comparison of 4 Types of Grouping
Pull-Out Only vs. Homogeneous Only vs. Push-In Only vs. Cluster Only
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Focus of Program Services

Using the slider, indicate the degree to which the gifted programming at your school focuses on the following goals and/or activities (0=Not a focus, 100=Complete focus).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>-55.31</td>
<td>85.65</td>
<td>27.08</td>
<td>18.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity/Creative Thinking</td>
<td>-63.73</td>
<td>88.27</td>
<td>19.44</td>
<td>20.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/ELA: Grade Level Extension Activities</td>
<td>-66.19</td>
<td>92.31</td>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>23.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math: Grade Level Extension Activities</td>
<td>-66.96</td>
<td>92.31</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>25.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>-55.31</td>
<td>75.19</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>20.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Literacy</td>
<td>-78.27</td>
<td>75.62</td>
<td>10.97</td>
<td>21.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Skills</td>
<td>-79.00</td>
<td>76.35</td>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>20.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Skills</td>
<td>-68.27</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>21.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Motivation</td>
<td>-59.77</td>
<td>71.23</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>20.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Self-Confidence</td>
<td>-82.69</td>
<td>72.27</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>20.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Autonomy</td>
<td>-85.00</td>
<td>71.23</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>21.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment in non-core content areas</td>
<td>-79.04</td>
<td>96.15</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>25.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills</td>
<td>-77.31</td>
<td>95.92</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>23.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directed projects</td>
<td>-80.73</td>
<td>75.96</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>22.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Skills</td>
<td>-74.50</td>
<td>76.92</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>21.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Emotional Needs</td>
<td>-82.69</td>
<td>76.35</td>
<td>-1.51</td>
<td>23.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary study of big ideas</td>
<td>-86.73</td>
<td>80.54</td>
<td>-4.01</td>
<td>23.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math: Acceleration</td>
<td>-89.58</td>
<td>83.58</td>
<td>-7.63</td>
<td>29.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/ELA: Accelerization</td>
<td>-95.19</td>
<td>75.73</td>
<td>-8.50</td>
<td>28.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Underserved Students</td>
<td>-84.81</td>
<td>79.65</td>
<td>-8.60</td>
<td>24.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College and Career Readiness</td>
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States are concerned about under-identification.

Gifted services are not equally distributed across schools within districts.

Underserved populations are not being identified at the same rates as non-underserved students even after controlling for student achievement.

Very few districts reassess students.

Extensive use of cognitive tests to identify students.

Third grade achievement is directly related to identification gaps.

Very few districts offer programs to identify and recruit potentially gifted students.

Practices such as universal screening and nonverbal tests do not appear to be panaceas.

Universal screening with modification shows promise at reducing under-identification.

Majority of schools use pull-out classes for gifted instruction.

Greater focus on critical thinking and creative thinking than Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Gifted programs seldom focus on core curriculum such as math and reading.

Gifted students start ahead in reading and mathematics achievement but don’t grow any faster than other groups.

Teacher autonomy positively influences academic achievement.

EL reclassification is linked to gifted identification.

Talent scouts are effective in finding gifted English learners; don’t wait for EL students to surface.

High level of agreement between district and teacher reports of practice and curriculum.
• 28.9% schools offer gifted reading/LA but 28.7% of them don’t have specific reading/LA curriculum

• 28.4% schools offer gifted mathematics but 24.2% of them don’t have specific gifted math curriculum

• 93.7% of districts do not have a designated math curriculum for gifted

• 90.2% of districts do not have a designated reading/LA curriculum for gifted
o States are concerned about under-identification.
o Gifted services are not equally distributed across schools within districts.
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o Very few districts reassess students.
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- EL reclassification is linked to gifted identification.
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- High level of agreement between district and teacher reports of practice and curriculum.
Teacher autonomy is strongly related to gifted students’ achievement

How much autonomy do your school's teachers of the gifted have in choosing the content to deliver?

- Very Little – 4.6%
- Some – 26.8%
- A Lot – 51.9%
- Complete 15.8%
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**EL reclassification is linked to gifted identification.**
Talent scouts are effective in finding gifted English learners; don’t wait for EL students to surface.
High level of agreement between district and teacher reports of practice and curriculum.
• Students are in EL for less time in schools with more gifted students.
• EL students who exit EL earlier have a greater probability of being identified as gifted, but they do not have higher slopes of achievement growth than other gifted students.
Take home message...

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In bilingual education, students are taught in both their native language and English to help them master curriculum content while developing their English proficiency.

(Hakuta, Butler, & Whitt, 2000)
Data Collection

- **Quantitative Methods**
  - 3 years of school-reported state data
  - 3 states with mandates for identification and programming for gifted students

- **Qualitative Methods**
  - 16 schools from 9 districts
  - Interviews and focus groups (225 informants)
  - 84 transcripts
  - 2,207 excerpts
  - 6,278 total code applications
  - 208 total axial codes
  - Four selective codes (i.e., core categories)
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Visit http://ncrge.uconn.edu for more information

This research was completed by the National Center for Research on Gifted Education (NCRGE) at the University of Connecticut under a contract with the United States Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). These recommendations are based on the NCRGE’s research on the identification of gifted English learners (ELs) and the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department. No official endorsement by the Department of any identification procedures, practices, and instruments mentioned is intended or should be inferred. This research was funded by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, PR/Award # R305C140018. Visit the Resources section at http://ncrge.uconn.edu for the full research report from which these recommendations were made.
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6. Use native language ability and achievement assessments as indicators of potential giftedness, when available.
7. Maintain a list of multilingual school psychologists who are qualified to administer assessments in the student’s native language.
8. Establish a preparation program prior to formal identification procedures that provides students with learning opportunities to enhance knowledge and academic skills necessary for a student to be recognized.
9. Create a talent pool list of students who exhibit high potential but are not yet enrolled in gifted and talented programs.

Observations, daily interactions between teachers and students, informal assessments, and formal assessments provide multiple opportunities to gauge students’ learning progress. Make identification of giftedness an ongoing process rather than a single event.

**Establish a Web of Communication**
10. Establish an identification committee that includes representatives who have key responsibilities in various roles and departments.
11. Develop and implement intentional outreach to the school community, particularly parents/guardians/caretakers. This process should utilize multiple pathways in languages appropriate to the population.

**Emphasize collaboration within and across specializations/departments (e.g., general education, English as a second language [ESL], special education, gifted education) so people view themselves as talent scouts.**

**View Professional Development as a Lever for Change**
12. Provide professional development opportunities for school personnel about effective policies and practices to support equitable representation of ELs in gifted and talented programs.
13. Develop a systematic approach to analyzing district and school demographics and the status of students identified/not identified for gifted and talented programs.
14. Promote efforts to diversify the teaching corps so that the adult community of a school reflects the student population.
Tips for Identifying EL Students from the National Center for Research on Gifted Education

Adopt Universal Screening Procedures
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Model for Improving Identification of EL Students

National Center for Research on Gifted Education (http://ncrge.uconn.edu)

- Identification Preparation Opportunities
- Universal Screening
- Alternative Identification Pathways
- More Frequent Screening
- Culturally Appropriate Assessments

- Increased Identification of EL Students for Gifted Services
- Improved Acceptance and Placement for Gifted Services
- Increased Trustworthiness of Communications

- Improved School Personnel Awareness of EL Identification Issues
- Development of Practice of Being Talent Scouts

- Evolution of a Web of Communication Among Administration, Faculty, Staff, Specialists, & Parents/Guardians
- Modifications in Program Services

- Inclusion of Culturally Responsive Curriculum
- Adding Support Services to Ensure Student Success

Champion for Identifying EL Students

Professional Development

Identification Preparation Opportunities

Universal Screening

Alternative Identification Pathways

More Frequent Screening

Culturally Appropriate Assessments

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Improved Acceptance and Placement for Gifted Services

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Modifications in Program Services

Inclusion of Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Adding Support Services to Ensure Student Success
Four Phases for Improving Identification of English Learners for Gifted and Talented Programs

Pre-Identification
- Targeted Subgroups
- Broadened Definition of Giftedness
- Informal Data Sources to Identify Giftedness
- Parent Awareness

Preparation
- Staffing/Human Resources
- Material Resources

Identification
- Universal Screening
- Broadened Definition With Alternative Identification Pathways
- Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity Through Professional Development
- Frequent Screening
- Culturally Appropriate Assessments
- Web of Communication
- Talent Scouts

Acceptance of Placement
- Parent Awareness
- Accessibility of Location/Scheduling
- Trustworthiness of the Communicator
- Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity to Being Labeled as Gifted
- Support Services to Ensure Student Success

National Center for Research on Gifted Education
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Exploratory Study on the Identification of English Learners in Gifted and Talented Programs:

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States are concerned about under-identification.
Gifted services are not equally distributed across schools within districts.
Underserved populations are not being identified at the same rates as non-underserved students even after controlling for student achievement.
Very few districts reassess students.
Extensive use of cognitive tests to identify students.
Third grade achievement is directly related to identification gaps.
Very few districts offer programs to identify and recruit potentially gifted students.
Practices such as universal screening and nonverbal tests do not appear to be panaceas.
Universal screening with modification shows promise at reducing under-identification.
Majority of schools use pull-out classes for gifted instruction.
Greater focus on critical thinking and creative thinking than Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics.
Gifted programs seldom focus on core curriculum such as math and reading.
Gifted students start ahead in reading and mathematics achievement but don’t grow any faster than other groups.
Teacher autonomy positively influences academic achievement.
EL reclassification is linked to gifted identification.
Talent scouts are effective in finding gifted English learners; don’t wait for EL students to surface.
High level of agreement between district and teacher reports of practice and curriculum.
Best practices involve a fair and equitable nomination process. This requires a paradigm shift where the focus changes from identifying and remediating weaknesses to identifying strengths and giftedness through multiple lenses (Esquierdo & Arreguin-Anderson, 2012).

The National Center for Research on Gifted Education (NCRGE – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018.
Talent Development is a Two Step Process—
1. We must provide opportunities for talent to surface
2. Then we must provide programs that develop students’ talents
“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The only way our country will reach its potential is if we help all our children reach their potential.