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Gifted Education in Elementary Schools

Danielle Wilkinson

Eastern Illinois University

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Abstract

Gifted students have enormous potential, yet there are few consistent opportunities for gifted students to receive challenging instruction. Drawing upon literature detailing the history of gifted education nationally and in Illinois, this study sought to find what services were currently offered to Illinois students, and if the opportunities for gifted students were related to a district's state funding tier. Findings indicated that the elementary gifted services being offered and the ways in which eligibility is determined were inconsistent among districts. In addition, many districts who offer gifted services are using local/community funds in order to provide services regardless of their funding tier. Very little federal or state funding, nor mandates regarding gifted education, has led to the inconsistency of elementary gifted education in Illinois districts.

Keywords: elementary gifted education, Evidence Based Funding Tiers (EBF), eligibility determination, gifted funding, gifted services, Illinois school districts

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, family, and close friends. Thank you all for supporting me and picking up the slack when I have overextended myself. Thank you for your continuous love, encouragement, and understanding. I would have never come this far without all of you. I am very blessed to have you in my life.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, Dr. Alexis Jones, this thesis would not have been possible without you. Thank you for your guidance and support throughout this entire process. Your patience and dedication to helping me accomplish my study went above and beyond. Your positivity, organization, and expertise are immensely appreciated! To Dr. Md-Yunus and Dr. Melissa Jones, thank you for your guidance and feedback throughout this process. I appreciate the knowledge and background you brought to my research. Finally, I want to thank all the administrators who took the time to respond to my survey and even personally reach out to me with words of interest and encouragement. This study certainly would not have been possible without your responses.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Gifted students hold the key to future innovation and developments in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. When the educational needs of these children are not met, we as a society lose. In the elementary school, gifted education plays a vital role in motivating gifted students to push the bounds, discover new things, and develop new talents (McLain & Pfeiffer, 2012; Peters & Mofield, 2017; Wright & Ford, 2017). When these extraordinary children are not challenged, they become bored in school and in some cases, underachieve. From this boredom and underachievement, students can develop behavior problems (Haney, 2013). Students may act out in attempt to gain the attention they so desperately seek. Behavior problems in the classroom may also arise because the gifted child is disengaged in a lesson that is far too easy for him/her. It is important to focus on gifted education at the elementary level because elementary school sets the tone for a student's educational future. By the time students enter high school, where they can hopefully take advanced classes or be more independent in challenging themselves, it may be too late.

Gifted education faces some major challenges in today's world. Although it sometimes seems like state and federal governments have a hand in everything that is education, the area of gifted education does not receive much government attention. There are very few state or federal funding programs and even fewer mandates related to gifted education. The lack of state or federal funding means that local communities must attempt to fund programs for gifted and talented students. Unfortunately, not all communities are able to do this, and unequal access to gifted education may occur throughout Illinois school districts.

In lieu of actual gifted programs, classroom teachers are being asked to differentiate curriculum and instruction for these students. However, when a classroom is full of 24-27 students, who all have different needs, this can be very difficult to do. Relying on the classroom teacher to fully meet the academic needs of gifted students becomes especially strenuous, and nearly impossible, when teachers are also pressured to bring underachieving students up to grade level (Warne & Price, 2016). While classroom teachers have the best of intentions of meeting the unique needs of all their students, it is the underachieving students who receive the most time, focus, and resources.

While lack of funding certainly creates barriers for gifted education, the lack of state and federal mandates related to gifted education only hinders the situation. State and federal mandates help regulate what occurs in an educational setting. In the absence of such mandates, districts are left to “figure it out for themselves.” This leads to unequal access across the state or even within a district. For instance, because there are no mandates about how children should be identified as gifted, districts may use various measures (Warne & Price, 2016). Some districts may determine eligibility based solely upon state required standardized test scores, parent and teacher referrals, or use more non-traditional measures such as those that take into consideration language barriers, disabilities, or creative talents. In order to achieve equal access for all gifted students, there needs to be mandates that regulate how gifted students are identified.

Research needs to be done in the area of elementary gifted education in order to bring attention to gifted students who are so often overlooked by teachers, administrators, and lawmakers because the focus is always on underachieving students. It is the researcher’s hope that new research in this area will promote public interest and create change in the field of education that will benefit these extraordinary children.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Gifted education provides advanced educational services and opportunities to gifted and talented children who may not otherwise be challenged. However, due to recent educational mandates like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, money, effort, and time have been shifted to focusing on underachieving students in attempt to bring them up to grade level, leaving little for students who excel. There are very few federal laws or mandates related to serving these gifted and talented students, putting gifted education primarily on the shoulders of local communities and leaders.

There are several definitions of what it means to be gifted. The United States Department of Education (as cited in Giftedness Defined-NSGT, 2018), defines giftedness as the following:

Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment (para. 1).

As adults, these gifted and talented children will most likely lead to the advancement in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Why are we not spending more time and resources cultivating and challenging these young, brilliant minds? Furthermore, how if at all, are schools identifying gifted and talented students?

In this literature review, the author will discuss the need for gifted education and its effect on students. In addition, gifted education funding and how schools identify gifted and talented students will be analyzed. Finally, the underrepresentation of minorities and students from low socioeconomic classes will be examined.

The History of Gifted Education

In the late 1950s, the spotlight shown on gifted education as a result of the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik (Jolly, 2009). In response to Sputnik and America's seeming inability to compete globally, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 (Jolly, 2009). The purpose of the NDEA was to stimulate and strengthen American education by providing funding in the form of \$1 billion in loans, scholarships, and graduate fellowships to advanced students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields (Jolly, 2009). As a result of the NDEA, talent searches were conducted in attempts to identify more children as gifted and talented (Jolly, 2009). Across the United States, schools began offering advanced courses and early college entry for advanced students, in addition to boosting the amount of science, foreign language, and technology content into the curriculum (VanTassel-Baska, 2018). Unfortunately for gifted education, the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s shifted federal focus, funding, and interest away as the public became more concerned with providing free and equal education to all children regardless of skin color (Jolly, 2009).

State level gifted education officially began in San Diego, California in 1963, followed by Chicago, Illinois in 1965 (Jolly, 2009; VanTassel-Baska, 2010). These big cities provided a hub for special gifted schools and policies because there were large concentrations of children in these areas, and thus a wider and more diverse pool of intellectually gifted students (VanTassel-Baska, 2010). Throughout the 1960s, San Diego focused on the education of teachers in the areas of gifted education, expecting teachers to attend six weeks of summer training each year related to gifted education (Van-Tassel-Baska, 2010). In addition, the Association of San Diego Educators of the Gifted (ASDEG) was formed in 1969 to support gifted teachers and held an annual conference which continues to this day (VanTassel-Baska, 2010). According to

VanTassel-Baska (2010), in the 1980s, the Chicago Public Schools gifted program served more than 25,000 students with 40 citywide programs in schools and 25 full-time employees who were responsible for the implementation of these programs.

Gifted Education Funding and Mandates

Throughout history, gifted education support and funding has seen only short-lived success, through the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Marland Report, the creation of the Office of Gifted and Talented within the Department of Education, the Gifted and Talented Children's Education Act of 1978, and the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 (Haney, 2013). Unfortunately, all these efforts lasted only a short time before being replaced or repealed (Haney, 2013). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 continued to hinder gifted education by forcing states to put their already limited resources toward ensuring that all students perform at grade-level and meet AYP, therefore putting all the focus on under achieving students (Haney, 2013). Gifted learners were not addressed at all in the NCLB legislation and as a result, it compromised services for gifted education by leading to allocation of funds away from gifted programs (VanTassel-Baska, 2018). Hodges (2018) states, "NCLB created an atmosphere that rewarded teaching to the test. This reward structure largely did not favor gifted education programming" (p. 337).

The newest education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provides a few mandates that can be related to gifted education ("Gifted and Talented," 2016). ESSA requires districts to collect, separate, and report their student achievement data at every level, including those achieving at an advanced level ("Gifted and Talented," 2016). It also states that districts receiving Title II professional development funds must use the money for training to address the needs of "all" students including those of the gifted and talented ("Gifted and Talented," 2016).

However, the ESSA does not provide funding to districts specifically for gifted education (“Gifted and Talented,” 2016).

The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, which focuses on serving under-represented students in gifted programs such as minorities, low income, and disabled students, is the only federal act that provides funds specifically for gifted students (“Gifted and Talented,” 2016). The Javits Act has led to identification, programs, curriculum, and assessment models that have been used across the nation (VanTassel-Baska, 2018). However, its funding was cut as part of the 2011 budget deal (Haney, 2013).

Due to lack of federal support and response to the needs of gifted students, funding and policy making has been left in the hands of advocacy groups and state and local governments (VanTassel-Baska, 2018). This has led to policies, programs, and funding varying significantly between states and even districts within a state (VanTassel-Baska, 2018). State mandates for services and funding range from no mandates and no funding to enforced mandates and funding (Haney, 2013). Young and Balli (2014) state the following:

According to the Davidson Institute for Talent Development (Gifted Education Policies, n.d.), only four states mandate and fully fund gifted education. Conversely, nine states do not mandate gifted education and funding is not available. Other states fall somewhere in between ranging from mandates with partial funding to no mandates with some funding available. Consequently, decisions about gifted and talented programming are generally left to local school districts. (p. 237)

The continuous decline in mandates and funding at the federal and state levels have led to community funding, which means children from poorer districts may or may not be receiving the same opportunities as those from wealthy districts (Haney, 2013). A study done by Hodges

(2018) in which he examined 16 years of financial and enrollment data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for 1,025 Texas public schools demonstrates the effects of mandates such as NCLB on gifted program funding and the unequal access it has created. In his study, Hodges discovered that rural districts saw the smallest year to year decline in allocation of gifted funds, but this was due to the fact that rural districts were not allocating much money toward gifted education to begin with, in contrast to urban and suburban districts who had allocated a lot of money to gifted education prior to NCLB (Hodges, 2018). Overall, Hodges' study found that large national education mandates such as NCLB have shifted discretionary funds away from gifted education in all four types of districts, suburban, urban, town, and rural. In his study, Hodges (2018) states, "Where money is allocated is a good indication of what is valued. In the case of gifted education, the focus on AYP has led district administrators to view gifted education as a luxury" (p. 337).

The Need for Gifted Education

Gifted students benefit from differentiated learning experiences that increase over time and target areas in which the child demonstrates high levels of performance ("Why Are Gifted Programs Needed," n.d.). The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) states that more than seven in ten teachers of high-achieving students admitted that their most advanced students were not able to thrive to their highest potential in the general education classroom ("Why Are Gifted Programs Needed," n.d.). According to Meulen (2014),

Full inclusion in educational settings has been presented as a desirable situation, whereby all children, including children with severe disabilities and highly gifted students, should be placed in a regular classroom. However, the vast majority of educational systems

struggle with adequately meeting the educational needs of gifted students and the focus is most often on average and weaker learners. (p. 289)

In a study done by Young and Balli (2014) in which they interviewed gifted students and their parents, it was reported by several parents that their child would receive additional busy work if the normal work was completed quickly instead of differentiated, enrichment work. The same study by Young and Balli (2014), found that gifted students reported varying occurrences and effectiveness of differentiation in the regular classroom.

Gifted education programs are a necessity for serving gifted students as the general education classroom is not able to adequately meet the needs of these exceptional learners for two reasons (Callahan & Herberg-Davis, 2013). First, most general education teachers are not trained to meet the needs of their gifted students (Callahan & Herberg-Davis, 2013). Young and Balli (2014) noted the following:

According to the 2010-2011 National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) State of the State Report, teachers are underprepared to meet gifted students' needs. Of 43 states reporting, only 5 states required teachers to participate in annual professional development for gifted education instructional strategies. An additional 26 states did not require it, and 12 states had local discretion for professional development. (p. 242)

Sixty-five percent of teachers said that their teacher preparation courses prepared them very little or not at all to teach advanced learners (Callahan & Hertberg-Davis, 2013). Second, general classroom teachers are overly burdened with raising their low-achieving students' test scores due to high-stakes testing (Callahan & Herberg-Davis, 2013).

The NAGC references several longitudinal studies which show that gifted programs positively correlate to post-secondary plans for students who participate in these programs

(“Why Are Gifted Programs Needed,” n.d.). A follow up study of 320 thirteen-year-old gifted students, 95% of which participated in some type of academic acceleration or gifted program, showed that 203 of them earned an advanced degree by age 38 (Kell, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2013).

Critical thinking has always been an important skill in the education of children, but with the implementation of Common Core Standards and the entry into the 21st century, critical thinking skills are more important than ever before (Kettler, 2014). A study of the use of critical thinking skills by fourth grade students was conducted in a school district in Texas. This study included 45 identified gifted students and 163 general education students who were all given the Cornell Critical Thinking Test and the Test of Critical Thinking (Kettler, 2014). From this study it was concluded that identified gifted students outperformed general education students on both tests. From his research, Kettler deduced this “suggests that differentiation of curriculum and instruction for gifted or advanced learners might fruitfully include deliberate differentiation of instruction in this area” (2014, para.1).

Social-emotional effects of gifted education. Gifted education has an effect of academic advancement as well as social development (Preckel, Rach, & Scherrer, 2017). A study by Preckel, Rach, and Scherrer examined changes in the self-esteem, self-concept, and social relations of 177 gifted students who attended a sixteen-day summer school in Germany (2017). In the study, students were given questionnaires three weeks before the school started, on the seventh day, and on the fifteenth day (Preckel et al., 2017). The results of the study showed students’ self-esteem had a small and insignificant, but positive development over time (Preckel et al., 2017). However, self-concepts of acceptance and relations with peers increased significantly (Preckel et al., 2017). From this study it can be concluded that gifted students’

socio-emotional needs benefit greatly from participation in advanced programs (Preckel et al., 2017). Another study conducted in England by Meulen et al. (2014), examined the effects a Day a Week School (DWS) pull-out program had on the social-emotional and academic functioning of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students. The study found that gifted students who were considered at-risk due to experiencing social-emotional problems or who were underachieving, benefitted greatly from the DWS pull-out program and reported a significant rise in self-concept, behavioral conduct, and enjoyment at school (Meulen et al., 2014).

Identifying the Gifted

Traditionally, state required norm-referenced standardized tests and IQ tests have been used to identify gifted students. However, it has been argued recently that these tests lead to the under-identification of minorities, students of low socioeconomic status, those with creative talents, and twice-exceptional students, which are students who demonstrate giftedness and possess one or more learning disabilities (Missett & Brunner, 2013; Wang & Neihart, 2015). Those who oppose the use of test scores also argue that their use creates arbitrary cut-off scores for gifted programs (Missett & Brunner, 2013). These concerns have led to new, multiple criteria for identification of gifted students such as the use of portfolios, authentic and dynamic assessments, performance tasks, teacher rating scales, and other traditional and non-traditional measures (Missett & Brunner, 2013). An example of one such measure is demonstrated in a study conducted in England by Kornilov, Tan, Elliott, Sternberg, & Grigorenko (2012). In this study, an assessment designed to measure analytical, creative, and practical abilities, called the Aurora Battery, was given to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders in an attempt to identify gifted students (Kornilov et al., 2012). The number of gifted students identified by the Aurora Battery was compared to the number of students identified by the traditional standardized tests (Kornilov

et al., 2012). While it was found that the number of students identified as gifted by the Aurora Battery overlapped with the standardized test method, the Aurora Battery identified a new set of students who demonstrated analytical, creative, and practical gifted abilities as well as giftedness in verbal, numerical, and figural domains (Kornilov et al., 2012). Additionally, a position statement titled, “The Role of Assessments in the Identification of Gifted Students” (n.d.) by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) states the following:

NAGC believes that the process of identifying students for gifted and talented programs must be based on defensible measurement practices, including the process of selecting psychometrically sound assessments aligned with a program’s goals and objectives; the administration and interpretation of the assessments by individuals with appropriate credentials or training; and the ethical application of decisions regarding gifted program placement. Further, NAGC believes that there are specific practices that are supportive of these measurement practices (para. 2).

The Underserved

According to Card and Giuliano (2016), “In 2012, 7.6% of White K-12 students participated in gifted and talented programs nationwide, compared with only 3.6% of Blacks, 4.6% of Hispanics, and 1.8% of English learners” (p. 13678). When schools rely solely on state required standardized test scores or IQ scores to determine who is eligible for their gifted programs, minorities, low-income students, and twice exceptional students end up underrepresented. For this reason, researchers are now arguing that giftedness be viewed as multidimensional and incorporate various traits, skills, and abilities (Karnes & Bean, 2015). A study by Card and Giuliano (2016) examined whether the use of a universal screening would raise the number of poor and minority students eligible for gifted education. In the study, all

second-grade students in a diverse urban school district were given the Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (NNAT), a test intended to assess cognitive ability independent of linguistic and cultural background. It was found that the NNAT universal screening program led to a large increase in gifted eligibility for poor, Black, and Hispanic students and for students whose parents did not speak English as their primary language (Card & Giuliano, 2016).

Giftedness is viewed as a social category which is supported by the highly disproportionate percentage of upper- and middle-class students compared to low-income and minority students labeled as gifted (Banks & Banks, 2016). In many schools, students must be referred for testing by parents or teachers, and as a result, students who come from a disadvantaged background are referred less often (Card & Giuliano, 2016). While many students who are labeled as gifted do possess special talents and an advanced IQ, some students get labeled as gifted due to their parents' knowledge and power to influence school personnel (Banks & Banks). Banks and Banks (2016) state, "If schools or districts do not have in their gifted programs a population that represents their various cultural, racial, language, and ethnic groups, steps should be taken to examine the criteria used to identify gifted students and develop procedures to correct the disproportion" (p.15). According to the NAGC, students may be more accurately identified using one-on-one testing, especially with young children, children with language barriers, and twice exceptional students ("The Role of Assessments," n.d.).

Summary

As we look to the future, there is no denying that we need to educate all students to their highest potential, including our gifted and talented students. The best way to serve these students is through carefully planned and constructed gifted education programs led by highly qualified gifted teachers. As the research shows, gifted students who are denied the opportunity to learn at

an accelerated and more advanced level become frustrated and less invested in their schooling. Research also shows that more comprehensive ways of identifying gifted students need to be implemented to avoid bias and create a balanced program that reflects the school's diverse population.

In conclusion, due to a lack of federal guidance and funds for gifted education, program availability and identification methods vary greatly between states and even districts. At this time more research needs to be done to determine what types of gifted programs are being offered, how districts are deciding eligibility, and how much funding is being allocated to gifted education.

CHAPTER III

Methods

Rationale and Purpose

This study utilized quantitative research through the means of a survey in order to collect data about the gifted programs being offered to elementary students in Illinois. Due to there being very little federal or state funding and mandates designated to gifted education, the hypothesis of the researcher was that gifted education for elementary students may look different depending on the district and its local resources. The quantitative research approach allowed for analysis of the following research questions:

- What types of gifted services are being offered to elementary students in Illinois school districts?
 - Do gifted students living in Illinois have equal access to gifted programs?
- How are the gifted services being funded?
- How is eligibility for these services being determined?
 - Is eligibility determined differently depending on the district?
- Do districts with higher local wealth offer more gifted education opportunities?

A quantitative research approach was necessary for this study in order to show percentages and numbers of the gifted services being offered, the funding methods being used, and the ways in which eligibility is being determined. Analysis of the collected data was also used to examine if wealthier districts offer more elementary gifted education opportunities in the areas of services being provided and eligibility determination. In order to examine this, the Evidence Based Funding Tier for each district was compared with the gifted services each district offers and how each district determines eligibility for their elementary gifted services.

Research Protocol

The survey was sent to all superintendents of Illinois public schools containing an elementary school. The study was based on survey results that the researcher obtained from 127 Illinois public school districts. The survey was created using *Qualtrics Research Suite* survey software. This is a web-based software that allowed the survey to be sent to administrators via email. This enabled the researcher to reach out to administrators from various Illinois districts and receive results quickly. The survey consisted of an Informed Consent section and nine questions that administrators should have had the knowledge to answer. The simplicity of the survey encouraged administrators to participate in the study, thus providing a good sample.

In addition, the Illinois State Report Card was used as a supplementary source of data. Prior to sending the survey, the researcher used the Illinois State Report Card for each district to determine each superintendent's email and which districts qualified for the study. The Illinois State Report Card was also used to obtain any data that administrators were unable to provide through the survey, such as the district's Evidence Based Funding Tier (EBF).

Participants

The online survey was sent to superintendents of every public-school district in Illinois that serves elementary students. The survey was sent to 754 superintendents. This study excluded superintendents of charter or private school districts and school districts that do not have elementary schools, as this study examined elementary gifted education.

Sending the survey to superintendents of all Illinois public schools gave a true representation of the current state of elementary gifted education in Illinois. This also provided an adequate representation from each Evidence Based Funding Tier (EBF). The Evidence Based Funding Tiers (EBFs) include Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4. The Evidence Based Funding

Tiers (EBFs) allowed the researcher to retrieve a sample of financially diverse districts, as the EBF tier for a district is determined by the district's adequacy of funding, or the amount of funding needed to educate their students versus the amount they actually have available.

The tiers are determined by measuring the cost of educating all students in order to determine an Adequacy Target for the district. The district's local resources are then measured and compared to the Adequacy Target. Finally, state funds are distributed to districts in order to help meet their Adequacy Targets. Districts who need the greatest amount of state funding in order to meet their Adequacy Target, are labeled as Tier 1 and receive 50% of the funding. Districts who need a moderate amount of state funds are given the Tier 2 label and receive 49% of the funding. Tier 3 districts are those who do not need much state funding in order to reach their Adequacy Target, and therefore only receive 0.9% of the funding. Districts who are able to meet or come very close to meeting their Adequacy Target on their own, are labeled as Tier 4 and receive only 0.1% of the funding.

Measures

The researcher used an online survey in order to collect data efficiently. The online survey also allowed a sample to be obtained from financially diverse districts. The survey included questions about the district and its gifted programs for elementary students. Data from the surveys was analyzed to determine what kinds of gifted programs are being offered to elementary students, how districts are funding these programs, and how gifted eligibility is being determined. These findings were used to determine if access to elementary gifted education is inconsistent across the state of Illinois. In addition to the online survey, the Illinois State Report Card was used as a supplement to provide any information that was not obtained from the survey. For instance, the Illinois State Report Card was used to determine districts' Evidence

Based Funding Tiers (EBF) for administrator who marked “I am not sure” for that question on the survey. In addition, the researcher looked at the Illinois State Report Card prior to sending out the surveys to ensure surveys were sent to all administrators in Illinois public school districts containing an elementary school.

Data Collection Procedures

The online survey created using *Qualtrics Research Suite* survey software was used as the primary method of data collection. Data was recorded and stored using the *Qualtrics Research Suite* software. Data was recorded using school district names. However, school district names were not used in the final research report. School district names were necessary when collecting the data in case the researcher needed to use the district’s Illinois State Report Card to obtain additional data.

The survey was the primary method of data collection. It consisted of nine questions, most of which were multiple choice. For example, “How are the gifted programs funded in your district?” Answer choices for this question were federal funding, state funding, grant funding, local/community funding, and other. Prior to the survey being delivered to participants, it was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board. In addition, prior to data collection, the survey was piloted with a local superintendent, and the results were examined to ensure the questions yielded the anticipated information.

Due to the short time frame in which data was collected and the nature of the data being collected, no participants withdrew from the study. However, if a participant would have wished to withdraw, the researcher would have deleted those survey results upon receipt of an email stating they wished to no longer participate.

Data Analysis

During the study, the researcher obtained nominal data through the survey questions.

Univariate analysis was used to answer the following research questions:

- What types of elementary gifted programs are being offered in Illinois?
- What funding methods are being used for these gifted programs?
- How is eligibility for the gifted programs being determined?

A bivariate analysis was used to examine the following research question:

- Do districts with higher local wealth offer more elementary gifted education opportunities?

In order to represent the data for the research question, “What types of elementary gifted programs are being offered in Illinois,” the researcher used a bar graph that shows the number of districts who reported providing each type of gifted service. Figure 4 includes the following gifted services: before/after school programs, pull-out programs/classes, weekend programs, ability grouping, acceleration/grade advancement, advanced classes, specialized self-contained schools, enrichment, push-in support, and other. The researcher intends for this data to show how vastly different elementary gifted education looks from district to district.

Figure 5 was used to show percentages of the types of funding being used for elementary gifted programs in Illinois. For this graph, the components include federal funding, state funding, local/community funding, and grant funding. As hypothesized, this data reveals that local/community funding is the primary source of funding across most districts.

Figure 6 was used to represent how eligibility is being determined for elementary gifted services. This graph has the following components: teacher recommendations, standardized test scores, parent request/recommendation, local assessments, aptitude tests, classroom

performance, and other. This graph also presents data in the form of percentages. Since there are no state or federal regulations for gifted eligibility, it was the researcher's hypothesis that the data would show that eligibility determination methods vary from district to district.

The researcher also hypothesized that districts with more local income, and therefore a higher EBF tier, provide more gifted programs and opportunities for elementary gifted students. The researcher attempted to prove this by constructing a table that represents all the EBF tiers (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 4) and the number of elementary gifted programs being offered. If the hypothesis was correct, the bar for EBF Tier 4 should have been the highest since Tier 4 districts receive the least amount of state funding due to their local resources, and the bar for Tier 1 should have been the lowest since Tier 1 districts receive the most state funds in order to meet the basic needs of the district and therefore do not have extra funds to put towards gifted programs.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Findings

This chapter discusses the findings from the survey *Gifted Education in Elementary Schools*. Data from the survey was analyzed in order to address the following research questions:

1. What types of gifted programs are being offered to elementary students in Illinois school districts? 2. How are the gifted programs being funded? 3. How is eligibility for these programs being determined? 4. Do districts with higher local funding offer more elementary gifted education opportunities?

Evidence Based Funding Tier Percentages

The step-in data analysis involved investigating the percentages of Illinois districts that were in certain EBF funding tiers. Figure 1 shows the percentage of Illinois public school districts in each Evidence Based Funding Tier (EBF Tier).

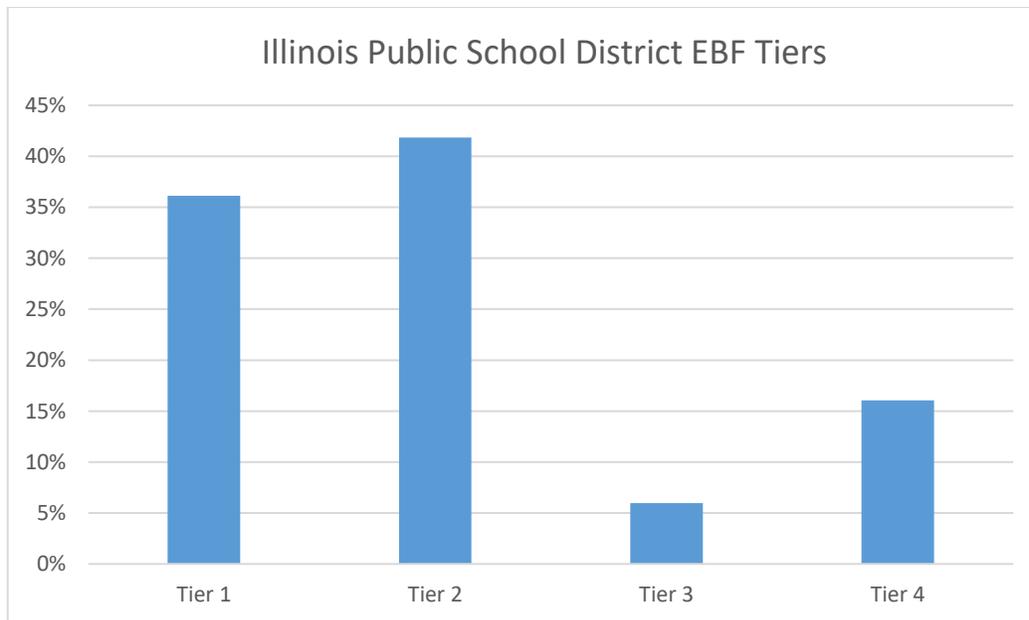


Figure 1. Percentages of Illinois Public School Districts by EBF Tiers

Figure 1 is arranged to show the EBF tiers along the X-axis and the percentage of districts within each tier along the Y-axis. Forty-two percent of Illinois public school districts fall into Tier 2, the largest represented tier. Only 6% of Illinois public school districts fall into Tier 3, representing the smallest EBF tier. This means the largest number of public-school districts fall into Tier 2, while the smallest number of public-school districts are Tier 3.

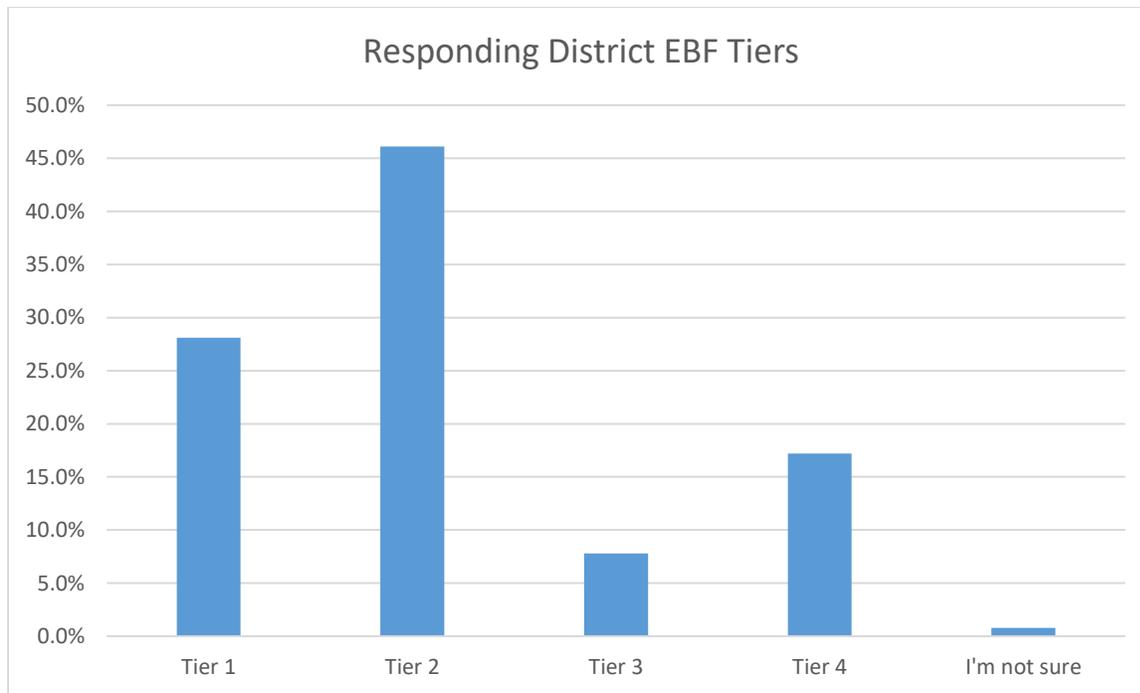


Figure 2. Responding District EBF Tiers

Figure 2 displays the percentage of districts who responded to the survey among each EBF tier. Figure 2 shows that the percentage of responding districts in Tier 2 is the largest with 46.1% of responding districts belonging to Tier 2, which aligns with the percentage of Tier 2 Illinois school districts displayed in Figure 1. Approximately 7.8% of responding districts were Tier 3 districts. This is representative of the percentage of Tier 3 districts in the state of Illinois. The very small number of Tier 3 districts can be misleading when examining funding and services offered, but this is a true representation of Tier 3 in the state of Illinois.

Gifted Services Offered

Figure 3 is arranged to show the options “Yes” or “No” to the survey question, “In your district, are there any gifted programs in place for elementary students?” This question is along the X-axis and the percentage of respondents who selected that option is along the Y-axis.

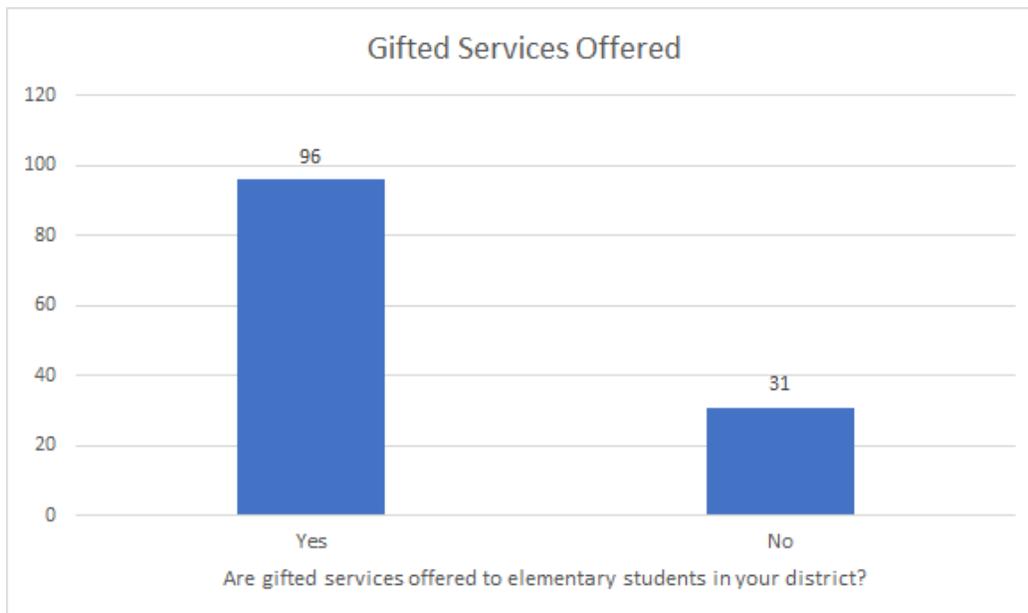


Figure 3. Number of Elementary Gifted Services Offered

Of the 127 districts who responded to the question, 31 districts reported offering no elementary gifted services at all, while 96 districts reported offering some type of gifted program for elementary students. This shows that many, but not all, Illinois districts are offering some type of gifted services/programs for their elementary students.

Figure 4 shows the gifted services currently being offered to elementary students in Illinois. As indicated in Appendix A, the survey options districts could choose from for gifted services were: before/after school programs, pull-out programs/classes, weekend programs, ability grouping, acceleration/grade advancement, advanced classes, specialized self-contained schools, enrichment, and push-in support. Districts who offer other types of gifted services that were not represented in the survey, were allowed to select “other,” but were asked to explain

what services they offered. Four districts responded that they offer “other” gifted services. These services included STEM coursework, online intervention, Spanish classes, and cluster classrooms. Seventy-seven districts reported that they offer more than one type of gifted services to their elementary students. Figure 4 is arranged to show the survey options along the X-axis and the number of respondents who selected that option along the Y-axis.

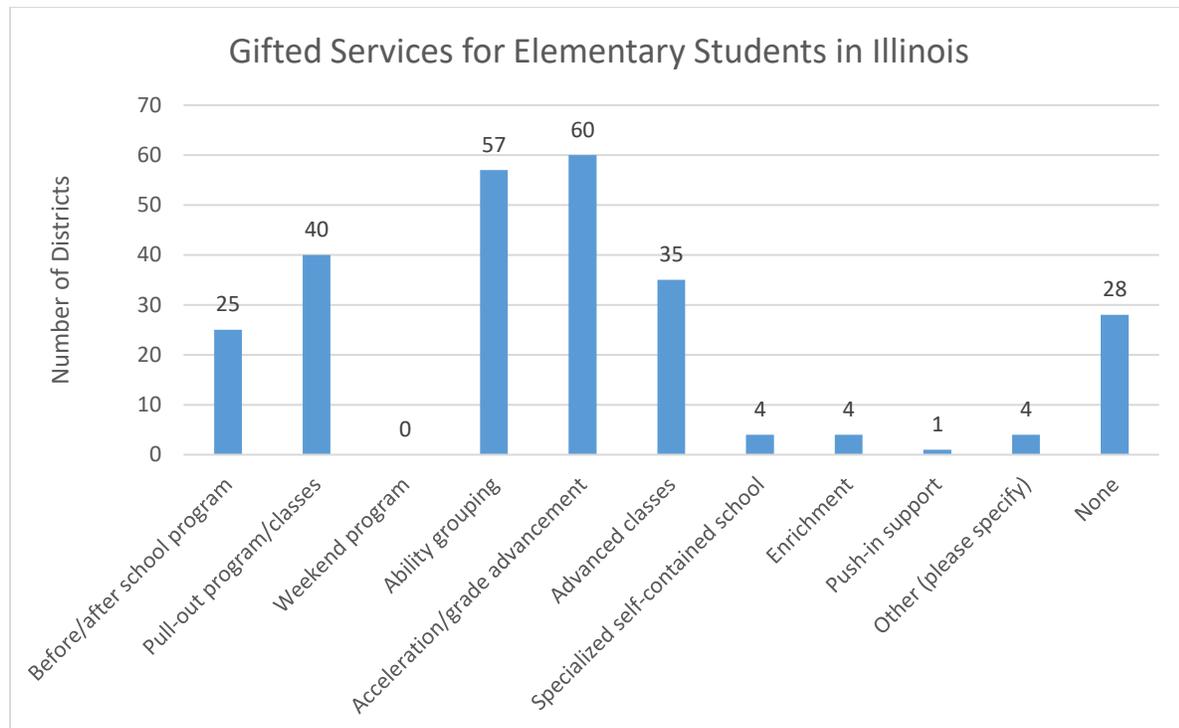


Figure 4. Number of Gifted Services

Acceleration/grade advancement was the most frequently selected option, demonstrating that of all the gifted service options listed on the survey, this was the one most commonly chosen. Acceleration/grade advancement was reported by 60 districts as a gifted service offered to their elementary students. Ability grouping was similarly selected frequently by districts. The survey results show that 57 districts report offering ability grouping as a gifted service to their elementary students. This means that acceleration/grade advancement and ability grouping are

the two most reported elementary gifted services offered by Illinois districts who responded to the survey.

The survey option “weekend program” was not reported as being used by any of the survey respondents. The survey option “push-in support” was the second least frequently chosen gifted service. Only one district reported providing push-in support as a gifted service for elementary students.

Elementary Gifted Funding

Figure 5 displays the ways in which Illinois public school districts are funding their elementary gifted programs. Districts were able to select federal funding, state funding, grant funding, local/community funding, or other from the survey options. The survey also allowed districts to select more than one funding source. Thirty-two districts selected two or more funding sources. According to the survey results, 59.6% of responding districts reported using local/community funding as at least one of the funding sources for their elementary gifted services. Federal funding was reported by only 9.9% of responding districts. Similarly, grant funding is reportedly used by only 9.2% of responding districts. This shows that a very low percentage of responding districts use federal funding or grant funding to provide elementary gifted services. Additionally, 20 districts reported using a combination of local/community funding and state funding in order to fund their elementary gifted services. None of the districts reported using a different funding source other than the options presented on the survey. Districts who do not offer elementary gifted did not answer this question as they do not use any funding.

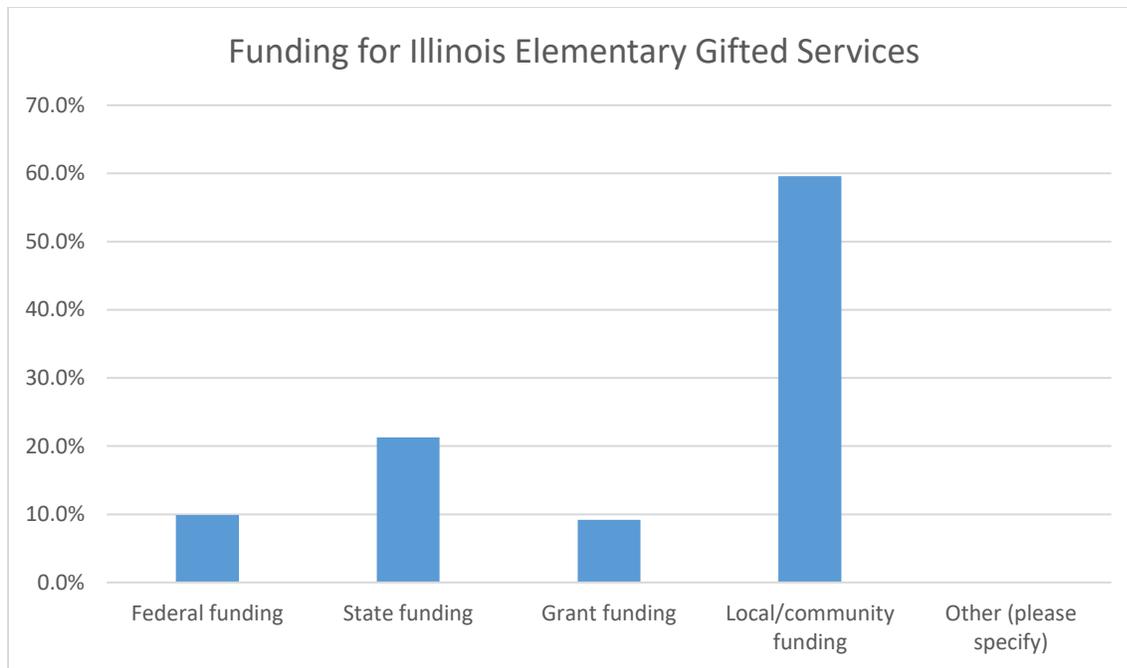


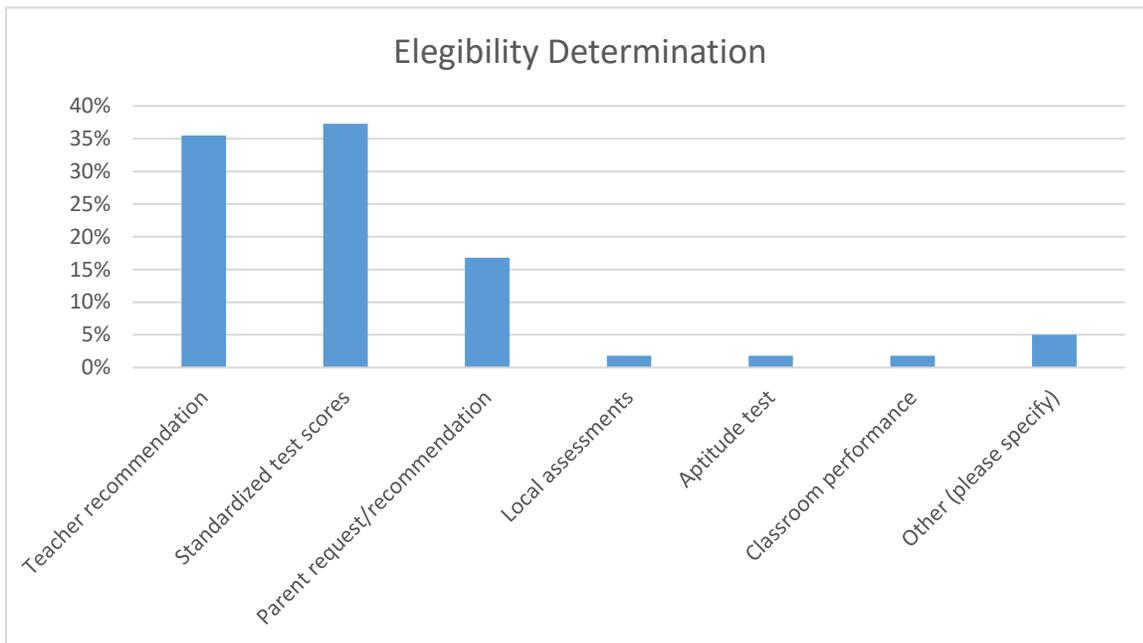
Figure 5. Percentage of Type of Funding for Elementary Gifted Services

Elementary Gifted Eligibility

Figure 6 reported responses to the survey question, “For elementary students, how is eligibility for gifted students determined?” The following were the survey options from which districts could choose: teacher recommendation, standardized test scores, parent request/recommendation, local assessments, aptitude test, classroom performance, or other. Districts were allowed to select more than one option. According to the survey results, 37.3% of districts reported using state-required standardized test scores such as PARCC, SAT, ACT, or IAR, to determine eligibility. Similarly, 35.5% of districts reported using teacher recommendations for eligibility. This shows that standardized test scores and teacher recommendations are the most commonly used eligibility determination methods among the responding districts. Local assessments, aptitude tests, and classroom performance were each only selected by 1.8% of districts. These three forms of eligibility determination were reported with the least frequency. Respondents who chose “other” were asked to explain how eligibility is

determined in their district. These districts reported using a variety of measures including nonverbal assessments, multiple measures, universal screening tools, student request, and Renzulli's Observable Behavior Checklist.

Figure 6. Percentage of Types of Eligibility Determinations for Gifted Students



Gifted Services by Funding Tier

Table 1 shows each EBF tier and whether they offer elementary gifted services. According to the results, 75% of districts in Tier 1, those who have the least amount of local resources, provide some type of gifted services to their elementary students. Table 1 also shows that 73.9% of Tier 4 districts, those who have the greatest amount of local resources, also provide some type of elementary gifted services. Tier 3 districts seem to provide the highest percentage of elementary gifted services at 90%. However, a very small percent of Tier 3 districts responded to the survey. This shows that districts with very little local revenue provide some type of elementary gifted services as often as districts who have more local funding revenue available.

Table 1. Gifted Services by Funding Tier (n=127)

| EBF Tier | No | Yes | Total |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Tier 1 | 25.0% | 75.0% | 100.0% |
| Tier 2 | 29.3% | 70.7% | 100.0% |
| Tier 3 | 10.0% | 90.0% | 100.0% |
| Tier 4 | 26.1% | 73.9% | 100.0% |

Table 2 displays each of the gifted service options listed on the survey and the percentage of corresponding districts within each EBF Tier that offer each of those services. On the survey, 77 districts selected more than one gifted service. It should be noted that the Tier 3 responses can be deceiving given that only 10 Tier 3 districts responded to the survey.

Table 2. Percentage of Types of Gifted Services by Funding Tier (n=127)

| Gifted Services | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Ability Grouping | 44.4 | 39.0 | 40.0 | 59.1 |
| Acceleration/grade advancement | 47.2 | 37.3 | 60.0 | 63.6 |
| Advanced classes | 22.2 | 28.8 | 40.0 | 27.3 |
| Before/after school program | 27.8 | 15.3 | 30.0 | 13.6 |
| Enrichment | 2.8 | 3.4 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Pull-out program/classes | 22.2 | 33.9 | 20.0 | 45.5 |
| Push-in support | 2.8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Specialized self-contained school | 2.8 | 3.4 | 0 | 4.5 |
| Weekend program | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 2.8 | 3.4 | 10.0 | 0 |
| None | 19.4 | 25.4 | 10.0 | 22.7 |

Of the 36 Tier 1 districts that responded, 47.2% of them reported providing acceleration/grade level advancement and 44.4% reported providing ability grouping services. Table 2 shows that acceleration/grade advancement and ability grouping services were reported as the two most provided gifted services for Tier 1 districts respectively. Comparably, Tier 2 districts reported providing ability grouping and acceleration/grade level advancement most often with ability grouping being reported by 39.0% of Tier 2 districts and acceleration/grade level advancement being reported by 37.3% of Tier 2 districts. Responding Tier 3 and Tier 4 districts also reported providing acceleration/grade level advancement and ability grouping services with the highest percentages. This shows that acceleration/grade level advancement and ability grouping services are used most often by the responding districts despite the districts' EBF tiers. Gifted services that would cost money such as before/after school programs, pull-out program/classes, push-in support, specialized self-contained school, and weekend programs were reported with low percentages. For example, push-in support was reported as an offered gifted service by only 2.8% of Tier 1 districts and 0% of Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 districts. Of the services that would cost additional money, before/after school programs and pull-out programs/classes were reported as being offered the most often across all EBF tiers. However, it should be noted that 30.0% of Tier 3 districts reported offering before/after school programs making Tier 3 the tier that offered this service the most often. Approximately 45.5% of Tier 4 districts reported offering pull-out programs/classes. This shows that responding Tier 4 districts reported offering pull-out programs/classes more frequently than districts in the other EBF tiers. Weekend programs were reported as not being offered by any districts within any of the EBF tiers.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Currently, elementary gifted education is not given much attention and seems to be inconsistent across the state of Illinois. However, gifted education for elementary students can have a huge impact on the education and life of those students. The purpose of this study was to find out the current state of gifted education for elementary students in Illinois. This chapter will discuss, in detail, the implications of the study findings, limitations, and suggestions for future study.

Gifted Services Offered

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), does not name any one service or program as the best for teaching gifted students. However, the NAGC has put together a set of standards called the “NAGC Pre-K-Grade 12 Gifted Programing Standards” which suggests that there needs to be a continuum of services at every level of a gifted learner’s education.

According to the NAGC, these services may take the form of pull-out programs, advanced classes, varied grouping strategies, acceleration, differentiation, dual enrollment, magnet schools, and specialized, self-contained schools (“Frequently Asked Questions,” n.d.).

When looking at the survey results, one of the patterns I noticed was within the findings of gifted services offered. I found that the majority of responding districts reported that they provide some type of gifted services to their elementary students, but these services were quite varied. Ninety-six out of 127 participating districts reported offering some type of gifted service or a combination of services. However, 31 districts responded that they offer no gifted services at all. In addition, the types of gifted services varied greatly. Of the gifted services reported, ability grouping and acceleration/grade advancement were reported most often. In addition to these

services, districts reported using before/after school programs, pull-out programs/classes, advanced classes, specialized self-contained schools, enrichment, push-in support, and other services such as STEM coursework. Seventy-seven responding districts used a combination of services, while nineteen districts only provided one service, and thirty-one districts reported no services at all. Due to there being no federal or state mandates nor true funding for gifted education, there is high variability between the gifted services districts are offering just within the state of Illinois.

It was surprising how many districts responded that they offer some type of gifted service to their elementary students. Ninety-six districts responded that they do offer at least one gifted service to elementary students while 31 districts responded that they do not offer any services. However, perhaps the number of districts offering services was so high because of the numerous types of services that are being considered gifted services. For instance, on the survey there were nine different gifted service options listed in addition to an “other” option. Four districts selected “other” because the gifted services they offered did not fit into any of the options provided. In addition, there were two districts that selected “No” to survey question number five, “In your district, are there any gifted programs (e.g. after school programs, pull-out programs, weekend programs, ability grouping, acceleration, advanced classes, specialized schools, etc.) in place for elementary students?” However, when answering all the other survey questions about funding, services offered, and eligibility determination, both schools provided answers. This may mean that although they provide services such as differentiation, ability grouping, acceleration/grade advancement, and advanced classes, these two schools do not consider these services part of a gifted program. Additionally, some districts responded that they use differentiation in place of a gifted program. For example, one administrator who responded to the survey said the following:

We do not identify students as gifted in our district. We have a differentiation philosophy where we provide differentiated instruction to students for a variety of reasons, such as having mastered learning targets or having shown interest in a particular area.

Differentiated instruction and services can occur during the day or after school.

Another responding administrator discussed the use of extension targets in subject areas stating the following, “This ensures that ALL students have access to rigor and enrichment as they show the need/ability to be extended.”

According to The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), more than seven in ten teachers of high-achieving students admitted that their most advanced students were not able to thrive to their highest potential in the general education classroom (“Why Are Gifted Programs Needed,” n.d.). In addition, a follow up study of 320 thirteen-year-old gifted students, 95% of whom participated in some type of academic acceleration or gifted program, showed that 203 of them earned an advanced degree by age 38 (Kell, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2013). This study demonstrates the positive impact gifted education can have on students. While research such as that mentioned above demonstrates the importance of gifted education, the inequitable education of elementary gifted students in the state of Illinois means that Illinois gifted students may or may not receive a consistent and challenging education, depending on where they live. Mandates and funding would help to ensure that all elementary gifted students receive the services they need to be successful.

Elementary Gifted Funding

When looking at the funding methods used by responding Illinois districts, local/community funding was reported as being used by over half of the districts. As you can see from the section, Elementary Gifted Funding in the Results and Findings chapter, only 21.3% of

responding districts reported using state funding as a source of funding for their elementary gifted services. Thirty-two districts responded that they used two or more funding sources, with local/community funding and state funding being the most frequently used combination. This seems to show that districts must combine funds in order to fund gifted services for their elementary students. One administrator who participated in the survey responded with the following statement regarding funding:

Due to lack of state funding over the years, we released our full-time librarian 4 years ago, who served as our K-8 gifted teacher. She pulled kids out for RtI to work on accelerated learning. Now we utilize differentiated instruction as our only means to support advanced learners. Finding a licensed teacher for this position has not been possible.

The research seems to show that in many Illinois districts, elementary gifted education is being placed on the shoulders of the community. This may suggest that districts who receive consistent local pressure for gifted services and/or value gifted education are more likely to provide services. Hodges (2018) wrote, “Where money is allocated is a good indication of what is valued” (p. 337). While Hodges was referring to the federal government when he stated this, it seems the same can be said for districts. Federal or state funding specifically for gifted education would allow more districts to provide greater gifted services for their elementary students and alleviate the pressure for local/community funding.

Elementary Gifted Eligibility

According to the survey results, the majority of participating districts use state-required standardized tests and teacher recommendations to determine student eligibility for gifted services. State required standardized test scores are used by 37.3% of participating districts,

while 35.5% of participating districts use teacher recommendations. Parent request/recommendations were reported as being used by 16.8% of responding districts. However, as stated in the Literature Review, many researchers argue that state required standardized tests lead to the under-identification of minorities, students of low socioeconomic status, those with creative talents, and students who have a learning disability but are also gifted (Missett & Brunner, 2013; Wang & Neihart, 2015). In addition, according to Card and Giuliano (2016), when schools rely on referrals from teachers or parents for eligibility, students who come from a disadvantaged background are referred less often. According to the NAGC, students may be more accurately identified using one-on-one testing, especially with young children, children with language barriers, and twice exceptional students (“The Role of Assessments,” n.d.).

A study by Card and Giuliano (2016) examined whether use of a universal screening would raise the number of poor and minority students eligible for gifted education. In the study, all second-grade students in a diverse urban school district were given the Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test (NNAT), a test intended to assess cognitive ability independent of linguistic and cultural background. It was found that the NNAT universal screening program led to a large increase in gifted eligibility for poor, Black, and Hispanic students and for students whose parents did not speak English as their primary language (Card & Giuliano, 2016). According to the research, only five of the responding districts use nonverbal assessments such as The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAt) and The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). Further research would be needed to determine if districts are not using these types of assessments due to the additional money they would cost, and the lack of funding provided to districts for gifted education.

According to the NAGC, there are five essential practices when using assessments as identification tools. First, the assessment tool must match the definition of giftedness set forth by the state, district, or school. Second, identification of giftedness should be reached through the collection of multiple pieces of evidence, not just one assessment. Third, the setting of the assessment should closely match the natural setting in which the child can perform to the best of his or her ability. Fourth, only valid and reliable assessments should be used. Fifth, administrators of the assessments must be appropriately trained to administer and score the assessments and placement decisions must be made using defensible data that is not swayed by personal relationships, political associations, or parental pressure (“The Role of Assessments,” n.d.). The research revealed that seventy-seven of the districts who responded to the survey use two or more types of assessments or evidence when determining eligibility for elementary gifted services. It does seem that many districts are at least using data from several sources to determine eligibility instead of relying on only one assessment.

Gifted Services by Funding Tier

Before beginning this research, the researcher’s hypothesis was that districts with more local wealth and resources, and therefore a higher EBF tier, would offer more elementary gifted services. However, the EBF tier of a district did not seem to affect whether they provide elementary gifted services. This was especially surprising considering how many districts responded that they rely on local/community funding to fund their gifted services. As you can see in Table 1, *Gifted Services by Funding Tier*, in the Results and Findings chapter, 70% or more of participating districts within each EBF tier reported that they provide some type of elementary gifted service. In fact, 75% of Tier 1 districts, those with the least local resources available, reported offering some type of gifted service to their elementary students. This was the

second highest percentage compared to the 90% of Tier 3 districts who reported offering elementary gifted services. However, the percentage for Tier 3 is deceiving due to only ten Tier 3 districts participating in the survey.

According to Haney (2013), the lack of federal and state mandates and funding for gifted education has led to the need for local/community funding. Haney claimed that local/community means gifted students from lower poorer districts would not receive the same gifted opportunities as students from wealthier districts. However, the research conducted did not support this. If what Haney claimed was true, then the research should have shown that Tier 1 districts, districts with less local wealth and resources, offered gifted services less often than Tier 4 districts, districts with more local wealth and resources. However, as you can see in Table 1, *Gifted Services by Funding Tier* in the Results and Findings chapter, 75% of responding Tier 1 districts offered elementary gifted services while 73.9% of Tier 4 districts offered services. In fact, one Tier 4 district stated the following in response to the survey question about funding, “Since we are a tier 4 school, we do not get funding to help with gifted programs. The state believes based on our numbers that we should be able to provide it without assistance, which is unfortunately untrue.”

As part of the research, the researcher also analyzed EBF tiers and the gifted services being provided by districts within each EBF tier. As you can see by Table 2, *Types of Gifted Services by Funding Tier*, ability grouping and acceleration/grade advancement gifted services yielded the highest percentages across all EBF tiers. Gifted services that would cost additional money such as before/after school programs, pull-out programs/classes, push-in support, specialized self-contained school, and weekend programs were reported with low percentages across all EBF tiers. However, despite pull-out programs/classes costing additional funds to

operate, they were reported as being used 45.5% of the time by Tier 4 schools, which is the highest percentage for that type of service.

According to the research, the EBF Tier of a district did not play much of a role in whether a district offered gifted services, nor the type of gifted services offered. It is possible that it is a district's commitment to gifted education that drives appropriation of funds to such programs, not their local wealth and resources.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

It is highly agreed upon that gifted students have special needs which can be supported by gifted education services. Unfortunately, there is very little federal, or state funding related to gifted education. This puts a financial burden upon communities to fund their gifted programs and/or services themselves. In addition, the lack of mandates related to gifted education means that gifted services and eligibility determination vary depending on each district. Without these supportive services, gifted students may underachieve, display behavior problems, and grow to dislike school.

In order to assess the current state of elementary gifted education in Illinois, an online survey was sent to all Illinois public school districts that serve elementary students. The survey contained questions regarding whether the district has a gifted program, what gifted services are offered, how eligibility for these services is determined, and how services are funded. The results of the research revealed that several districts provide *some type of elementary gifted service or services*. However, the types of services provided were widespread among the responding districts. The way in which districts determined eligibility was also inconsistent across districts. The two most common eligibility determinations were teacher recommendations and state required standardized test scores. However, research previously stated in the Literature Review, argues that these methods, when used alone, failed to identify all gifted students. The research also revealed that 59.6% of districts reported at least partially funding their gifted services with local/community funds. There were even some districts that responded by saying they simply do not have the funds to support a gifted program or services.

Despite the lack of state or federal support, it seems that gifted education is a significant issue for school districts. When the survey was sent, the researcher received an immediate response from several administrators stating how important this topic is to their district and requesting the research results. One administrator emailed the following:

I am very interested in the findings of your survey. We have a gifted program. We're trying to expand it, but we can't find people with the qualifications that we're expecting. I would love to know what you find. Our district also says (too often) that many districts are eliminating gifted programs. I don't think they are eliminating as much as I think they are renaming them. Calling them enrichment vs. gifted. Some might call it extended. Our gifted kids need so much help. It's so sad. Please share what you learn. Especially if it helps my defense of why we should have a gifted program.

State and/or federal mandates and funding for gifted education are needed in order to ensure that gifted students are receiving the best opportunities regardless of the school they attend. It is time for the state and/or federal government to recognize the importance of elementary gifted education and offer financial support and mandates in the state budget or in the next version of ESSA.

APPENDIX A**Gifted Education in Elementary Schools Survey**Informed Consent

You are being asked to participate in a web-based online survey as part of a thesis research project examining elementary gifted education programs. This research study is being conducted by Danielle Wilkinson, a graduate student at Eastern Illinois University. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the survey below to the best of your knowledge and submit your responses. This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You may also choose to decline to answer any survey question for any reason.

BENEFITS

You will not receive any direct benefits from your participation in this study. However, your responses to the survey questions may help us to learn more about gifted education in the elementary setting.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks related to participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your survey answers will be submitted through Qualtrics where data will be stored in a password protected online format. Identifying information will only be available to the researcher and will not be collected by any other party. Your district's name will not be used in the final research report and no one other than the researcher will know whether or not you participated in the study or what your answers were.

CONTACT

If you have any questions or concerns about this research or your participation in this study, please contact the Principal Investigator, Danielle Wilkinson via phone at 217-259-5934 or via email at drmcfarlin@eiu.edu. You may also contact the Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Alexis Jones via phone at 217-778-1817 or via email at aljones16@eiu.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

If you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human participants in this study, you may call or write:

Institutional Review Board
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Ave.

Charleston, IL 61920
Telephone: (217) 581-8576
E-mail: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with EIU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

Please sign below to confirm that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you affirm that you understand you are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time and that you have been presented with a copy of this consent form.

SIGN HERE

What is the name of your district?

What is your role in the district?

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Curriculum Coordinator
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Other (please specify)

What type of region is your district located in?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

What is your district's Evidence Based Funding Tier (EBF)?

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- I'm not sure

In your district, are there any gifted programs (e.g. after school programs, pull-out programs, weekend programs, ability grouping, acceleration, advanced classes, differentiation, specialized schools, etc.) in place for elementary students?

- Yes
- No

If your answer was yes to the previous question, please check all that apply and include what **grade levels** receive services through the program.

- After school program
- Pull-out program
- Weekend program
- Ability grouping
- Acceleration or grade advancement
- Advanced classes
- Differentiated curriculum and instruction
- Specialized self-contained school
- Other (please specify)

Please describe any elementary gifted programs in place.



How are the gifted programs funded in your district? Please check all that apply. Please also include how much is spent if available.

- Federal funding
- State funding
- Grant funding
- Local/community funding
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B**IRB Approval**

July 16, 2019

Danielle Wilkinson
Alexis Jones
EC/ELE/MLE

Dear Danielle,

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, "Gifted Education in Elementary Schools" for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed this research protocol and effective 7/16/2019, has certified this protocol meets the federal regulations exemption criteria for human subjects research. The protocol has been given the IRB number 19-059. You are approved to proceed with your study.

The classification of this protocol as exempt is valid only for the research activities and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any proposed changes to this protocol must be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator at 581-8576, in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board
c/o Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Telephone: 217-581-8576
Fax: 217-581-7181
Email: eiuirb@www.eiu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation, and the best of success with your research.

John Bickford, Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Telephone: 217-581-7881
Email: jbickford@eiu.edu

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