

**ANNUAL REPORT ON
GIFTED AND
TALENTED EDUCATION**



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OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

More than two decades ago, Senator Jacob K. Javits sponsored a bill requiring United States Commissioner of Education Sidney Marland to evaluate the status of the nation's gifted and talented children. The Commissioner was further directed to provide Congress with recommendations specifying how other federal educational assistance programs could be more effectively used to meet the needs of this population. The resulting report, *Education of the Gifted and Talented*, was published in 1972 and was widely acclaimed as a landmark document in the education of the gifted and talented.

For the next ten years, limited funds were provided to state and local education agencies for program development. States, including Oklahoma, used the modest incentive grants to create statewide awareness of the needs of the students who were identified as gifted and talented. Those seed monies, in turn, led to the allocation of state funds to support further programming.

In 1981, Oklahoma became the seventeenth state to mandate educational services for students identified as gifted and talented. Twenty-three other states also mandate services for students who are gifted and talented. Thirty-one states, including Oklahoma, fund gifted programs in some way. Oklahoma's funding comes through the state aid formula and is a weight of .34 for each student identified and served in gifted and talented education.

In the same year that Oklahoma mandated gifted and talented education, federal leadership in the area of gifted and talented education was effectively ended with the passage of *The Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981*. Many states, including Oklahoma, continued to expand programs and budgets for the gifted and talented throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s.

The legacy of the early federal leadership has resumed in the present and been energized by the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program established in 1988 under Public Law 100-297, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Javits Program for Gifted and Talented Education was created within the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the United States Department of Education.

Patricia O'Connell Ross, Director of the Javits Program, coordinated the writing of *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* by a broad-based national panel. The report was released in November 1993, and has served as an advocacy document for top level officials as well as school-site educators to recognize the need for restructuring to address the strengths and needs of all students, including those who are gifted and talented.

NATIONAL REPORT ON GIFTED EDUCATION

Many students who are identified as gifted and talented are bored and unchallenged in the classrooms of this country. This problem was called a “quiet crisis” by the most recent national report, *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America’s Talent*, published by the United States Department of Education’s Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Many of the nation’s most talented students are not encouraged to master rigorous or complex material or even to work hard. The emphasis is often on making good grades and the learning is incidental.

The report is the first comprehensive study in twenty years on the status of gifted and talented education. Findings include:

Most elementary students with high ability have mastered as much as third or even one half of the year’s curriculum before the first day of class, yet most teachers make few provisions for their special needs.

Poor and minority students with outstanding talents are especially neglected. More than one in five children live in poverty in the United States. These students have access to fewer advanced educational opportunities and their talents often go unnoticed. Most programs that serve poor students focus on the problems they bring to school, rather than helping them develop their strengths.

Several important recommendations are made to help enhance student learning. Among these are:

set content standards and use a curriculum that challenges all children. Schools should provide challenging learning opportunities that offer students variety and flexibility and encourage students to pursue learning both in and out of school;

recognize that intelligence takes many forms and should be assessed through a variety of criteria. Educators should identify outstanding talent by observing students in settings that enable them to display their abilities, rather than relying solely on test scores;

increase access for poor and minority children to early childhood education programs that focus on children’s strengths, not their deficiencies;

make high-level achievement for poor and minority children possible by removing barriers to advanced learning opportunities; and,

develop teacher skills in teaching high-level curricula.

OKLAHOMA'S LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

Gifted and talented education was mandated by the legislature in 1981, through the enactment of Title 70 O.S. 1981 Sections 1210.301-307 (Senate Bill 214), making Oklahoma the seventeenth state in the nation to take this step. "Gifted and talented children" were defined as "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" meant those identified students who score in the top three percent (3%) on any nationally standardized test of intellectual ability, or may include students who excel in one or more of the following areas:

- a. Intellectual ability,
- b. Creative thinking ability,
- c. Leadership ability,
- d. Visual or performing arts ability, and
- e. Specific academic ability (SB 214, Section 1).

Title 70 O.S. 1981, 301-307, also told schools to:

... 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.

In 1985, House Bill 1466, changed the definition of "demonstrated abilities of high performance capability" to read:

... those identified students who score in the top three percent (3%) on any nationally standardized test of intellectual ability. Said definition may also include students who excel in one of more of the following areas:

- (1) Creative thinking ability,
- (2) Leadership ability,
- (3) Visual and performing arts ability, and
- (4) Specific academic ability.

House Bill 1466 also added the requirement for each local board of education to adopt a written policy. This policy statement was required to specify criteria for placement and to be consistent for grades one through twelve.

In 1990, the 42nd Legislature, in Senate Bill 770, Section 63, added the requirements that local school districts notify in writing the parents of students identified as gifted and talented "of the fact that the child has been so identified" and provide "each such parent a summary of the program to be offered such child."

The Second Session of the 44th Legislature made several important additions to the statutory mandate for gifted and talented education in House Bill 2041. Local Advisory Committees on Education for Gifted and Talented Children are to be appointed by local school

boards. These committees will assist in formulating district goals, developing the district plan, preparing the district report and other advisory duties as requested by the local school board.

Each local school district must submit a Gifted Education Plan (GEP) to the State Department of Education for approval. The GEP includes:

- (1) A written process for assessment and selection of children for placement in gifted and talented programming options.
- (2) A description of programming options and curriculum which demonstrates that the curriculum is sequential and is differentiated from the normal curriculum in pace, breadth, and/or depth.
- (3) Criteria for evaluation of the gifted child educational programming.
- (4) Evidence of participation by the local advisory committee in establishing goals, planning, child identification process and program evaluation.
- (5) Required competencies and duties of the staff for gifted and talented child educational programming.
- (6) A budget for the district gifted and talented child educational programming.
- (7) Gifted Child Count as required by the State Department of Education.

Other additions to the statutes include:

- (1) a yearly expenditures report for gifted and talented child educational programming;
- (2) program monitoring of twenty-five randomly selected districts;
- (3) monitoring of other districts whose identified students are not, as a group, representative of racial and socioeconomic demographics of district student population, districts with unusual budget reports, inappropriate implementation policies or questionable gifted and talented child programming.
- (4) a penalty for districts who cannot demonstrate that the depth, breadth, and pace of the curriculum have been and continue to be in compliance with the provisions of Sections 1210.301-308 of Title 70;
- (5) a cap on the number of students for whom districts can be reimbursed for gifted and talented services. The number of identified students for which a district will receive reimbursement will be limited to:
 - those students scoring in the top three percent (3%) on any nationally standardized test of intellectual ability, and
 - those students identified by multiple criteria; up to eight percent (8%) of the total average daily membership of the school district for the preceding year.

It is important to note that this cap does not limit the number of students who can be identified and served; rather it limits reimbursement.

ROLE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In administering the legislative mandate for gifted and talented education, the State Department of Education is required to provide:

1. The necessary State Department of Education staff with primary responsibility for:
 - a. developing educational programs for gifted and talented children,
 - b. assuring appropriate assessment and evaluation procedures for use by school districts of this state, and
 - c. enforcing compliance with the provisions of Sections 1210.301-308 of Title 70 by school districts;
2. The procedures for educational screening, needs analysis and prescriptive programming for children who are gifted and talented by Regional Education Service Center personnel and others approved by the Department;
3. Inservice training for selected teachers, administrators, college personnel, parents and interested lay persons;
4. Assistance in the development of new programs and the projection of program alternatives for the eventual provision of high quality programs for all children identified as gifted and talented;
5. Recommendations to the State Board of Education concerning qualifications of teachers for children who are gifted and talented;
6. Recommendations for degree programs and short course seminars for the preparation of teaching personnel for children who are gifted and talented;
7. Selected procedural safeguards for all potentially identifiable and identified gifted and talented children;
8. Auditing of gifted and talented education programs in twenty-five districts selected at random each year to determine compliance with the provisions of Section 1210.301-308 of Title 70 as well as program monitoring and auditing for other districts who identified students are not, as a group, representative of racial and socioeconomic demographics of district student population, districts with unusual budget reports, inappropriate implementation policies or questionable gifted and talented child programming; and
9. Any other programs, services, supplies or facilities necessary to implement the provisions of this act. (70-1210.303).

The staff of the Gifted and Talented Section provides technical assistance and inservice opportunities in local school districts statewide. Information and ideas are shared which assist schools in planning and evaluating their programming options. An important responsibility of the staff is the collection and compilation of child count data for the purposes of state aid allocation.

The emphasis of the Gifted and Talented Section continues to be appropriate assessment of and appropriate programming for individual student needs and abilities. This emphasis is based on the belief that students are identified because they have specific educational needs and included not only identification of students but assurance that the design of gifted and talented programming provides for the unique needs of each child. Of major importance is the utilization of culturally unbiased assessment and diagnostic tools so that culturally different and economically disadvantaged students are properly assessed.

As Oklahoma schools reexamine their curriculum, processes and programs relative to the educational reform mandates, education of gifted students is being reexamined and redefined. Appropriate educational opportunities come in the many forms discussed in this report. The provision of appropriate education services is a high priority for the staff of the Gifted and Talented Section.

2006-2007 CHILD COUNT DATA

Number of gifted students identified and served	103,546
Number of students identified, not served	1,041
Number of students identified in top three percent (3%) on an ability test	35,332
Number of students identified by multiple criteria	68,214
Number of students identified as handicapped and gifted	1,684

Gender Distribution:

Male	50,013
Female	53,533

Race Distribution:

African American	6,108
Native American	16,355
Hispanic American	4,949
Asian American	3,133
Caucasian/Other	73,001

Number of Districts Serving Each Ability Area:

General intellectual ability	511
Creative thinking ability	428
Leadership ability	427
Visual and performing arts ability	405
Specific academic ability	509

Number of Districts Using Each Multiple Criteria Procedure:

Referrals - professional, peer, parent, self	526
Measures of achievement	525

Measures of performance	456
Scales, inventories, checklists	283
Autobiographies, work samples	309
Test of intellectual ability	460
Number of Districts Offering Various Programming Options:	
Acceleration	420
Advanced Placement Courses	357
Cluster Grouping	178
Concurrent Enrollment	406
Continuous Progress	211
Correspondence Courses	213
Creative and Academic Competitions	489
Cross-Grade Grouping	259
Differentiated Curriculum	323
Dual Enrollment	142
Duke Talent Search	235
Enrichment Classes	311
Enrichment in Regular Classroom	479
“Great Books” and “Junior Great Books”	66
Guidance and Counseling	453
Honors, Differentiated or Enriched Classes	330
Independent Study	365
Individualized Education Programs	202
Individualized Instruction	314

Instructional Groups	233
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PROGRAMMING OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Appropriate programming for students who are gifted and talented will include many options of curricular modification which are designed to meet the assessed needs of the students. Each programming option must provide challenging educational experiences for these students.

Enrichment

Enrichment in the Regular Classroom - Experiences provided in regular classrooms that are supplemental to the established curriculum and which are purposefully planned with the needs, interests and capabilities of particular students in mind. Appropriate enrichment experiences are not a repetition of material.

Seminars/Convocations - Special short-term sessions where students focus on one area of study.

Mentorships - A program which pairs individual students with someone who has advanced skills and experiences in a particular discipline and can serve as a guide, advisor, counselor and role model.

Summer Enrichment Programs - Enrichment classes or courses offered during the summer months.

Saturday Enrichment Programs - Enrichment classes or courses offered on Saturday.

Creative and Academic Competitions - Organized opportunities for students to enter local, regional, state or national contests in a variety of areas.

Differentiated Curriculum - Curriculum designed to meet the needs of high ability students and differentiated according to content, process, and product.

Learning Centers - A designated area or portable center designed to enrich and/or accelerate students' interests in a given content area.

“Great Books” and “Junior Great Books” - Discussions of great literature led by an adult discussion leader using a prepared question guide.

Special Classes

Honors, Differentiated or Enriched Classes - Include differentiated curriculum and accelerated content designed for able students. These classes need not be limited to identified gifted students.

Advanced Placement Courses - College level courses provided at the secondary level for which students may receive college credit by examination (administered by the Advanced Placement Program of the College Board).

Independent Study - Individually contracted in-depth study of a topic; also a course or unit of study taken through an individual arrangement.

Enriched Classes - A group organized from one or more classrooms which meets on a regular basis to provide experiences beyond the established curriculum.

Interest Groups - Any group organized from one or more classrooms on the basis of interest in a topic; usually short term in duration.

Correspondence Courses - High school courses taken by correspondence through an approved university.

Resource Room - A class for students released from their regular classroom on a scheduled basis to work with a teacher trained in the education of students who are gifted and talented.

Flexible Pacing (Types)

Continuous Progress - The content and pacing of curriculum and instruction are matched to students' abilities and needs. Students move ahead on the basis of mastery.

Acceleration - Administrative practices designed to allow students to progress through the curriculum and/or grade levels at a rate faster than the average.

Proficiency Based Promotion - Elementary or secondary students advancing one or more levels in a curriculum area by demonstrating proficiency at the ninety percent (90%) level on designated assessments.

Early Admission (Kindergarten) - Underage children admitted to a kindergarten program in the school district in which he or she resides based on assessed readiness [70 O.S. 1-114].

Concurrent Enrollment - Qualified students taking college courses concurrently while in high school.

Dual Enrollment - Qualified students taking middle level or high school courses while at the elementary level or high school courses while at the middle level.

Flexible Pacing (Ways to implement)

Cluster Grouping - Any classroom with a group of identified able learners purposefully organized to provide planned differentiated instruction most of the time.

Cross-Grade Grouping - Opportunity for a student to work in an advanced grade-level setting with one or more students sharing a similar readiness for the learning task and performance expectations.

Instructional Groups - Any group of identified able learners organized to provide planned differentiated instruction in a curriculum area.

Individualized Education Program - A program designed to meet the particular educational needs of that student.

Curriculum Compacting - A system designed to adapt the regular curriculum to meet the needs of above average students by either eliminating previously mastered work or streamlining work that may be mastered at a faster pace. The time gained may be used to provide students with appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration experiences.

Special Schools

International Baccalaureate (IB) - A rigorous, comprehensive program that enhances and extends the quality of the eleventh and twelfth grade course offerings. The internationally recognized IB curriculum provides students with a comprehensive background in English, foreign language, the social sciences, physical and life sciences, mathematics, and the arts.

Special Schools - Specialized schools for high ability students, usually with a specific focus, e.g., performing arts and/or science (magnet schools or schools within schools).

Other Services

Guidance and Counseling - Planned activities, sessions and policies that assist students who are gifted and talented in planning their academic career in school and after high school, and that also address the specific social-emotional needs of students who are gifted and talented, including those students who are underachieving.

Ongoing Assessment - Students' abilities and needs are continually assessed through both formal and informal means designed to discover and nurture talent. The results are used as the basis for individual educational planning.

Duke Talent Search - Conducted by Duke University to identify academically talented youth and inform them about their abilities and academic options.