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Gifted Education and National Standards: A K--5 program evaluation

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Gifted Education and National Standards: A K-5 Program Evaluation

By
Debra A. Harwell-Braun

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2010

Approval Page

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of a K-5 Gifted Education Program. Program evaluation addressed how well the gifted education program studied met the National Association of Gifted Children standards. In addition, this study included stakeholder perceptions of the current gifted education program K-5.

This program evaluation utilized the Accreditation Approach as well as the Logic Model for program planning and evaluation. Instruments used included surveys, interview groups, and classroom observations. Review of district evidence to address the standards was completed.

Analyses of the data by geographical region of the district studied provided minimal differences between each of the regions regarding the perception of program adherence to the National Gifted Program Standards. Program Evaluation revealed, based on geographical regions within the district, that there is little difference in perception. Program strengths and opportunities for improvement were identified. Data collected based on district evidence provided short, intermediate, and long-term recommendations for the current AIG program based on NAGC standards.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge related to the evaluation and improvement of gifted education programs based on NAGC program standards.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1993), lack of academic growth, challenge, and student performance of Academically Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students has been acknowledged and addressed in educational literature for many years. The focus of the literature addresses academic underachievement as indicated by tests, teachers, psychologists, and parents. According to Rimm (1987), estimates of AIG students who do not achieve well are as high as 50%. The underachievement of AIG students has been connected to several causes. Factors that contribute to the underachievement of AIG students, particularly those from minority backgrounds, include family, school, community, and personal issues such as race and ethnic identity, self-efficacy, coping strategies, and perseverance (Castellano & Diaz, 2002).

This researcher conducted a program evaluation with district permission (Appendix A) based on adherence to the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) National Standards. Program evaluation has been considered important, yet it has been a component rarely addressed by experts in the field of gifted education for at least the last three decades (Gallagher, 1979; Renzulli & Ward, 1969). According to Callahan (1986) and Carter and Hamilton (1985), a common approach to program evaluation involves the identification of essential components of gifted programs considered to be the target areas of the evaluation process. The NAGC National Standards serve as the essential components or target areas.

Another significant cause related to underachievement has been the lack of a long-term commitment to the specific learning needs of the gifted student. According to VanTassel-Baska and Feng (2004), the total funding for gifted education is less than 1%

of the federal budget; more than 160 times the total dollars (state, local, and federal) go to support other student exceptionalities. Less than half of the states employ full-time coordinators or directors of gifted programs (Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, 2003). VanTassel-Baska (2006) cited, in her study of gifted programs, that evidence proliferates showing that gifted program development has been dormant for years or has failed to grow commensurate with the expanding needs of students and schools. Lack of funding for academically gifted education programs has presented funding authorities with unique challenges. Gifted programs are capped at 4% of the allotted average daily membership per district, regardless of the number of students who are identified as AIG. In accordance with this percentage, school systems have approximately \$6.46 per day per a portion of the students to address the educational and social needs of gifted learners. In comparison, the North Carolina February 2009 state legislative briefings, GS 148-29, authorized the North Carolina Department of Corrections to pay counties \$40.00 per day for convicted offenders in jail awaiting a transfer to the state prison system.

Underachievement of gifted students typically begins in the elementary years. Once this pattern occurs, the opportunity to change it is negligible. Most interventions, if any, incorporated in the middle school and high school years for underachieving gifted students have little impact. Dowdall and Colangelo (1982) have written that “it is in the early years of a child’s education that they must be provided with an environment that encourages success in order to foster commitment to applying oneself in school” (p. 53).

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) does not exclude nor include the nation’s gifted students as a subgroup to monitor for academic success.

Golden (2003), in the *Wall Street Journal*, reported that to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and math by 2014, public schools are shifting resources from gifted programs to programs that focus on students who are scoring at the bottom or the middle. The focus of NCLB is to increase the level of achievement in schools so that every student is meeting minimal grade-level requirements. This focus does not include gifted children, who are usually working beyond or are capable of working beyond grade-level. In most states, gifted education is not mandated, or if it is, it may not be funded. Consequently, schools have little incentive or repercussions to move them to provide appropriate educational services for their gifted students. In the state of North Carolina, gifted education is mandated as well as funded per pupil, although school systems' gifted education programs are vastly different across district lines and are not monitored by the state.

According to Cox, Daniel, and Boston (1985), research indicated that many AIG and talented students spend most of their time in school in a traditional classroom environment. Archambault et al. (1993) agreed that instruction in the traditional classroom environment is not differentiated to meet the specific learning needs of gifted students. Instruction that is not differentiated often leads to problems for gifted students. According to Schultz, Davan, and Montague (as cited in Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998), if the content and tasks that have been determined appropriate for a particular grade-level are too easy, gifted students will not be engaged, and as a result, they will not be learning. Brain research provides a physical explanation for students' underachievement. When tasks are not challenging, the brain does not release enough of the required chemicals for learning: dopamine, noradrenalin, serotonin, and other

neurochemicals (Schultz et al., as cited in Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998). Research indicates that the experiences of gifted learners in school do not provide challenge, and learning needs are not being met. Traditional instruction of mathematics and science is often inappropriate for gifted students because of the continual repetition and little depth (Johnson, Boyce, & VanTassel-Baska, 1995; Johnson & Sher, 1997). In fact, at the elementary level, a national study found that an average of 35% to 50% of the regular curriculum could be eliminated for gifted students (Reis & Purcell, 1993). The lack of rigorous and challenging instruction that pushes beyond the boundaries of the predetermined curriculum limits the possibility of student achievement in the gifted learner. Data confirm that most of the gifted students in the United States spend the majority of their school day in the regular education classroom setting (Cox et al., 1985).

According to the 2008 audit of the state North Carolina Gifted Education Program, achievement data for gifted learners are not disaggregated, monitored, or addressed. Comparison achievement data are not available for educators to utilize for identification or instructional consideration, and academic trend data are not readily available nor reported unless specific schools or districts gather the data independently. Without the data, student performance cannot be monitored for growth, best practices, or effective teaching strategies.

The lack of focus on differentiation and meeting the specific needs of this population leads to additional program concerns. According to Reis and Tomlinson (2004),

Occasionally, after school enrichment programs offered by museums, science centers, or local universities take the place of comprehensive school programs and too many academically talented students attend school in classrooms across the country in which they are bored, unmotivated, and unchallenged. (p. 14)

Strenzniewski (1999) stated that approximately 20% of the prison population is gifted. Interviews revealed that because students were not adequately stimulated in school or because no one was there in a mentor role to help them direct their vast energy, their path led to incarceration. Renzulli and Park (2002) stated that the majority of gifted people who are incarcerated are low-income minorities who are the least likely to have had access to gifted programs in school. In a summary of the literature regarding dropouts, about 11% have intelligent quotients (IQs) of 110 and above; only 25% of the total population has an IQ in that range (Warner, 1964). VanDyke and Hoyte (1958) reported data from their study on the dropout problem in a 20% stratified sample in Iowa using a total of 73 high schools. Out of the total of 1,652 students, 165 (virtually 10 percent) had IQs of 120 or above. Of the 165 high-ability students, 29 (18%) were dropouts. Data on Pennsylvania youth, as reported by French (1968), suggested that more than 1,300 high-ability youth drop out. Almost 500 dropouts, or 28%, had IQs of 120 or above, and 80, or 4.5%, of the dropouts had IQs of 130 or more. Using these data, each year, more than 80,000 students within the top 25% of the nation's population intellectually, who have the academic potential for a job requiring comparatively high-level intellect, leave school before graduation. It has been reported that 25% of all students who drop out of school do so by age 16. Data also provided evidence that between 18% and 25% of AIG and/or talented students drop out (Robertson, 1991). Kuss (2008) reported that "at least 11,000 gifted students drop out of high school each year in the United States, according to recent educational research" (p. 6).

The exact data regarding AIG student dropout rates are difficult to determine given the differences in the definitions of *gifted* and *dropout* within the literature and

among programs. The definition that will be utilized for the purpose of this program evaluation is the definition used by the state of North Carolina, which has been developed to apply to gifted programs in the state according to Article 9B (n.c.g.s.115C-150.5).

AIG students perform, or show the potential to perform, at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. AIG students exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in both intellectual areas and specific academic fields. AIG students require differentiated education services beyond those ordinarily provided by the regular educational program. Outstanding abilities are present in students from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human behavior (North Carolina Department of Public Schools, 2008).

Background of the Study

On the basis of the mandated end-of-grade North Carolina state testing trend data, school systems in North Carolina mirror the national trend data regarding gifted students' lack of academic growth and gifted student dropout rates. Students scoring Level 1 or Level 2 (below standard) on the North Carolina end-of-grade tests receive state-funded remedial instruction. Currently no allocation, federal, state, or local, is provided for remediation of gifted students scoring Level 3 or Level 4 (proficiency) yet lacking evidence to confirm a year of academic progress for a year of instruction.

The school system that will be involved in the program evaluation has a total student population of more than 21,500 students, ranking in the top 20 largest school systems in the state of North Carolina. The gifted student population in K-12 is approximately 10% of the district's overall student population, as validated by the state-

required April 1, 2009, AIG head count. The school system employs approximately 3,160 full- and part-time employees, of whom approximately 1,740 are classroom teachers. The average teaching experience is 15 years, with 41 percent of teachers having advanced degrees and approximately 130 teachers being nationally board certified. A current total of 58 classroom teachers have obtained the North Carolina AIG certification. A minority of administrators, instructional facilitators, and literacy coaches have also obtained the AIG state certification. The school system does not employ full- or part-time gifted specialists for pull-out classes. Cluster grouping of AIG students within the regular education classroom is utilized by the system. The school system involved in the program evaluation does employ a full-time AIG-certified director of gifted education.

The district in this study is a blend of urban, suburban, and rural communities, with a wealth of agricultural resources as well as technical industry. Diversity is evident in the economy of the region, where business and industry typify the southern suburban section of the county, urban life prevails at the center of the county, and rural farmland abounds in the northern section. The county population is estimated to be 146,384 and is one of the top five population growth counties in North Carolina. Currently the district maintains 17 elementary school sites, 7 middle school sites, 5 high schools, 2 early college sites, 2 International Baccalaureate sites, and 2 alternative sites. The average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score is 1045, which compares to an average score of 1026 for North Carolina and an average score of 1017 for the nation. The student population consists of 88.4 percent Regular Education Program, 11.6 percent Exceptional Children's Program, 4.5 percent English as a Second Language Program, 9.7 percent AIG Program, 45.7 percent College Prep Program, 48.7 percent Tech Prep Program, and 3.7

percent International Baccalaureate Program. The student population data for the school system by ethnicity are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Student Ethnicity Population Data

Ethnicity	Percentage
Caucasian	71.43
African American	14.37
Hispanic	9.10
Asian	2.50
American Indian	0.21
Other	2.40
Economically disadvantaged	35

Note. $N = 21,395$.

Data for the school district involved in the program evaluation indicated that AIG students are not performing in the top 25 percent of all systems in the state. Overall student reading and mathematics end-of-grade test data rank the school system in the top 20 percent of schools in the state. Student SAT scores rank the school system in the top 10 districts in the state (P. Schiffman, personal communication, August 20, 2008). The population of identified gifted students in the public school system to be evaluated has not shown consistent academic growth in reading and/or mathematics, as measured by the North Carolina state-mandated summative assessment and as evidenced by trend data. Table 2 displays the growth data for the gifted population evaluated using trend data over the previous 3 school years in reading. Table 3 displays the growth trend data in mathematics for the gifted population over the previous 3 school years. For the following

table, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) identifies a year's worth of growth by an increase in scale score of 3–5 points. The years in boldface indicate year's growth based on the needed point gains identified by NCDPI.

Table 2

Reading End-of-Grade Scale Score Trend Data

School	Grade 3			Grade 4			Grade 5		
	05–06	06–07	07–08	05–06	06–07	07–08	05–06	06–07	07–08
1			351.5	261.8	263.8	356.8	264.5	263.6	359.3
2		255		264	264	360.6	265.1	269	357.5
3		258.5		266.6	266.4	359.7	262	266.1	361.1
4			360	267.8	270	353.5	261	268.5	361.5
5				267		343.8	264.6	265.7	363.9
6			349	263.8	263	362.3	266.3	266.8	356.7
7				265	264.1	360.9	265.4	266.4	360.4
8			354	263.3	263.8	357.7	267.7	266.1	362.2
9		262	357	263.7	264	361.3	266	269.3	361.7
10				262.7	265.5	362.5	265.8	266	363.1
11		256	349	265.6	265.5	359	260	267	360.5
12				270	266.7	358.6	270	269	366.8
13				264.8	266.1	358.5	268	268.8	367.7
14				263	266	361	266.7	265	362
15				263.3	263.7	356	266.2	267.4	361.2
16				260.5	267.5		270.3	266.5	368
17		256.1	348	264.8	265.3	359	267.3	267.4	363.1
District avg.		257.5	354	264.7	250.5	359.3	265.6	267	361.8

Note. Missing data indicates that there were no AIG-identified students tested in that grade for the identified school year. (P. Schiffman, personal communication, August 20, 2008).

Table 3

Mathematics End-of-Grade Scale Score Trend Data

School	Grade 3			Grade 4			Grade 5		
	05–06	06–07	07–08	05–06	06–07	07–08	05–06	06–07	07–08
1			361	331	365.3	362.3	364.5	362.9	365.5
2		355		364.1	360.8	359.8	366.1	365	364.5
3		361		363.8	364.6	366.5	365.9	366.6	364.4
4			367.5	363.2	369	363.8	361	367.6	369.1
5				359.7		367	362.9	362	364.5
6			357	365	360.5	366	369.6	372.8	368.4
7				363.7	365.4	366	365.2	367.7	368.3
8			359		361.8	363	363.4	366.7	367.1
9		363	358.3	361.7	363.9	362.3	367.1	365	365.9
10				363.3	370	367.5	365.3	364.9	364.8
11		364	361	360.4	361.5	365	361	363.5	366
12				373	363.3	363	367.8	372	367.6
13				362.3	363.1	363	371	368.7	370.9
14				364.3	365	361.5	365.7	368	367.5
15				365.8	366.5	361	364.8	367.5	366.7
16				362.8	358.5		370	367.5	365
17		354	356		363.8	364.6	367.1	367.1	367.4
District avg.		359.7	360.1	381.6	363.9	363.7	365.9	366.8	367.8

Note. Missing data indicates that there were no AIG-identified students tested in that grade for the identified school year. (P. Schiffman, personal communication, August 20, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The current implementation of instructional practices and strategies has not had a consistent impact on student learning for the specific population of AIG-identified

students. The purpose of this program evaluation is to examine and describe the current AIG local program of a public school system in the northwest region of North Carolina at the elementary level and to do a gap analysis regarding the alignment of the current AIG program based on the NAGC standards. On the basis of the findings, recommendations are made for program next steps.

The accreditation approach is used to determine if the current gifted program and personnel are meeting the criteria outlined in the seven programming areas determined by the NAGC to exemplify gifted education programs. The seven categories evaluated are (a) program design, (b) program administration and management, (c) student identification, (d) curriculum and instruction, (e) socio-emotional guidance and counseling, (f) professional development, and (g) program evaluation. The benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of the gifted program are the criteria for program evaluation and assessment and guidelines for program design and development. Recommendations are made regarding the minimum requirements necessary for high-quality educational programming designed to meet the needs of gifted students.

A program action-logic model (Figure 1) is also used as a systematic and visual way to collect, analyze, and provide data. The model was developed primarily as an evaluation tool that describes logical links among program resources, activities, outputs, and audiences as well as short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes related to a specific identified need. According to McLaughlin and Jordan (1999), the model was originally a tool designed for identifying performance measures. It is also beneficial as a tool to guide project planning, documentation, and reporting as well as program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

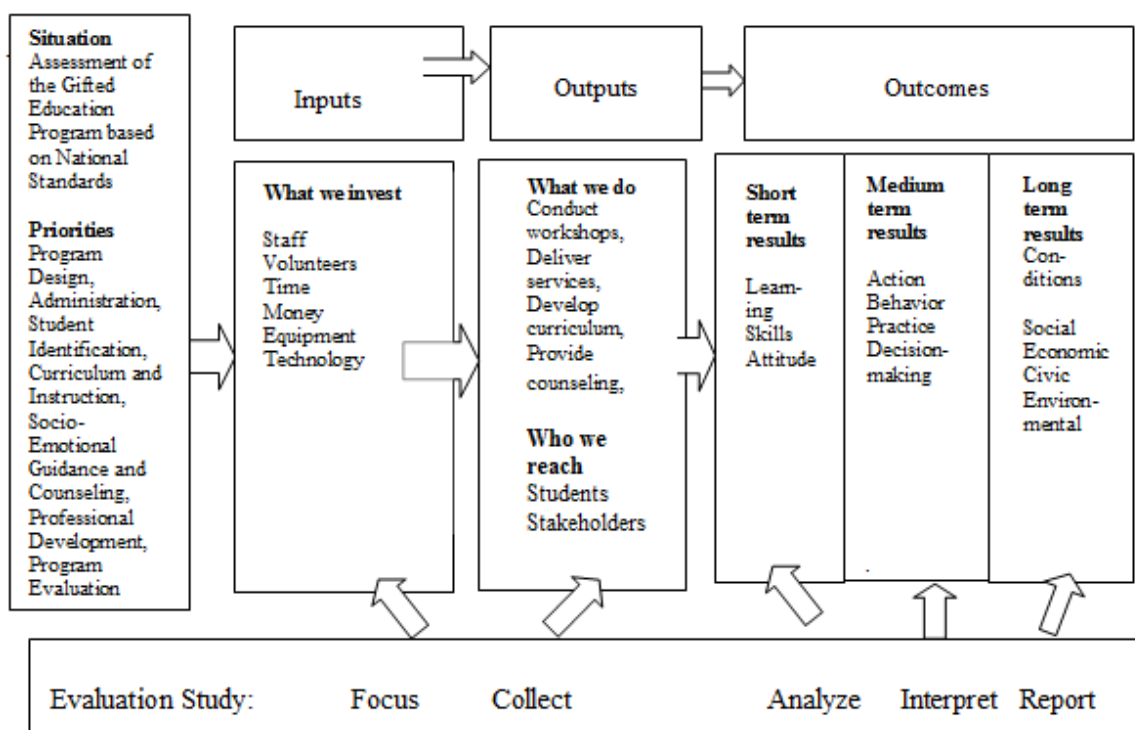


Figure 1. Program action-logic model. (McLaughlin & Jordan, p.56).

This model has been called *program theory* (Weiss, 1998) or the program's *theory of action* (Patton, 1997). According to Bickman's writings on program theory, it is a "plausible, sensible model of how a program is supposed to work" (1987, p. 5). Millar, Simeone and Carvevale indicate that "Planning a course of action, such as managing a program or charting a course of policy, generally implies some sort of logic model" (2001, p. 73). This will enable all program stakeholders to learn about and use information for the continual improvement of the district gifted education program.

Program Evaluation

The literature on AIG program evaluation is minimal. According to the data by the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted (VanTassel-Baska, 2006), out of a survey of all states with legislation addressing services to AIG students, only eight states had conducted a statewide evaluation of these programs in the last 7 years. Johnsen

(2000) found that there were only 15 evaluation reports in the gifted literature during the past 10 years that included a program evaluation and results. Tomlinson and Callahan (1994) stated that “educational accountability is a popular topic in political circles, but in practice, effective evaluation in school programs is sporadic at best” (p. 46).

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction commissioned a Task Force on Academically Gifted Education in November 1993, at the direction of the General Assembly. The task force published its recommendations in March 1994. Nine model sites were chosen to pilot changes in the guidelines and requirements of programs serving gifted students in North Carolina. In January 1996, the General Assembly passed State Statute 115C-150.5 to 115C-150.8 to establish Article 9B, which re-created gifted education in North Carolina to reflect the recommendations in the task force report and the planning process developed by the nine model sites. According to the North Carolina Department of Public Schools, each school system has autonomy and flexibility to develop a local plan for the identification of educational processes for AIG students pertinent to the diversity of each system’s specific student population. The local plan is a comprehensive description of the identification processes and the service options available to the students in the specific school systems. It also encompasses: staff development; involvement of school, parents, and community; personnel and job expectations for those implementing the plan; procedures to resolve disagreements; a K-2 nurturing component and defined enrichment activities; measurable objectives aligned with curricula and evaluation of improved student performance; and program evaluation. The definition that will be used for this program evaluation will be the definition provided by the Task Force Membership responsible for creating the standards: “Gifted

education programming is a coordinated and comprehensive structure of informal and formal services provided on a continuing basis intended to effectively nurture gifted learners” (Landrum & Shaklee, 2000, p. xii).

The authors of the NAGC standards were guided by the following principles:

1. Standards are observable aspects of educational programming and are directly connected to the continuous growth and development of gifted learners.
2. Standards represent professional consensus on critical practice in gifted education that almost everyone is likely to find acceptable.
3. Standards should encourage but not dictate approaches of high quality.
4. Standards represent both minimal program outcomes as well as standards for excellence (Landrum & Shaklee, 2000, p.11).

Research Questions

On the basis of the seven essential criteria of gifted educational programming written by the NAGC, this program evaluation focused on the following questions:

1. How well does the gifted education program meet the National Standards?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholder groups regarding the gifted education program?

Significance of the Study

Within the study, the researcher presents a better understanding of the history of gifted education, the origin and validation of the Gifted Education National Standards based on research, and the characteristics of gifted learners and educational best practice for teaching gifted learners. The program evaluation helps to illuminate ongoing best practice as well as to determine gap areas that allow opportunity for improvement. The

NAGC standards are based on research that identifies best practice in gifted education programming. Adherence to the standards enables educators to provide gifted learners with a precise framework for successful learning.

Limitations of the Study

The data collected are specific to the gifted education program evaluated. The findings cannot be generalized to other gifted education programs within the northwest region of North Carolina. Other variables, such as parent education levels, class size, attendance, or principal experience level, were not considered.

Delimitations of the Study

This research focused on six randomly-selected elementary schools within the district studied. The criteria for exemplary gifted education standards were determined by NAGC.

Brief Methodology

The methodology utilized was a stratified random sample to identify the strengths and opportunities for improvement within the gifted education program evaluated. Data collection included a survey for students, teachers, and administrators. A simple random sample was utilized to determine survey participants to include the socioeconomic and geographic (rural, urban, and suburban) areas of the district. Additional data were collected involving classroom observations from randomly-selected elementary classrooms serving AIG-identified students within each of the three areas of the district. The Classroom Observation Scale-Revised (COS-R), developed by the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary (VanTassel-Baska & Feng, 2004), was the instrument used for classroom observation data collection. Group interviews involved

using the questions from the student, teacher, and administrator surveys using a semi structured format. The intent of the design was to gather information within certain parameters using open-ended questions. This qualitative design instrument was used to allow participants to bring to the surface issues that might otherwise stay hidden.

Evidence gathered from the AIG department provided additional data to address specific areas of the standards.

Summary

This K-5 program evaluation revealed program strengths as well as gaps in the current gifted education program relative to the National Standards for Gifted Education. Each of the seven categories within the standards was evaluated. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed to determine strengths as well as opportunities for improvement in the current gifted education program. Stakeholder focus group interviews were utilized to gather data, in addition to the analysis of surveys completed by randomly-selected students, educators, and parents from the three distinct geographical areas within the district. Additional documents were secured to address specific areas of the standards. Successful completion of the program evaluation enabled illumination of focus areas that revealed gaps to be addressed. The program evaluation was made available to stakeholders of the school system as well as the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Since 1961, North Carolina has had legislation in place that governs gifted education. In 1974, the legislation identified gifted and handicapped children as special-needs children. In 1977, Chapter 927 in the North Carolina Session Laws brought in a system of educational opportunities for all children requiring special education. In 1983, in Chapter 247 of the North Carolina Session Laws, the program title was changed from “Gifted and Talented” to “Academically Gifted.” At this time, it was legislated that the student’s gifted educational program be defined with an Individual Education Plan or a Group Education Plan. In 1993, in Chapter 321, Section 134, of the North Carolina Session Laws, it was required that the State Board of Education take another look at the state’s laws, rules, and policies concerning the education of the AIG student. In 1996, new legislation was passed that resulted in Article 9B. Article 9B provided a state definition of AIG students. It also provided a requirement for Local Education Agencies to develop 3-year local plans with specific components to address the needs of gifted learners. The components consisted of screening, identification and placement, program service options, program evaluation, professional development, roles and responsibilities, community involvement, and procedure to disagree. The local plans must be approved by local school boards and sent to the State Board of Education and the NCDPI for review and feedback. Article 9B is the current legislation that mandates identification and services for gifted education in grades K-12.

In 1996, NAGC president Carolyn M. Callahan commissioned a task force to study the possibility of developing pre-K-12 educational programming standards for gifted education (Landrum & Shaklee, 2001). The purpose of these standards was to

assist local school districts in examining the quality of their current programming for gifted learners (Landrum et al., 2001).

Reis and McCoach (2000) stated that any discussion of the issue of gifted underachievement should begin with a definition. Dowdall and Colangelo (1982) described three underlying themes in the definition of gifted underachievement:

1. Underachievement as a discrepancy between potential achievement and actual achievement.
2. Underachievement as a discrepancy between predicted achievement and actual achievement.
3. Underachievement as a failure to develop or use potential.

Rimm (1997) defined *underachievement* as follows: “Underachievement is a discrepancy between a child’s school performance and some index of the child’s ability. If children are not working to ability in school, they are underachieving” (p. 18). Establishment of a definition of gifted underachievement makes it easier to explore the source or causes and to describe the common characteristics. Research does not identify one single event or aspect that contributes to underachievement in gifted students. The causes of underachievement are complex (Fehrenbach, 1993) and a pattern that develops in elementary school often continues throughout the student’s time spent in school. Factors contributing to this developing pattern are cited in the literature. Gallagher (1991) and Rimm suggested that the origins of underachievement could be divided into two areas: environmental factors (school) and personal/family factors. They added that the environmental factors appear to stem from two areas: the school and the student’s peer group. According to Rimm (1995), an anti-intellectual atmosphere that focuses on

athletics and social status, and houses a nonsupportive attitude toward giftedness, can also contribute to underachievement. Berndt (1999) completed a study that measured students' grades and behavior at the beginning of school and again at the end of the school year. The study found that students seemed to more closely resemble their friends at the end of the school year than at the beginning of the school year. Underachieving students often indicate that peer influence is the most significant factor blocking their achievement (Reis & McCoach, 2000).

Program Design

According to Knowling (2002), “most leaders love to make strategy, but it is vision and values that spawn strategic action. The absence of a vision will doom any strategy, especially a strategy for change” (p. 129). According to Davis and Rimm (2005) and Renzulli (1986), a high-quality, regular education classroom curriculum should always be the foundation for the learning activities that are provided in an exemplary gifted and talented program. Purcell and Eckert (2006) established seven traits of a high-quality comprehensive program design: (a) derivation of the services, (b) comprehensiveness, (c) practicality, (d) consistency, (e) clarity, (f) availability, and (g) continuation, extension, and evaluation. A comprehensive program design must demonstrate connections between what is provided in the district, classrooms, the local and state curriculum standards, as well as gifted program guidelines and regulations. The design must describe the current program services as well as opportunities for expansion across content areas and grade-levels. Program design must account for a broad range of talents (academic, artistic, creative, leadership), consider socio-emotional as well as academic needs, and address grouping processes (Purcell & Eckert).

Curriculum and Instruction

Reis (1998) stated that students who are not challenged in school actually demonstrate integrity and courageous behavior when they decide not to do the work assigned that is actually below their ability. Reis called this rebellion “dropping out with dignity” (p. 19), which refers to some gifted students’ underachievement as an impact of an academically inappropriate curriculum that does not engage or motivate students. The educational intervention of most benefit within the program design is established within part-time or full-time special classrooms for gifted underachievers (Butler-Por, 1993; Fehrenbach, 1993). In the special classrooms, the curriculum is altered to create an environment for achievement that is not the traditional classroom organization. Research suggests (Colangelo, Kerr, Christensen, & Maxey, 1993; Reis, Herbert, Diaz, Maxfield, & Ratley, 1995) that students who are involved in extracurricular activities are less likely to become underachievers. Additional research (Reis et al., 1995) conveys information that boredom may also contribute to underachievement. The results of Reis et al.’s 4-year study with gifted high school students who were identified as underachievers suggested that boredom with the regular education curriculum in elementary and middle school contributed to underachievement in high school. Whitmore (1980) suggested that “the problem of gifted students who lack motivation to participate in school or to strive to excel academically is in most cases, a product of a mismatch between the child’s motivational characteristics and the opportunities provided in the classroom” (p. 67). Robertson (1991) cited school-related factors, such as the failure of the school to address the needs of gifted students and their learning styles, as a link to gifted dropouts. According to Moon (2001), the teacher in the classroom is a natural researcher who

determines the process to bridge existing gaps between research and practice. According to Barber (2007), in the conclusion regarding the world's best-performing schools, nothing is as important in schools as the following three principles:

- (1) The quality of the educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers,
- (2) the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction and,
- (3) achieving universally high outcomes is only possible by putting in place mechanisms to ensure that schools deliver high-quality instruction to every child (p. 40).

Sadwoski (1987) found in his case study of gifted dropouts that (a) There was an indication of instability in the student's home environment, (b) alcohol and drugs were part of the student's home environment, (c) gifted dropouts shared a lack of interest and motivation in high school, (d) students shared a negative and rebellious attitude toward authority and school, (e) gifted dropouts exhibited poor social adjustment as well as development of poor peer relationships, and (f) there was a lack of school and home communication and a lack of counseling services provided. Table 4 defines the profiles of gifted and talented students regarding success and school dropout (Betts & Neihart, 1988).

Whitmore (1980) provided a list of seven significant traits to identify the gifted underachiever: (a) poor test performance; (b) incomplete or poorly done work; (c) achievement data at or below grade-level in one or all of the basic content areas, including reading, language arts, or mathematics; (d) superior mastery of concepts when interested; (e) gaps between oral and written work; (f) a wide range of interests and expertise in the area of investigation and research; and (g) a tendency to withdraw or to be aggressive in the classroom, that is, low self-esteem.

Table 4

Profiles of Gifted and Talented Students

	Type 1: Successful	Type IV: Dropouts
Feelings and attitudes	Boredom; dependent; positive self-concept; anxious; guilty about failure; extrinsic motivation; responsible for others; diminish feelings of self and rights to their emotion; self-critical	Resentment; angry; depressed; explosive; poor self-concept; defensive; burnout
Behaviors	Perfectionist; high achiever; seeks teacher approval and structure; non-risk taking; does well academically; accepts and conforms; dependent	Has intermittent attendance; doesn't complete tasks; pursues outside interests; "spaced out" in class; is self-abusive; isolates self; is creative; criticizes self and others; does inconsistent work; is disruptive, acts out; seems average or below; is defensive
Needs	To see deficiencies; to be challenged; to take risks; assertiveness skills; autonomy; help with boredom; appropriate curriculum	An individualized program; intense support; alternatives; counseling; remedial help with skills
Adult and peer perceptions of type	Loved by teachers; admired by peers; loved and accepted by parents	Adults are angry with them; peers are judgmental; seen as loners, dropouts, dopers, or airheads; reject them and ridicule; seen as dangerous and rebellious
Identification	Grade point average; achievement test; IQ test; teacher nomination	Review cumulative folder; interview earlier teachers; discrepancy between IQ and demonstrated achievement; incongruities and inconsistencies in performance; creativity testing; gifted peer recommendation; demonstrated performance in nonschool areas
Home support	Independence; ownership; freedom to make choices; time for personal interests; risk-taking experiences	Seek counseling for family
School support	Accelerated and enriched curriculum; time for personal interests; compacted learning experiences; opportunities to be with intellectual peers; development of independent learning skills; in-depth studies; mentorships; college and career counseling	Diagnostic testing; group counseling for young students; nontraditional study skills; in-depth studies; mentorship; alternative out-of-classroom learning experiences; GED

Source: From "Profile of the Gifted and Talented" (Betts & Neihart, 1988, pp. 250-1)

According to VanTassel-Baska and Johnsen (2007), “factors reported that influence a gifted student’s academic underachievement are stable interests, advanced content, identification that is linked to the goals of the gifted program, and families that support the student talents” (p. 192). Herbert (2002) said that

in enriched teaching and learning, teachers acknowledge that learning is more effective when youngsters enjoy what they are doing, and therefore, learning experiences are designed with concern for student enjoyment. In addition, learning is more meaningful when content and process are learned within the context of a real problem. Therefore, attention is focused on opportunities that personalize student choice in selecting a problem to pursue, the relevance of the problem for individual students and authentic strategies for addressing the problem. (p. 136)

Whitmore (1980) described three types of strategies that have been found to be effective in working with underachieving behaviors in students:

1. Supportive strategies or techniques that allow students to feel they are part of a family versus a factory.
2. Intrinsic strategies that incorporate the idea of student self-concepts as learners are tied to their desire to achieve academically (Purkey & Novak, 1984, as cited in whitmore).
3. Remedial strategies that effective teachers utilize to reverse underachievement by recognizing that each student has specific strengths and weaknesses as well as social, emotional, and intellectual needs.

Socio-emotional Guidance and Counseling

Interventions that are intended to reverse gifted underachievement fall into two basic categories: counseling and instructional intervention (Butler-Por, 1993; Dowdall & Colangelo, 1982). Socio-emotional guidance and counseling interventions focus on changing the personal or family dynamics that may contribute to a student’s underachievement. Counseling interventions may involve individual, group, or family counseling (Jeon, 1990).

Underachievement is a combination of a variety of factors. Baum, Renzulli, and

Herbert (1995) corroborated in their study that these factors are emotional issues, social and behavior problems, inappropriate curricula, and learning deficits. These issues are a result of student needs that are not fulfilled or addressed before the pattern of underachievement can be reversed. Figure 2 displays the prism metaphor (Baum et al., 1995), which explains the transformation that can take place for underachieving students as they become achieving students. This metaphor reinforces the identified needs outlined in the NAGC standards for gifted program evaluation.

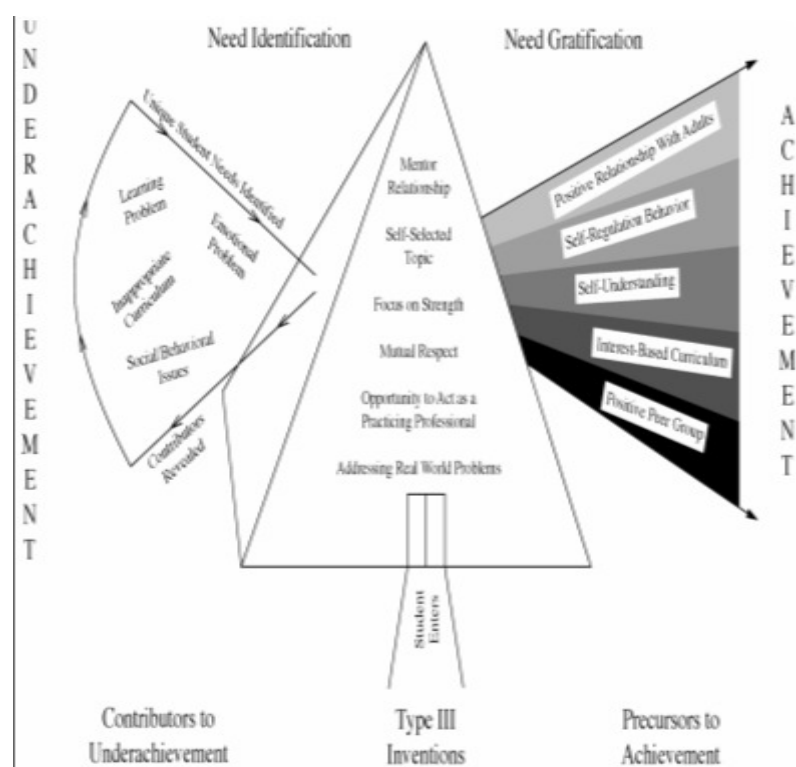


Figure 2. The prism metaphor for reversing underachievement. From *The Prism Metaphor: A New Paradigm for Reversing Underachievement* (NRC/GT Collaborative Research Study No. CRS95310), by S. N. Baum, J. S. Renzulli, and T. Herbert, 1995, Storrs: University of Connecticut, National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. Copyright 1995 by Collaborative Research Study. Reprinted with permission.

Moon (2001) cited that the most common counseling need of the gifted population is support in coping with the stress associated with growing up as a gifted child in a world that does not always recognize, understand, or welcome giftedness.

There is substantial evidence that the breakdown in addressing some of the affective needs of gifted children contributes to academic underachievement, the complexity of peer relationships, and other adjustment issues (Baker, 1996; Ford, 1993; Gross, 1993; Janos, Robinson, & Lunneborg, 1989; Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002).

Student Identification

Reis and McCoach (2000) pointed out that the criteria used to identify giftedness vary from state to state and district to district; therefore a standardized test may not directly reflect the actual school experience, making classroom grades unreliable and subjective. In support of the NAGC exemplary standards for gifted identification, Ford (1996), VanTassel-Baska, Patton, and Prillaman (1991), and Coleman (2003) stated that identification should recognize the different ways in which students display giftedness using multiple criteria for identification. Measures such as student observation while interacting with a variety of learning experiences (Passow & Frasier, 1996) and sources, which may include test scores, grades, interviews, performance tasks, and recommendations, are recommended for identification of gifted students, although research suggests that traditional sources that include standardized IQ tests, teacher recommendations, and parent interviews are not sufficient in the identification of minority and low-income students (Naglieri & Ford, 2003). The identification process should be reviewed occasionally to make sure that it is valid for the population being served and that it does drive the specific service options provided. The identification process is the first step in the process of ensuring that students who need gifted education services are recognized and receive appropriate services to facilitate academic growth in school (Coleman, 2001).

Program Administration and Management

Landrum, Cox, and Evans (2001) stated that “appropriate gifted education programming must include the establishment of a systematic means of developing, implementing, and managing services” (p. 15). Research reveals that without obtaining training in gifted education, educators are not effective in meeting the specific needs of gifted learners (Tomlinson & Callahan, 1994). These data infer that there is a need for specific aptitude that is unique to gifted education. Effective gifted education programs must employ an administrator who has a strong knowledge base in gifted education and is an advocate in obtaining support from the district and community (Delcourt & Evans, 1994).

Professional Development

A substantial amount of evidence from varying research suggests that how teachers perform in the classroom and the instructional approaches they utilize significantly affect the degree of successful learning for students (Kitano, Montgomery, VanTassel-Baska, & Susan, 2008). According to Davidson, Davidson, and Vanderkam (2004), “teachers of gifted classes also receive little training for these positions. A 2003 survey found that twenty-nine states offer certification or endorsement in gifted education and in four of these states that certification is optional” (p. 69). According to Sanders and Rivers (1996), ineffective teachers over 3 years had a depressed effect on student achievement in mathematics by as much as 54% for all students, including gifted learners. Data from the McKinsey Report (Barber, 2007) indicated that students placed with poorly trained teachers in the primary years for several years in a row suffered an educational loss that was, for the most part, irreversible. Emerick (1992) stated that

participants in his study on underachievement indicated that a specific teacher had the greatest impact on reversing their underachievement. Research has confirmed a positive effect when teachers use key instructional practices, such as critical thinking and metacognition, for student learning in mathematics and science with elementary and middle school students (Emerick). Gifted education literature indicates that teacher behavior is the direct link to differentiated programs and services for the gifted student population (Wenglinsky, 2000). Research verifies that teachers who cultivate their teaching techniques obtain greater success with students than those who remain dormant. Teachers of gifted education follow this pattern when they are professionally prepared to meet the needs of gifted students (Hanson & Feldhusen, 1994). Planned professional development for staff and parent groups is necessary to educate professionals and the general public about the need for gifted education programs. Data (Gallagher, 1981; Marland, 1972; Mitchell, 1984; Rubernzer & Twaite, 1979) have shown continually the ambivalent attitudes and erroneous beliefs regarding gifted programs. Additional research compiled by Carter and Hamilton (1984) showed that parents of gifted students, classroom teachers, and administrators want more professional development on topics such as the gifted curriculum, characteristics of gifted learners, and the identification process. Dettmer, Landrum, and Miller (2006) agreed that professional development objectives are needed to prepare all school personnel to interact with gifted learners and are essential to educating this specific group of students.

Program Evaluation

Callahan (1986) and Carter and Hamilton (1985) emphasized the importance of inclusion of the gifted program decision makers in the evaluation of gifted programs.

They also stressed the importance of a common approach to evaluation of essential criteria or components of the gifted education program. These essential components should be reflective of the standards for excellence in gifted programming that have been clarified by the NAGC and include program design, program administration and management, curriculum and instruction, student identification, professional development, social and emotional guidance and counseling, and program evaluation (Landrum & Shaklee, 2001). Renzulli (1975) indicated the need to go beyond judging a program as accomplished or not accomplished; rather, Renzulli stressed the importance of helping to identify the areas of the program that are functioning successfully and that are likely to contribute to the overall success of the gifted program.

Summary

A review of the literature does support that effective evaluations of gifted programs continue to be sporadic and lack evaluation designs and procedures that are robust, meaningful, thorough, and well-funded (Tomlinson & Callahan, 1994). The rare and nonsystematic nature of gifted program evaluations is also confirmed by Silky and Reading (1992). The purpose of a gifted program evaluation is not to determine the need for such a program; rather, it is a critical piece of assessment to determine the strengths and opportunities for improvement within the current program that are impacting the learning of students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The continuation of appropriate services for gifted learners in poor economic times may depend on precise planning and comprehensive evaluation that validates all aspects and outcomes of services provided, in addition to providing data for decision makers to improve program effectiveness and the cost and benefits of programs (Dettmer, 1985; Renzulli, 1984). The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine and describe the current AIG program of a public school system in the northwest region of North Carolina at the elementary level and to do a gap analysis regarding the alignment of the current AIG program based on the NAGC standards. The research questions addressed in the program evaluation were as follows:

1. How well does the gifted education program meet the National Standards?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholder groups regarding the gifted education program?

The program methodology used involved surveys of students, parents, teachers, and administrators to gain input regarding the perception of the current Gifted Education Program and adherence to the NAGC standards. Focus interview groups were held to gain deeper insight into stakeholder perceptions of the program and to uncover any hidden perceptions that were not discovered through the survey data. Classroom observations were done using the COS-R.

Research Design and Rationale

The *accreditation approach* was used with this program evaluation. This approach requires institutional process quality, linking program quality with process quality. Accreditation is an integrated part of an autonomous quality assurance system.

The purpose of using this approach was to strengthen quality awareness and quality culture, integrate systematic demonstration of accountability, and support program transparency. A program action-logic model was used as systematic and visual ways to collect, analyze, and provide data. The model was used as an evaluation tool to describe logical links among program resources, activities, outputs, and audiences as well as short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes related to a specific identified need, according to the NAGC standards.

The research design used qualitative data to answer and describe the current AIG program relative to the NAGC standards. Surveys and interview groups allowed the researcher to analyze and determine current stakeholder perceptions of the program based on each of the seven areas of the standards. Interview groups enabled a deeper perspective to be revealed, utilizing follow-up questions from the survey data obtained. The COS-R data provided observed quantitative data on classroom practices that were described relative to the standards involving curriculum and instruction as well as areas addressed by the standards in program design. Permission to use was obtained from the authors (Appendixes B). Evidence was collected to evaluate alignment to the standards in the areas of identification criteria, staff development, and program administration and management. Each of the standards was addressed as indicated in Appendixes K and L.

Research Question 1, which pertains to the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the current AIG program, was answered with the data gathered through classroom observations, surveys, and documented evidence collection. Research Question 2, regarding stakeholder perceptions of the current AIG program, was answered through surveys and interview groups.

Participants

The elementary schools for this program evaluation were a simple random selection of two schools from each area (urban, suburban, and rural) of the district. After selection of each school, the building principal was notified of the school's selection and was provided information (Appendix C) regarding next steps. All administrators, parents, and teachers at each school selected were surveyed to obtain perception data on the program. AIG K-5 students at each school were surveyed to obtain their perceptions of the program. Randomly-selected AIG parents from each school were invited to participate in one interview group per each area of the district. Two teachers per school who were currently teaching AIG students were randomly-selected for the classroom observations (Appendix D). Each teacher participated in one 45-min observation and one follow-up debriefing session with this researcher following the observation.

Instruments

Three surveys were constructed using the NAGC standards as the basis for questions posed to each participant group. Surveys were reviewed by peers for validation and reliability purposes. The surveys were put into electronic format for participant input.

Interview group participants were randomly selected to gather in-depth responses to specific survey questions as well as to uncover any additional perceptions of the AIG program that may have not been uncovered through the survey process. An interview group was selected from each area of the district for a total of three interview group sessions.

The original version of the COS-R was the Classroom Observation Form, which was developed by Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Dr. Linda Avery, Dr. Jeanne Struck, Dr.

Annie Feng, Dr. Bruce Bracken, Diann Drummond, and Tamra Stambaugh at the College of William and Mary School of Education Center for Gifted Education. Research does support that teachers of gifted learners are strong in many categories of teaching; they have opportunities for improvement in the area of differentiation practices (VanTassel-Baska, 2006). The field of gifted education has been innovative in moving forward classroom practices such as inquiry-based learning, critical and creative thinking, higher order questioning, and the use of various curriculum materials, rather than explicit use of textbooks (Tomlinson & Callahan, 1992). Regardless of these innovative practices, there is minimal evidence to indicate that school districts systematically evaluate student gains for gifted learners using appropriate learning measures (Avery & VanTassel, 2001). The COS-R provides direct evidence of the need for specific emphases in program development and professional development. This instrument examines 25 items in six clusters. The cluster areas are curriculum planning and delivery, accommodations for individual differences, problem solving, critical thinking strategies, creative thinking strategies, and research strategies. Each cluster includes sets of domain-specific indicators to provide the observer with exemplary examples of observable classroom behaviors. The indicators for each content area were developed for each behavioral item and then reviewed by content specialists to connect them to state and National Standards. Each item on the scale is rated as to the level of effectiveness. Three levels are utilized, with a rubric description per level. Feng (2001) established the content validity of the COS-R instrument and calculated it at .97, and the interrater reliability using Cohen's kappa was calculated at .83. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1998) stated that classroom observation allows for the recording and description of behavior as it occurs and provides

information regarding the processes and procedures teachers use in lesson delivery as well as the processes and procedures students use in completing assignments. This researcher received one-on-one training in the use of the COS-R instrument.

Procedures

Two schools from each identified area of the study were randomly selected to participate in the AIG program evaluation. Administrators of the selected schools were notified of the AIG program evaluation and its processes and timeline in July. All AIG students in the selected schools were invited to participate in the student surveys. Teachers of AIG students received an electronic link and were asked to complete the AIG teacher survey during the month of August. Parents of AIG students received information (Appendix E) about the student survey as well as the parent survey (Appendix F) in August. Students also utilized an electronic version of the survey. Parent permission forms to allow students to participate in the student survey were due back to the school in the last week of August. Student surveys were administered during the first week of September. Parent e-mail addresses were obtained to distribute the parent survey electronically. Families without e-mail access received a survey with return postage through the U.S. Postal Service. Survey responses utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses were converted to percentages for the purpose of analysis. All parent survey data were collected during the months of September and October.

Interview groups from each of the three identified areas consisted of randomly-selected AIG parents, and interviews were held during the month of September following survey analysis for trends and issues needing additional clarification. Each interview

group session was held in one of the three areas identified for this study, and interviews were conducted by the researcher. Sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed to identify perceptions of the AIG program and the standards. The data were provided in narrative form to present topics of strength and areas of concern regarding the current AIG program.

The researcher randomly selected classroom teachers of AIG students for observation. Teachers were notified and scheduled for a classroom observation. Classroom observations were 45 min in length and involved utilization of the COS-R checklist forms as well as scripting of the lesson. Teachers were provided with copies of the observation and scripting. Follow-up sessions were held with each teacher to review forms and provide any needed clarification of the observation and/or forms. Classroom observations and follow-up sessions with each individual teacher began in September and were completed by the end of October. Permission to use the COS-R was obtained by this researcher (Appendix H). The observation data allowed for triangulation with the interview group and survey data collection. According to Gall, Gall & Borg, *Triangulation* is the “process of using multiple data-collecting methods” (2007, p. 464). This process was used to ensure validity of the qualitative data by investigating the scope of the findings and their relationship across variants.

Documents were collected to provide data for specific analysis according to the NAGC standards’ definition of exemplary practice. Certain standards lend themselves to confirmation of exemplary practice through verification of process documents such as utilizing multiple methods for AIG student identification.

Limitations

Survey data provided exclusive perceptions of the program from stakeholders participating in the AIG program. Participants entered the program at varying times, which may have impacted their knowledge and perception.

Interview group sessions were limited to 1 hour to contain discussion to the standards and perceptions of the AIG program and steer participants away from concerns that were personal in nature. Classroom observations were arranged in advance due to the specific process of using the COS-R.

Delimitations

The research was focused on six randomly-selected elementary schools within the district studied. The criteria for exemplary gifted education standards were determined by NAGC.

Summary

The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine and describe the current AIG program of a public school system in the northwest region of North Carolina at the elementary level and to do a gap analysis regarding the alignment of the current AIG program based on the NAGC standards. Recommendations for next steps to align the current gifted educational program with the NAGC standards are provided based on the data obtained. Instrumentation included stakeholder surveys, interview groups, classroom observation using the COS-R, and program documents. Triangulation of the data was used for validation purposes. Procedures and an evaluation timeline were developed. Limitations and delimitations of the study were addressed.

Chapter 4: Findings

The current implementations of instructional practices and strategies have not had a consistent impact on student learning for the specific population of AIG-identified students. The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine and describe the current AIG local program of a public school system in the northwest region of North Carolina at the elementary level and to do a gap analysis regarding the alignment of the current AIG program based on the NAGC standards. Six elementary schools in the school system serving AIG students were the focus of this study.

Data collected in this program evaluation were acquired from a variety of sources, including the following:

1. Electronic surveys designed with a Likert scale, examining the perception of the NAGT standards implementation, administered to teachers, administrators (Appendix G), parents of AIG students (Appendix H), and AIG students (Appendix I) at the six school sites
2. Teacher observations with 11 randomly-selected teachers of AIG students, 2 teachers at each randomly-selected site, with only one school having a single classroom teacher working with an AIG cluster of students
3. Interview groups, one from each geographical area of the district
4. Analysis of documents within the local AIG plan

Data reported in chapter 4 include responses to and analysis of the following research questions:

1. How well does the gifted education program meet the NAGT National Standards?

2. What are the perceptions of stakeholder groups regarding the gifted education program?

In exploring these questions, key components organized around the seven criteria, program design, program administration and management, socio-emotional guidance and counseling, student identification, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and program evaluation, were examined to determine their presence based on NAGT exemplary standards.

Interview group sessions were held in each of the three geographical areas of the district. Participants included parents and one student. Each session addressed the following questions:

1. Does the district have a comprehensive K-5 plan that includes policies and procedures for identification, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, formative and summative evaluation, support services, and parent involvement?
2. Do the gifted education programming staff distribute information regarding policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, etc.) to school personnel, parents, community members, and so on?
3. Is there an effective well-defined and implemented curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness provided to gifted learners?
4. Does the school district provide information annually in a variety of languages regarding the process for the nomination of students for gifted education

programming services?

5. Is there documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates of learning plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners?
6. Does information collected by the district address questions raised by all constituency groups and is it responsive to the needs of all stakeholders?

Interview Group A represented the rural portion of the district, Group B represented the urban portion of the district, and Group C represented the suburban portion of the district.

Group A focused most of their discussion on the lack of information communicated to them. They were adamant that identification procedures exist, but they were not sure how to obtain the information and if they could understand the information due to the use of what they referred to as “educational” language. A continual focus on the lack of understanding and a lack of connection between school and home to help with understanding was recorded. This group shared difficulties in finding information on the school Web site as well as a lack of brochures or general information for stakeholders regarding nomination and service information. Parents indicated a need for professional development in working with AIG students as many teachers are neither AIG certified nor do they have specific training to address the needs of this population of students. The group referred to the use of AIG school coordinators as an insufficient way for schools and parents to receive information. Two participants indicated that their schools’ AIG coordinators were very helpful in getting information out to stakeholders. They also saw a lack of administrative awareness of the needs of AIG students at the building level.

Group B indicated inadequate communication to parents and shared a lack of knowledge regarding the current AIG program. The perception in this group was that there are a very limited number of AIG students in this area of the district, so it is not focused on as much as the need to help struggling students who are not AIG students. The discussion continued to refer to the measures in place to help below-grade-level students and the lack of information or professional development regarding high-end achievers. They were unaware of any publications for parents to help with understanding the scope of the services or how students are identified as AIG. They indicated that this was one of the first times they had been asked to reflect on the issues raised in the questions during the interview. They indicated that while teachers try to focus on the needs of all students, in reality, the focus is more toward those students who are below grade-level.

Group C shared an understanding of identification procedures and service options and indicated that they felt very involved at the school level. They discussed formative and summative evaluations and indicated that data received are not AIG-specific, but rather, general to the grade-level curriculum. This is the only group that indicated that students are not aware of what AIG implicates or the impact of any specific service options. A need for more teacher preparation in working with gifted learners was discussed. They also indicated that while they have participated in surveys and data collection, they did not remember receiving the results of those surveys or if they had any impact regarding support or changes in policy for AIG.

Interview groups' responses reflected the frequency of themes recorded in open-ended interview sessions conducted in each of the three geographical locations.

Transcribed interviews were analyzed for theme occurrence; themes were identified and then counted for the number of times they surfaced.

Group A cited lack of a comprehensive program in 11 different reference points, followed in frequency by lack of teacher preparation, with 9, and lack of distributed information, with 8. Group B cited a lack of distributed information in 10 different reference points, followed by a lack of parent involvement, with 9, and a lack of teacher preparation, with 7. Group C cited a lack of teacher preparation in 8 different reference points, followed by a lack of distributed information, with 6, and a lack of information in a variety of languages, with 5.

Table 5

Frequency of Themes Recorded in Interview Group by Region

Theme	Geographical region		
	A	B	C
Lack of comprehensive PreK-12 program plan that includes policies for identification	11	5	2
Lack of procedures for service delivery	7	2	2
Lack of teacher preparation	9	7	8
Lack of parent involvement	7	9	2
Lack of distributed information	8	10	6
Lack of scope and sequence to address needs of AIG students	4	2	2
Lack of information in a variety of languages	3	0	5
Lack of documented instruction, accelerated rates of learning and plans for specific needs of AIG students	2	0	3
Lack of sharing information collected and its impact on policy	3	6	4
Total	54	41	34

Note. $N = 13$.

As evidenced in Table 5, each interview group indicated a lack of distributed information as one of their top three cited responses, and two groups indicated a lack of teacher preparation as one of their top cited responses.

Teacher observations involved two randomly-selected teachers of AIG students at two randomly-selected schools within each of the three geographical regions studied. A total of 78 AIG students were observed in 12 different elementary classrooms within the district using the COS-R instrument (Appendix J). Based on expectations gained from best practices in regular and gifted education classrooms, the tool was developed at the College of William and Mary to be used in all classrooms and in all subject areas. The focus of the tool is on the utilization of strategies that promote student learning and growth in the areas of higher order thinking, problem solving, and metacognition. The COS-R is comprised of a total of 25 items in six clusters. The items developed focus on key behaviors to be observed in each of the specific clusters. The minimum number of behaviors per cluster was three and the maximum was five. Table 6 illustrates the six clusters and the number of items observed in each cluster.

Table 6

<i>COS-R Number of Items per Cluster</i>	
Behaviors	No. of items
General teaching behaviors	
Curriculum planning and delivery	5
Differentiated teaching behaviors	
Accommodation for individual differences	4
Problem solving	3
Critical thinking strategies	4
Creative thinking strategies	4

The items on the instrument were rated regarding level of effectiveness. The three levels on the rating scale based on a defined rubric were utilized. Table 7 captures the data from the classroom observations. The two schools designated A are located in the rural area of the district, the schools designated B are located in the urban area, and the schools designated C are located in the suburban area.

Table 7

Classroom Observations Using the COS-R

Behavior	School	Score
Curriculum planning and delivery	A1	19/30
	A2	18/30
	B1	30/30
	B2	7/15
	C1	24/30
	C2	30/30
Accommodation for individual differences	A1	11/24
	A2	12/24
	B1	12/12
	B2	12/24
	C1	19/24
	C2	21/24

Table 7

(continued)

Behavior	School	Score
Problem solving	A1	3/18
	A2	11/18
	B1	18/18
	B2	6/9
	C1	18/18
	C2	14/18
Critical thinking strategies	A1	18/24
	A2	7/24
	B1	12/12
	B2	12/24
	C1	21/24
	C2	18/24
Creative thinking strategies	A1	16/24
	A2	4/24
	B1	6/12
	B2	9/24
	C1	21/24
	C2	21/24
Research strategies	A1	0/30
	A2	0/30
	B1	0/15
	B2	7/30
	C1	12/30
	C2	6/30

Score represents number of indicators observed over the total number possible.

The COS-R is one way to assess individual teacher performance regarding high-ability learners. The instrument is seen as a performance-based assessment of the teacher within the context of the actual learning environment. The teacher is the focus of the instrument, rather than the student. It is open-ended in that the teacher selects the content area and lesson to be taught. The form provides a benchmark, which can be used in assessment based on the expectations derived from best practice in a specific field. Teacher behavior is sampled using the classroom observation process and allows for teachers to prepare for the observation to reduce the level of threat often felt from traditional evaluation processes. Aggregation of the data across classrooms allows for a snapshot of current instructional practices that informs the program evaluation. Research suggests that while teachers working with gifted learners appear strong in many areas of quality teaching, they exhibit less success in areas that examine differentiation practices (VanTassel-Baska, 2004). Table 8 indicates combined and geographical area percentages obtained in each of the six categories of the COS-R teacher observation instrument. Area A includes the schools in the rural area, Area B includes schools in the urban area, and Area C includes schools in the suburban area.

Table 8

Combined and Geographical Area COS-R Percentages

Category	Mean (all)	Area A	Area B	Area C
Curriculum planning and delivery	84%	78%	82%	90%
Accommodation for individual differences	66%	48%	67%	83%
Problem solving	71%	39%	89%	89%
Critical thinking	67%	52%	67%	81%
Creative thinking	58%	42%	42%	88%
Research	15%	0%	16%	3%

Critical and creative thinking strategies were used less than would be expected in classrooms with gifted learners. There was little evidence of curriculum compacting and the use of accelerative strategies in the classroom. Individual rates of learning with direct accommodations were not evident for most gifted learners, but rather, accommodations were reserved for struggling learners. The use of whole-group instruction and discussion was observed, while the provision of opportunities or activities for students to accommodate individual differences through choice in material or task was observed in 1 of the 11 classrooms observed. The use of problem-solving behavior evident in most of the classrooms observed was that of brainstorming. Research was shown to be the most underutilized of the instrument categories, while curriculum planning and delivery proved to be the most observed category. The COS-R provided additional evidence of the need for specific emphasis in professional development in each of the categories, with direct attention on the categories of research, creative thinking, accommodation for individual differences, and critical thinking as priorities, based on sampling percentages across the district.

The William and Mary Classroom Observation Scales Revised Part 3 Student Observation were also used in each of the classroom observations. This portion of the instrument relates student responses to general classroom teacher behavior. It is aligned with the categories outlined in the teacher observation portion of the instrument. Table 9 summarizes the data from the student observation.

Table 9

COS-R Student Observation Data

Category	Most (>75%)	Many (50–75%)	Some (25–50%)	Few (<25%)	None	NA
General classroom behaviors	C	B	A			
Differentiation		C	A, B			
Problem solving		B, C	A			
Critical thinking			B, C	A		
Creative thinking		C	A, B			
Research strategies				B, C		A

Data indicate that the student behaviors observed did not indicate substantial variance among the geographical areas studied. Classroom student behaviors observed were consistent with the teacher behaviors utilized during the classroom visits.

One reason that these six schools were chosen is that they represent different types of environments within the school district. Two schools are located in the rural area of the district, two schools are located in the urban area, and two schools are located in the suburban part of the district. Therefore the survey results can be examined to determine if there are any clear patterns across the different areas in the district. Thus, in this section, data are included to represent these differences for educators, parents, and

students. Given the small sample sizes, it is important to be somewhat circumspect about reading too much into these differences, but if consistent differences were found across the three different types of respondents, this would be cause for concern.

The educators' views of how well the criteria are being met by area are presented in Table 10. The penultimate row in the table presents the average across all of the criteria. It can be seen that the suburban respondents generally had the most negative views, but the differences with the other two areas are not very large, and the other two areas had very similar views on average. Furthermore, there was not a consistent pattern on many issues. The suburban respondents had more positive views in three areas: Program Design 1.0 (levels of service are matched to the needs of gifted learners by providing a full continuum of options), Program and Administration 3.0 (the gifted education programming staff facilitate the dissemination of information regarding major policies and practices in gifted education to school personnel, parents, community members, etc.), and Curriculum and Instruction 2.2 (documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates of learning demonstrate plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners). In short, there is not much evidence of differences across areas, at least for educators.

Table 10

Mean Educator Responses by Geographical Area

Criteria	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Program Design 1.0	3.29	3.38	3.11
Program Design 2.0	2.96	2.92	2.61
Program Design 3.0	3.25	2.75	3.17
Program Design 3.1	3.92	3.54	4.17
Program Design 3.2	3.5	3	3.39
Program Design 4.0	3.75	3.25	3.89
Program Design 5.0	3.625	3.125	3.44
Program Admin & Man. 2.0	3.83	3.42	3.89
Program Admin & Man. 3.0	3.71	3.79	3.78
Program Admin & Man. 3.1	3.38	3.46	3.83
Program Admin & Man. 3.2	3.33	3.38	3.61
Program Admin & Man. 4.1	2.75	2.54	2.33
Program Admin & Man. 4.2	2.92	2.71	2.56
Socio-emotional 1.0	3.17	2.75	3.17
Socio-emotional 2.0	3.13	2.54	2.78
Socio-emotional 3.0	3.42	2.88	3.06
Socio-emotional 4.0	3.21	2.63	3.06
Socio-emotional 5.0	3.33	2.42	2.89
Student Identification 1.0	3.33	3.17	3.67
Student Identification 1.3	3.13	3.38	3.94
Student Identification 3.0	3.71	4.17	4.44
Student Identification 3.1	3.46	3.29	3.78
Curr. & Instruction 1.0	3.54	3.13	3.44
Curr. & Instruction 2.0	3.79	3.38	3.44

Table 10

(continued)

Criteria	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Curr. & Instruction 2.1	4.13	4.13	4.33
Curr. & Instruction 2.2	3.5	3.79	3.44
Curr. & Instruction 2.3	3.67	3.38	3.44
Curr. & Instruction 3.0	3.63	3.17	3.28
Curr. & Instruction 4.0	3.58	3.42	3.33
Curr. & Instruction 5.1	3.42	3.08	3
Prof. Dev. 1.0	3.29	2.75	2.67
Prof. Dev. 1.1	3.08	2.63	2.56
Prof. Dev. 2.0	3.5	3.08	3.22
Prof. Dev. 3.0	2.5	2.13	2
Prof. Dev. 4.0	3.38	2.29	2.44
Program Evaluation 1.0	3.63	3.38	3.56
Program Evaluation 2.0	3.17	2.79	2.94
Program Evaluation 3.0	3.58	3.79	3.89
Average	3.407763	3.126711	3.303947
<i>N</i>	24	24	18

Pertaining to parent respondents by geographical area in Table 11, data show that, again, there were not very large differences among the different areas. Rural parents had the lowest average responses, but they were nearly identical on average to suburban parents and only slightly lower than the parents in the urban areas.

Table 11

Mean Parent Responses by Geographical Area

Criteria	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Program Design 1.0	3	2.7	3.18
Program Design 2.0	2.71	2.29	3
Program Design 3.0	3.14	2.96	3.18
Program Design 3.1	3.71	3.22	3.64
Program Design 3.2	2.86	3.11	3.27
Program Design 4.0	3.43	3	3.36
Program Design 5.0	3.29	3.81	2.82
Program Design 6.0	3.14	3.33	3.18
Program Admin & Man. 2.0	3.43	4.04	3.09
Program Admin & Man. 3.0	3.71	2.93	2.73
Program Admin & Man. 3.1	3.43	3.15	3.36
Program Admin & Man. 3.2	3.71	3	3.18
Program Admin & Man. 4.1	3.14	2.04	2.82
Socio-emotional 1.0	2.57	2.67	2.18
Socio-emotional 2.0	2.43	2.78	2.09
Socio-emotional 3.0	2.29	2.93	1.91
Socio-emotional 4.0	2.57	2.7	2
Socio-emotional 5.0	2.43	2.7	2
Student Identification 1.0	2.86	2.96	2.45
Student Identification 1.3	2.86	2.78	2.27
Student Identification 3.0	4.29	3.26	3.73
Student Identification 3.1	3.43	2.96	2.91
Curr. & Instruction 1.0	3	2.7	2.91
Curr. & Instruction 2.0	3.29	3	2.91

Table 11

(continued)

Criteria	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Curr. & Instruction 2.1	3.86	3.41	3.64
Curr. & Instruction 2.2	3.43	2.85	3.27
Curr. & Instruction 2.3	3.14	2.56	3
Curr. & Instruction 3.0	3.14	2.93	2.12
Curr. & Instruction 4.0	2.71	3.07	2.82
Curr. & Instruction 5.1	2.43	2.93	2.64
Program Evaluation 1.0	3.43	2.67	3.27
Program Evaluation 2.0	3.14	2.7	3
Program Evaluation 3.0	3.86	3.3	4
Average	3.147273	2.952727	2.90697
<i>N</i>	7	27	11

Table 12 presents the results for the students. Again, there were relatively minor differences across the three different geographical areas. Unlike with the educators and parents, where urban respondents had the most positive views, urban students had the most negative views. As with the parents, suburban and rural students had very similar views.

Table 12

Mean Student Responses by Geographical Area

Criteria	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Program Design 1.0	3	3.56	3.33
Program Design 4.0	3.25	3.74	4.09
Program Design 5.0	3.25	3.66	3.38
Program Admin & Man. 4.1	3.75	3.87	3.67
Socio-emotional 2.0	1.86	2.87	3
Socio-emotional 3.0	2.13	3.11	3.48
Socio-emotional 5.0	1.63	2.72	2.62
Student Identification 3.0	3.38	3.77	3.52
Student Identification 3.1	4.13	3.64	4.19
Curr. & Instruction 2.2	3.25	3.17	3.86
Curr. & Instruction 2.3	2.25	2.53	2.9
Curr. & Instruction 3.0	2.5	2.11	2.48
Average	2.865	3.229167	3.376667
<i>N</i>	8	47	21

The small sample size prevents much in the way of statistical tests given the large number of variables, but it appears that there are no consistent differences in views toward how well criteria are being met by area. If results of the different respondents are combined by area, there are also minimal differences. Table 13 presents all responses averaged by area, weighted by the number of respondents from each category. For example, since more educators are in each area, educatory responses contribute more to the average. The data show that the urban and rural areas actually had an identical

weighted average evaluation. The suburban average was somewhat lower, due to the relatively lower evaluation by educators in that area.

Table 13

Combined Mean Responses by Geographical Area

	Educators	Parents	Students	Average	<i>N</i>
Urban	3.407763	3.147273	2.865	3.25	39
Suburban	3.126711	2.952727	3.229167	3.13	98
Rural	3.303947	2.90697	3.376667	3.25	50

Combining the results also provides a larger sample size, which allows for the utilization of some tests of statistical significance. Specifically, for each question where all three types of respondents addressed a particular criterion (Program Design 1.0, 4.0, and 5.0; Program Administration and Management 4.1; Socio-emotional Guidance and Counseling 2.0, 3.0, and 5.0; Student Identification 3.0 and 3.1), an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. This allows determination of significant differences in means across regions. For each of these variables, there were no significant differences in mean responses. Based on these various looks at the data, then, it can safely be concluded that there are only very modest differences across regions within the school district.

Additional results of the survey are presented in Table 14, along with the extent to which the district met the standard in the second column. The data show the averages reported when students, parents, and educators were all asked about a specific standard.

Table 14

District Evidence and Mean Responses to Survey Questions

Standard	District	Educator	Parent	Student	Average for all respondents
Program Design 1.0	2	3.27	2.87	3.43	3.23877
Program Design 2.0	2	2.62	2.53	–	n/a
Program Design 3.0	5	3.05	3.04	–	n/a
Program Design 3.1	5	3.85	3.4	–	n/a
Program Design 3.2	2	3.29	3.11	–	n/a
Program Design 4.0	2	3.61	3.16	3.79	3.574866
Program Design 4.1	5				n/a
Program Design 5.0	5	3.39	2.89	3.54	3.330642
Program Design 6.0	5	–	3.27		n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man. 1.0	5				n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man. 2.0	4	3.7	3.71	–	n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man. 3.0	2	3.76	3	–	n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man. 3.1	5	3.53	3.24	–	n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man. 3.2	4	3.42	3.16	–	n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man 4.0	1				n/a
Prog. Admin. & Man. 4.1	5	2.56	2.4	3.8	3.025454
Prog. Admin. & Man. 4.2	5	2.74	–	–	n/a
Socio-emotional 1.0	1	3.02	2.53	–	n/a
Socio-emotional 2.0	1	2.82	2.56	2.8	2.749305
Socio-emotional 3.0	5	3.12	2.58	3.11	2.985989
Socio-emotional 4.0	1	2.95	2.51	–	n/a
Socio-emotional 5.0	1	2.88	2.49	2.58	2.664225
Student Identification 1.0	1	3.36	2.82	3.66	3.351978

Table 14

(continued)

Standard	District	Educator	Parent	Student	Average for all respondents
Student Identification 1.1	5				n/a
Student Identification 1.2	1				n/a
Student Identification 1.3	4	3.44	2.67	—	n/a
Student Identification 2.0	1				n/a
Student Identification 2.1	1				n/a
Student Identification 2.2	5				n/a
Student Identification 2.3	5				n/a
Student Identification 3.0	1	4.08	3.53	—	n/a
Student Identification 3.1	2	3.49	3.02	3.84	3.519144
Student Identification 4.0	5				n/a
Student Identification 4.1	5				n/a
Student Identification 5.0	5				n/a
Student Identification 5.1	5				n/a
Curr. & Instruction 1.0	4	3.36	2.8	—	n/a
Curr. & Instruction 2.0	4	3.55	3.02	—	n/a
Curr. & Instruction 2.1	5	4.18	3.53	—	n/a
Curr. & Instruction 2.2	2	3.59	3.04	3.37	3.368235
Curr. & Instruction 2.3	2	3.5	2.76	2.61	2.960214
Curr. & Instruction 3.0	2	3.36	2.93	2.25	2.805401
Curr. & Instruction 4.0	5	3.45	2.96	—	n/a
Curr. & Instruction 5.0	5				n/a
Curr. & Instruction 5.1	2	3.18	2.78	—	n/a
Prof. Dev. 1.0	1	2.92	—	—	n/a

Table 14

(continued)

Standard	District	Educator	Parent	Student	Average for all respondents
Prof. Dev. 1.1	1	2.77	–	–	n/a
Prof. Dev. 2.0	1	3.27	–	–	n/a
Prof. Dev. 2.1	5				n/a
Prof. Dev. 2.2	1	2.23	–	–	n/a
Prof. Dev. 3.0	5				n/a
Prof. Dev. 4.0	5	2.73	–	–	n/a
Program Evaluation 1.0	5	3.52	2.93	–	n/a
Program Evaluation 2.0	2	2.97	2.84	–	n/a
Program Evaluation 3.0	5	3.74	3.56	–	n/a
Program Evaluation 3.1	5				n/a
Program Evaluation 3.2	2				n/a
Program Evaluation 3.3	5				n/a
Program Evaluation 3.4	5				n/a
Program Evaluation 4.0	5				n/a
Average	3	3.270263	2.958788	3.231667	
<i>N</i>	1	66	45	76	187

Comparing the responses to this column is a useful way to determine whether survey responses are based on perceptions or are reflective of a failure of the district to adopt a particular standard. A total of 187 individuals answered the surveys, with 66 educators, 45 parents, and 76 students responding. As can be seen, not all standards were relevant (Appendix K) for each criterion of respondent (e.g., students know little about

professional development opportunities for teachers).

Survey questions were developed based on the actual NAGC National Standards. Survey responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The district responses also utilized the same Likert scale due to the nature of the standards. The standards could not be addressed as yes or no as they often included more than one evidence within the standard. For example, Program Design 2.0 states, “Gifted education programming must receive funding consistent with the program goals and sufficient to adequately meet them.” The district does receive consistent funding, but it is not sufficient to adequately meet those goals based on the NAGC National Standards (Appendix L).

Elementary schools selected for this program evaluation were divided into three geographical regions: rural, urban, and suburban. Two schools were randomly selected from each of the three geographical regions. Two teachers who were currently teaching gifted students were randomly selected from each of the schools. One of the schools had only one teacher working with a cluster of gifted students. Surveys were sent to the staff members of each of the selected schools. Permission forms to survey AIG-identified students were sent to parents and returned to this researcher. Students with permission were surveyed. Parents were sent a survey link electronically as well as a letter about the survey with the survey link included and the option to receive a paper copy survey.

The data for district evidence of implementation of the National Standards indicate complete compliance, as indicated by a level 5 on the Likert scale within the program design standard, as the district does consult with experts in the field to design goals through state and regional meetings. The district also has a mission/philosophy

statement that addresses the need for gifted education programming in the local plan. Evidence in the state-adopted local plan reflects multiple service delivery options that include flexible grouping arrangements as well as policies for early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, and dual enrollment. There were no standards identified as an area of weakness based on the score of 1 on the Likert scale in this criterion.

The standards pertaining to program administration and management are evidenced by complete confirmation as the gifted programming coordinator has completed a certification program in gifted education. Gifted education programming does provide state-of-the-art technology in coordination with the school district. While schools and classrooms are provided with computers, digital cameras, calculators, Skype access, Mimeo boards, and Smart boards, gifted education finances a traveling Mac lab, Calculator Based Ranger (CBR) devices, Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, and Palm handheld technology. The acquisition plan for purchasing new materials for schools also consists of a district media center that houses the technology mentioned previously as well as novel sets, content-specific manipulatives, and a professional library that includes current professional books, videos, and DVDs. One area of weakness pertaining to the standards was identified with a score of 1 on the Likert scale: the availability of a diversity of resources (e.g., parent, community, vocational, etc.) to support program operations.

The criterion of socio-emotional guidance and counseling, while identified as the weakest area for evidence documentation, did provide complete compliance evidence with the Individual Differentiated Education Plan, which provides underachieving gifted learners with specific guidance and counseling to address the issues and problems related

to underachievement. Standards defined as weak were identified specific to counseling services. The district does not have evidence of counseling services provided by a counselor familiar with specific training in the characteristics and socio-emotional needs (i.e., underachievement, multipotentiality, etc.) of diverse gifted learners. Gifted learners are not provided with college and career guidance that is appropriately different and is delivered to them earlier than in typical programs. There is not a well-defined and implemented affective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness for gifted learners. There was also a lack of evidence to indicate that underachieving gifted learners are provided with specific guidance and counseling services that address the issues and problems that directly relate to their underachievement.

Student identification provided complete compliance evidence relative to an ongoing nomination and screening process for gifted learners. This criterion met more of the standards than any of the other criteria. Students are identified in all designated areas of giftedness across grade-levels, and assessments are sensitive to all stages of talent development. Student assessment data are obtained from multiple sources and include multiple assessment methods, which represent a balance of reliable and valid quantitative and qualitative measures. Student placement data are collected using an appropriate balance of quantitative and qualitative measures with evidence of reliability and validity for the purposes of identification. The district guidelines and procedures are reviewed and revised with the AIG advisory team, AIG school coordinators, and district curriculum team, when necessary. Four standards did show noncompliance relative to the lack of evidence. Nomination procedures and forms are not available in a variety of languages,

nor are assessments provided in the language in which the student is most fluent. Assessments are limited in that they all do not address students' economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, handicapping conditions, and other factors that mitigate against fair assessment practices. There is a lack of evidence to indicate that individual assessment plans are developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education.

The standards for curriculum and instruction received scores of 5 for complete compliance evidence in that teachers are responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for learners. The district has written in the local plan processes for partial or full acceleration of content and grade-level for any student representing such a need. Appropriate service options for each student to work at assessed level(s) and advanced rates of learning are available. There were no standards in this category that received a rating of 1 for noncompliance.

Professional development was a criterion of interest as standards received either a strongly disagree or strongly agree. The standard referring to gifted education certification for specialists was marked strongly agree as the district does not have school-based specialists, but rather, a director of gifted education, who has gifted education certification. Approved staff development activities in gifted education should be funded at least in part by school districts or educational agencies, as evidenced by the annual opportunity for AIG school coordinators to attend the North Carolina Association of Gifted and Talented Conference funded by district-gifted education funds. Regularly scheduled planning time is allotted to teachers for development of differentiated education programs and resources. Standards of noncompliance indicated that all school

staff are not provided with ongoing staff development in the nature and needs of gifted learners as well as appropriate instructional strategies. Teachers of gifted learners are not actively engaged in the study of gifted education through staff development or graduate degree programs, although the district does provide teachers with reimbursement for obtaining gifted certification. All personnel working with gifted learners do not participate in regular staff development programs. The district does not have teachers with advanced expertise in gifted education who are primarily responsible for the education of gifted learners.

The criterion of program evaluation provided evidence of six standards with complete compliance. This criterion was the second strongest in meeting the standards. Information collected by constituency groups is collected, addressed, and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders. Persons conducting the evaluation of the district local plan possess expertise in program evaluation relative to gifted education. The evaluation design does enable the district to report strengths and weaknesses found in the program as well as critical issues that might influence the delivery of program services. Formative evaluations are conducted regularly, with summative evaluations occurring minimally every 5 years. The district participates in summative evaluations every 3 years, as specified by North Carolina state policies. All individuals involved in the evaluation process have the opportunity to verify information and resulting interpretation. Results and feedback from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction enable follow-through by stakeholders. This category did not have areas of total noncompliance.

The educators have knowledge about most criteria, and therefore they were asked about more in the surveys. In general, the educators gave the schools high marks for how

the AIG program is run. Indeed, the mean response for teachers was actually higher than what the district actually does (3.27 vs. 3.0). By looking at Table 14, there does not seem to be a clear relationship between whether the district actually met the criteria and how teachers responded to the relevant question. For some of the questions, the differences are quite large. For example, for Program Administration and Management 4.1 and 4.2 (providing state-of-the-art technology and purchasing new materials for the schools that reflect the needs of gifted learners), the teachers gave middling ratings, but the district was scored as a 5. The largest difference for educators was for Student Identification 3.0 (individual assessment plans are developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education), where teachers gave very high responses despite the district being scored a 1. Interestingly, in the area of professional development, educators rated the district consistently higher than it actually scored. This may be due to the fact that the district provides ongoing research-based staff development, but it is not directly linked to gifted education.

The parents addressed the next largest number of factors, and they almost uniformly rated the program lower than the educators did, by approximately 0.30 points on average. In contrast, students evaluated relatively few factors given their limited knowledge on these issues, but in general, they were more favorable than their parents. The only standards where students gave relatively negative ratings were in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction 2.3 (gifted learners are assessed for proficiency in all standard courses of study and subsequently provided with more challenging educational opportunities) and 3.0 (when warranted, continual opportunities for curricular acceleration should be provided in gifted learners' areas of strength and interest, while

allowing a sufficient ceiling for optimal learning). They were closer to the district score than the parents or educators.

To get a sense of where the weaknesses are overall, responses by both parents and educators resulting in either high marks or low marks (since students responded on so few criteria, this is less useful) were examined. Educators and parents gave high marks on Program Design 3.1 (the school or school district should have a mission/philosophy statement that addresses the need for gifted education programming), Program Administration and Management 2.0 (responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one, requiring strong relationships between the gifted education program and general education school wide), Student Identification 3.0 (individual assessment plans are developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education), and Curriculum and Instruction 2.0 (district curriculum plans include objectives, content, and resources that challenge gifted learners in the regular classroom).

In contrast, parents and teachers gave relatively low marks on Program Design 2.0 (gifted education programming receives funding consistent with the program goals and sufficient to adequately meet them), Program Administration and Management 4.1 (local school districts provide multiple service delivery options as no single service should stand alone), and all of the standards under socio-emotional guidance and counseling. Over the past few years, testing responsibilities have been assigned to many guidance counselors. The perception by many in education is that the testing responsibilities leave little time for counselors to attend to the standards listed in this category. This area prevails as an area of weakness in perception and reality relative to meeting the National Standards. On all standards in the criterion of curriculum and instruction, parent response

was lower than educator response. This may be due to the difference in the level of knowledge and understanding regarding curriculum issues between the two groups. Overall, parent perception was lower than the district evidence for 16 of the 33 (49%) standards. Student perception was lower than the district on 2 of the 12 (17%) standards, and educator perception was lower than the district on 17 of the 38 (45%) standards. Evaluation of survey responses does tie to the interview groups' perceptions regarding communication of aspects of the program. Standards that are in place should be evident through communication to all stakeholders. The analysis of these data cannot say definitively why people have the view of the program they do, but it can say definitively what those views are in relationship to adherence to the NAGC National Standards.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of a gifted education program at the K-5 elementary level of a school district in northwest North Carolina based on the NAGC program standards. According to Callahan (1986) and Carter and Hamilton (1985), a common approach to program evaluation involves the identification of essential components of gifted programs considered to be the target areas of the evaluation process. The NAGC National Standards served as the essential components or target areas of this study. This program evaluation was specifically intended to improve the current gifted education program as the data indicate, for the school district involved in the program evaluation that AIG students are not performing in the top 25% of all systems in the state of North Carolina. Research tells us that most interventions, if any, incorporated in the middle school and high school years for underachieving gifted students have little impact. Dowdall and Colangelo (1982) stated that “it is in the early years of a child’s education that they must be provided with an environment that encourages success in order to foster commitment to applying oneself in school” (p. 53).

Based on the seven essential criteria of gifted educational programming written by the NAGC, this program evaluation focused on the following questions:

1. How well does the gifted education program meet the National Standards?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholder groups regarding the gifted education program?

Data collected in this study were collected from a variety of sources, including the following:

1. Interview groups representative of each of the three geographical areas of the district
2. Classroom observations utilizing the COS-R in two randomly-selected classrooms with AIG students in two randomly-selected elementary schools in each of the three geographical regions of the district, which were rural, urban, and suburban
3. Surveys that included educator, parent, and student respondents in each of the randomly-selected elementary schools within the district studied
4. Review of evidence of artifacts to substantiate the presence of the specified criteria and standards relative to those identified as exemplary by the NAGC (data are presented in chapter 4)

Data presented in chapter 4 included responses to and analysis of the following interview questions:

1. Does the district have a comprehensive pre-K-12 plan that includes policies and procedures for identification, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, formative and summative evaluation, support services, and parent involvement?
2. Do the gifted education programming staff distribute information regarding policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, etc.) to school personnel, parents, community members, and so on?

3. Is there a well-defined and implemented effective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness provided to gifted learners?
4. Does the school district provide information annually in a variety of languages regarding the process for the nomination of students for gifted education programming services?
5. Is there documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates of learning plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners?
6. Does information collected by the district address questions raised by all constituency groups and is it responsive to the needs of all stakeholders?

Implications of the Findings

The AIG program evaluated met the national NAGC standards on the following criteria based on examination of documents and received a 5 on a 5-point Likert scale: Program Design standards 3.0, 3.1, 4.1, 5.0, and 6.0 met exemplary statuses as defined by NAGC; Program Administration and Management standards 1.0, 3.1, 4.1, and 4.2 met exemplary status, as did Socio-emotional Guidance and Counseling standard 3.0; evidence was documented as exemplary for Student Identification standards 1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.0, 4.1, 5.0, and 5.1; Curriculum and Instruction standards identified as exemplary were 2.1, 4.0, and 5.0; the Professional Development standards that met exemplary status were 2.1, 3.0, and 4.0; while the Program Evaluation standards that were identified as meeting exemplary status were 1.0, 3.0, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, and 4.0. These artifacts identified 29 of 60 standards as compliant with the expectations of the NAGC National Standards at the

exemplary level. The current percentage of compliance with the National Standards was identified as 48%.

The classroom observations utilizing the COS-R confirmed evidence of Curriculum and Instruction standards 2.1 and 5.0 regarding evidence of teachers demonstrating responsibility for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners. While teacher knowledge and level of implementation varied, the standard was evident.

The perceptions of stakeholder groups regarding the current gifted education program were obtained through interview groups and surveys. The interview groups addressed six questions. Each question was developed based on a specific standard, as follows: Question 1 (Program Design standard 3.2), Question 2 (Program Administration and Management standard 3.0), Question 3 (Socio-emotional Guidance and Counseling standard 4.0), Question 4 (Student Identification standard 1.0), and Question 5 (Curriculum and Instruction standard 2.2 and Program Evaluation standard 1.0). The interview groups cited Program Design standard 3.2 as lacking in 55% of cited comments, while Program Administration and Management standard 3.0 was cited as lacking in 19% of the comments. Socio-emotional Guidance standard 4.0 and Student Identification standard 1.0 were indicated as lacking by interview participants each at 6% of the total comments tallied. Curriculum and Instruction standard 2.2 was perceived as lacking in 4% of the comments, while Program Evaluation standard 1.0 was at 10%. Area A (rural) indicated the most concern over what they deemed to be lacking, with Area B (urban) second and Area C (suburban) with the least amount of concern indicated comparatively. When compared to the district evidence in these areas, parent perception

was aligned in all standards presented within the interview questions, except for Program Evaluation standard 1.0 (information collected should address pertinent questions raised by all constituency groups and should be responsive to the needs of all stakeholders). While the district has evidence to document that pertinent questions have been addressed, communication through the district AIG advisory team and AIG school coordinators may not be enough to make sure all stakeholders are aware of frequently asked questions and ongoing changes to processes regarding the AIG program. The data do not take into account that stakeholders may not agree that an answer or solution has been delivered if they do not agree with the answer or solution provided.

The perceptions of educators based on survey responses did not indicate any standard with a mean greater than 4.18. Mean response was between 2.23 (Professional Development 2.2, only teachers with advanced expertise in gifted education have the primary responsibility for the education of gifted learners) and 4.18 (Curriculum and Instruction 2.1, teachers are responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners). Educator overall perception mean was 3.27, with the district mean relative to actual evidence of the standards at 3.0. This indicates that educator perception is higher than the actual evidence indicating the standards have or have not been met.

The perceptions of parents based on survey responses did not indicate any standard with a mean greater than 3.71. Mean response was between 2.4 (Program Administration and Management 4.1, gifted education programming provides state-of-the-art technology to support appropriate services) and 3.71 (Program Administration and Management 2.0, responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one,

requiring strong relationships between the gifted education program and general education program school wide). While the evidence and daily use of many technologies is evident in the program, parents responded to this area as the weakest of all their responses. This, again, may indicate a lack of communication between school and parent as to the technologies being utilized in the schools, or it may fluctuate based on actual teacher knowledge and student time with the technology. It may also indicate the difference in perception as to what constitutes state-of-the-art technology. The strongest parent response mean of 3.71 indicates a positive perception of the blended responsibility of the gifted education program and classroom teachers to service gifted learners. The parent overall mean of 2.95 was just slightly below the mean for the actual evidence to support implementation of the NAGC National Standards.

The student survey responses were quite limited in the analysis due to the smaller number of questions applicable to them. Student mean was above parent and district and below parent survey mean. Student mean ranged from 2.25 (Curriculum and Instruction 2.0, district curriculum plans include objectives, content, and resources that challenge gifted learners in the regular classroom) to 3.84 (Student Identification 3.1, an assessment profile reflects the gifted learner's interests, learning style, and educational needs). While students indicated that their teachers know how they like to learn and what they are interested in, they also responded that they do not feel challenged by the curriculum in the regular classroom. An interesting aspect of the student survey pertains to the overall mean of 3.23, which was above the district and parent mean but below the educator overall mean regarding meeting the program standards.

Survey data by geographical region provide minimal differences between each of

the regions regarding the perception of the gifted program standards. Combined responses provided a larger sample to test for statistical significance, and there were no significant differences in mean responses. It was concluded, based on geographical regions within the district, that there is little difference in perception.

Conclusion

The findings from the program evaluation were used to determine if the district studied was meeting the expectations of the NAGC National Standards. The researcher was also seeking to find current stakeholder perceptions of the gifted program based on adherence to the National Standards. A review of the literature containing authors who have expertise in the field of gifted education substantiates the determination of the 60 standards within the seven criteria on which the NAGC National Standards are founded.

The seven criteria are as follows:

1. Program design
2. Program administration and management
3. Socio-emotional guidance and counseling
4. Student identification
5. Curriculum and instruction
6. Professional development
7. Program evaluation

The state of North Carolina has adopted AIG Program Standards as of July 9, 2009. The state program standards utilize the National Association for Gifted Children (2000) NAGC Standards, *Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards*, as a foundational document for the writing of the North Carolina AIG Program Standards. The North

Carolina AIG Program Standards are aligned with the national program criteria. The 60 national program standards align with the 48 North Carolina AIG practices. The six state standards are as follows:

1. Student identification
2. Differentiated curriculum and instruction
3. Personnel and professional development
4. Comprehensive program with a total school community
5. Partnerships
6. Program accountability

The alignment between the NAGC National Standards and the North Carolina State Standards reinforces the validity on which this program evaluation was founded. Although there is substantial research to support each of the NAGC standards, most schools and districts fail to be in compliance, with the district studied being a prime example. Many AIG programs are minimally funded and staffed. The focus of NCLB has predetermined for districts priority targets within their schools, which do not include AIG. Regardless of the circumstances, it is essential that AIG programs continue to address the program standards and represent what is in the best educational interest of gifted learners.

Recommendations

Gifted education programming is still in its early years in the state of North Carolina, with AIG task force recommendations proposed in 1994 and adopted in 1996. The NAGC National Standards were released to the field in 1998. These standards represent work in progress, rather than an end result for gifted programs. Regarding the

evaluation of the current AIG program in relation to the NAGC National Standards and based on the Logic Model, the following short-term changes, which may include knowledge, skills, attitude, motivation, and awareness; intermediate-term changes, which may include behaviors, practices, policies, and procedures; and long-term changes, which may include environment, social conditions, economic conditions, and political conditions will be addressed.

Short Term

1. Implementation of ongoing professional development to increase knowledge, skills, and awareness of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of gifted learners with all educators.
2. Implementation of parent workshops to increase knowledge and awareness of the needs of gifted learners and how the schools are meeting those needs.
Included as part of parent workshops would be parenting skills to meet and understand the needs and characteristics of gifted learners.
3. Development of a diversity of resources and program information in multiple languages to distribute as an additional form of communication with stakeholders.
4. Implementation of collaboration between AIG and guidance to extend awareness of the socio-emotional needs of gifted learners and review processes to meet those needs.

Intermediate Term

1. Monitor classroom walkthrough data to determine if differentiation has increased as a result of ongoing professional development.

2. Survey parents regarding the impact of parent workshops and their value regarding information presented.
3. Distribution of resources and program information to schools and community partners in multiple languages.
4. Processes determined to enable guidance counselors to address needs identified by the socio-emotional NAGC criteria.

Long Term

1. Annual internal program evaluation based on the North Carolina state standards, with results reported to stakeholders formally in the form of a written document.
2. Ongoing AIG advisory team meetings with representation from all constituency groups.
3. Annual survey of AIG stakeholders to analyze program perception.

Ongoing formal program evaluation will be completed and monitored by the state Department of Public Instruction every 3 years.

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Appendix A

Program Evaluation Permission

Dr. Holliday
 [REDACTED]

Letter of Consent

Dear Dr. Holliday:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your formal consent to proceed with my doctoral dissertation, A Program Evaluation of the Iredell-Statesville Schools Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program based on national standards.

As you already know from a previous verbal request for consent, I am working on my doctoral dissertation at Gardner-Webb University. The focus of my dissertation will be on the current status of the Iredell-Statesville Schools AIG program based on the National Association of Gifted Children National Standards. For this research, AIG stakeholders within the district and the community from 2009-2010 school year will be asked to respond to a Likert-scale survey and participate in interview discussion groups. A Classroom Observation Scale developed by Dr. Joyce VanTassel-Baska from The College of William and Mary School of Education Center for Gifted Education will be utilized in classrooms of gifted students. Data will be collected and reported as it pertains to each of the standards.

The participation in the program evaluation by stakeholders is completely voluntary and there is no risk to participants should they choose not to respond. However, the more participants responding allows for gathering of substantial data to best represent the perceptions as a whole. Responses will be confidential. The results of the program evaluation will be written in my dissertation and a copy will be provided to the district to review at your convenience. Additional reports may be written as perceived necessary by particular stakeholders.

Any questions regarding the research should be directed to the researcher, Debra A. Harwell-Braun at [REDACTED]. Inquiries regarding the nature of this research, the district's rights as a subject or any other aspect of this research as it relates to the participants can be directed to the researcher or Gardner-Webb University. The chairperson of the research committee is Dr. Jane King who may be contacted by phone at [REDACTED].

If you agree for me to conduct a program evaluation on the Iredell-Statesville Schools AIG program based on national standards, please sign below. Thank you in advance for assisting me with this professional endeavor.

Sincerely,



Debra A. Harwell-Braun
 Doctoral Student, Gardner-Webb University



Superintendent Signature

4-16-09

Date

Appendix B

Permission to Use the Classroom Observation Scale-Revised

From: <[REDACTED]>
To: "Debra Harwell-Braun" <[REDACTED]>
Date: 2/6/2009 9:42 PM
Subject: Re: Concealed

Debra-

You have my permission to use the forms you mention in your request. I do not have a special form to use with the standards. I use a simple yes/no format to record. Joyce

Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D.
 Jody and Layton Smith Professor in Education and Executive Director,
 Center for Gifted Education,
 College of William and Mary
 Past President, National Association for Gifted Children

---- Original message ----

>Date: Fri, 06 Feb 2009 10:06:42 -0500

>From: "Debra Harwell-Braun" <[REDACTED]>

>Subject: Concealed

>To: <[REDACTED]>

>

>Subject: Permission

>

>Good Morning,

>I am currently a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University in Curriculum and Instruction. I am hoping to do a program evaluation of a gifted program based on the National Standards as my dissertation. I would like to use your External Observation form and Classroom Observation Form as part of my data collection. I would like your permission to use these forms in my dissertation. If you have an instrument or rubric that is aligned with the National Standards, I would also be very interesting in being able to use this to obtain data on the program.

>

>Thank you so much for all your books and continual attention on best practice for gifted students.

>Sincerely,

>Debra

>Debra Harwell-Braun,

>Director of AIG

>MA, NBCT '97, '06

>Iredell-Statesville Schools

>

>Statesville, NC 28677

>

[REDACTED]

>

>"Teachers who inspire realize there will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how we use them."

>Anonymous

>

>

>

>--- Scanned by M+ Guardian Messaging Firewall ---

Appendix C

Letter to School Administrators

To:

From: Debra Harwell-Braun

RE: Selection to participate in AIG Program Evaluation

Date: July 20, 2009

———— Elementary School has been randomly-selected to participate in a doctoral dissertation AIG Program Evaluation. Permission to perform the AIG Program Evaluation has been obtained from the district school superintendent. A copy of the permission document will be provided to you upon request. The AIG Program Evaluation will involve student, teacher, parent, and administrator surveys as well as classroom observations utilizing the Classroom Observation Scale–Revised instrument developed at the College of William and Mary. Teachers of AIG students will be randomly-selected for observation. Each observation is approximately 45 minutes in length. All data collection and scripting during the observation will be provided to the teacher and will remain anonymous. If you have any questions regarding the AIG Program Evaluation, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Debra A. Harwell-Braun

████████████████████

██████████

Appendix D

Letter to Classroom Teachers

To:

From: Debra Harwell-Braun

RE: Selection to participate in AIG Program Evaluation

Date: August 20, 2009

——— Elementary School has been randomly-selected to participate in a doctoral dissertation AIG Program Evaluation. As a teacher of AIG students at —— Elementary School, your classroom has been randomly-selected as a classroom that will be observed using the Classroom Observation Scale–Revised instrument developed at the College of William and Mary. Each observation is approximately 45 minutes in length. All data collection and scripting during the observation will be provided to you and will remain anonymous. Permission to perform the AIG Program Evaluation has been obtained from the district school superintendent. A copy of the permission document will be provided to you upon request. The AIG Program Evaluation will also involve student, teacher, parent, and administrator surveys. If you have any questions regarding the AIG Program Evaluation, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Debra A. Harwell-Braun

████████████████████

██████████

Appendix E

Letter to Parents

To: Parents of AIG Students

From: Debra Harwell-Braun

RE: Selection to participate in AIG Program Evaluation

Date: August 20, 2009

———— Elementary School has been randomly-selected to participate in a doctoral dissertation AIG Program Evaluation. Permission to perform the AIG Program Evaluation has been obtained from the district school superintendent. A copy of the permission document will be provided to you upon request. The AIG Program Evaluation will involve student, teacher, parent, and administrator surveys as well as classroom observations utilizing the Classroom Observation Scale–Revised instrument developed at the College of William and Mary. Current AIG identified students at ——— Elementary School will be asked to complete an anonymous survey composed of 12 questions regarding the current AIG program. All data collection remains anonymous. Please sign the attached permission form and return it to the AIG coordinator at your school to give your permission for your child to participate in the AIG student survey data collection. Students who do not return a form will *not* be asked to participate in the survey. If you have any questions regarding the AIG Program Evaluation, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Debra A. Harwell-Braun

████████████████████

████████

Appendix F
Parent Permission Form

Permission to Participate in AIG Program Evaluation Student Survey

Please complete the following information to allow your child to participate in the student survey for the AIG Program Evaluation data collection. Please return forms to the AIG school coordinator at your child's school by September 1, 2009. Thank you in advance for your help with this data collection.

_____ (student name) has my permission to take the AIG student survey at _____ Elementary School. I understand the survey data collection will not include student names and documentation of data will keep participants anonymous.

Parent signature

Date

Appendix G

Administrator-Teacher Survey

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program Evaluation Teacher–Administrator

Survey, 2009

Please complete the following items:

School_____ Position_____

AIG Certified Yes No

Currently teaching AIG Students Yes No

Number of years in education _____

Certification area(s) _____

Program Design

1. Levels of services are matched to the needs of gifted learners by providing a full continuum of options.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

2. Gifted education programming receives funding consistent with the program goals and sufficient to adequately meet them.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

3. Gifted education programming is planned as a result of consultation with informed experts.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

4. The school district has a mission/philosophy statement that addresses the need for gifted education programming.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

5. The district has a comprehensive pre-K–12 program plan that includes policies and procedures for identification, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, formative and summative evaluation, support services, and parent involvement.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

6. Gifted services are designed to supplement and build on the basic academic skills and knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade-levels to ensure continuous student progress through the program.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

7. Gifted learners are included in flexible grouping arrangements in all content areas and grade-levels to ensure that they learn with and from intellectual peers.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

8. Gifted education policies exist for at least the following areas: early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, and dual enrollment.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Program Administration and Management

9. Responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one, requiring strong relationships between the gifted education program and general education schoolwide.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

10. The gifted education programming staff distributes information regarding major policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, etc.) to school personnel, parents, community members, and so on.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

11. Parents of gifted learners have regular opportunities to share input and make recommendations about the gifted education program with the AIG coordinator.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

12. Gifted education personnel regularly review the issues being debated across the school district and are part of the decision making on a regular basis.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

13. State-of-the-art technology is available to support appropriate services for gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

14. The acquisition plan for purchasing new materials for the schools reflects the needs of gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Socio-emotional Guidance/Counseling

15. Counseling services provide a counselor with specific training in the characteristics and socio-emotional needs (i.e., underachievement, multipotentiality, etc.) of diverse gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

16. Gifted learners are provided with college and career guidance that is appropriately different from and delivered earlier than in typical programs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

17. Gifted learners who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance in regular and/or gifted education classes receive specialized intervention services.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

18. A well-defined and implemented affective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness is provided to gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

19. Underachieving gifted learners are provided with specific guidance and counseling services that address the issues and problems related to underachievement.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Student Identification

20. The school district provides information annually in a variety of languages regarding the process for nominating students for gifted education programming services.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

21. Parents are provided with special workshops or seminars to gain a full understanding of the meaning of giftedness.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

22. Individual plans are developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

23. An individual profile reflects the gifted learner's interests, learning style, and educational needs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Curriculum and Instruction

24. A well-defined and implemented curriculum scope and sequence is articulated for all grade-levels and all subject areas.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

25. Differentiation at each grade-level within subject areas is based on connections with previous learning experiences.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

26. Teachers are responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

27. Documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates of learning demonstrates plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

28. Gifted learners are assessed for proficiency in all standard courses of study and are provided with more challenging educational opportunities.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

29. When warranted, continual opportunities for curricular acceleration are provided in gifted learners' areas of strength and interest, while allowing a sufficient ceiling for optimal learning.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

30. A possibility for partial or full acceleration of content and grade-levels is available to any student presenting such needs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

31. Differentiated educational program curricula for students pre-K are modified to provide learning experiences matched to students' interests, readiness, and learning styles.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Professional Development

32. All school staff are provided ongoing staff development in the nature and needs of gifted learners, and in appropriate instructional strategies.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

33. All teachers of gifted learners continue to be actively engaged in the study of gifted education through staff development or graduate degree programs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

34. All personnel working with gifted learners participate in regular staff development programs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

35. Only teachers with advanced expertise in gifted education have primary responsibility for the education of gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

36. Regularly scheduled planning time (e.g., release time, summer pay, etc.) is allotted to teachers for the development of differentiated educational programs and related resources.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Program Evaluation

37. Information that is collected by the district does address questions raised by all constituency groups and is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

38. The school district allocates adequate time, financial support, and personnel to conduct systematic program evaluation.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

39. Persons conducting this evaluation possess an understanding in program evaluation in gifted education.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Appendix H
Parent Survey

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program Evaluation Parent Survey, 2009

Please complete the following items.

School _____

How many years has your child been in the AIG program? _____

How many of your children are currently served in the elementary AIG program?

Are you a member of NC PAGE (North Carolina Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education)? Yes No

Program Design

1. Levels of services are matched to the needs of gifted learners by providing a full continuum of options.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

2. Gifted education programming receives funding consistent with the program goals and sufficient to adequately meet them.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

3. Gifted education programming is planned as a result of consultation with informed experts.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

4. The school district has a mission/philosophy statement that addresses the need for gifted education programming.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

5. The district has a comprehensive pre-K–12 program plan that includes policies and procedures for identification, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, formative and summative evaluation, support services, and parent involvement.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

6. Gifted services are designed to supplement and build on the basic academic skills and knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade-levels to ensure continuous student progress through the program.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

7. Gifted learners are included in flexible grouping arrangements in all content areas and grade-levels to ensure that they learn with and from intellectual peers.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

8. Gifted education policies exist for at least the following areas: early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, and dual enrollment.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Program Administration and Management

9. Responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one, requiring strong relationships between the gifted education program and general education schoolwide.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

10. The gifted education programming staff distribute information regarding major policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, etc.) to school personnel, parents, community members, and so on.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

11. Parents of gifted learners have regular opportunities to share input and make recommendations about the gifted education program with the AIG coordinator.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

12. Gifted education personnel regularly review the issues being debated across the school district and are part of the decision making on a regular basis.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

13. State-of-the-art technology is available to support appropriate services for gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Socio-emotional Guidance/Counseling

14. Counseling services provide a counselor with specific training in the characteristics and socio-emotional needs (i.e., underachievement, multipotentiality, etc.) of diverse gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

15. Gifted learners are provided with college and career guidance that is appropriately different from and delivered earlier than in typical programs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

16. Gifted learners who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance in regular and/or gifted education classes receive specialized intervention services.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

17. A well-defined and implemented affective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness is provided to gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

18. Underachieving gifted learners are provided with specific guidance and counseling services that address the issues and problems related to underachievement.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Student Identification

19. The school district provides information annually in a variety of languages regarding the process for nominating students for gifted education programming services.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

20. Parents are provided with special workshops or seminars to gain a full understanding of the meaning of giftedness.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

21. Individual plans are developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

22. An individual profile reflects the gifted learner's interests, learning style, and educational needs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Curriculum and Instruction

23. A well-defined and implemented curriculum scope and sequence is articulated for all grade-levels and all subject areas.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

24. Differentiation at each grade-level within subject areas is based on connections with previous learning experiences.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

25. Teachers are responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

26. Documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates of learning demonstrates plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

27. Gifted learners are assessed for proficiency in all standard courses of study and are provided with more challenging educational opportunities.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

28. When warranted, continual opportunities for curricular acceleration are provided in gifted learners' areas of strength and interest, while allowing a sufficient ceiling for optimal learning.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

29. A possibility for partial or full acceleration of content and grade-levels is available to any student presenting such needs.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

30. Differentiated educational program curricula for students pre-K are modified to provide learning experiences matched to students' interests, readiness, and learning styles.

5 Strongly agree

- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

Program Evaluation

31. Information that is collected by the district does address questions raised by all constituency groups and is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

32. The school district allocates adequate time, financial support, and personnel to conduct systematic program evaluation.

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

33. Persons conducting this evaluation possess an understanding in program evaluation in gifted education.

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Appendix I
Student Survey

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted Program Evaluation Student Survey, 2009

Please complete the following items.

School _____

Grade-level _____

AIG identified in (circle one) Reading Mathematics Both

How many years have you been identified as an AIG student? _____

Program Design

1. The work I do at school challenges me.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

2. The work I do builds on what I already know so that I am always learning new things.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

3. I work in groups in my classroom with other students who know most of the same things I have learned. The students in my group are not always the same ones.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Program Administration and Management

4. I get to work with technology to help with my learning.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Socio-emotional Guidance and Counseling

5. I have participated in activities that involve college and career information.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

6. If I do not show satisfactory work, I receive special help to improve my work.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

7. If my work is not satisfactory, I am given time to go and meet with the counselor.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Student Identification

8. I have a Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) that I work on at school.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

9. My teacher knows what I am interested in and how I like to learn.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Curriculum and Instruction

10. Sometimes my assignments are different from other students in my classroom.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

11. When I already know what the teacher is teaching, she/he asks me to work on more challenging educational work.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

12. When I already know what the teacher is teaching, I am allowed to work on other topics I am interested in and don't already know about.

5 Strongly agree

4 Agree

3 Neither agree nor disagree

2 Disagree

1 Strongly disagree

Thank you for completing this survey.

Appendix J

Classroom Observation Scale-Revised

The William and Mary Classroom Observation Scales, Revised (Part 1)
Teacher Observation

Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D.
Bruce Bracken, Ph.D.

Linda Avery, Ph.D.
Dianne Drummond, M.Ed.

Jeanne Struck, Ph.D. Annie Feng, Ed.D.
Tamra Stambaugh, M.Ed.

Observer_____

Date _____ # of minutes observed _____

School _____

Grade _____

Teacher _____

Course/lesson Observed

Student Information: Total #_____

Observed Gender: #Boys_____

#Girls_____

Observed Ethnicity: #White_____

#African American _____ #Hispanic _____

#Asian American _____ #Other _____

Gifted: _____ #Identified Gifted _____

Classroom Desk Arrangement: Desks in rows and columns _____ Desks in groups _____ Desks in circle _____

Other (specify) _____

Service Delivery Model: *(as designated by the coordinator)*

Self-contained _____ Inclusion _____ Cluster group _____ Pullout _____ Other _____

Please outline what you have observed in the classroom with respect to curriculum and instruction-related activities. Describe the specific lesson, its organization, instructional methods used, characteristics of the learning experience and environment, texts and materials used, questions asked by the teacher, and any other relevant observations and impressions that may influence your completion of the attached checklist.

Lesson Outline: (See attached lesson plan script, pp. 11-13)

Texts and Materials: (List any materials, novels, texts, etc. used by students and/or the teacher.)

Teacher Interview Questions

Discuss the following questions with the teacher observed after each observation period. (Approximate time: 15 minutes)

1. Did you have a written lesson plan for this lesson? ____ yes ____ no
2. How would you characterize the purpose of the lesson?
3. What were your instructional objectives for the previous lesson with this class?
4. What content will you cover in your subsequent lesson?
5. What plans do you have to address homework or extensions of this lesson?
6. How do you intend to assess outcomes for this lesson? Final outcomes for the unit?
7. Are there any aspects of the lesson you would like to clarify before this observation is finalized?

Write responses on page 14.

The William and Mary Classroom Observation Scales, Revised (Part 2)
Teacher Observation

Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D.
Bruce Bracken, Ph.D.

Linda Avery, Ph.D.
Dianne Drummond, M.Ed.

Jeanne Struck, Ph.D.
Tamra Stambaugh, M.Ed.

Annie Feng, Ed.D.
Tamra Stambaugh, M.Ed.

Directions: Please employ the following scale as you rate each of the checklist items. Rate each item according to how well the teacher characteristic or behavior was demonstrated during the observed instructional activity. Each item is judged on an individual, self-contained basis, regardless of its relationship to an overall set of behaviors relevant to the cluster heading.

3=Effective	2=Somewhat Effective	1=Ineffective	N/O = Not Observed	
The teacher evidenced careful planning and classroom flexibility in implementation of the behavior, eliciting many appropriate student responses. The teacher was clear, and sustained focus on the purposes of learning.	The teacher evidenced some planning and/or classroom flexibility in implementation of the behavior, eliciting some appropriate student responses. The teacher was sometimes clear and focused on the purposes of learning.	The teacher evidenced little or no planning and/or classroom flexibility in implementation of the behavior, eliciting minimal appropriate student responses. The teacher was unclear and unfocused regarding the purpose of learning.	The listed behavior was not demonstrated during the time of the observation. (NOTE: There must be an obvious attempt made for the certain behavior to be rated "ineffective" instead of "not observed".)	
General Teaching Behaviors				
Curriculum Planning and Delivery	3	2	1	N/O
The teacher...				
1. set high expectations for student performance.				
2. incorporated activities for students to apply new knowledge.				
3. engaged students in planning, monitoring or assessing their learning.				
4. encouraged students to express their thoughts.				
5. had students reflect on what they had learned.				
Comments:				
Differentiated Teaching Behaviors				
Accommodations for Individual Differences	3	2	1	N/O
The teacher...				
6. provided opportunities for independent or group learning to promote depth in understanding content.				
7. accommodated individual or subgroup differences (e.g., through individual conferencing, student or teacher choice in material selection and task assignments.)				
8. encouraged multiple interpretations of events and situations.				
9. allowed students to discover key ideas individually through structured activities and/or questions.				
Comments:				
Problem Solving	3	2	1	N/O
The teacher...				
10. employed brainstorming techniques.				
11. engaged students in problem identification and definition				
12. engaged students in solution-finding activities and comprehensive solution articulation.				
Comments:				

Critical Thinking Strategies	3	2	1	N/O
The teacher...				
13. encouraged students to judge or evaluate situations, problems, or issues				
14. engaged students in comparing and contrasting ideas (e.g., analyze generated ideas)				
15. provided opportunities for students to generalize from concrete data or information to the abstract.				
16. encouraged student synthesis or summary of information within or across disciplines.				
Comments:				
Creative Thinking Strategies	3	2	1	N/O
The teacher...				
17. solicited many diverse thoughts about issues or ideas.				
18. engaged students in the exploration of diverse points of view to reframe ideas.				
19. encouraged students to demonstrate open-mindedness and tolerance of imaginative, sometimes playful solutions to problems.				
20. provided opportunities for students to develop and elaborate on their ideas.				
Comments:				
Research Strategies	3	2	1	N/O
<i>(It is atypical for these to be observed in one session. Some teachers, however, may use Items #21-25 within a single period to illustrate the full research process to students. Please note those observations in the comments section.)</i>				
The teacher...				
21. required students to gather evidence from multiple sources through research-based techniques (e.g., print, non-print, internet, self-investigation via surveys, interviews, etc.).				
22. provided opportunities for students to analyze data and represent it in appropriate charts, graphs, or tables.				
23. asked questions to assist students in making inferences from data and drawing conclusions.				
24. encouraged students to determine implications and consequences of findings.				
25. provided time for students to communicate research study findings to relevant audiences in a formal report and/or presentation.				
Comments:				
Additional Comments:				

The William and Mary Classroom Observation Scales
Lesson Plan Script Sheet

What's Going On? (Methods and Organization)	# of Minutes	Questions or Comments (Specific Quotes)		Other Observations (include # of students answering or involved)
		Teacher	Student	
Unanticipated Student Behaviors Observed:				

William and Mary Classroom Observation Scales, Revised
Teacher Interview Form

Questions	Teacher Responses
Did you have a written lesson plan for this lesson?	_____ yes _____ no
How would you characterize the purpose of the lesson?	
What were your instructional objectives for the previous lesson with this class?	
What content will you cover in your subsequent lesson?	
What plans do you have to address homework or extensions of this lesson?	
How do you intend to assess the outcomes for this lesson? Final outcomes for the unit?	
Are there any aspects of the lesson you would like to clarify before this observation is finalized?	

Appendix K

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Program Standards

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Program Design

1.0E Levels of services should be matched to the needs of gifted learners by providing a full continuum of options.

2.0E Gifted education programming must receive funding consistent with the program goals and sufficient to adequately meet them.

3.0E Gifted education programming should be planned as a result of consultation with informed experts.

3.1E The school or school district should have a mission/philosophy statement that addresses the need for gifted education programming.

3.2E A comprehensive pre-K–12 program plan should include policies and procedures for identification, curriculum and instruction, service delivery, teacher preparation, formative and summative evaluation, support services, and parent involvement.

4.0E Gifted services must be designed to supplement and build on the basic academic skills and knowledge learned in regular classrooms at all grade-levels to ensure continuity as students progress through the program.

4.1E Local school districts should offer multiple service delivery options as no single service should stand alone.

5.0E Gifted learners should be included in flexible grouping arrangements in all content areas and grade-levels to ensure that gifted students learn with and from intellectual peers.

6.0E Gifted education policies should exist for at least the following areas: early entrance, grade skipping, ability grouping, and dual enrollment.

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Program Administration and Management

1.0E The designated gifted programming coordinator must have completed a certification program or advanced degree program in gifted education.

2.0E Responsibility for the education of gifted learners is a shared one requiring strong relationships between the gifted education program and general education school wide.

3.0E The gifted education programming staff should facilitate the dissemination of information regarding major policies and practices in gifted education (e.g., student referral and screening, appeals, informed consent, student progress, etc.) to school personnel, parents, community members, etc.

3.1E Parents of gifted learners should have regular opportunities to share input and make recommendations about program operations with the gifted programming coordinator.

3.2E The gifted education program should consider current issues and concerns from other educational fields and agencies regarding gifted programming decision making on a regular basis.

4.0E A diversity of resources (e.g., parent, community, vocational, etc.) should be available to support program operations.

4.1E Gifted education programming should provide state-of-the-art technology to support appropriate services.

4.2E The acquisition plan for purchasing new materials for the school should reflect the needs of gifted learners.

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Socio-emotional Guidance and Counseling

1.0E Counseling services should be provided by a counselor familiar with specific training in the characteristics and Socio-emotional needs (i.e., underachievement,

multipotentiality, etc.) of diverse gifted learners.

2.0E Gifted learners should be provided with college and career guidance that is appropriately different and delivered earlier than typical programs.

3.0E Gifted learners who do not demonstrate satisfactory performance in regular and/or gifted education classes should be provided with specialized intervention services.

4.0E A well-defined and implemented affective curriculum scope and sequence containing personal/social awareness and adjustment, academic planning, and vocational and career awareness should be provided to gifted learners.

5.0E Underachieving gifted learners should be provided with specific guidance and counseling services that address the issues and problems related to underachievement.

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Student Identification

1.0E The school district should provide information annually, in a variety of languages, regarding the process for nominating students for gifted education programming services.

1.1E The nomination process should be ongoing and screening of any student should occur at any time.

1.2E Nomination procedures and forms should be available in a variety of languages.

1.3E Parents should be provided with special workshops or seminars to gain a full meaning of giftedness.

2.0E Assessments should be provided in a language in which the student is most fluent, if available.

2.1E Assessment should be responsive to students' economic conditions, gender, developmental differences, handicapping conditions, and other factors that mitigate against fair assessment practices.

2.2E Students identified in all designated areas of giftedness within a school district should be assessed consistently across grade-levels.

2.3E Student assessments should be sensitive to all stages of talent development.

3.0E Individual assessment plans should be developed for all gifted learners who need gifted education.

3.1E An assessment profile should reflect the gifted learner's interests, learning style, and educational needs.

4.0E Student assessment data should come from multiple sources and include multiple assessment methods.

4.1E Student assessment data should represent an appropriate balance of reliable and valid quantitative and qualitative measures.

5.0E Student placement data should be collected using an appropriate balance of quantitative and qualitative measures with adequate evidence of reliability and validity for the purposes of identification.

5.1E District guidelines and procedures should be reviewed and revised when necessary.

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Curriculum and Instruction

1.0E A well-defined and implemented curriculum scope and sequence should be articulated for all grade-levels and all subject areas.

2.0E District curriculum plans should include objectives, content, and resources that challenge gifted learners in the regular classroom.

2.1E Teachers should be responsible for developing plans to differentiate the curriculum in every discipline for gifted learners.

2.2E Documentation of instruction for assessing level(s) of learning and accelerated rates

of learning should demonstrate plans for gifted learners based on specific needs of individual learners.

2.3E Gifted learners should be assessed for proficiency in all standard courses of study and subsequently provided with more challenging educational opportunities.

3.0E When warranted, continual opportunities for curricular acceleration should be provided in gifted learners' areas of strength and interest while allowing a sufficient ceiling for optimal learning.

4.0E Possibilities for partial or full acceleration of content and grade-levels should be available to any student presenting such needs.

5.0E Appropriate service options for each student to work at assessed level(s) and advanced rates of learning should be available.

5.1E Differentiated educational program curricula for students pre-K–12 should be modified to provide learning experiences matched to students' interests, readiness, and learning styles.

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Professional Development

1.0E All school staff should be provided ongoing staff development in the nature and needs of gifted learners, and appropriate instructional strategies.

1.1E All teachers of gifted learners should continue to be actively engaged in the study of gifted education through.

2.0E All personnel working with gifted learners should participate in regular staff development programs.

2.1E All specialist teachers in gifted education should possess a

certification/specialization or degree in gifted education.

2.2E Only teachers with advanced expertise in gifted education should have primary responsibility for the education of gifted learners.

3.0E Approved staff development activities in gifted education should be funded at least in part by school districts or educational agencies.

4.0E Regularly scheduled planning time (e.g., release time, summer pay, etc.) should be allotted to teachers for the development of differentiated educational programs and related resources.

Gifted Education Programming Criterion: Program Evaluation

1.0E Information collected should address pertinent questions raised by all constituency groups, and should be responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

2.0E School districts should allocate adequate time, financial support, and personnel to conduct systematic program evaluation.

3.0E Persons conducting the evaluation should possess an expertise in program evaluation in gifted education.

3.1E The evaluation design should report the strengths and weaknesses found in the program, as well as critical issues that might influence program services.

3.2E Care should be taken to ensure that instruments with sufficient evidence of reliability and validity are used, and that they are appropriate for varying age, developmental levels, gender, and diversity of the target population.

3.3E Formative evaluations should be conducted regularly with summative evaluations occurring minimally every five years or more often as specified by state or local district policies.

3.4E All individuals who are involved in the evaluation process should be given the opportunity to verify information and the resulting interpretation.

4.0E Evaluation reports should be designed to present results and encourage follow-through by stakeholders.

Appendix L

NAGC Programs Standards and Measurement

	Evidence (E)	Teacher (T)	Admin. (A)	Student (S)	Parent (P)	Obs. (O)	Interv. (I)
Standards program design							
1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x	x	x		x		
3	x	x	x		x		
3.1	x	x	x		x		
3.2	x	x	x		x		x
4	x	x	x	x	x	x	
4.1	x						
5		x	x	x	x	x	
6	x	x	x		x		x
Program admin. management							
1	x						
2	x	x	x		x		
3	x	x	x		x		
3.1	x	x	x		x		x
3.2	x	x	x		x		
4	x						
4.1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4.2	x						
Socio-emotional							

guidance/counseling							
1	x	x	x		x		
2	x	x	x	x	x		x
3	x	x	x	x	x		
4	x	x	x		x		
5	x	x	x	x	x		
Student identification							
1	x	x	x		x		
1.1	x						
1.2	x						
1.3	x	x	x		x		x
2	x						
2.1	x						
2.2	x						
2.3	x						
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	
3.1	x	x	x	x	x		
4	x						
4.1	x						
5	x						
5.1	x						
Curriculum/instruction							
1	x	x	x		x		

2	x						
2.1	x	x	x	x	x	x	
2.2	x	x	x	x	x	x	
2.3	x	x	x	x	x	x	
3	x	x	x	x	x	x	
4	x	x	x		x	x	
5	x						
5.1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Professional development							
1	x	x	x				
1.1	x	x	x			x	
2	x	x	x				
2.1	x						
2.2	x	x	x			x	
3	x	x	x				
4	x	x	x				
Program evaluation							
1	x	x	x		x		
2	x	x	x		x		
3	x	x	x		x		
3.1	x						
3.2	x						
3.3	x						

3.4	x						
4	x						

Appendix M

E-Mail Response From Joseph Renzulli

From: "Renzulli, Joseph" [REDACTED]
 To: Debra Harwell-Braun [REDACTED]
 CC: "Gubbins, Elizabeth" [REDACTED], "Carolyn M. Callahan" <c...
 Date: 7/1/2009 9:32 AM
 Subject: Re: Information Request

Dear Debra,

I am forwarding your request to two of my colleagues who have much more recent experience in program evaluation, and might be able to offer some advice.

I think that this important work and the NAGC standards should, themselves, serve as a rationale for some original instrument development.

Best wishes in your work,

Joe

On 7/1/09 8:39 AM, 'Debra Harwell-Braun' [REDACTED] wrote:

Dr. Renzulli,

I am currently a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC. My dissertation is a K-5 Program Evaluation of a Gifted Education Program based on the NAGC program standards. I have been searching for a survey that could be used with students, teachers, parents, and administrators to obtain their perceptions of the current program being evaluated utilizing the NAGC standards. Based upon your expertise in this area, I wanted to inquire if you know of an instrument, or could guide me to where I might locate one that would be appropriate for my research. I would appreciate any information you can provide.

Sincerely,

Debra

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Joseph S. Renzulli, Director
 The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented
 University of Connecticut Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor
 Raymond and Lynn Neag Professor of Gifted Education and Talent Development

Visit our award winning website [REDACTED] for information about our summer and academic year programs including Confratute, Three Summers Master's Degree Program, On-Line Courses, UConn Mentor Connection, Parenting Specialist Help, and the latest research from The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Appendix N

E-Mail Response From CarolAnn Tomlinson

From: *Tomlinson, Carol ([REDACTED])
To: Debra Harwell-Braun ([REDACTED])
Date: 7/6/2009 11:08 AM
Subject: RE: Information request

Hi Debra-

I don't know of a survey like the one you're hoping to find. It might be that the best bet is to create one pretty directly from the NAGC standards. I'm sorry I don't have a better answer for you.

Carol

From: Debra Harwell-Braun ([REDACTED])
Sent: Wednesday, July 01, 2009 8:21 AM
To: Tomlinson, Carol (cat3y)
Subject: Information request

Dr. Tomlinson,

I am currently a doctoral student at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC. My dissertation is a K-5 Program Evaluation of a Gifted Education Program based on the NAGC program standards. I have been searching for a survey that could be used with students, teachers, parents, and administrators to obtain their perceptions of the current program being evaluated utilizing the NAGC standards. Based upon your expertise in this area, I wanted to inquire if you know of an instrument, or could guide me to where I might locate one that would be appropriate for my research. I would appreciate any information you can provide.

Sincerely,
Debra

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Appendix O

Program Evaluation Permission From Interim Superintendent

July 28, 2009

Mr. Brady Johnson

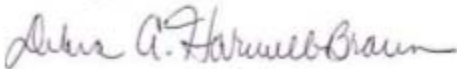

RE: Confirm letter of consent

Dear Mr. Johnson,

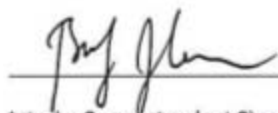
I wanted to contact you regarding my current dissertation. I received verbal permission from Dr. Holliday in 2008 and written permission in 2009 (attached) to do a program evaluation on the K-5 elementary gifted education program in the Iredell-Statesville Schools based on the NAGC National Standards. I have completed my proposal defense and am at the collection of data portion of my dissertation. Data collection will be completed by the end of September, with my plan to defend my dissertation in December and graduate from GWU in May, 2010. As Interim Superintendent, I am requesting your permission to continue my work and complete my data collection.

If you agree for me to complete this program evaluation of the Iredell-Statesville Schools AIG K-5 Program based on the national standards for my dissertation, please sign below. Thank you in advance for assisting me with this professional endeavor.

Sincerely,



Debra A. Harwell-Braun
Doctoral Student, Gardner-Webb University



Interim Superintendent Signature

7-28-09

Date

Appendix P

Permission to Use Graphic From Joseph Renzulli

From: "Renzulli, Joseph" Saturday - October 17, 2009 11:22 PM
 <[REDACTED]>
To: Debra Harwell-Braun <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Permission to use graphic
Attachments: Mime.822 (2878 bytes)
 Dear Debra,

You certainly have permission to use the graphic. Please send me an abstract of your dissertation upon completion. Best wishes in your research.

Joe

On 10/17/09 6:02 PM, "Debra Harwell-Braun" <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dr. Renzulli,
 I am a doctoral student and am working on my dissertation which is a program evaluation of a school system based on the NAGT Standards. I would like to ask your permission to use the graphic attached as part of my dissertation reference.

Sincerely,
 Debra

Debra Harwell-Braun
 MA, NBCT '97,'06
 Director of AIG
 Iredell-Statesville Schools
 Alan D. Rutherford Education Ctr.
 [REDACTED]

"Teachers who inspire realize there will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how we use them."
 Anonymous

--- Scanned by M+ Guardian Messaging Firewall ---

--
 Joseph S. Renzulli, Director
 The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented
 University of Connecticut Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor
 Raymond and Lynn Neag Professor of Gifted Education and Talent Development

Visit our award winning website [REDACTED] for information about our summer and academic year programs including Confratute, Three Summers Master's Degree Program, On-Line Courses, UConn Mentor Connection, Parenting Specialist Help, and the latest research from The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.