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BEST PRACTICES OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA'S PLAN B IMPLEMENTATION  
FOR  
POTENTIALLY GIFTED STUDENTS  
DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Education in  
Educational Leadership

by

Robin N. Rothman, M.S.Ed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lynn University

2019

## ABSTRACT

### ROBIN N. ROTHMAN: Best Practices of the State of Florida's Plan B Implementation for Potentially Gifted Students

The aim of this study was to analyze the best practices methods and procedures used by school districts in the State of Florida for the purpose of identifying Gifted students from historically underrepresented groups who fall under the Plan B provision of the Florida Administrative Code 6A-6.03019, specifically students who are Limited English Proficient and those who belong to Low Socio-Economic Status families. Twenty eight of the 67 Florida school districts that demonstrated the most equitable representation of traditionally underserved student populations in gifted programs were identified and selected to participate. Of the 152 Gifted education administrators or evaluators that received an email invitation to take part in the six question survey, 32 responded. According to their responses, two major themes were identified. First, classroom teachers play a crucial role in both the nomination and assessment process. Professional development is the primary method of supporting teachers in identifying gifted behaviors in potentially gifted students from Plan B sub-groups. Second, the use of a universal screener, administered in the early grades is both utilized and recommended. These results are to be compiled into a practical handbook and made available to the districts and the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Student Education.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lynn University offered me an opportunity to reach an academic goal that I had previously considered unattainable and I will always be grateful for this most enriching experience. The Doctoral program in the Ross College of Education provided the means for me to flourish, both professionally and personally, and its accelerated pace allowed me to finish my terminal degree well before my career itself became terminal.

I am grateful to Dr. Jennifer Lesh, my committee chairperson, for her patient advice and guidance. I must also thank Dr. Kathleen Weigel, Dean of the Ross College of Education, for crafting a program that works for the working education professional. My appreciation also goes to my committee members, Dr. Nancy Kline and Dr. Lisa Spencer-Hoo, for their recommendations and validation. Every professor in the Ed.D. program has my eternal gratitude and admiration.

Danny, Jaqua, Laura, and Susan have been wonderful cohort-mates. I have learned so much from each of them and they will forever remain in my heart and mind. Shazam!

My family and friends have unfailingly cheered me on and offered their support along the way. While naught could diminish its value, humbly, this was to be expected. It is the sincere response of my students that warms my heart to its core. They expressed genuine interest in my work, enthusiastic encouragement as I shared my progress, and generous applause as I reached the final steps. Thank you, my dears. I did this for me, true. But I did this for you, as well.

## DEDICATION

This body of work is dedicated to the untold number of gifted students who were left behind, overlooked, or ignored. I am sorry that we failed you.

A wise friend once told me that true amends are found in the actions. The best we can do now is to give our attention to the gifted students of today and tomorrow.

Therefore, my work is dedicated to the gifted student waiting to be acknowledged. I see you, I hear you, and I will not stop looking for you.

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Best Practices of the State of Florida's Plan B Implementation for

Potentially Gifted Students

Robin N. Rothman

Lynn University

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

History is filled with stories of gifted people who were not always considered gifted. Albert Einstein did not speak until he was four years old. Thomas Edison's teachers said he was unable to learn. Isaac Newton, Winston Churchill, and Louis Pasteur were all considered poor students (Rhode Island State Advisory Committee on Gifted and Talented Education, 2016). Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Frank Lloyd Wright did not have college degrees (Time, 2016). And yet, somehow, they all proved that they were indeed exceptional, responsible for revolutionary advancements in science, architecture, and the new field of computers, as well as leading a country at war to victory. They were able to push past low expectations and achieve great things. These stories are known. But, how many stories are unknown? What happens to other gifted students who are not identified, nurtured, or encouraged? What happens to the gifted child who is told he or she is not gifted? How many gifted students are falling through the cracks?

Who are they? And, how do we find them?

#### **Background**

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) estimates that approximately six to ten percent of the K-12 student population is gifted (2016). This estimate is not limited by ethnicity, language or socio-economic status. While current research places increasing emphasis on a child's environment for the development of giftedness, the potential for giftedness begins with genetic composition (NAGC, 2016).

Therefore, is it not logical to expect that six to ten percent of demographic sub-groups are potentially gifted?

Logical it may be, but an equitable representation of non-White students in gifted populations is seen in half of the United States public school districts or less. As reported by the NAGC (2014), nationally:

“In only 50% of elementary school districts was exact alignment reported for Black student representation; 34% of districts at the middle school level and 50% at the high level were in the exact category. Hispanic student representation was similarly disparate. Fifty four percent of coordinators provided data that placed their elementary schools in the exact category; 37% of middle schools and 50% of high school districts fell in the exact category. More than 80% of the district coordinators across all school levels reported exact or adjacent alignment between Black and Hispanic student representation in their districts and in districts’ gifted programs” (NAGC, 2014).

Similarly, students from lower socio-economic groups are also underrepresented:

“Notably, underrepresentation of students of poverty in gifted programs was greater than that of Black or Hispanic students. More than 50% of the respondents across school levels reported much lower representation of students of poverty in their gifted programs than the percentage of the subgroup in their district student population. Only 17.8%, 21.4%, and 15.1% of the districts at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, respectively were in the exact alignment category” (NAGC, 2014).



Stated plainly, across the country, gifted student populations within school districts are primarily White, of middle class or higher socioeconomic status. In many cases, the diversity of the gifted population within a school district does not mirror the diversity of the district as a whole. Minority students are not represented at an equitable level.

In 1988, revisions were made to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, to include grant programs to encourage individual states to create special programs for gifted and talented students. The Secretary of Education is specifically charged with giving “highest priority to programs intended to identify and serve gifted and talented students, such as the disadvantaged, who might not be identified by traditional means” (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1988). The most recent revision, enacted in September of 2017, specifically includes “economically disadvantaged individuals, [and] individuals who are English learners” (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2017).

Although federal legislators seem to have been aware of the need for more inclusive gifted programs since 1988, non-White students continue to be underrepresented in gifted programs. For example, in 2012, students enrolled in public schools across the United States were 51% White, 15.7% Black and 24.3% Hispanic. However, students enrolled in gifted programs across the nation were 60.7% White, 8.8% Black, and 16.8% Hispanic (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). White students were over-represented by almost 10%, while Black and Hispanic students were underrepresented by 7% - 8%. The gap in representation can be interpreted as approximately 17% nationwide.

In the State of Florida, 2012 enrollment is reported as 41.6% White, 23% Black, and 29% Hispanic (NCES, 2014) while 2012 enrollment in gifted programs was reported as 54.9% White, 9.2% Black, and 26.5% Hispanic (NCES, 2015). This translates to an overrepresentation of more than 13% in the White subgroup, and an underrepresentation of almost 14% for Black students and less than 3% for Hispanic students. While the Hispanic students are equitably represented, the representation gap for Black and White students is approximately 27%, significantly (10%) higher than the national gap.

Under the auspices of the Florida Department of State, the Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-6.03019 (1988) outlines the eligibility criteria for a student to be included in special instructional programs for the gifted. Originally implemented in 1977, lawmakers revised the rule in 1991, adding a provision designed to serve students from underrepresented groups. Underrepresented students were originally defined as those “whose racial/ethnic backgrounds are other than white non-hispanic, or who are limited English proficient, or who are from a low-socio-economic status family” (FAC, Rule 6A-6.03019, 1997). In 1998, the regulation was amended by stating that in addition to white, non-hispanic students, those of Asian/Pacific Island descent were also not considered to be members of an underrepresented student group (FAC, Rule 6A-6.03019, 1998). In 2002, the reference to race was removed completely (FAC, Rule 6A-6.03019, 2002).

This regulation is frequently referred to as Plan B (FAC, Rule 6A-6.03019, 2002).

The current verbiage is:

“(b) The student is a member of an under-represented group and meets the criteria specified in an approved school district plan for increasing the participation of under-represented groups in programs for gifted students.

1. For the purpose of this rule, under-represented groups are defined as groups:
  - a. Who are limited English proficient, or
  - b. Who are from a low socio-economic status family” (FAC, Rule 6A-6.03019, 2002).

This rule gives the Florida Department of Education the authority to approve district plans for increasing the inclusion of students from the named underrepresented groups. Approved plans must include specific goals for increasing inclusion of underrepresented students, a description of referral and screening procedures, and a list of measurement instruments to be used. Districts, therefore, have the autonomy to choose from a broad array of assessments and procedures for the purpose of implementing Plan B (FAC, Rule 6A-6.03019, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to determine which of Florida's 67 school districts showed the most equitable representation and identify which assessments and procedures under Plan B were best achieving the goal of including more students from underrepresented groups in their gifted programs.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this research was to identify procedures and assessments that promote equitable participation of gifted students from traditionally underrepresented subgroups, specifically students who are categorized as Limited English Proficient or who come from a family of Low Socio-Economic Status. Florida school districts that demonstrated equitable representation were selected for this survey. By broadening the demographic base of the gifted student population, more students will gain the support and services to which they are entitled. Gifted students who have access to challenging

and rigorous learning opportunities thrive in the customary K-12 experience and in post-secondary ventures, as well (NAGC, 2017).

Additionally, most current statistical reporting that is available to the public does not parse the demographics within the categories of Limited English Proficient or Low Socio-Economic Status, but by ethnic groups. It is, therefore, somewhat difficult to measure and monitor the success of Plan B.

### **Rationale for the Study**

It would be virtually impossible to calculate the number of students who are gifted but have not been identified as gifted. Although one may find anecdotal evidence of students who have not been identified as gifted, there is no empirical way to measure this. In an effort to find an aspect of the problem that could be measured and potentially facilitate a meaningful result, this researcher chose to study the reported statistics of the 67 school districts in Florida to discover which methods of gifted assessment produced the most equitable results for students from traditionally underrepresented groups, namely that the percentages of gifted students from the identified underrepresented subgroups would mirror the percentages of the identified groups in the district population as a whole. Then, the methods of the districts with the most equitable distributions could be studied and shared as best practices.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to learn which assessment instruments for identifying giftedness in students from underrepresented populations were producing the most equitable results in Florida school districts. Specifically, as defined in the Plan B provision (Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-A.03019, Section b, 1991), these

students have Limited English Proficiency or come from a Low Socioeconomic Status family. By comparing the percentage of these two groups as they are represented in the individual districts' gifted programs to the percentage of these two groups as they are represented in the individual districts as a whole, the methods that produced the most equitable results were identified. Results are to be disseminated to the districts in an effort to share best practices.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) Which measurement instruments and procedures for assessing giftedness being used by the Florida school districts show the most equitable representation of students who belong to an underrepresented group, as defined in Plan B?
- 2) How can school districts support teachers in identifying students who are potentially gifted for nomination for Plan B assessment?

### **Assumptions**

For the purpose of this study, certain assumptions were accepted. First, it was assumed that all 67 Florida school districts have a gifted services program. It was assumed that all districts have specialized personnel who manage these programs and would be able to answer survey questions. It was assumed that demographic data regarding student groups and subgroups would be readily accessible online through state or district websites. It was assumed that demographic data reported at the district level and the state level was reported accurately and consistently. It was also assumed that survey participants would be honest and forthcoming about their district's Plan B procedures.

**Definitions**

In an effort to ensure the consistency of language in the reporting and analysis of data, the following defined terms were used throughout the study.

*Assessments.* This term refers to any measurement instrument used by any Florida school district in an effort to identify students for participation in their respective gifted programs. These may include, but are not limited to, standard intelligence or academic proficiency tests, non-verbal assessments, portfolio submissions, and indicator checklists.

*Equitable Representation.* This term represented a difference of no more than 20% in the percentages of each subgroup in the specified population. For example, if a district's FRL population is 40% and the percentage of FRL students in the Gifted program is 20%, it was considered an equitable representation.

*Gifted.* As found in the Florida Department of State Administrative Code, Rule 6A-6.03019 is "One who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance." This includes those students who have "ability or potential in specific areas of leadership, motivation, academic performance, and creativity" (Florida Administrative Code, 2017).

*Gifted Education Administrators.* This term refers to members of the district level gifted education departments, as found on each district's website. Depending on the information available on these websites, this may have included gifted education department directors, facilitators, coaches, or specialists. When the gifted education department did not have their own webpage, the Exceptional Student Education staff were selected and may have included ESE directors, facilitators, coaches or specialists.

*Gifted Education Evaluators.* This term refers to those district employees who may be administering gifted assessments to students nominated to the gifted programs. This group was primarily composed of school psychologists who may have operated at the district or school level.

*Limited English Proficient (LEP).* This term signifies any student who is currently participating in an 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) program or an 'English Language Learner' (ELL) program. The terms LEP, ELL and ESOL may be used interchangeably, and for the purposes of this study, were considered equivalent. For the purpose of clarity and delineation, LEP was be the preferred acronym.

*Low Socio-Economic Status (LSES).* This benchmark is determined annually by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, as reported by the Federal Register (2017) and is often considered equivalent to the term established for those who qualify for 'Free or Reduced Lunch' (FRL). For the purposes of this study, the terms LSES and FRL may have been used interchangeably and are considered equivalent. For the purpose of clarity and delineation, FRL was the preferred acronym.

*Representation Differential.* This term will represent the difference between the percentage of a subgroup's representation with the total enrollment and the subgroup's representation within the Gifted population. For example, if a district's LEP population is 20% and the percentage of LEP students in the Gifted program is 15%, then the differential is 5%.

*Representation Gap.* This term represented the total difference between one subgroup's overrepresentation and another's underrepresentation. For example, if one

subgroup is overrepresented by 10% and another is underrepresented by 5%, then the representation gap is 15%.

*School Districts.* This term represented the brick-and-mortar school districts that are delineated by the 67 geographical counties within the state. Although some databases include additional school districts, they are specialty districts, defined for unrelated purposes and were not included in this study.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

Data was collected from the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Students Services, ESE Policies and Procedures (SP&P) database found within the Florida Department of Education's website. Each school district is responsible for reporting their policies and procedures for their respective Exceptional Student Education departments. Under Part V Appendices, Appendix C is entitled: District Plan to Increase the Participation of Underrepresented Students in the Program for Students who are Gifted. Within this page, districts report enrollment data, including the number of Limited English Proficient students and those from Low Socio-Economic Status families who are identified as Gifted.

Based on this data, 28 districts show equitable representation in either LEP or FRL gifted enrollment categories, or both. A Survey Monkey™ survey was sent to the designated Gifted education administrator or evaluator at each of these school districts. The identity of the respondents was masked via Survey Monkey's anonymity protocols. The survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions regarding the procedures and measurement instruments for identifying gifted students.



Once the data was collected, data will be analyzed and coded (Yin, 2016).

Themes and additional coding were determined as the data was reviewed.

The measurement instruments and procedures that have produced the most equitable results are to be compiled as a handbook of best practices to be shared with districts. This information is also to be offered to the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Historical Background

As explained by Dr. Donna Y. Ford and Dr. J. John Harris III, in their book, *Multicultural Gifted Education* (1999), the discussion of equitable multicultural education for gifted students begins with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). This landmark case “is the foundation upon which all subsequent developments ensuring the legal rights of the disenfranchised rest” (Ford & Harris, 1999, p. 16).

The focus on equality continued through the 1960s, as President Lyndon B. Johnson and his administration waged a War on Poverty in an effort to create the Great Society, in which poverty would be eliminated and all Americans would enjoy economic and educational opportunities. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the accompanying Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 were intended to level a playing field for those citizens facing a pervasive discrimination that prevented them from accessing fair wages and adequate education (US History, 2017). In 1965, Head Start awarded its first grants to give students from low socio-economic neighborhoods access to learning opportunities so that they would be ready for mainstream public school (National Head Start Association, 2018). Although Johnson's equality programs commenced with good intentions, the Vietnam War was costly and his social programs suffered (US History, 2017).

Ford and Harris (1999) describe a shift in policy during the 1970s. They explain that while education reform was focused on the disenfranchised, opponents felt that the rights and needs of the majority were not given equal attention.

This complaint then influenced reforms that followed. Ford and Harris (1999) cite three misconceptions that negatively impacted efforts to offer equal educational opportunities to minority students and those from low socio-economic status families. First, high test scores seem to have more importance than quality experiences. Second, common core curriculums do not allow for cultural and socio-economic differences; the words 'common' and 'different' are antonyms. Third, "In attempting to be democratic, reformers have ignored the importance of group differences (e.g., gender, race, socio-economic status) as general guidelines from which to educate children, especially racially and culturally diverse youth" (Ford & Harris, 1999, p. 17).

These reforms were focused on helping these students function in the mainstream public classroom at grade level. The legislative discussion had not yet addressed the underprivileged, underrepresented gifted and talented student (Ford & Harris, 1999). As described in Chapter I of this document, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) was amended in 1988 to include specific language to ensure that gifted and talented students who come from disadvantaged situations were identified and included in programs for the gifted (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1988). In 2017, that verbiage was made even more specific and the law now focuses on students who are "economically disadvantaged individuals, [and] individuals who are English learners" (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2017).

While it is too soon to gauge the effects of the most recent adaptation, it is logical to next review the inclusion of the underrepresented students since 1988.

### **Underrepresented Students in Gifted Education Today**

Most collected data on the emerging concept of greater inclusion of the underrepresented in gifted education is parsed by ethnic group: White, Black, and Hispanic. It is important to note that Black is not necessarily indicative of LSES. Sociologist Robert Ross cites data from the 2011 Census Bureau report entitled *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States*, and explains that

“The white poverty rate does run much lower than the black rate, just under 10 percent, one-third of the black rate. But the white poor outnumber the black poor considerably, 19 to 7.8 million. White people make up 42 percent of America’s poor, black people about 28 percent...Of the 20 million people who live in extreme poverty [less than 50% of poverty level income], about 42 percent are white, 27 percent black” (Ross, 2012).

Additionally, even though Spanish speakers account for 77% of English Language Learner students in the 2014-2015 school year (NCES, 2017), it cannot be assumed that all students who identify themselves as Hispanic are simultaneously LEP. The available data will nonetheless support the general idea that underrepresentation is still an issue in gifted education (Grissom & Redding, 2016).

For example, African American students are most notably underrepresented in Gifted Education. In 2012, Jordan, Bain, McCallum and Bell introduced their study, *Comparing Gifted and Nongifted African American and Euro-American Students on Cognitive and Academic Variables Using Local Norms*, with the following statistics:

“According to U.S. Department of Education figures from 2006, although 55% of the entire population of public school students was Euro-American, 67% of gifted students were Euro-American. Alternatively, 17% of the entire school population

was African American, but only 9% of gifted students were African American (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

An examination of additional reporting from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2017), the data warehouse for the US Department of Education, showed similar results. Beginning in 2006, the NCES began reporting the number and percentages of students enrolled in gifted and talented programs, parsed by gender and ethnicity. This figure was not updated annually, but reported again in 2007, 2008, and 2015 (NCES, 2006, 2007, 2008, & 2015). This represented the gifted enrollment in 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2011, respectively. These figures were compared with the overall student enrollment and the percentages of enrollment based on ethnic group from the same years (NCES, 2004, 2006, 2008, & 2015). It was clear that the pattern of the underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in gifted programs, although improving slightly, had continued as seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Differential in Ethnic Representation in Gifted Programs in United States*

School Yr	Total Gifted	White			Diff ±	Black			Diff ±	Hispanic			Diff ±
		Number of Gifted Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment	% of Gifted Enrollment		Number of Gifted Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment	% of Gifted Enrollment		Number of Gifted Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment	% of Gifted Enrollment	
2002	3,002,040	2,179,250	59.5	72.6	+13.1	253,140	17.3	8.4	-8.9	312,450	17.8	10.4	-7.4
2004	3,202,760	2,231,410	57.9	69.6	+11.7	287,830	17.3	8.9	-8.4	394,810	19.2	12.3	-6.9
2006	3,236,990	2,191,210	56.5	67.6	+11.1	296,150	17.1	9.1	-8.0	414,060	20.5	12.7	-7.8
2011	3,189,757	1,939,266	51.7	60.7	+9.0	281,135	15.8	8.8	-7.0	583,529	23.7	18.2	-5.5

Total Enrollment Data: (NCES 2004, 2006, 2008, 2015)

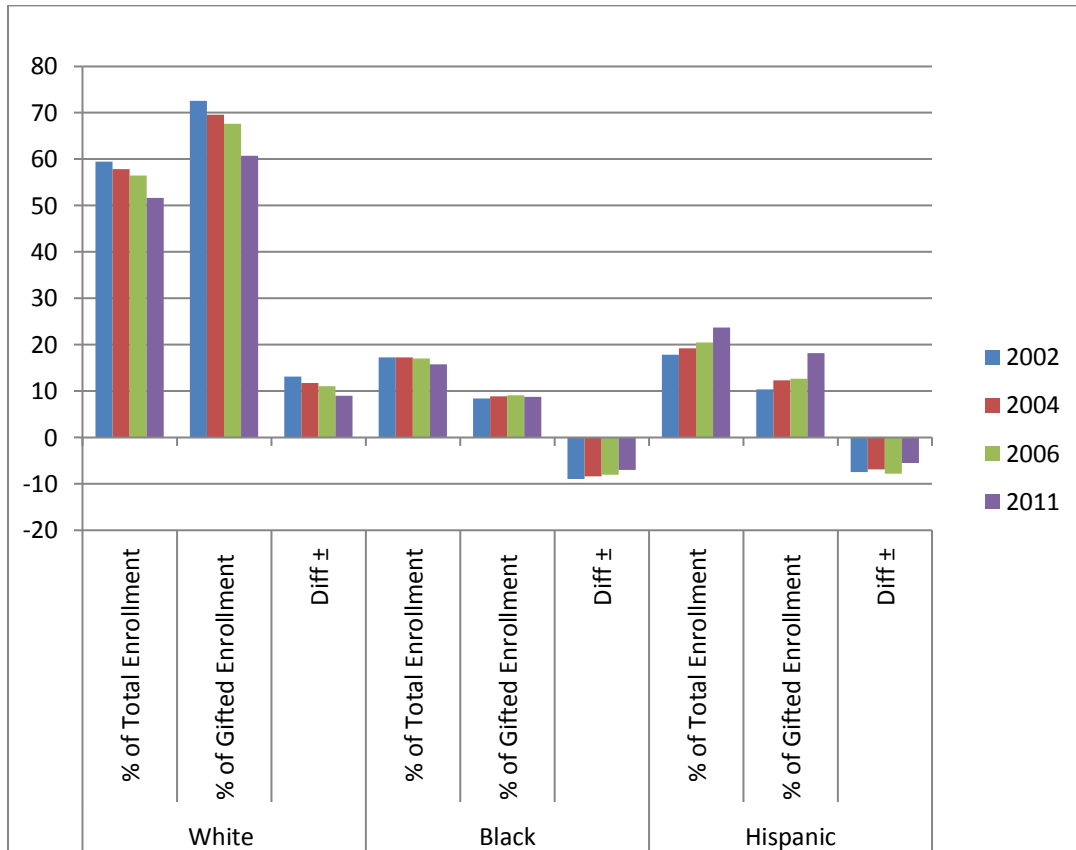
Gifted Enrollment Data: (NCES 2006, 2007, 2008, 2015)

While White students were over-represented by a range of 9% to 13%, Black students were underrepresented by 7% to 9% and Hispanic students were

underrepresented by 5% to 7%. Figure 1 depicts the representation gap of almost 20% between Black and White students, and an average of 16% between White and Hispanic students.

Figure 1.

*Comparison of Differential in Representation in Gifted Programs in the US*



Total Enrollment Data: (NCES 2004, 2006, 2008, 2015)

Gifted Enrollment Data: (NCES 2006, 2007, 2008, 2015)

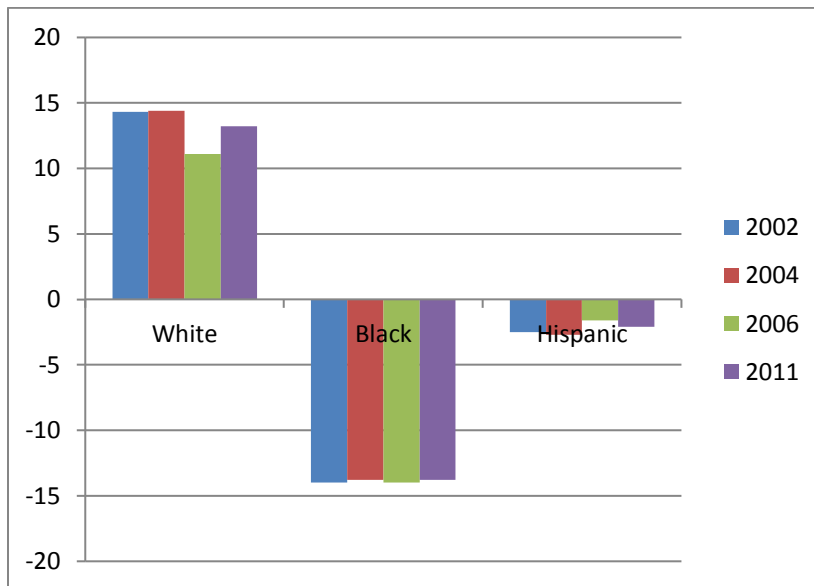
**Narrowing the Gap in the State of Florida**

An analysis of data with the same parameters in the State of Florida shows somewhat different, yet still significantly disproportionate findings. Figure 2 shows that the White subgroup was overrepresented by 11% to 14% and the Black subgroup was

severely underrepresented at approximately 14% across all years surveyed. The Hispanic subgroup representation seemed to be the most equitable, with differential percentages hovering just 1 – 2% below the overall representation figures.

Figure 2.

*Representation Gap in Gifted Programs in the State of Florida*



Total Enrollment Data: (NCES 2004, 2006, 2008, 2013)

Gifted Enrollment Data: (NCES 2006, 2007, 2008, 2015)

In an effort to balance the underrepresentation in gifted program, the State of Florida implemented the Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-A.03019 (2002), Section b (Plan B), which specifically focuses on LEP (Limited English Proficient) students and FRL students (those who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch). However, most of the current statistical reporting that is available to the public does not parse the demographics within these same categories, but by ethnic groups. It was, therefore, somewhat difficult to measure and monitor the success of Plan B.

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has created a variety of publications, technical assistance papers and other resources for the benefit of all gifted students, and their parents and teachers (FLDOE, 2017). The FLDOE's requirements for the approval of districtwide gifted programs are specified, but the creation of districtwide gifted programs does not appear to be mandated. However, an initial survey of the individual districts appeared to report that while all Florida school districts have a gifted education policy, not all implement a Plan B model (FLDOE, Department of Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2017).

**History of the Plan B Regulation.** Regulation 6A-6.03019 was first introduced to the Florida Administrative Code in 1977 (Florida Department of State, 1988). It states that a student shall be deemed Gifted and is therefore eligible to participate in a gifted program, if he or she scores two or more standard deviations above average on a standardized intelligence test. Neither race nor any other demographic designation is stipulated (Florida Department of State, 1988).

In 1991, the regulation was amended to include the first iteration of the Plan B verbiage. It stated that a student who was a member of an underrepresented group and who met the criteria specified by the district in a plan that was approved by the state, could be included in the Gifted program. 'Underrepresented' was defined as a student 1) whose race or ethnicity is other than white non-Hispanic, 2) who has limited English proficiency or 3) is from a low socio-economic status family (Florida Department of State, 1997). This change was presumably in response to the 1988 amendment to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act that focused on the identification and



inclusion of disadvantaged students in gifted programs (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1988).

In 1998, the regulation was further amended to expand the definition of 'underrepresented.' In addition to excluding White non-Hispanic students, those of Asian/Pacific Islander ethnicity were also deemed ineligible for the Plan B path into the gifted programs (Florida Department of State, 1998).

In 2002, the current version of the Plan B regulation was established. All racial or ethnic criteria were removed so that the Plan B option is available only to students with limited English proficiency or who come from a low socio-economic status family. This was in direct response to a lawsuit, *Miller, et al. v. State of Florida, the State of Florida Department of Education, and Charlie Crist, Commissioner of Education* (2002), that alleged that the racial component of the regulation was indicative of unconstitutional racial discrimination. Mrs. Miller's son had been nominated for Gifted assessment, but his score did not qualify him for placement under Plan A. As he is a White non-Hispanic student, he did not qualify for placement in the Gifted program under the Plan B regulation. The plaintiff alleged that her son was a victim of discrimination because of his race. The lawsuit was initiated first against the Miami-Dade Public Schools and Superintendent Merritt Steirheim, and as it progressed through the system, finally named the State of Florida, the Florida Department of Education and Charlie Crist, Commissioner of Education as the Defendants. A settlement was reached on March 8, 2002. In addition to a reimbursement of the Plaintiff's legal fees, the Defendants agreed to adopt "a race-neutral gifted rule" (*Miller, et al. v. State of Florida, the State of Florida Department of Education, and Charlie Crist, Commissioner of Education, 2002*).

### **Assessing Giftedness in Underrepresented Student Populations**

Traditionally, school districts and other testing authorities have relied upon standard intelligence tests to assess students for giftedness (Ford, 2013). Recently, however, leaders in the field of gifted education have been advising that school districts use a more flexible approach and use a combination of assessment measures so that more underrepresented students will have access to services and enrichment opportunities (Ford, 2013).

In 2008, the National Association for Gifted Children released a position statement entitled “The Role of Assessments in The Identification of Gifted Students” (NAGC, 2008). Rather than relying on one standardized test, they believe that

“Identification of gifted and talented students should not be based on a single assessment. Rather, multiple pieces of evidence should be collected that measure different constructs and characteristics aligned to the gifted program’s definition, goals, and objectives (Callahan, Tomlinson, & Pizzat, 1993), ideally including a variety of format types (e.g., paper-and-pencil; performance assessment).

Multiple pieces of psychometrically sound data obtained from a variety of sources result in a more comprehensive and thus, more accurate picture of the student on which to base selection” (NAGC, 2008).

The position statement also enumerates their recommendations for alternative instruments that can be used for determining entrance into a gifted program to ensure that all students are assessed fairly, including those from underrepresented subgroups. In addition to traditional standardized tests, these instruments may include performance assessments, such as portfolios of student work, and ratings scales used for observations

of a student's work-related behaviors and interviews with teachers and parents (NAGC, 2008).

Dr. Donna Y. Ford, a leader in the field of inclusive gifted education, advocates the use of the Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (2003) and Raven's Matrix Analogies Tests (2003). Both of these assessments measure the cognitive processes of the student, rather than acquired knowledge. As a result, students from underrepresented subgroups score better on these tests and are included in gifted programs more often (Ford & Grantham, 2003).

School districts may choose from a broad variety of measurement instruments to identify gifted students and promote inclusion of underrepresented students (FAC, Rule 6A-A.03019, Section b, 2002). As Florida has the second most diverse student population in the United States, the state has a unique opportunity to become a leader in gifted education equity (New York Times, 2011.)

### **Summary**

More than five decades have passed since the United States government acknowledged the underrepresentation of minority students in Gifted programs in public schools. Educational equity legislation dates back as early as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Despite the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the implementation of the Head Start program in 1965, non-White students continue to lag behind their White peers academically. Challenging, high level scholastic opportunities are easily accessed by White students, while these same pathways are statistically and chronically blocked for their counterparts of color. While the State of Florida has specific legislative policies to promote equity, the progress has been slow. This study

aimed to assist Florida school districts in implementing more effective procedures for more balanced participation of traditionally underrepresented student groups in Gifted programs.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Although federal and state legislators have recognized the disparities in the representation of students who are cultural minorities or those who belong to low socioeconomic status families in gifted education programs around the country, significant inequities still exist (NCES, 2015). The representation gap is significant across the United States as well as the State of Florida. Although Florida legislation and Florida Department of Education policies encourage school districts to decrease this gap, the variance continues to be substantial (NCES, 2015). This study surveyed the 28 Florida school districts that have demonstrated the most equitable representation based on the results documented in this chapter and attempted to ascertain which assessment methods and procedures are producing these outcomes.

**Philosophical Perspective.** After more than a decade teaching in Florida public schools, this researcher has become increasingly aware of disparities and inequities in the placement of students in Gifted programs and advanced classes. The researcher has personally known many students who demonstrate exceptional skills, aptitudes and talents that may have deserved a place in Gifted or accelerated programs, but were not afforded that opportunity because they did not 'fit in the box.' This prompted the researcher to learn more about Florida's Plan B provision for increasing inclusion for underrepresented students in Gifted programs. Not convinced that the code yet serves as many students as it could, the researcher was motivated to discover which methods and procedures were producing the most equitable results. Sharing these best practices is the

researcher's first step in working to facilitate increasing equity for underrepresented student groups.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices within the Plan B procedures and assessments used by Florida school districts in order to identify gifted students from traditionally underrepresented sub-groups. Specifically, these students are English Language Learners and those from low Socio-Economic status families. This study was intended to answer the following research questions:

### **Research Questions**

- 1) Which measurement instruments and procedures for assessing giftedness being used by the Florida school districts show the most equitable representation of students who belong to an underrepresented group, as defined in Plan B?
- 2) How can school districts support teachers in identifying students who are potentially gifted for nomination for Plan B assessment?

### **Setting of the Study**

The setting of the study was the 28 Florida districts who have reported equitable representation of LEP and/or FRL students in their respective Gifted programs. A six question survey was sent to Gifted education administrators and evaluators at each school district. The identity of respondents was anonymous. The selected participants may have answered any, all, or none of the questions. Respondents may have chosen to identify the size of their district based on enrollment.

The 28 Florida districts were identified by an analysis of data found in the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services,

Policies and Procedures (SP&P) database. This information belongs to the public domain and is accessible via the internet to any interested party.

### **Description of Population**

The surveyed population included designated representatives of the gifted education program for each of the 28 Florida school districts that have demonstrated success in equitable representation of LEP and/or FRL students in their Gifted programs. Gifted education administrators or evaluators, or other designated representative, as applicable within each district, were invited to participate.

**Selection of the population.** First, data was collected from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services database (BEESS), found within the Florida Department of Education website. Within this database, each Florida school district reports their ESE Policies and Procedures. Under Part V. Appendices, Appendix C is entitled District Plan to Increase the Participation of Underrepresented Students in the Program for Students who are Gifted. The data used in this study reflects the 2016-2019 reporting period.

Appendix C compares the total student enrollment to the total number of Gifted students. It then compares the total number of Limited English Proficient students with the number of LEP students in the Gifted program. It also compares the total number of students from Low Socio-Economic Status families to the number of LSES (or FRL) students in the Gifted program.

The data for each school district was then transferred to an excel spreadsheet for further comparison. The Representation Differential was calculated for each category,

LEP and FRL, for each district. The districts with a Differential of 20% or less were selected for the survey.

Table 2.

*Florida School Districts with Representation Differential of 20% or Less of LEP Students in Gifted Programs*

	School District	Total Enrolled	Total Gifted	LEP				Representation Differential
				Enrolled		Gifted		LEP
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1	Gadsden	5629	81	426	7.57%	9	11.11%	-3.54%
2	St. Johns	40450	3440	736	1.82%	14	0.41%	1.41%
3	Hernando	23755	684	703	2.96%	8	1.17%	1.79%
4	Clay	38859	2408	971	2.50%	10	0.42%	2.08%
5	Alachua	33768	5478	803	2.38%	9	0.16%	2.21%
6	Leon	35321	1444	1046	2.96%	8	0.55%	2.41%
7	Pasco	86770	4641	6614	7.62%	166	3.58%	4.05%
8	Brevard	73052	5691	3254	4.45%	23	0.40%	4.05%
9	Duval	126388	5483	6762	5.35%	30	0.55%	4.80%
10	Lake	41489	654	2923	7.05%	13	1.99%	5.06%
11	Volusia	62937	3392	4065	6.46%	34	1.00%	5.46%
12	Seminole	65508	5660	5401	8.24%	146	2.58%	5.67%
13	Marion	42747	2357	3035	7.10%	10	0.42%	6.68%
14	Pinellas	103779	7022	7912	7.62%	48	0.68%	6.94%
15	Monroe	8629	315	1074	12.45%	7	2.22%	10.22%
16	Lee	94440	5993	10629	11.25%	21	0.35%	10.90%
17	Broward	272023	12209	43495	15.99%	337	2.76%	13.23%
18	Hillsborough	219614	18030	35150	16.01%	416	2.31%	13.70%
19	Polk	94448	5113	13953	14.77%	44	0.86%	13.91%
20	Palm Beach	194331	10868	31618	16.27%	135	1.24%	15.03%
21	Orange	200637	13481	38819	19.35%	312	2.31%	17.03%
22	Mia-Dade	356086	39362	72264	20.29%	899	2.28%	18.01%
23	Collier	45998	3005	8905	19.36%	35	1.16%	18.19%

Florida Department of Education. (2018).



Table 2 shows the calculated data for the 23 Florida school districts that reported the smallest representation differential for LEP students in their respective Gifted programs. The districts are listed by smallest to largest representation differential, of 20% or less.

Table 3 shows the calculated data for the 13 Florida school districts that reported the smallest representation differential for FRL students in their respective Gifted programs. The districts are listed by smallest to largest representation differential of 20% or less.

Table 3.

*Florida School Districts with Representation Differential of 20% or Less of FRL Students in Gifted Programs*

	School District	Total Enrolled	Total Gifted	FRL				Representation Differential	
				Enrolled		Gifted			FRL
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
				1 Gadsden	5629	81	3618		
2 Martin	19727	833	1090	5.53%	135	16.21%	-10.68%		
3 St. Johns	40450	3440	7663	18.94%	414	12.03%	6.91%		
4 Clay	38859	2408	16316	41.99%	828	34.39%	7.60%		
5 Collier	45998	3005	26907	58.50%	1464	48.72%	9.78%		
6 Osceola	70630	2342	38181	54.06%	1022	43.64%	10.42%		
7 Hernando	23755	684	14616	61.53%	346	50.58%	10.94%		
8 Pasco	86770	4641	28317	32.63%	987	21.27%	11.37%		
9 Bradford	3211	105	1927	60.01%	51	48.57%	11.44%		
10 Suwannee	6021	209	2535	42.10%	55	26.32%	15.79%		
11 Bay	28426	634	15511	54.57%	243	38.33%	16.24%		
12 Mia-Dade	356086	39362	251914	70.75%	21182	53.81%	16.93%		
13 Brevard	73052	5691	35985	49.26%	1838	32.30%	16.96%		

Florida Department of Education. (2018).

Of the 36 districts that showed a differential of 20% or less, eight appeared in both categories. They are: Brevard, Clay, Collier, Gadsden, Hernando, Miami-Dade, Pasco and St. Johns. Therefore, a total of 28 districts were selected to be invited to participate in this research. (Appendix A)

Some districts were excluded from the selection process. Seventeen school districts were excluded because data was not reported in the BEESS database. Districts that reported less than five Gifted students in a category (LEP or FRL) were also excluded from selection for that category.

### **Research Design**

This design of this study was embedded action research (Leedy & Ormond, 2016). Although some preliminary quantitative data was compiled, both quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered in a synchronous fashion. As explained by Leedy and Ormond (2016), the research was primarily quantitative, with qualitative data included as a supplement.

The central component of the research included a researcher-created survey presented to the Gifted education administrator or evaluator of each district or their designee. The survey was a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions. (Appendix E).

These questions were presented via the online survey format, Survey Monkey™. The identity of the gifted education representative remained anonymous and the IP addresses were masked to the researcher.

### **Rationale for Design**

A study of the methods used by the selected 28 Florida county school districts to implement their Plan B steps for inclusion of underrepresented groups in their gifted programs may assist other school districts in achieving greater equity in their Gifted enrollment. This will potentially serve underrepresented students across the state by expanding access to advanced academic opportunities throughout the public school districts. This information may also be helpful in creating an informational document for both school districts and the Florida Department of Education.

### **Procedure**

First, the researcher identified the Gifted education administrators and evaluators at the District level and obtained a valid email address. This was primarily found at the District's website. When the identity of a Gifted specialist was not found online, the researcher called the District office to ascertain who would be the most appropriate recipient. A sample of the phone script can be found in Appendix B.

An online Survey Monkey™ survey was created with six questions (Appendix E). It was estimated to require approximately 6 minutes or less to complete. The first two questions asked the participant which procedures and assessments are commonly used to determine Giftedness in Plan B students. These questions were multiple-choice, with the ability to select all that apply and to include any explanatory notes. The next two questions allowed for open-ended response. The respondents were asked how the district assists classroom teachers in identifying potential giftedness in their students. They were also asked for advice or suggestions on how other districts can also achieve equitable results. Finally, respondents were asked to identify the size of their district based on student enrollment and to identify their role in the process. As this relates to the districts'

identity, these questions were labeled as optional. However, the size ranges are broad enough that identification of a specific district based on that one characteristic is highly unlikely.

The responses were collected from Survey Monkey™ and compiled in an Excel spreadsheet. The data was categorized and analyzed, for patterns and coding. Based on the participants' responses, a handbook of best practices is to be compiled. This handbook is to be offered to school districts across Florida, as well as the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services within the Florida Department of Education.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected from Survey Monkey™ survey responses and transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. Analysis was guided by quantity and quality of the data. All digital data was saved on a password protected flash drive.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The identity of the district designees who choose to respond remained anonymous. SurveyMonkey.com allows researchers to suppress the delivery of IP addresses during the downloading of data, and in this study no IP address was delivered to the researcher. All data received from the survey was saved on a password-encrypted flash drive that will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Data will be destroyed after five years.

All invitees were informed of the voluntary nature of their potential participation. All respondents were assured of their anonymity, both personally and as a district representative. Informed consent was specified prior to the invitees accessing the survey

(Appendix C). Respondents were able to exit the survey at any time and to answer as many or as few questions as they chose.

### **Risks and Benefits**

Risks to participants were extremely low. If at any time, the respondent became stressed or felt uncomfortable for any reason, he or she may have exited out of the survey and the data would have been destroyed. There was no penalty for exiting the survey. The researcher had no direct contact with district representatives after the initial invitation, with the exception of four who initiated contact with the researcher with questions or comments. The anonymity of the respondents was assured. There were no direct benefits for the respondents, other than knowing that they contributed to a study that aims to expand academic opportunities for students from underrepresented demographic subgroups. However, respondents were able to request a copy of the handbook once completed.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

After the initial invitation to participate, respondents' identities and the identity of the district they represent were completely anonymous. The Survey Monkey™ protocols allowed the researcher to mask IP addresses and the researcher did not have access to identifying information.

### **Quality of Data**

Data obtained via survey from voluntary district participants was to be deemed reliable. It was assumed that the participant chose to assist and offered the most reliable information they possess. Their identity and the identity of their district was to be completely anonymous, thereby hopefully promoting an atmosphere of openness.

### **Data Analysis**

Based on the responses received, the methods and practices of those districts whose gifted population is most equitably represented by their district demographics were closely analyzed for themes and coding (Yin, 2016).

The examination of all data was expected to demonstrate which types of Plan B processes are most effective. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, and mode will be calculated using the tools in Survey Monkey™. As a final project, the researcher will create a concise and practical handbook outlining research based best practices for inclusive gifted populations to be shared with districts, schools and the Florida Department of Education.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations included the participation of the individual districts in the qualitative survey. While the selected 28 Florida school districts were invited to participate, they may have declined to participate or may not have completed all parts of the survey. Additionally, not all Florida school districts reported Plan B data in the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services database. Therefore, these districts were not included in the selection process. Qualitative data may have also been limited by the participants' personal bias or willingness to complete the survey or answer all questions.

Delimitations were the exclusion of other subgroups within student data. The study did not parse the data based on race, gender or age. Additionally, students with other exceptionalities were not included. Inclusion of these groups would have rendered the study too broad. These groups would be best served in a separate study.

Also, the study focused on public schools and did not include online, charter or private schools.

### **Summary**

In an effort to better serve the gifted students from underrepresented subgroups, a variety of legislative policies are being enacted, federally and locally. While the State of Florida has empowered the Florida Department of Education to create policies and procedures for the inclusion of these unidentified gifted students, the individual districts choose which measurement instruments they will use. The purpose of this study was to determine which measurement instruments produce the most equitable results for traditionally underrepresented students.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the best practices within the Plan B procedures and assessments used by Florida school districts in order to identify gifted students from traditionally underrepresented sub-groups. Specifically, these students are English Language Learners and those from low Socio-Economic status families. Data was collected from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services database, found within the Florida Department of Education website (Florida Department of Education, 2018). A review of the reported statistics from each of the 67 traditional Florida school districts identified 28 districts with equitable representation within 20% or less (Appendix A). Gifted education representatives from these 28 districts were invited to participate in the online survey.

**Participant Demographics.** Gifted education administrators and evaluators were the targeted invitees. Email addresses were primarily obtained from the district websites, openly available to the public. Two districts were contacted by phone to request corresponding email addresses (Appendix B). One district required a completed paper application to obtain approval before invitees could respond.

Eighty four Gifted education administrators and 68 Gifted evaluators were contacted, for a total of 152 invitees. Thirty two of those invitees chose to participate in the online survey, via the Survey Monkey™ interface. Informed consent was specified in the invitation email and the invitee signified his or her consent to participate by intentionally clicking on the link in the invitation. Of the 32 participants, 17 identified



themselves as Gifted education administrators and 12 identified themselves as Gifted evaluators. Three respondents skipped this question.

Thirty one of the 32 respondents identified the size of their respective school district by overall student enrollment. The mid-size districts had the highest participation, with 19 of the respondents representing districts with enrollment between 10,001 and 100,000 students. Districts with 10,000 students or less had three respondents, while nine participants represented districts with more than 100,000 students (Figure 6).

**Data Collection Timeline.** One hundred and forty five survey invitees were initially contacted via email through the Survey Monkey™ survey interface on November 6, 2018. After obtaining additional email addresses, the invitation was sent again on December 2, 2018 to an additional seven potential participants. Concurrently, on December 2, 2018, a reminder email was sent to 117 invitees who had not yet responded.

Three invitations were bounced back, most likely because they were no longer valid email addresses and two invitees opted out. One district employee emailed the researcher and explained her district's required approval process. These instructions were followed but an approval was not received by the researcher prior to the survey closing date of December 10, 2018. One invitee emailed the researcher and explained that she and her colleagues could not access the survey. An alternative web link within Survey Monkey™ was created and sent to this district representative.

In total, 32 responses were received. Twenty three responses were received between November 6, 2018 and November 20, 2018. An additional nine responses were received between December 2, 2018 and December 10, 2018.

### **Summary of Analyses**

Thirty two invitees responded and 29 identified his or her role in the Gifted student identification process. Of those who chose to identify his or her role, 17 respondents (58% percent) were Gifted education administrators while 12 respondents (41% percent) were Gifted education evaluators. This establishes a degree of balance of both roles, allowing a reasonably comprehensive image of the prevalent themes (Figure 7).

Most respondents cited the classroom teacher as the primary source of nominations for assessment (Figure 3). The Gifted Indicator Checklist, or similar item, is the most widely used method of assessment, often in addition to other more traditional tests (Figure 4). Most of the districts that responded rely upon in-school Professional Development to help teachers to recognize Gifted behaviors in the classroom (Figure 5). When asked for advice as to how to achieve a higher level of equitable representation of Plan B students, most respondents recommended the use of a universal screener, administered in second or third grade. Many also recommended additional training for classroom teachers to recognize gifted behaviors (Table 4).

In reviewing the aggregate survey data, it is important to note that respondents were encouraged to select 'all that apply.' Total responses may therefore exceed the number of participants.

### **Results for Research Question One**

Which measurement instruments and procedures for assessing giftedness being used by the Florida school districts show the most equitable representation of students who belong to an underrepresented group, as defined in Plan B?

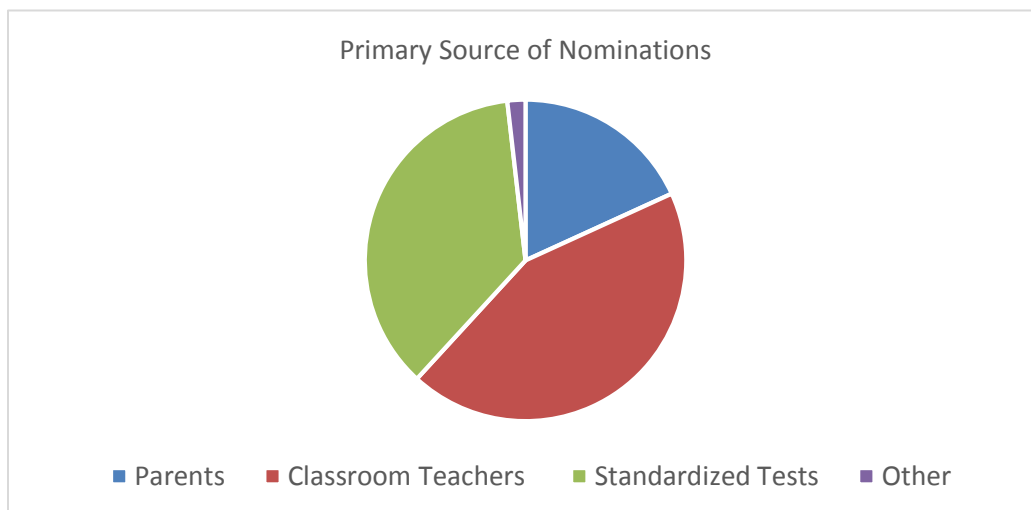
**Survey Question One.** The primary source of nominations for assessment for Plan B students is (check all that apply):

- a) Parents
- b) Classroom Teachers
- c) Standardized Tests
- d) Other

Of the 29 respondents that answered survey question one, 24 cited classroom teachers as the primary source of nominations for assessment for Plan B students. Standardized tests were selected by 13 respondents and parents were named by ten respondents. Additionally, seven participants chose 'other' and referred to an unnamed screener, with three respondents specifying the Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test. These seven responses were added to the total of number standardized test responses in Figure 3. One respondent referenced an In-School Success Team that managed student referrals to the Gifted program.

Figure 3.

*Primary Source of Nominations for Potentially Gifted Students via Plan B*

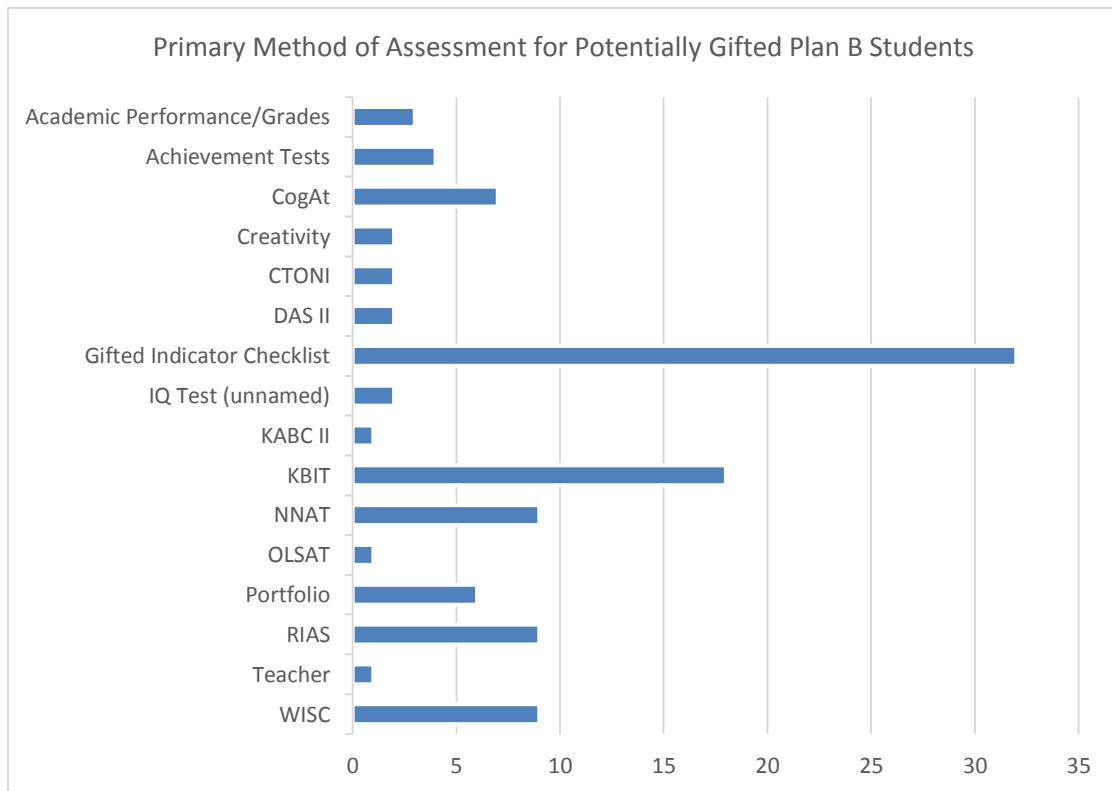


**Survey Question Two.** The primary method of assessment for Plan B students is (check all that apply)

- a) Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT2)
- b) Naglieri Non -Verbal Abilities Test (NNAT)
- c) Raven’s Progressive Matrices (RPM)
- d) Gifted Indicators Checklist
- e) Portfolio of Student Work
- f) Other (please describe)

Figure 4.

*Primary Method of Assessment for Potentially Gifted Plan B Students*



Twenty seven participants answered this question. Twenty two selected the Gifted Indicators Checklist as the primary method of assessment. The Kaufman Brief

Intelligence Test (KBIT2) was chosen by 15 respondents. The Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test (NNAT) and a Portfolio of student work were each chosen six times. Twenty three of the 27 respondents chose 'other' and elaborated by naming numerous other assessment vehicles, with the Gifted Indicator Checklist as the most cited.

Responses that were duplicated from the answer choices 'a' through 'e' were added to the totals represented in Figure 4. Responses that were similar in nature (ex., Gifted Indicators Checklist, Gifted Rating Scale and HOPE Scale Gifted Checklist) were added to the same category. Figure 4 also lists all other assessments named by respondents. A list of these additional assessments with complete names and brief descriptions can be found in Appendix F.

### **Results for Research Question Two**

How can school districts support teachers in identifying students who are potentially gifted for nomination for Plan B assessment?

**Survey question three.** How does your district help teachers identify gifted behaviors in the classroom (check all that apply)

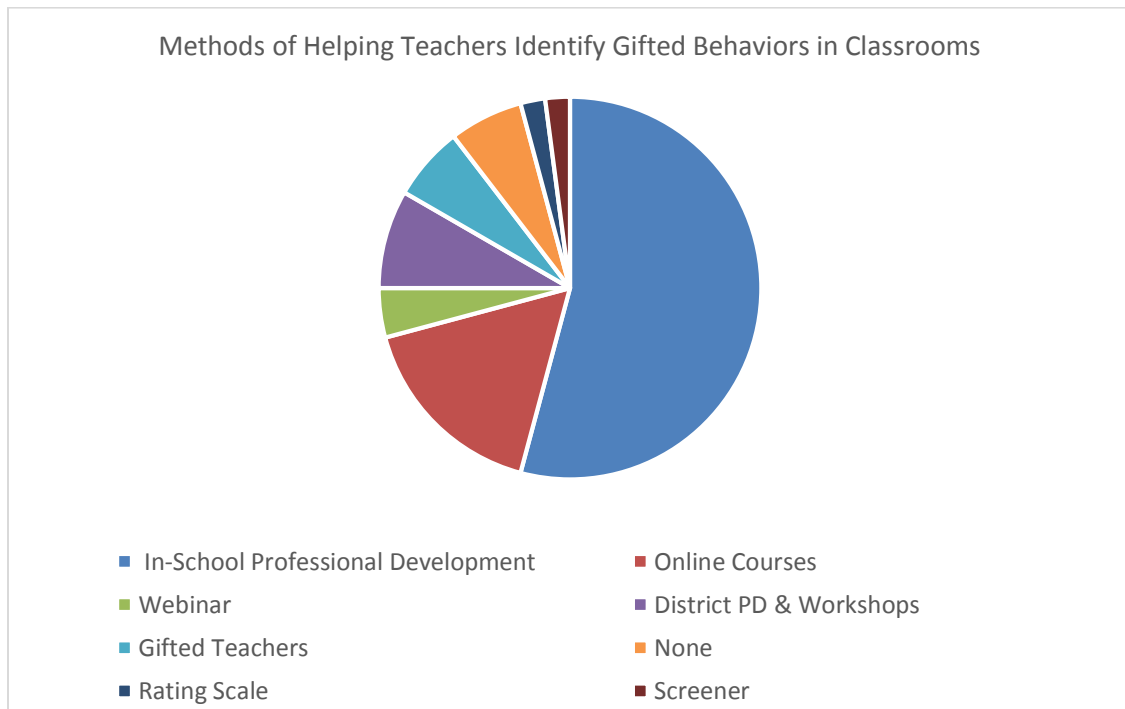
- a. In-School Professional Development
- b. Online Courses
- c. Webinar
- d. Other

Twenty six of 28 respondents chose In-School Professional Development as the primary method of helping teachers identify gifted behaviors in the classroom. Online courses were chosen by eight respondents and two participants chose Webinars. Eleven participants chose 'other' and in addition to citing district led workshops and professional

development, three wrote that the Gifted teachers assisted the classroom teachers. Two others referenced a rating scale and a screener. Three other respondents stated that there was no support for the classroom teachers in this regard. Figure 5 represents all responses to survey question three.

Figure 5.

*Methods of Supporting Teachers in Identifying Gifted Behaviors*



**Survey question four.** Based on your district's success in equitable representation for underrepresented Plan B students, what suggestions or advice would you have for other school districts?

**Coding of responses.** More than half of the respondents recommended a universal school-wide screening.

“Start universal screening and use multiple screening tools.”

“Universal screening is essential to give every student the chance to show the skills.”

“Our district wide screener is very successful as well.”

One respondent also specified that one of the benefits of a school-wide screening is that “parent and teacher requests don't catch everyone.” Additionally, a “district wide nonverbal screener [can be used] in addition to screening checklist.” Another respondent supported the use of a screener, although his or her district does not yet use one. “We are looking to revamp our policy currently. We believe a universal screening is needed.”

Several responses specified that the screener should be administered in elementary school.

“Adopt a universal screening system to administer to all students in every elementary school, instead of relying solely on parental request.”

“The best practice is to screen all students in Kindergarten or 1st grade.”

Both the Cognitive Abilities Test and the Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test were mentioned, as they were in responses for survey question two.

“I think moving to a grade-specific, school-wide group administered standardized assessment would be a better approach. Something like the CogAT and/or Nagliari.”

An equal number of respondents suggested targeted professional development and “educating teachers on gifted characteristics.”

“Teacher training is key-recognizing talent in students beyond just a test score.”

“Training to teachers on gifted characteristics for underrepresented learners.”

Furthermore, several respondents specifically stated that the training should focus on the characteristics of a non-traditional Gifted student, implying that the Plan B student may exhibit his or her giftedness in a unique or atypical manner.

Districts can offer “PD around what is gifted and how can it look in all students, not just our typical type A gifted.”

“Also target training on non traditional gifted characteristics.”

“Educating the teachers in the gifted characteristics of underrepresented students.”

“My advice would be to look at each student on an individual basis, across the curriculum. Districts need to train their staff on what a Plan B kid might look like in the educational setting, so that referrals for further testing can happen.”

One participant also noted that the use of checklists required training and should “take into account whether the person filling out the checklist has been trained, user bias, personal feelings or opinions about the student.”

The need for all stakeholders, in and out of school, to be involved was similarly advised.

“PD around what is gifted and how can it look in all students, not just our typical type A gifted. Increased knowledge in all stakeholders including teachers, parents, and administrators.

“Provide more awareness activities for teachers, school counselors and for school psychologists.”

Table 4.

*Major Themes and Sub-Themes Identified in Suggestions for Increasing Equitable Representation of Plan B Students*



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## Major Theme 1

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### Universal Screener

Administered in Elementary School

Cognitive Abilities Test and Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test

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## Major Theme 2

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### Professional Development

Non-traditional Gifted Characteristics

All Stakeholders

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**Demographic Questions.** These questions were included in order to get a general picture of the sample group, and still maintain the anonymity of the respondents. Although they were specifically labeled as optional, most participants answered the following two questions.

**Survey Question Five.** Please identify the size of your district based on student enrollment (optional)

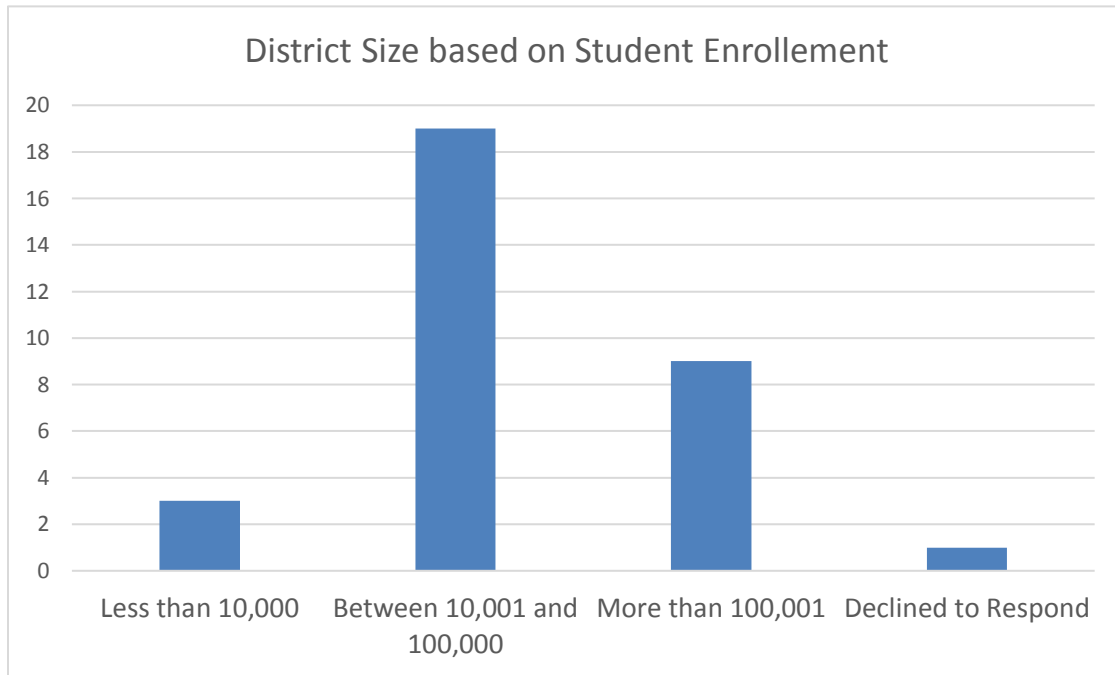
- a. Less than 10,000
- b. 10,001 to 100,000
- c. 100,001 or Higher

Figure 6 illustrates that three respondents identified his or her district as having less than 10,000 students enrolled. Nineteen participants described his or her district's

enrollment as between 10,001 and 100,000. Nine respondents wrote that his or her district has more than 100,001 enrolled students. One participant declined to answer.

Figure 6.

*Student Enrollment of Districts Participating in the Study*

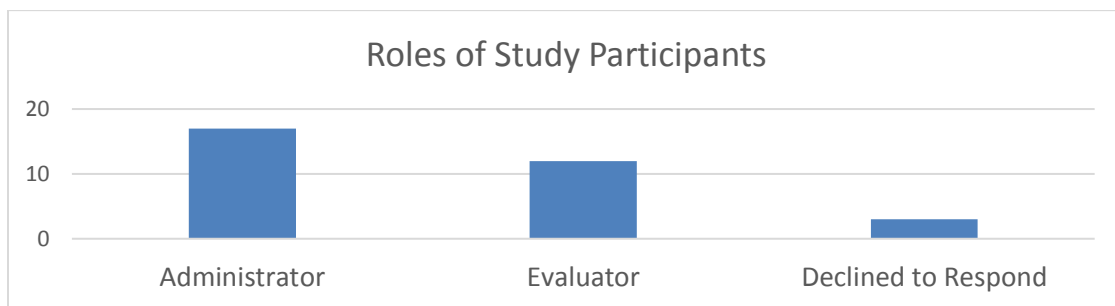


**Survey Question Six.** Please identify your role in this process (optional):

- a. Gifted Education Administrator
- b. Gifted Education Evaluator

Figure 7.

*Roles of Participants in Study*



Seventeen Gifted Education Administrators participated in the study, along with 12 Gifted Education Evaluators. Three participants declined to identify themselves.

### **Summary of Results**

Of the 152 Gifted Education professionals that were invited to participate in this study, 32 chose to respond. Although more administrators than evaluators completed the survey, both perspectives are amply represented. The mid-size school districts contributed the most replies, while small and large school districts were also represented.

Two themes are consistently illustrated throughout both the quantitative and qualitative responses. First, most of the participants recognize the value of a universal non-verbal school-wide screener as a required element for equitable representation. Second, the importance of the classroom teacher is an ever-present entity in this process. These themes and additional perspectives will be analyzed in Chapter V.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to identify the nomination procedures and testing instruments that produce the most equitable representation of traditionally underrepresented students in the Gifted programs in Florida's public school districts. Specifically, as defined in the Plan B provision (Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-A.03019, Section b, 2002), these students have Limited English Proficiency or come from a Low Socioeconomic Status family. Although the FAC code specifies which students qualify for non-traditional assessment methods, each district may choose from a broad array of nomination procedures and testing instruments, subject to a final approval by the State of Florida Department of Education (Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-A.03019, Section b, 2002).

A review of the district level statistical data found in the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services database, within the FLDOE website, revealed 28 Florida public school districts that demonstrated equitable representation of traditionally underrepresented students in Gifted programs, within a 20% differential, as explained under Definitions in Chapter I of this document (Florida Department of Education, 2018). One hundred and fifty two Gifted Education Administrators and Evaluators representing the selected 28 Florida school Districts (Appendix A) were invited to participate in this study. They each received, via email, a request to participate in an online survey, created on SurveyMonkey.com™. Informed consent was clearly delineated prior to entering the survey and anonymity was assured by the researcher and through Survey Monkey™

protocols. Thirty two Gifted Education professionals chose to contribute their expertise to this research.

### **Summary of Results**

Research question one asks: Which measurement instruments and procedures for assessing giftedness being used by the Florida school districts show the most equitable representation of students who belong to an underrepresented group, as defined in Plan B?

According to the responses for survey question one, classroom teachers are the clear leader in the nomination process, followed closely by standardized tests or screeners. Parents are nominating their students; however, this answer was chosen at approximately half the frequency of the others (Figure 3).

Gifted Indicator Checklists and other similar documents were the frontrunner for assessment methods, chosen 32 times in survey question two. The KBIT II was chosen 18 times, followed by the NNAT and Portfolios of student work (Figure 4). Other assessments were listed under 'other' at a frequency of less than ten selections. These are described in Appendix F.

Research question two asks: How can school districts support teachers in identifying students who are potentially gifted for nomination for Plan B assessment?

In-School Professional Development was the most widely chosen approach to supporting classroom teachers in recognizing potentially gifted students, selected 26 times. Online courses were chosen next but at a much lower rate of only eight times. District workshop and professional development were also included along with working directly with Gifted teachers (Figure 5).

Twenty seven participants offered advice on how districts can increase their representation of Plan B students in Gifted programs. A universal screener, administered in the early grades, was cited the most, at 12 times. At almost the same frequency, 11 times, teacher training and awareness were recommended. Other suggestions were included but none with any significant frequency (Table 4).

### **Discussion of Results**

While the initial focus of this research was directed at testing instruments and procedures, it appears that the human element is equally important to an equitable process for students to gain access to Gifted programs through the Plan B guidelines. The reliance on teachers for nominations for Gifted assessment and for the completion of Gifted Indicator Checklists puts the everyday classroom educator at the center of this research.

However, most of the academic research focuses on the assessment vehicle and enrichment opportunities offered to potential Plan B students, also referred to as Culturally and Linguistically Different (CLD) students. The role of the teacher is acknowledged but very little is said after that. For example, a position paper written by the National Association for Gifted Children entitled, *Identifying and Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gifted Students*, states “In order to meet the needs of CLD students, a change in how educators view these students must occur.” (NAGC, 2011). Yet, the paper continues without any further mention of how to facilitate that change as it directly pertains to the teacher. In 2014, the NAGC published another position paper, *Preparing All Pre-Service Teachers to Work Effectively with Gifted Learners*. This one-page paper discusses the need for teacher preparation programs to include “coursework

for all their teacher candidates on the nature and needs of gifted and talented students.” (NAGC, 2014).

Although no further guidance is offered in that paper, the NAGC initiated a pilot program in Tennessee called Giftedness Knows No Boundaries, reported in April 2018 (Sparks, 2018). This is a micro-credentialing program for teachers in training to recognize and work with potentially gifted students and is “the first formal certification in the country focused on educating academically advanced but underserved students.” (Sparks, 2018). The article in EdWeek reports that if the pilot goes well, the NAGC hopes to expand the program to other states (Sparks, 2018).

Some resources for training teachers on how to identify potentially gifted students from minority sub-groups can be found online. Teachers First.com has an easy-to-read checklist of identifying behaviors (Teachers First, 2019). In addition to another behaviors checklist, AdvancementCourses.com offers training modules available for a fee (Advancement Courses, 2016). Generally, though, the researcher had difficulty finding any substantive methods for classroom teachers to recognize giftedness in traditionally under-represented student groups. If the NAGC's pilot program is successful, perhaps more emphasis will be placed on the crucial role of the classroom teacher.

The importance of the front-line educator should not draw attention away from the value of the universal non-verbal screener. The Naglieri Non-Verbal Test (NNAT) was the most frequently cited by survey participants. Respondents repeatedly recommended the use of this type of screener in the early grades, usually kindergarten through second grade. The NNAT and other screeners, such as the Cognitive Abilities Test, were also cited as assessments.

Teacher training was named as the most effective way to support teachers in identifying potentially gifted students in their classrooms. In-school professional development was cited most often, followed by online courses and district-led workshops.

Educating the educators was also one of the most recurrent suggestions for equitable representation in other districts. Several respondents were quite specific:

“PD around what is gifted and *how can it look in all students, not just our typical type A gifted.*”

“Provide training/support in *recognizing gifted characteristics in all students, including SWD*”

“Utilize a normed referenced gifted identifier/checklist instead of relying on a gifted characteristic *checklist that does not take into account whether the person filling out the checklist has been trained, user bias, personal feelings or opinions about the student.*”

“Also target *training on non-traditional gifted characteristics*”

“Districts need to train their staff on *what a Plan B kid might look like in the educational setting*”

“*Principals who push teachers to identify and take the [Gifted] endorsement* seem to correlate with schools that have higher representation and more endorsed teachers.”

“Teacher training is key-*recognizing talent in students beyond just a test score.*”

“Training to teachers on *gifted characteristics for underrepresented learners*”

It is noteworthy that many of these comments acknowledge that Plan B students, those who are ‘outside the box,’ may demonstrate giftedness in untraditional ways. This,

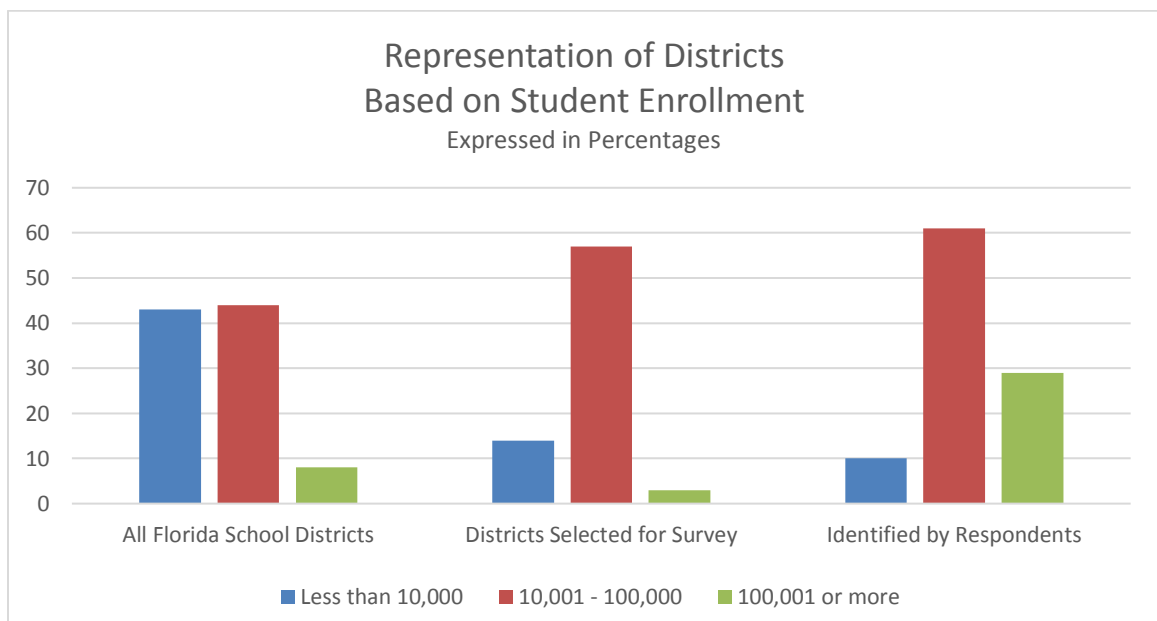


presumably, was the original impetus for the addition of Plan B to the Florida Administrative Code.

Of the 32 respondents, 17, or 53%, identified themselves as Gifted education administrators and 12, or 37%, as Gifted education evaluators. Three, or 10%, declined to respond. This allows for a reasonably balanced perspective, within 16%, between the two roles.

Figure 8.

*Representation of School Districts in Study by Enrollment*



Florida Department of Education. (2018).

The representation of small, mid-size, and large school districts in the survey shows a lesser degree of balanced representation, especially in the over-representation of the larger school districts. Figure 8 shows a comparison of the distribution of the three size categories in all of Florida's 67 school districts, the 28 districts selected for the survey, and the 31 participants who responded to this question. The representation of the mid-size districts was consistent with their prevalence in both the state at large and within

the districts selected for the survey. Small districts were not represented at the same rate as they are in the state overall but represented commensurately within the survey. The larger districts, while represented fairly in the survey, had an over-presentation of respondents. As larger districts may tend to operate differently from the smaller districts, it is difficult to surmise what effect, if any, this may have had on the survey results.

### **Implications for Practice**

The two most prevalent themes realized from this research are the need for a universal screener administered in the early grades, and improved training and support for classroom teachers for identifying potentially gifted students who meet Plan B criteria.

Although not all respondents specified which screener they prefer, participants consistently recognized the value of a universal screener designed for elementary level students. Standardized tests or screeners were identified by 68.9% of the participants who answered survey question one as the primary source of nomination. When asked for suggestions for success in survey question four, almost half of the comments were recommendations for the use of an early grades screener. Additionally, even though survey question two focused on assessments for giftedness, screeners such as the Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test and the Cognitive Abilities Test were most notably selected. Overall, the use of universal abilities screeners is perceived by these district representatives to be an important tool for identifying potentially gifted Plan B students.

The impact of the classroom teacher was repeatedly acknowledged throughout the survey results. Classroom teachers were overwhelmingly (82.76%) selected as the primary source of nominations for Plan B students. Nominations from the teacher were

named by 24 out of 29 participants, even more frequently than the screening instruments. Moreover, professional development to support these teachers was the most cited way to support them in the challenge to identify and nominate potentially gifted students from under-represented groups. In-school Professional Development was selected by 26 out of 28 respondents (92.86%) as the most prevalent method of assisting teachers with this task. It must be noted, however, that increased knowledge and awareness for all stakeholders of the characteristics of the traditionally under-represented gifted student was also consistently recommended as a means by which other districts could achieve more equitable representation of Plan B students in Gifted programs.

In addition to the results of this survey, there is recent research that confirms the value of a universal screening process. Card and Guiliano (2015) reported on the improvement in equitable representation in gifted enrollment in a large Florida district when a universal screener had been implemented. McBee, Peters and Miller (2016) conducted a statistical analysis of how universal screening for giftedness can positively impact the representation of traditionally under-represented students by broadening the nomination process (McBee, et.al., 2016). A 2018 study conducted at the Thomas B Fordham Institute entitled, "Is There a Gifted Gap?" found that while gifted programs were found with relatively equal frequency at high-poverty schools and low-poverty schools, enrollment in those programs was significantly higher at low-poverty schools. Their first recommendation for school districts is to implement universal screeners (Fordham Institute, 2018). These proposals are supported by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC, 2018).

However, some research cautions that the non-verbal screener should not be used as a comprehensive tool. In 2013, Giessman, Gambrell and Stebbins compared the NNAT II to the Cognitive Abilities Test 6 and confirmed that while the results for underrepresented students were comparable, they should not be used solely without “other adjustments to selection protocol.” Additionally, they cautioned that:

This study raises doubts about the claims of at least one nonverbal test that it can better identify students from underrepresented groups for gifted services.

Districts should not assume that one instrument will be a panacea and, instead, might consider using nonverbal ability tests as one tool in a wider approach to identifying and serving students in these groups. (Giessman, et.al, 2013).

In 2016, Carman, Walther, and Bartsch researched the use of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the effect of specific demographics on the final results of this screener. They found that the specific demographics of a selected group of students can directly impact the validity of the scores (Carman, et.al, 2016). Considering the broad diversity found in Florida school districts, this may have a significant influence.

As is sometimes seen in contemporary education, United States policymakers try to place an objective, numeric value on a subjective, human experience by relying on standardized testing for quantified data. For example, the Washington Post cited the 2015 research by the Council of the Great City Schools ([www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org)) which found that “A typical student takes 112 mandated standardized tests between pre-kindergarten classes and 12th grade...By contrast, most countries that outperform the United States on international exams test students three times during their school careers.” (Layton, 2015). Interestingly, the Council of the Great City Schools membership includes seven Florida

school districts, all of which were invited to participate in this study: Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Orange, Pinellas and Palm Beach (Council of the Great City Schools, 2019). In parallel, teacher performance has also been translated into a quantified paradigm. Steinberg and Kraft (2017) cite the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) as the recent focused redesigning of teacher evaluation models. Their study suggests that designers of these evaluation systems may not be aware of the intricacies of each component and how delicate the overall balance can affect evaluations and in turn, student achievement (Steinberg & Kraft, 2017).

Therefore, while some instructional leaders seem to favor an increasing push for digital data and automated delivery, the contribution of the classroom teacher remains a significant factor. How can district administrators and school principals continue to support these teachers without adding one more task to their already overflowing plates?

Ongoing professional development is the mainstay of successful educators, but perhaps the professional development itself must be vetted. It should be obtained from Gifted Education experts such as the National Association for Gifted Children ([nagc.org](http://nagc.org)), the Neag Center at the University of Connecticut ([gifted.uconn.edu](http://gifted.uconn.edu)), or The Institute for Educational Advancement ([educationaladvancement.org](http://educationaladvancement.org)). In order to broaden the scope of nominations, educators need to broaden their perception of giftedness.

Nonetheless, any pupil learns best by doing. Experienced Gifted Education teachers, those who have recognized giftedness in underrepresented student groups are in the best position to work with classroom teachers and assist them in recognizing the talents that may be outside the box yet right under his or her nose.

As referenced in Chapter I, the National Association of Gifted Children estimates that approximately six to ten percent of K-12 students are gifted, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status or first language. Yet, non-white student subgroups are historically under-represented in Gifted programs both nationally (Table 1) and in the State of Florida (Figure 2). More specifically, only 28 of 67 Florida school districts reported Plan B enrollment within a 20% differential (Tables 2 & 3). Therefore, a majority of Florida school districts (39) report a Plan B enrollment with a greater than 20% differential. It should be noted that the researcher had originally intended to survey Florida school districts with an even lower differential, but that sample would have been too small for a representative analysis. Based on the NAGC estimates, a significant number of gifted students are not being identified. Experienced, well-trained teachers would likely improve this situation.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to the results of this study. Although 152 gifted education professionals were invited to participate, only 32, or 21% chose to respond. Therefore, the actual sample size was smaller than anticipated. This may be at least partially attributed to the fact that the survey was sent during the winter holiday season on November 6, 2018 and again on December 2, 2018. Generally, school districts and their employees are often busy with holiday events and there are a significant number of days when district offices are closed. Also, although every effort was made by the researcher to remain unbiased, the researcher had prior knowledge and opinions of the Plan B protocols, which could have possibly influenced the final analysis or recommendations.

Other limitations may have included the organization and wording of the survey questions. Specifically, in Survey question one, the researcher used the term 'standardized test', which was meant to include all screeners. Several respondents chose 'other' for this question and then specified 'screener' in general or 'NNAT' in particular. This may have artificially inflated the number of times an answer was chosen. Additionally, the types of measurement tools used for nomination versus assessment could have been more clearly described as several respondents listed instruments usually used for screening, as assessments for giftedness. Some respondents may not have understood that they could choose 'all that apply' because there were several occasions when answers were written as 'other' even though they were offered in the original answer choices. Again, this may have artificially inflated the final results.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As the Plan B protocol focuses solely on students who are either Limited English Proficient or a member of a low Socio-Economic Status family, it might be interesting to compare the level of equitable representation in Gifted programs by Race or Gender, and then compare those numbers against the Plan B data.

This survey targeted Gifted Education Administrators and Evaluators but did not include the perspectives of the classroom teachers. The opinions and perceptions of those who work directly with Gifted students, regardless of the path to acceptance into these programs, could be most enlightening. How do classroom teachers see Giftedness?

Additionally, interviews with the parents of Limited English Proficient students and those from Low Socio-Economic Status families would also offer a unique perspective. What are their views or opinions of the application of Plan B? Are most

parents even aware of the Plan B protocol and the potential opportunities for their children?

Another way to analyze this data might be to consider the specific demographics of each individual district and how they may affect sub-group representation in Gifted programs. For example, do districts with a lower percentage of FRL or LEP students have a higher or lower representation differential than other districts?

While the Plan B regulation is specific as to what should be included in the district plan, it does not specify how each component is to be implemented. For example, it requires the district to name the referral, screening, or assessment instrument, but does not specify which instruments are recommended, or may or may not be used.

Presumably, this is done at the state level, but it appears to allow the districts an extremely broad breadth of flexibility. How are the district-proposed plans monitored and evaluated for final approval? Are recommendations for preferred screening or assessment instruments offered by the state?

Historical Plan B data, as it may be available, would also be of interest. Considering the evolution of the Plan B regulation as described in Chapter 2, it may be relevant to explore how the demographic data may have shifted as a result of the changes through the years. For example, between the years of 1991 and 2002, the regulation specified that students who were not white non-Hispanic, and later Asian/Pacific Islander, were eligible for Plan B placement into Gifted programs. Was there a more equitable representation of Black students during those years? Additionally, it has been 17 years since the Plan B verbiage was amended. Leaders in the field of Gifted education, such as Dr. Donna Y. Ford (2013), Dr. Joseph Renzulli (2019), and the



National Association for Gifted Children (2019, 2011, 2008), all agree that flexible and varies assessment procedures facilitate a more inclusive Gifted student environment that better serves the Culturally and Linguistically Different student. Is it not time to review the regulation again? What would happen if any student could qualify for Plan B? What if Plan B became Plan A? How many more potentially Gifted students would be served?

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify best practices for equitable representation for potentially gifted students from historically underrepresented demographic sub-groups in Florida public school districts, under the Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-A.03019, also known as Plan B (Florida Administrative Code, Rule 6A-A.03019, Section b, 2002). After a review of the data reported by Florida's 67 public school districts, 28 districts were found to have equitable representation within a 20% differential (see Definitions, Chapter I). One hundred and fifty two Gifted Education Administrators and Evaluators were invited to participate in an online survey, via the Survey Monkey.com™ interface. Thirty two education professionals responded.

While there were many different suggestions and opinions expressed, two primary themes emerged. The respondents strongly recommended the use of a non-verbal screener, such as the NNAT or CogAT, to be administered in the early grades. Perhaps more importantly, the interaction of the classroom teacher was represented as invaluable to an equitable process.

The researcher will be compiling a Best Practices Handbook, highlighting the final results of this research, to be shared with the Florida Department of Education and

interested school districts. Similar to Appendix F, this will also include an investigation of the different screeners and assessments cited by respondents. Additionally, sources for high quality professional development for teachers and other education professionals will be included.

One of the sacred duties of an educator is to seek, find and nurture the special talents that each unique child possesses. Gifted children are in every school, every neighborhood, every classroom. The right teacher supported by a well-designed system will find them all.

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**Appendix A**

## Selected Florida School Districts to be Invited to Participate in Survey

1	Alachua	15	Marion
2	Bay	16	Martin
3	Bradford	17	Mia-Dade
4	Brevard	18	Monroe
5	Broward	19	Orange
6	Clay	20	Osceola
7	Collier	21	Palm Beach
8	Duval	22	Pasco
9	Gadsden	23	Pinellas
10	Hernando	24	Polk
11	Hillsborough	25	Seminole
12	Lake	26	St. Johns
13	Lee	27	Suwannee
14	Leon	28	Volusia

**Appendix B**

## Sample Phone Call to District (as applicable)

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is Robin Rothman and I am a Doctoral student in the Ross College of Education at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida.

I am calling today to verify the email address of the coordinator of your district's gifted program. I am researching best practices in Florida's Plan B implementation and your district has one of the highest levels of equity for underrepresented students.

I would like to invite a designee from your district to participate in a brief online survey about the procedures and assessments that your district has used to help create this level of equity. The survey will be completely anonymous; neither the identity of the respondent or his/her respective district will be revealed.

May I have the email address of the appropriate person?

Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

## **Appendix C**

### Informed Consent

Invitees were apprised of the following before choosing to participate in the survey:

By clicking on the link leading to the survey, respondents agree to participate in this survey. Respondents acknowledge that participation is voluntary and that the survey is completely anonymous. There are minimal risks, such as possible stress from answering questions regarding school issues. At any time, participants can exit the survey and choose not to participate. If participants choose to exit the survey, there will be no penalty and any related data will be destroyed. There are no benefits; however, participants may enjoy answering questions regarding their work. By participating in the study, respondents will be benefiting research in the area of increasing equitable representation in Florida's Gifted programs for underrepresented students.



## Appendix D

### Cover letter to Survey Invitees

Good day, Gifted Education Specialist,

My name is Robin N. Rothman and I am a Doctoral student in the Ross College of Education at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. I am asking for your assistance in completing my dissertation.

Based on the reporting found in the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services database, your District has one of the highest levels of equitable representation for Plan B Gifted Students, either in the Limited English Proficient category and/or the Low Socio-Economic Status family category. I am conducting an investigation into which methods and procedures are producing the most equitable results in Plan B implementation. This email with the link to the survey may be forwarded to another district employee if you feel that he/she would be more knowledgeable in this area.

The link below will take you to a Survey Monkey™ survey consisting of five questions. The respondent's identity as well as his/her IP address will be anonymous and not known to the researcher. You may answer as many questions as you wish. However, your detailed responses would be most appreciated. The survey is expected to take approximately 6 minutes or less to complete.

By clicking on the link, respondents agree to participate in this survey. Respondents acknowledge that participation is voluntary and that the survey is

completely anonymous. There are minimal risks, such as possible stress from answering questions regarding school issues. At any time, participants can exit the survey and choose not to participate. There are no benefits; however, participants may enjoy answering questions regarding their work. By participating in the study, you will be benefiting research in the area of increasing equitable representation in Florida's Gifted programs for underrepresented students.

Thank you very much for your assistance in helping me to compile my data and complete my degree. I hope to create a handbook of best practices for identifying gifted students from underrepresented groups, which I look forward to sharing.

If you would like to receive a copy of the handbook, or if you have any other questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Robin N. Rothman

## Appendix E

### Survey Questions

Please review the following informed consent clause before beginning the survey:

By clicking on the link leading to the survey, respondents agree to participate in this survey. Respondents acknowledge that participation is voluntary and that the survey is completely anonymous. There are minimal risks, such as possible stress from answering questions regarding school issues. At any time, participants can exit the survey and choose not to participate. If participants choose to exit the survey, there will be no penalty and any related data will be destroyed. There are no benefits; however, participants may enjoy answering questions regarding their work. By participating in the study, respondents will be benefiting research in the area of increasing equitable representation in Florida's Gifted programs for underrepresented students.

1) The primary source of nominations for assessment for Plan B students is

(check all that apply)

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Parents            | b) Classroom Teachers      |
| b) Standardized Tests | d) Other (please describe) |

2) The primary method of assessment for Plan B students is (check all that apply)

- a) Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT2)
- b) Naglieri Non Verbal Abilities Test (NNAT)
- c) Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM)

- d) Gifted Indicators Checklist
  - e) Portfolio of Student Work
  - f) Other (please describe)
- 3) How does your district help teachers identify gifted behaviors in the classroom?
- a) In-School Professional Development
  - b) Online Courses
  - c) Webinar
  - d) Other (please describe)
- 4) Based on your district's success in equitable representation for underrepresented Plan B students, what suggestions or advice would you have for other school districts?

(open-ended reply)

- 5) Please identify the size of your district based on student enrollment (optional)

Less than 10,000            10,001 to 100,000            100,001 or Higher

- 6) Please identify your role in this process (optional)

Gifted Administrator      Gifted Evaluator

Thank you for participating. If you would like to receive a copy of the handbook, or if you have any other questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at

████████████████████.

## Appendix F

### Additional Assessments Cited by Respondents

**CogAT.** The Cognitive Abilities Test is published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. It was designed by Dr. David F. Lohman and Dr. Joni Larkin. The publisher states that "CogAT measures three separate domains - Verbal, Nonverbal, and Quantitative reasoning - to identify strengths and weaknesses missed by other assessments." Additional information can be found at <https://www.hmhco.com/programs/cogat>.

**Creativity.** Although specific creativity tests were not specified by the respondents, the CAP and TTCT appear to be the most popular. The Creativity Assessment Packet (CAP) is sometimes called the Williams Creativity test after its author, Frank Williams. It is offered by Pro-Ed, Inc. who states that "the CAP measures the cognitive thought factors of fluency, flexibility, elaboration, originality, vocabulary, and comprehension." Further information can be found at <https://www.proedinc.com/Products/6565/cap-creativity-assessment-packet.aspx>.

The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), created by E. Paul Torrance, are published by Scholastic Testing Service, Inc. Per STS, Inc "The highly reliable Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking are the most widely used tests of their kind since testing only requires the examinee to reflect upon their life experiences." and recommends its use with multicultural students and special populations. Additional information can be found at <https://www.ststesting.com/gift>.

**CTONI.** The Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (CTONI) is offered by Pearson Education, Inc. It was created by Donald D. Hammill, PhD, Nils A. Pearson and J. Lee Wiederholt. PearsonClinical.com states that "The CTONI-2 is a popular norm-referenced test that uses nonverbal formats to measure general intelligence of children and adults whose performance on traditional tests might be adversely affected by subtle or overt impairments involving language or motor abilities." More information can be found at <https://www.pearsonclinical.com/education/products/100000624/comprehensive-test-of-nonverbal-intelligence-second-edition-ctoni-2-ctoni-2.html#tab-details>.

**DAS II.** The Differential Ability Scales II is also offered by Pearson Education, Inc. It was created by Dr. Colin D Elliott. Pearson states that "The DAS–II is a comprehensive, individually administered, clinical instrument for assessing the cognitive abilities that are important to learning." Additionally, "The DAS-II is appropriate for diverse populations as it can predict achievement on the basis of ability equally well for African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White/Non-Hispanic children." More information is available at <https://www.pearsonclinical.com/education/products/100000468/differential-ability-scales-ii-das-ii.html#tab-details>.

**Gifted Indicator Checklist.** While most respondents did not name a specific source for a Gifted Indicator Checklist, the HOPE Teacher Rating Scale is one of the checklists referenced by respondents. This instrument is published by Prufrock Press and was created by Marcia Gentry Ph.D., Scott J. Peters Ph.D., Nielsen Pereira, Ph.D. and Jason McIntosh. Prufrock states that this scale can be one of

"multiple measures and multiple pathways crucial for reversing the inequities in identifying culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse student."

Additional information is available at <https://www.prufrock.com/HOPE-Teacher-Rating-Scale-Manual-Involving-Teachers-in-Equitable-Identification-of-Gifted-and-Talented-Students-in-K-12-P2525.aspx>.

The Gifted Rating Scales (GRS) was recommended by respondents. It was created by Steven Pfeiffer, PhD., and Tania Jarosewich, PhD. and is published by Pearson Education, Inc. The description references gifted characteristics in general; however, suitability for underrepresented student populations is not specified. More information can be found at

<https://www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000180/gifted-rating-scales-grs.html#tab-details>

Numerous gifted indicator checklists were easily found online, however, based on a cursory review by the researcher, not all checklists appear to be designed for underrepresented student populations. Other online checklists that acknowledge non-traditional characteristics of giftedness may be found at

<https://www.advancementcourses.com/blog/how-to-identify-gifted> and

[https://www.teachersfirst.com/gifted\\_spot.cfm](https://www.teachersfirst.com/gifted_spot.cfm)

Some Florida school districts have gifted indicator checklists posted on their websites. Examples of comprehensive and inclusive checklists can be found at the following addresses.

Broward County Public Schools

[http://www.sbbc-gifted.com/downloads/Gifted\\_Eligibility\\_Matrix\\_Plan\\_B.pdf](http://www.sbbc-gifted.com/downloads/Gifted_Eligibility_Matrix_Plan_B.pdf)

Pinellas County School Board

<https://www.pcsb.org/cms/lib/FL01903687/Centricity/domain/176/pcs%20forms/2-3194.pdf>

**KABC II.** The Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Second Edition Normative Update (KABC-II NU) is presented by Pearson Education, Inc. It was created by Drs. Alan and Nadeen Kaufman and this version was intentionally updated to "reflect the changing population of children in the United States." The description found at PearsonClinical.com goes on to state that "test items contain little cultural content, so children of diverse backgrounds are assessed more fairly." More information can be found at <https://www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000088/kaufman-assessment-battery-for-children-second-edition-kabc-ii.html?origsearchtext=KABC#tab-details>.

**KBIT.** The Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Second Edition (KBIT-2) is again authored by Drs. Alan and Nadeen Kaufman and is available through Pearson Education, Inc. The KBIT II includes verbal and non-verbal components and PearsonClinical.com reports that "cultural fairness [is] reflected in norming procedures and item selection." Further information can be retrieved from <https://www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000390/kaufman-brief-intelligence-test-second-edition-kbit-2.html#tab-details>.



**NNAT.** The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test-Second Edition (NNAT-2) was cited by respondents numerous times, both as a nomination tool and an assessment for giftedness. It was created by Dr. Jack A. Naglieri and is published by Pearson Education, Inc. The NNAT-2 "provides a nonverbal, culturally neutral assessment of general ability that is ideal for use with a diverse student population." Additional information can be found at <https://www.pearsonassessments.com/learningassessments/products/100000287/naglieri-nonverbal-ability-testsecond-edition-nnat2-nnat-2.html#tab-details>

**OLSAT.** The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test Eighth Edition (OLSAT 8) is published by Pearson Education, Inc. According to Pearson, the OLSAT 8 has undergone "specialized statistical procedures and comprehensive review of all test items by minority-group educators help minimize ethnic, gender, cultural, and regional bias." More information is available at <https://www.pearsonassessments.com/learningassessments/products/100000003/otis-lennon-school-ability-test-eighth-edition-olsat-8-olsat-8.html#tab-details>

**RIAS.** The Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales, Second Edition (RIAS-2) created by Cecil R. Reynolds, PhD., and Randy W. Kamphaus, PhD. is published by PAR, Inc. The RIAS contains both verbal and non-verbal components. The RIAS-2 fact sheet states that it is "suitable for both clinical and educational settings, including school Gifted and Talented programs." However, underrepresented student populations are not specified. More information can be found at <https://www.parinc.com/Products/Pkey/365>

**WISC.** The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Fifth Edition (WISC-V) was created by David Wechsler and is currently published by Pearson Education, Inc. It appears that the initial purpose of the WISC was to diagnose learning disabilities, however, the current version has an updated "normative sample stratified to match current U.S. census data based on sex, race/ethnicity, parent education level, and geographic region for each age group" and has been informed by "special group studies to examine patterns of performance of children from frequently-tested populations." Additional information can be found at <https://www.pearsonclinical.com/psychology/products/100000771/wechsler-intelligence-scale-for-childrensupfifth-edition--wisc-v.html#tab-details>