What really happens in gifted education: A portrait of three states

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

NCRGE

- This study is part of a large study conducted by the National Center for Research on Gifted Education.
- An exploratory study of gifted programs in three states by collecting data from four sources:
  - a) state administrative data on student achievement (*n*=362,254 students who were in grade 5 in 2014)
  - b) district (*n*=332) and school (*n*=2,250) surveys about services these students received
  - c) district gifted education plans that described district goals for gifted education (*n*=293 each analyzed for 133 variables)
  - 4) school site visits (*n*=40 school visits)

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

The importance of alignment

- Research suggest that alignment between gifted education policies and practices is important for student success.
- Jarvis and Henderson (2014) suggest that a lack of alignment between identification processes, program models can result in services that are fragmented and have unclear goals
- Peters, Matthews, McCoach, and McBee (2014), further suggest that when school and district administrators focus their efforts on first designing the gifted program, instead of identifying students, the identification and selection process are better aligned with programming decisions and can better predict student success
- In the current study, we examine the extent of alignment between state and district policies and practices

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

State Selection

- States selected on the following criteria:
  - Mandated identification *and* services for gifted students
  - Availability of vertically scaled longitudinal state data on student achievement
  - Program emphasis on involving higher numbers of underrepresented students with gifted program services
  - Willingness of state department gifted specialist to work collaboratively

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

School and District Survey

- Designed to extract current information about effective identification and programming practices
- Policies, procedures, and assessments used to identify students for gifted services
- Range of programming details
  - Content, curricula, instructional approaches, timing, location, duration, intensity, and staff qualifications and training

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Survey Development

- Each survey item was tied to our data collection matrix, which was based on our Theory of Change.
- Developed in collaboration with state level gifted coordinators
- Reviewed by an advisory committee with a variety of expertise including gifted education, early education, and education statistics (see more at: ncrge.uconn.edu/advisory-board/)

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Survey Development cont.

- Pre-pilot
  - 20 teachers and administrators
  - Used cognitive interviews
- Pilot
  - 148 teachers and administrators
  - 92 district-level respondents
- Designed to take less than 15 minutes to complete online
- Surveys were distributed via the web-based platform, Qualtrics.

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Data Sources

District Survey

Identification and Selection of Elementary School Students for Gifted Services

Curriculum and Instruction for Gifted Education

Identifying and Instructing Potentially Gifted Students

School Survey

Standards and Curriculum

The logistics of Schools' Gifted Education Services

Gifted Education and Instructional Emphasis

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

State Context
Overall Representation

Overall Percentage of Selected Sub-populations			
	State 1	State 2	State 3
Identified as Gifted	17.4%	10.5%	10.5%
FRPL-eligible	60.9%	50.6%	67.1%
African American	24.6%	4.8%	21.9%
Hispanic	15.7%	33.3%	30.6%
EL	12.1%	20.1%	21.7%
White	51.6%	54.6%	40.9%
Asian	2.9%	3.4%	2.8%

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

State Context
Gifted Representation

Percent of Gifted Population from Selected Sub-populations			
	State 1	State 2	State 3
% of Gifted that is FRPL-eligible	28.5%	30.2%	42.4%
% of Gifted that is African American	9.1%	2.5%	8.8%
% of Gifted that is Hispanic	7.3%	21.2%	26.6%
% of Gifted that is EL	3.8%	14.4%	13.9%
% of Gifted that is White	73.0%	66.5%	53.9%
% of Gifted that is Asian	6.0%	5.3%	6.6%

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

State Context - Within Group

Percent of Sub-populations Identified as Gifted			
	State 1	State 2	State 3
% of FRPL-eligible Identified	8.2%	6.2%	6.6%
% of African American Identified	6.5%	5.6%	4.2%
% of Hispanic Identified	8.0%	6.5%	9.1%
% of EL Identified	5.5%	7.4%	6.3%
% of White Identified	24.6%	12.8%	13.8%
% of Asian Identified	36.7%	16.7%	24.9%

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

State Context - Representation

- Based on these data, we created a representation index (RI; Kitano & DiJiosia, 2002) to demonstrate each subpopulation's likelihood for identification.
- A group's RI represents the actual proportion of the group being identified in the school divided by the expected proportion of that subpopulation, given the proportion of gifted students and the subpopulation in the school.

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

State Context- RI

Gifted Representation Index			
	State 1	State 2	State 3
FRPL-eligible RI	0.47	0.60	0.63
African American RI	0.37	0.54	0.40
Hispanic RI	0.46	0.63	0.87
EL RI	0.32	0.70	0.63
White RI	1.41	1.22	1.32
Asian RI	2.11	1.59	2.37
NOT FRL, Afr. Am., Hisp., Native American RI	1.77	1.37	1.84

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Response Rates

- District Survey:
  - Overall: 85%
  - Range: 82.8% to 88.7%

- School Survey:
  - Overall: 56%
  - Range: 48.6% to 73.5%

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Analysis

- Descriptive study
- Conducted a series of cross-tabulations
- Exploring themes within and across states

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Misalignment - Curriculum

- Most districts stated that they classify students as gifted in reading/English language arts (ELA) and/or math
  - This was mostly the case in States 1 and 2

- The majority of responding districts did not use a district-wide reading or math curriculum that was specifically designed for gifted students

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Classification of Gifted Students

Students Classified as Gifted in Reading/ELA					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	10	33	49	92
	Percentage	9.7	22.8	100.0	31.0
Yes	Frequency	93	112	0	205
	Percentage	90.3	77.2	0.0	69.0
Total	Frequency	103	145	49	297
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

Students Classified as Gifted in Math					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	15	36	49	100
	Percentage	14.56	24.83	100	33.67
Yes	Frequency	88	109	0	197
	Percentage	85.4	75.2	0.0	66.3
Total	Frequency	103	145	49	297
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Availability of District Curriculum

District-Wide Mathematics Curriculum Specifically for Gifted Students?					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	94	133	50	277
	Percentage	91.3	92.4	96.2	92.6
Yes	Frequency	9	11	2	22
	Percentage	8.7	7.6	3.9	7.4
Total	Frequency	103	144	52	299
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

District-Wide Reading/ELA Curriculum Specifically for Gifted Students?					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	90	127	50	267
	Percentage	87.4	87.6	96.2	89
Yes	Frequency	13	18	2	33
	Percentage	12.6	12.4	3.9	11
Total	Frequency	103	145	52	300
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

This pattern extended to the schools

Gifted education curriculum for Math that is separate from the regular curricula offered					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	604	308	595	1,507
	Percentage	69.1	78.8	82.2	75.8
Yes	Frequency	270	83	129	482
	Percentage	30.9	21.2	17.8	24.2
Total	Frequency	874	391	724	1,989
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

Gifted education curriculum for Reading/ELA that is separate from the regular curricula offered					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	564	271	580	1,415
	Percentage	64.2	69.0	80.0	70.9
Yes	Frequency	315	122	145	582
	Percentage	35.8	31.0	20.0	29.1
Total	Frequency	879	393	725	1,997
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

ELA Curriculum in Schools

Description of ELA curriculum for gifted students				
		State 1 N=309	State 2 N=119	State 3 N=146
Faster Pace	Frequency	115	40	60
	Percentage	37.2	33.6	41.1
More In-Depth	Frequency	236	90	102
	Percentage	76.4	75.6	69.9
Greater Breadth	Frequency	175	53	79
	Percentage	56.6	44.5	54.1
Above Grade Level Content	Frequency	184	82	79
	Percentage	59.6	68.9	54.1
Process Skills	Frequency	252	95	116
	Percentage	81.6	79.8	79.5

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Math Curriculum in Schools

Description of Math curriculum for gifted students				
		State 1 N=269	State 2 N=82	State 3 N=132
Faster Pace	Frequency	122	42	69
	Percentage	45.4	51.2	52.3
More In-Depth	Frequency	207	53	103
	Percentage	77.0	64.6	78.0
Greater Breadth	Frequency	156	40	72
	Percentage	58.0	48.8	54.6
Above Grade Level Content	Frequency	176	57	82
	Percentage	65.4	69.5	62.1
Process Skills	Frequency	204	54	109
	Percentage	75.8	65.9	82.6

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Time in Gen Ed Classrooms

Hours a typical 5th grade gifted (identified as globally gifted or gifted in math) student spend in a regular education math classroom					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
1 hour	Frequency	74	35	141	250
	Percentage	8.9	9.2	20.1	13.1
2 hours	Frequency	36	17	28	81
	Percentage	4.4	4.5	4.0	4.2
3 hours	Frequency	60	23	32	115
	Percentage	7.3	6.0	4.6	6.0
4 hours	Frequency	51	23	41	115
	Percentage	6.2	6.0	5.8	6.0
5 more hours	Frequency	588	263	422	1,273
	Percentage	71.0	69.0	60.0	66.6
Don't Know	Frequency	19	20	39	78
	Percentage	2.3	5.3	5.6	4.1
Total	Frequency	828	381	703	1,912
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

Hours a typical 5th grade gifted (identified as globally gifted or gifted in ELA) student spend in a regular education ELA classroom					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
0 hours	Frequency	76	19	118	213
	Percentage	8.89	4.99	16.57	10.93
1 hour	Frequency	21	15	10	46
	Percentage	2.46	3.94	1.4	2.36
2 hours	Frequency	36	15	34	85
	Percentage	4.21	3.94	4.78	4.36
3 hours	Frequency	14	10	7	31
	Percentage	1.64	2.62	0.98	1.59
4 hours	Frequency	66	26	24	116
	Percentage	7.72	6.82	3.37	5.95
5 more hours	Frequency	622	277	482	1,381
	Percentage	72.75	72.7	67.7	70.89
Don't Know	Frequency	20	19	37	76
	Percentage	2.34	4.99	5.2	3.9
Total	Frequency	855	381	712	1,948
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Teacher Autonomy

Teachers' Autonomy in Choosing the Content Taught to Gifted Students					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
None	Frequency	2	2	2	6
	Percentage	1.9	1.4	3.9	2.0
Very Little	Frequency	4	12	6	22
	Percentage	3.9	8.3	11.5	7.3
Some	Frequency	25	51	17	93
	Percentage	24.3	35.2	32.7	31.0
A lot	Frequency	56	63	20	139
	Percentage	54.4	43.5	38.5	46.3
Complete	Frequency	16	17	7	40
	Percentage	15.5	11.7	13.5	13.3
Total	Frequency	103	145	52	300
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Pull Out Programs

Do gifted students attend pull-out classes for gifted instruction?					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	163	127	230	520
	Percentage	18.8	32.7	31.9	26.3
Yes	Frequency	703	261	490	1,454
	Percentage	81.18	67.27	68.06	73.66
Total	Frequency	866	388	720	1,974
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Subject Match

Subject match between pull-out program and class from which students are pulled?					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
Yes	Frequency	314	112	187	613
	Percentage	45.2	43.6	38.6	42.7
Sometimes	Frequency	312	116	213	641
	Percentage	45.0	45.1	44.0	44.7
No	Frequency	62	22	65	149
	Percentage	8.9	8.6	13.4	10.4
Don't Know	Frequency	6	7	19	32
	Percentage	0.9	2.7	3.9	2.2
Total	Frequency	694	257	484	1,435
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Reassessing Students

Are Non-Identified Students Re-assessed to Determine Eligibility?			
	State 1 N=102	State 2 N=144	State 3 N=52
No	5.9%	9.0%	6.1%
Yes, At Regular Intervals	58.4%	54.2%	16.3%
Yes, As Needed	49.0%	52.8%	84.6%

Are Identified Students Re-assessed to Determine Continued Eligibility?			
	State 1 N=103	State 2 N=143	State 3 N=52
No	81.6%	59.4%	94.2%
Yes, At Regular Intervals	10.8%	30.8%	2.0%
Yes, As Needed	10.8%	11.2%	4.1%

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Supporting Potentially Gifted, Students

District Offers Special Activities for Potentially Gifted Elementary School Students from Underrepresented Populations					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	62	99	43	204
	Percentages	60.2	68.3	82.7	68.0
Yes	Frequency	41	46	9	96
	Percentages	39.8	31.7	17.3	32.0
Total	Frequency	103	145	52	300
	Percentages	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Accessing this Programs

Evidence Used to Determine Student Participate in Special Activities				
		State 1 N=41	State 2 N=45	State 3 N=9
Standardized Test	Frequency	17	25	6
	Percentage	41.5	55.6	66.7
Teacher Nominations	Frequency	28	37	6
	Percentage	68.3	82.2	66.7
Parent Nominations	Frequency	14	17	3
	Percentage	34.2	37.8	37.5
Observational Tools/ Checklists	Frequency	24	18	3
	Percentage	58.5	40.0	37.5
Performance-based Assessment	Frequency	17	22	4
	Percentage	41.5	48.9	50.0
Non-Verbal Assessment	Frequency	13	19	4
	Percentage	31.7	42.2	50.0

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Curriculum Use

District Utilizes Curriculum to Guide Special Activities					
		State 1	State 2	State 3	Total
No	Frequency	21	34	5	60
	Percentage	51.2	77.3	55.6	63.8
Yes	Frequency	20	10	4	34
	Percentage	48.8	22.7	44.4	36.2
Total	Frequency	41	44	9	94
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

UCONN NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Discussion

Overall, these results suggest a general lack of cohesive around districts policies and the way in which those policies are implemented.

Many districts, for example, have an academic focus when it comes to identifying students but opt to focus on process skills when teaching gifted students and not utilize a specialized curriculum for these students.

This lack of cohesiveness may be, in part, a result of the limited funds and resources that plague schools and districts.

UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018

Discussion cont.

A topic that our survey did not explore is that of the evaluation of gifted programs

The evaluation process may provide districts and schools with information about how funds are being utilized and how students are benefiting from gifted services

Future studies might examine the relationship between program funding, program cohesiveness, and student achievement

This research from the **National Center for Research on Gifted Education** (NCRG – http://ncrge.uconn.edu) was funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education PR/Award # R305C140018