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Research into Practice: Exploring Teacher Practices with Young Gifted Learners

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RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE:
EXPLORING TEACHER PRACTICES WITH YOUNG GIFTED LEARNERS

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I dedicate this thesis to Primary Talent Pool and Gifted Students. You are an inspiration to your teachers and all those who have the chance to know you. Keep shining bright.

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This research study investigates teacher practices with young gifted learners and provides recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the Primary Talent Pool through examination of the program as it is implemented in four Kentucky school districts. Gifted coordinators were interviewed and primary (kindergarten-third grade) teachers were surveyed. Though each school has different methods for meeting the needs of high potential learners, there are commonalities across all seven schools represented. The present findings indicate teachers feel confident in their ability to recognize high potential in academic areas. Teachers are comfortable using differentiation, and often differentiate to support gifted learners.

Introduction

The 1957 launch of the Russian spacecraft Sputnik forever changed education in the United States through a visible shift in focus to math and science content and the formalization of gifted education (Bailey, 2006). In 1990, Kentucky established regulations for gifted education, including how young students should be served in a Primary Talent Pool (PTP) Program. The PTP serves children in kindergarten through third grade. Kentucky's regulation on Gifted and Talented Education 704 KAR 3:285 defines the PTP as, "a group of primary students informally selected as having characteristics and behaviors of a high potential learner and further diagnosed using a series of informal and formal measures to determine differentiated service delivery needs during their stay in the primary program." (Kentucky Department of Education, 1994).

Schools strive to select the top twenty-five percent of their primary students to be in the pool to follow the state regulation. Kentucky has a progressive view of high potential learners and gifted students. Students in the Commonwealth are not identified as gifted until fourth grade. Other states such as Colorado identify young students beginning at age five for gifted services (Colorado Department of Education, 2019). Kentucky students in the PTP have an enhanced possibility of being identified as gifted in fourth grade (Kentucky Council for Gifted and Talented Education, 2011). When students are accepted into a thriving PTP, they have the opportunity to flourish through challenging tasks. A thriving PTP is one that provides opportunities for the highest potential students to achieve. However, several PTP programs are in name only with few services offered. Some school guidelines address that PTP programs must provide multiple services because one service method is not adequate for all students (Fayette County Schools,

2017). The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher practices with young gifted learners and to develop recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the PTP through a close look at the program as it is implemented in four Kentucky school districts.

Literature Review

Though it is required for all Kentucky public schools to have a PTP, it is not mandated how those students are identified. When looking at gifted education across the United States, it is repeatedly left to school districts to determine criteria for selecting and labeling students (Plucker & Peters, 2016). It has been demonstrated that there is a lack of consistency with selection requirements between districts and states (Peters et al., 2019). For example, this can be seen in identification practices where some school districts rely on parent recommendations as part of the selection process, and others do not authorize them. Various districts select students in kindergarten while others wait until students are in first grade to make PTP selections.

Regardless of how students are selected for gifted programs, the school funding and resources also impact the breadth and depth of programming. Society desires for students to become productive citizens but refuses to spend adequate money on gifted education services because it might not be politically advantageous to concentrate on only one group of children (Adelson et al., 2012). Even in the face of restrictive budgets, gifted programming can be designed and implemented to benefit all students, not just those who have been identified as gifted (Adelson et al., 2012). Enriching lessons can benefit all learners, and they can assist teachers in selecting students who should be chosen for PTP. Prioritizing where government funding is allocated seems like the next logical step

because it provides the groundwork for a gifted student's educational experience which begins when they first enter school.

The Foundation for School Experience

The early years of kindergarten through third grade set the stage for the remainder of a child's years in school. A solid foundation built during these grades often determines how students will perform in later years. Not only do students learn to read, write, and calculate, they also develop an appreciation for learning and build relationships. When a young gifted child is bored in their primary classes, it can be detrimental (Chance, 2006). With boredom comes the inevitable battle parents dread of getting their child to school each day. Selecting students for gifted programming as early as possible can be beneficial because it supports their development, and diffuses the potential fight going to school each day can become (Pfeiffer & Petscher, 2008). Therefore, when a student is excited and motivated by learning from the beginning, they are more likely to be successful (El-Abd et al., 2019). Without that strong start to school students may have a shaky foundation for the remainder of their school years.

Primary gifted children have many needs that they often cannot express due to their age or perhaps their level of development. However, these students have differences of which educators need to be aware. Students who are gifted may have asynchronous development when compared to their peers. Research has shown young gifted students have interests about which they are extremely passionate (Kitano, 2006). These passions may be uniquely different from those of their same age peers. High potential learners acquire information at a greater speed and can connect the new information to previous learning. Even though these students are considered very bright, they are still children

and love to play. The foundation set for them in the classroom should be one of play, choice, and exploration (Morelock & Morrison, 1999). Meeting the learning and social-emotional needs starting at a young age will set the stage for positive educational experiences from the very beginning of a child's schooling.

Ability and Readiness of Students

There is also the question of when to send primary students to school, especially if they have a birthday close to the birthdate cut-off. In Kentucky, a student must be five years old by August 1 of the calendar year to attend kindergarten (Kentucky Department of Education, 2019). One concern to note is there are more older students in gifted and talented programs across the country (Huang, 2015). When that occurs, there is an additional year of experiences that brings new knowledge and schema for the student. There are pros and cons to consider when determining the best time to begin kindergarten for a particular child. For example, a student who enters kindergarten later may have more developed social-emotional skills than those who are younger (Thomas, 2017). However, some high potential students begin kindergarten early because of their advanced skill level (Adelson et al., 2020). For this reason, when educators look at identification and selection of students for gifted programming, it cannot be solely based on academics. When academic accomplishments are the primary focus of how children are identified for PTP, students who are younger are sometimes left out due to fewer experiences and less background knowledge (Huang, 2015).

Some parents choose to keep their child at home or in daycare services until they enter kindergarten later at age six. Parents may choose to wait for their child to start school for various reasons, including maturity and consideration for their future

endeavors. Other parents may have their child tested for early entrance to kindergarten because they feel they are ready for school. Early entry into school often affects primary gifted programs (Vialle et al., 2001). In order for students to be enrolled in school early, they must pass a basic skills test, including concepts like letter sounds and names, counting, and shape identification. Students who qualify for early enrollment are often enrolled on a probationary basis for a few months. These students can be considered for PTP services during that time.

When children enroll in school, they represent various ability and readiness levels. Some young children have had few social experiences while others have been thriving in preschool and with family involvement. Early childhood has provided numerous travel and enrichment experiences for some students while others have not had the same opportunities (Robinson et al., 2002). If a family is informed of a learning opportunity and they have the financial means to make it a reality, then the student has an advantage (Plucker et al., 2017). However, some students do not have those same benefits. Educators must create learning that will advance all students regardless of their prior experiences.

For young gifted students to blossom, there needs to be a school and home connection (Bailey, 2006). This happens when there is an open line of communication between parents and school personnel. It revolves around a positive relationship with the child and doing what is best for them. When this occurs, parents and teachers alike can advocate for the gifted child (Hernández-Torrano, 2018). Not only does this school and home connection help with advocating for the child, it can also assist them in furthering their academic study. Parents can provide valuable insight into what their child enjoys

and how they learn best. These observations can assist teachers with planning services and curriculum for the student (Hertzog & Bennett, 2003). Something as simple as the school providing literature options and activities for families to do together at home could benefit students in the long run (Bailey, 2006). Family reading and math nights showcase what students are learning in school that can be continued with the child in their home environment. The partnership between school and home is often an integral factor in student success.

Common Approaches to Meeting the Needs of Gifted Learners

A student in elementary school typically spends the majority of the school day in the traditional classroom. Formal gifted education identification and services do not begin until fourth grade in Kentucky. High potential learners often learn new information quickly and have advanced abilities (Assouline et al., 2017). High potential primary students often must wait to learn something new or to work with other like-minded students. Many high potential primary students wait each day for a task that is cognitively challenging and motivating (Kanevsky, 2011; Wood, 2008). Educators rely on their set curriculum or on small modifications being enough when it comes to planning cognitively challenging material for high potential learners.

Gifted students are often left to their own devices to figure out what is expected of them (Morris & Parker, 1990). Gifted students typically come to school with a plethora of background knowledge, but they still need to be taught how to research and summarize what they know and have learned. Just because a student may know numerous details about a topic they are interested in does not mean they have exhausted all learning opportunities available. The student may understand the basic concept but need to learn

about the concept at a more advanced or complex level. When teachers are aware of a student's level of understanding, they will scaffold instruction. That means they will provide temporary supports until the child can work independently. Scaffolding information can introduce new content to gifted students and give them the opportunity to practice and feel successful (Cho & Ahn, 2003; El-Abd et al., 2019). As high potential learners gain self-confidence through scaffolding, they will no longer be obligated to wait on their teachers for next steps. Two common approaches for addressing the needs of gifted students are acceleration and enrichment.

Acceleration

One way schools can accommodate young students who learn more quickly than their age-mates is through acceleration. There are twenty types of acceleration ranging from early admission to kindergarten through early admission to college (Southern & Jones, 2015), and three of them are commonly used in the primary grades - early entry to school, skipping a grade, and subject area acceleration (Vialle et al., 2001). Early entry to school occurs when students younger than the birthdate requirement are admitted into school. Unlike other states, Kentucky does not designate a birthdate range to determine early entry (Adelson et al., 2020). This age range is left up to the Kentucky school districts to determine and must align with the Kentucky School Readiness Definition (Kentucky Department of Education, 2019). This definition states that children display preparedness in all developmental areas including social, emotional, cognitive, and communication. The focus is on passing the basic skills test. On the other hand, the acceleration method of grade skipping is used when a student is moved to the next grade level early and can skip an entire year of curriculum. There is also radical grade skipping

where a student is accelerated two or more grade levels up (Southern & Jones, 2015). Any grade skipping acceleration is only considered after meeting with a committee composed of school officials and parents.

The most widely used acceleration is within a subject discipline. An example of this type of acceleration is seen when a high potential third grade student goes to math class with fourth grade students and then returns to their regular classroom for instruction on other subjects (Assouline et al. 2015). This type of acceleration might require individual or small group instruction from the teacher on what the student is to complete. When students have mastered small group instruction techniques, their teacher may scaffold them to use a different form of instruction that allows them to be in command.

Enrichment

Another approach to meeting the cognitive needs of advanced young learners is enrichment. Enrichment can be defined as going beyond what is offered in the general curriculum or exploring an area of study in greater depth. One form of enrichment used with gifted students in the regular classroom is self-directed learning. This type of learning focuses on the high potential student being in control of what and how they will learn with teacher guidance. For example, when a primary class is learning about weather, a student may decide to focus their research on tornados and create a model. Research on self-directed study for gifted students completed by Uresti, Goertz, and Bernal (2002) showed that students developed necessary life skills such as ingenuity and dependability when using self-directed learning. Student choice is also a powerful tool in the classroom that can serve young gifted learners. This cannot be used for every single lesson each day, but when used appropriately, it can make an impact on instruction

(Parke & Neese, 1988). Teachers can allow students choice on how to present a topic, but often teachers will allow students to decide from a selection of choices. For example, instead of having a gifted student create a poster on a project, they might participate in a debate or write a letter to the editor (Samuels, 2005). These choices require continued thinking about the topic and cause students to examine different perspectives and often connect to previous concepts that have been learned.

It is typical for high potential learners to be very curious. It is advantageous to create a primary curriculum around the innate curiosity students already possess. Discovery and enrichment lessons are a benefit when included in day-to-day teaching so that students are not told the answers quickly so the class can just move on. "One advantage of classroom enrichment for early primary gifted students is that it provides opportunities to develop gifted behaviors in all students and provides a method for identification of giftedness not yet revealed" (Chance, 2006, p. 79). Enrichment can be valuable for all students and assist teachers in identifying those who are exhibiting gifted behaviors.

It would be beneficial if young gifted children were able to work alongside the teacher to create the curriculum (Parke & Neese, 1988). This is not possible for every curriculum unit due to district constraints that often state what curriculum teachers should use, but it would be a great asset to the student whenever this is able to occur. Teachers and students could collaborate on tasks that meet their learning needs and are centered around their areas of interest (Hertzog & Bennett, 2003). Uresti et al. (2002) found taking charge of their own learning helped show significant growth on tests as well as in student confidence and allowed students to fall in love with school.

Pull-Out Program

Another practice used with gifted students is a pull-out program. Pull-out programs are often used in elementary school so that high potential learners can be together. This is the time when students are out of the classroom and grouped together for a short amount of time to work on a specific activity (Plucker & Peters, 2016). Though the number of times outside the regular classroom may be limited, if the option is a pull-out program versus no service at all, then at least the gifted students would be getting some form of service. Some teachers rely on pull-out services because they are unsure of how to implement differentiated curriculum in their classroom (Wood, 2008). Pull-out services are often led by certified staff who have more training and specialty certification in gifted education. These educators know how to work with gifted students and spend their time doing that on a regular basis.

Grouping Students

Grouping can be defined as how students are divided in the classroom for different amounts of time and can be controversial. There are many different types of grouping. It can be based on needs, such as time for practice, additional assistance, interests, prior skills, and learner profile. Kulik (1993) found that grouping had minimal to no effect on students. He went on to say that grouping students only had a small effect on self-esteem. However, his research is considered outdated, though it is still referred to by some administrations today. On the other hand, Plucker and Peters (2016) found that students who were grouped with peers who were academically like them made significant gains. That research is further substantiated by current research by Rogers and Hay (in press) who found that not only did gifted students grow in academics, but they also grew

in other areas including social emotional development and their ability to collaborate with others. Grouping by prior achievement or pretest scores is often used in elementary classrooms. With this type of grouping teachers focus on students with similar achievement levels at the same time. Flexible grouping is a strategy that helps teachers meet the wide range of learner needs in their classroom. Flexibly grouping by student prior achievement gives students a better opportunity for challenging tasks that continue to push them. This type of grouping can allow students to work and achieve with students who are like them (Huang, 2015; Walsh et al., 2012). It not only makes it easier on teachers because they are focused on one group of students at a time, it also can be better for the students because of improved achievement and social development. "At the end of the day, we have to group students in some way-choosing 'not to group' doesn't mean you are not grouping, just that you have somewhat arbitrarily chosen to use age-based heterogeneous grouping" (Plucker & Peters, 2016, p. 126). Regardless of how educators personally feel about grouping, they are grouping in some way; and, when it comes down to it, the focus for grouping should be on what is best for students.

Some schools allow their gifted students to be in clusters so they are not alone and instead can learn together (Wood, 2008). When students can work with like-minded peers, through discussions and projects, it can assist young gifted students in finding their community. When high potential learners can recognize they are not alone and can work with similar students, they will feel less isolated (Morris & Parker, 1990). Many high potential learners need time to be with like-minded peers, but they may also need a quiet place by themselves (Hertzog & Bennet, 2003). High potential learners need time to process what they have learned through drawing, reading, or writing in a journal

(Hernandez-Torrano, 2018). However, when a gifted student has feelings of constant loneliness, does not have time with other high potential students, or lacks self-confidence, it can lead to perfectionism (Kitano, 2006). Not only do teachers have to challenge students, they also have to instill in them the self-confidence that they can complete hard tasks and solve difficult problems without giving up (Kitano, 2006).

It is beneficial if the teacher of a cluster group has a background or interest in working with high potential learners (Gentry et al., 2014). Without grouping, high potential learners may not be given the opportunity for collaboration and divergent thinking (Rogers, 1993). Grouping provides an avenue for students to work on curriculum that is new and challenging.

Multi-Age Classrooms

Most of the time students are grouped according to age. On the other hand, multi-age classrooms are more focused on blending children after looking at their learning on an individual level (Garner et al., 2006). In a multi age classroom a teacher might have students ranging from age six to nine. When a selection committee is decisive about which students go into that classroom, there will be the possibility for self-directed learning and enrichment (Uresti et al., 2002). Multi-age primary classrooms are often self-contained and have different goals than a regular classroom. These classrooms are focused on meaningful activity that connects the content areas. Projects that incorporate spelling, math, writing tasks and other subject areas together are the focal point. Each child is constantly learning instead of waiting for everyone else to catch up (Garner et al., 2006).

Excellence Gap

The Excellence Gap can be defined as gaps among the highest levels of achievement between racial, linguistic, or economic groups. With the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002), educators' focus shifted to assisting students to obtain proficiency (grade-level learning) without taking into account students who are already at or above that level. These gaps develop as early as the primary grades. The push for students to achieve proficiency, but not anything greater, is detrimental to high potential students. As educators try to combat these excellence gaps, they are only aiding in expanding them (Hardesty et al., 2014). For example, students who already know their multiplication facts are not allowed to move to any other content because the curriculum map says they are to focus solely on multiplication at that given time. Instead of waiting, the student could be working on a different math content or going deeper into multiplication standards.

Though the flaws are still being worked out, many districts nationwide are moving to a growth-based system. Under this system, teachers would be responsible for showing growth in every student, not just those who are below the average (Plucker & Peters, 2016). When growth begins to affect accountability and federal funding for districts and schools, the Excellence Gap may be addressed more seriously. According to a brochure entitled *Finding and Serving Primary Students with High Potential* published by Western Kentucky University in 2018 the Commonwealth of Kentucky does not have numerous high achievers based on the state accountability system. The number of nonwhite or diverse students are not proportionally represented among high achieving students (Western Kentucky University Gifted Studies, 2018).

It is a common practice for teachers to focus on the students who need the most hands-on help while leaving the gifted students to seek out new information on their own. However, gifted students who achieve at high levels deserve to be challenged, and that will only come if they are presented with new information or asked to think in different ways. Educators cannot forget that gifted students need advocates who will challenge them to reach their potential just like other special needs children do (Adelson & Carpenter, 2011; Pardeck, 2006). An article entitled *Closing the Excellence Gap: Investigation of an Expanded Talent Search Model for Student Selection Into an Extracurricular STEM Program in Rural Middle Schools* suggests in addition to advocates, early identification and gifted programming with equal opportunity focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is one approach for closing the Excellence Gap (Assouline et al., 2017). The United States holds little expectation of catching up to other developed nations in the areas of math, science, and technology until gifted students and other high achievers are pushed to do better and learn more (Hardesty et al., 2014). To close the Excellence Gap, educators need to start challenging high potential students as soon as they enter school.

Lack of Understanding Regarding Primary High Potential Students

Building and maintaining relationships with young high potential learners needs to begin early and continues throughout their educational career (Wood, 2008). When looking at the curriculum of regular early childhood classrooms ranging from birth through kindergarten, there is a shortage of appropriately challenging tasks in which young gifted students can engage (Morelock & Morrison, 1999; Wurman, 2017). Classroom programming does not often consider how to address the needs of gifted

children. It is critical that educators are aware of the unique needs of young, gifted learners to appropriately nurture their development. Much research has been conducted in the field of gifted education; however, research is lacking in the field of young gifted learners (Adelson & Carpenter, 2011; Chance, 2006; Walsh et al., 2012). Research to date has focused primarily on the basics of gifted education including underrepresented populations, and twice-exceptional students.

Due to lack of research and appropriate testing materials, standardized tests for gifted students are often not given until first grade (Pardeck & Murphy, 2006). Selection for PTP uses informal assessments and relies on observation and recommendations from parents and teachers. These can be completed in the form of parent interview or questionnaire as well as teacher observations or anecdotal records. This can be a flawed system because of bias (Chance, 2006). Oftentimes standardized tests contain only multiple-choice questions with little to no insight into a child's thinking through written answers. When that is the case, standardized tests can also create classrooms filled with worksheets and repetitive teaching (Moon et al., 2002). There is a need for gifted identification methods to be streamlined as standardized tests have not been shown to be a sufficient means, especially for those students affected most by the Excellence Gap.

The necessity for more teacher education in the field of gifted education has been documented in research (Harris & Plucker, 2014). Professional development training would assist teachers in feeling more prepared when working with gifted students (Plucker & Peters, 2016). Teachers often know the value of differentiation, but do not feel confident in how to implement this practice (Morelock & Morrison, 1999). Differentiation and the attempt to meet the needs of all different learner levels is

sometimes viewed as the “one more thing” that teachers have to do that for which they do not have time and it gets pushed to the side. Differentiation pairs content and learner experiences together to create memorable encounters (Roberts & Inman, 2013). It is a way of teaching that puts the learner first. Differentiation can be difficult and time consuming. Before differentiation can begin in the classroom, teachers and students must have a relationship built on trust (Tomlinson, 2008). More training on gifted education and high potential learners would benefit teachers as they teach a variety of learners in their classroom (Assouline et al., 2017; Chance, 2006; Peters et al., 2019; Plucker & Peters, 2016; Vialle et al., 2001). Therefore, we need to explore and understand teacher practices with young gifted learners and develop recommendations to increase effective programming for our brightest young students.

Methods

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher practices with young gifted learners and to establish recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the PTP through a close look at the program as it is implemented in four Kentucky school districts.

The current study examines the following three research questions and provides recommendations on best practices.

1. What are teachers’ understandings of the characteristics and needs of young gifted learners in the PTP?
2. What are the teacher practices regarding meeting the needs of young gifted learners?

3. What is the relationship between teacher behavior and research recommendations?

Participants

This mixed methods study consisted of seven interviews with gifted coordinators in a variety of Kentucky schools as well as a survey of staff members who work with PTP students. Qualitative design methods were chosen to structure the interviews with gifted personnel across four Kentucky school districts. Table 1 (Appendix A) describes more in-depth information about each participating school. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participating schools.

Each of the seven interviewees are Caucasian and female and have been working with gifted students for two to 13 years, with an average of five years. They have been in education between 12 to 39 years, with an average of 21 years. Table 2 (Appendix A) provides additional information about the interviewees. Pseudonyms were used here to protect those who agreed to be interviewed.

There was also a 13-question survey (Appendix C) conducted with 70 kindergarten through third grade teachers responding. Survey participants were located in the same school as the gifted coordinators who were interviewed. If a gifted coordinator was located at the district level, schools representing their district were selected by them for participation. Table 3 (Appendix A) shows the years survey participants have taught. Some surveyed teachers have taught for thirty-nine years while others are just completing their first year.

Procedure

Comprehensive interviews were conducted in the district where each interviewee worked. The qualitative approach provided the opportunity for posing seven open-ended interview questions, allowing interviewees to reflect on their involvement with high potential students in their district (Appendix B). From those seven questions the conversation included follow-up questions. Interviews ranged in length from 26 to 58 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. The transcribed interviews were shared with gifted coordinators to provide checks that the data reflected the intention of the interviewees. Follow-up questions were sent via email if clarification was needed.

Using Saldana's *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Research* (2016), the interviews were analyzed after transcription. The analysis turned into codes for only the most important highlighted data. Initial data were first coded, and it was determined if new codes were needed with every transcription reading. After the first round of coding, patterns began to emerge. The seven interviewees do not all know each other or work together, and yet there were consistencies in their experiences and opinions. If new codes were added, the researcher went back to verify if the previously coded transcripts needed to be revised. The constant comparison method was used until all of the data had been coded in meaningful ways. The coding process did not end there because the patterns required further analysis.

The data were reviewed as a whole, and it became evident that several codes needed to be refined due to the large number of data in each one. For example, the category *obstacle* originally had 115 codes in it. Those data were sorted into more precise

categories, including budget, policy barrier, and frustration. The researcher investigated patterns in the data by grouping codes in multiple iterations until definitive groups of codes led to categories. Categories were not left alone but, instead, were arranged in themes. Four themes emerged from the data. The first theme was how PTP is defined across all four school districts. The second theme was teacher perceptions of PTP students. The third theme focused on how students are identified for PTP. The final theme was how students are served in and out of the classroom. The themes were substantiated with quotes from individual interviews.

Findings and Results

Survey data were analyzed to determine relationships between teacher understanding and practice (See Appendix A). Statistical analysis was conducted to generate descriptive measures and correlations to illustrate relationships. Seventy out of 109 teachers responded to the survey request which is a response rate of 64%. They were asked questions about their understanding and practices with PTP students as well as how their school or district refers students for the PTP.

Teachers reported that PTP students receive differentiated instruction at least weekly and often daily. Conversely, the majority of teachers indicated that individual goals and personal growth plans did not exist for PTP students or if they did exist were most likely only reviewed annually.

Descriptive statistics from the teacher survey are shown in Table 4. Figures A-D provide details regarding the teachers' level of comfort in identifying potential students for the PTP. The scales were 1—strongly disagree, 2—disagree, 3—neutral, 4—agree, 5—strongly agree. The closer to 5 a teacher answered, the more positively they viewed

the statement asked of them. Overall, the teachers had a more positive than neutral or negative view with topics associated with the PTP students. Based on survey results, 94.5% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they can recognize behaviors and characteristics of students who are exhibiting high academic potential. Teachers' beliefs in their ability to recognize high leadership potential are even stronger at 95.8%. Creative potential comes in strong with 86.1% of teachers feeling confident in their ability to recognize this potential. Unfortunately, only a little more than half at 58.3% of teachers in this study were confident in their ability to recognize high potential in the arts.

Tables 5 and 6 show the survey results regarding how often teachers use various research-based teaching methods such as pull-out services and differentiation. The scales were 1 – never, 2 – occasionally, 3 – monthly, 4 – weekly, and 5 – daily representing how often young children in the PTP have their instructional needs met with these methods. When comparing pull-out to differentiated instruction, 87% of teachers indicated their PTP students received differentiated services daily or weekly. On the other hand, only 41.5% of teachers reported that their students received pull-out instruction on a daily or weekly basis. Table 7 shows the majority of teachers at 71.4% indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that their school meets the needs of PTP students.

Figures E and F demonstrate school policy regarding planning for the academic growth of PTP students. This refers to targeted planning and goal setting to ensure that PTP students continue to grow academically through the school year. These plans can be addressed monthly, quarterly, or by semesters. However, 58.5% of survey participants indicated that they never or only occasionally use growth plans to support their PTP students. Individual goal setting with PTP students is also a part of the growth plan

process. The majority of survey participants at 60% expressed that they never or only occasionally set or monitor goals with PTP students.

The results of the question regarding how often teachers are given classroom resources to support students selected for PTP are shown in Table 8. Sixty-seven percent of teachers indicated that they are never or only occasionally provided with resources from their district or school to assist with meeting the needs of PTP students. Teachers are lacking resources and support to meet the needs of their PTP students in the regular education classroom on a daily basis.

The interviewees spoke about their beliefs regarding the PTP. Questions were constructed from the literature review to gain perspective on the purpose of the PTP, what services should be provided, and barriers that affect the job they do on a daily basis. Interviewees were asked to speak freely about their experiences which led to genuine conversation about what is going well regarding PTP and what concerns or struggles they have. Four themes emerged from the data. They were district policy and support determine the robustness of the PTP program, teacher perceptions of giftedness influence their recognition of potential, understanding of giftedness influences how teachers and parents identify PTP students, and teachers and classroom services attempt to meet the needs of PTP students.

Four Themes

District Policy Influences Programming

The interviewees reported feelings of concern in regard to district policy. District policy and support determine the robustness of the PTP program. Though the concerns varied depending on the school district, there was still some level of dissatisfaction

presented from each interview. Some interviewees expressed concern about the amount of time spent with students while others focused on budget concerns. Each interviewee spoke about their job descriptions and what they do on a daily basis. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants.

Ms. Kirk stated:

> Because in my job there's so many things you have to do when you come in here. I have really good intentions of planning or doing this really cool lesson or whatever but then I get pulled or something in the building happens or there's a crisis. The nature of the job kind of takes that away.

Due to limited resources district policy often mandates one person is in charge of several different programs. Those numerous responsibilities make it challenging for everything to be done well. Sometimes, one program tends to suffer, or be put on the back burner. Unfortunately, that is often the case for PTP programs.

Like several participants in the current study Ms. Adams spoke about the limited resources district wide. Even when the district does a phenomenal job with handling finances, there is often a frustration felt with lack of funding. Ms. Adams noted:

> If you look at the budget spent on the bottom 10 percent compared to the top 10, it is unbelievable, and it's sad. You can move those kids way faster. Special ed has their own pot of money. Where is the pot for gifted? There isn't one. It's sad and it's frustrating and we always think "Oh, they're gifted, they'll be fine." But what we are seeing is they're staying the same or even dropping.

The bottom line is the lack of funding for gifted education from the district level is hurting students. The source of this issue is seen in the limited or lack of funding for gifted education from every level of government.

District officials choose to use their limited funding in a variety of ways. Some districts have a gifted representative at each school while others have more gifted educators at the district level. Because servicing options are determined by individual schools and districts, students are served through pull-out programs, grouping, as well as a variety of other methods. Ms. Smith spoke about the desire to meet with high potential students more frequently and build strong relationships which in turn leads to more learning. She stated:

> I would like to double the contact time than what we currently have. That would equate to about twice a month instead of once a month. I feel like that wouldn't be too disruptive for teachers. I don't think it would. If I were back in the classroom and had a chance for eight of my kids to be out doing something else, then that would give me more time to work on the needs of the other kids. I think I would gladly take it.

Not only would that be a win-win for the gifted students, but it would give the classroom teachers a greater opportunity to work with students who require more assistance. Regrettably, this option requires more funding and additional staff. The desire to do better and do more is there, but the funding is inadequate to achieve it.

Perceptions Influence Recognition

Funding and district policy are not the only pieces of the puzzle that effect services for high potential students. Teachers' perceptions of giftedness influence their

recognition of potential. Perception involves recognizing and understanding. High potential students will not be identified for gifted services without educators advocating for them. Often searching for high potential learners starts out small with just what is noticed in the classroom. Ms. Downing pointed out, “If they are finishing what you’ve got for them to do before you’ve even given them the directions, then it is not challenging.” Educators’ and gifted coordinators’ perceptions can be influenced if they have had someone in their personal life that is identified as a high potential learner.

In addition to personally knowing someone who is a high potential learner many districts find that teachers building relationships with students has a positive impact on their potential for identification. In fact, it is beneficial for teachers to build relationships with students before making recommendations for PTP. Ms. Adams states:

> Right now, the teachers knowing their kids is the most effective strategy going for us. I never ask them to identify until after being around them for a couple of months and getting acclimated to their culture and classroom. One thing that I try to encourage is every year look at the kids on your list. We have a conversation about those kids and is it something you see as well or not. Then we think about the kids not on that list. Maybe with the new teacher’s eyes they see something different that maybe the previous teacher didn’t see.

Educators want to give students the opportunity to be recognized for their achievements. If they are consistently achieving at high levels, the next step might be for them to be selected for PTP. All teachers need to know the characteristics of high potential learners so that students do not miss out on opportunities. There is a distinct

possibility that high potential learners might be missed if the focus is not on how to assist them to be their very best. Ms. Johnson stresses this:

> The work that we are doing in PTP then matters. We aren't just selecting kids then for no reason. We are looking at PTP for the two reasons I told you: to give the kids some extra incentive to come to school because they are advanced, and then also we are starting to uncover those kids who are GT and sometimes that skill is latent and they just haven't been exposed that way.

Oftentimes gifted students need to be presented with advanced materials so they can be pushed to achieve at the highest levels. Ms. Kirk pointed out, "I mean we have grade accelerated in this school several times, but then there are sometimes ways to go deeper and challenge in other ways." Shifting the primary focus to students' needs is what teachers and staff are attempting to do as they plan their lessons.

Selection and Identification

Teachers' perception is not the only contributing factor to PTP selection as parents often play a role in the selection process as well. Understanding of giftedness influences how teachers and parents select PTP students. Ms. Sims commented, "I think the biggest barrier is getting out of that mindset of your high achieving kids are always going to be your gifted kids." Each child presents their abilities in different ways, even though there are common characteristics for educators to look for. Teachers must be mindful of those differences and take into account the whole child.

Parents offer a unique perspective when it comes to selecting students for PTP. Some schools do not allow parent recommendations for the program while other schools

encourage that. Regardless of the school policy, parents often play a vital role in their child's educational journey. Ms. Kirk articulated:

> It has always been our philosophy here that if a parent speaks up that they're just advocating for their kiddo and we are always going to take value in that. In the past we have had to have a little bit of a shift that it's not a "we just want them in the Primary Talent Pool" but we really do want them to speak up and let us take their insight. They know their kid better than we do. I always value their input.

More times than not when parents are advocating for their child, they simply want what is best for them.

On the other hand, parents may not recognize the high potential in their child. Their child may be the first born, and they do not know any other children of a similar age. Whatever the reason, a child might be selected for PTP without assistance from the parent. Ms. Downing pointed out:

> Sometimes I think parents aren't really aware of what their kids are capable of, and so by having the talent pool it kind of alerts parents to your child is really good in this area of academics and support and encourage them in that area.

In these cases, it might propel the parent to search out additional outside opportunities for their high potential learner.

Services In and Out of the Classroom

Once a child is selected for PTP, the focus shifts to the opportunities and services provided by the school. Teachers and classroom services attempt to meet the needs of PTP students. High potential students can be served at school in a variety of ways. A few schools focus on cluster grouping, while others focus on differentiated services within the

classroom. Ms. Downing's school has a unique view of differentiation. During the core classes of reading and math students are all taught on grade level. However, during flex time which is similar to RTI (Response to Intervention) students receive differentiated instruction. A similar approach is found at Ms. Adams' school. Students are in grade level core classes where instruction is the same. During RTI students are in different classrooms daily depending on if they met the lesson objective or are still learning to meet goals. Students in some districts are served in pull-out programs where they are with other high potential peers in small groups. Students in Ms. Johnson's district receive PTP lessons in small groups pulled out of the classroom once a month. When asked about how her groups are selected, Ms. Johnson specified:

> You don't want to water down the integrity of what you are doing with the kids. These are the kids that come to school and they are bored and want to do something more. They look so forward to their PTP day, but if you start reducing what you're going to accept it is just a program for high achievers, or for everyone.

The cohesiveness of the work done with PTP students is of the utmost importance. There is the opportunity to influence high potential students who will likely be the future world changers. PTP students need something different to make their primary school years worthwhile. Some schools do not have the resources to accomplish pull-out programs for PTP. Instead, they allow high potential learners to be together in classes. Ms. Rogers expressed:

> I think it is really important to provide a space and time for GT [and PTP] kids to be together. They are together a lot because we flex group. Coming in and giving

them something they can do that they haven't seen before. A lot of times they go through the day and they are not stumped. Having a productive struggle and getting something that is a little more challenging is necessary.

Several teachers expressed the idea that it is not only important for PTP students to be with others like them in challenging times, but also in those mountain top moments. Students learn so much from each other when they are allowed to work together. Ms. Johnson explained:

> What makes the kids grow most is allowing the kids to be with other kids who think quickly, and have the same characteristics, so that they drink what you're doing faster and make connections in different ways and share them with their peers. They push each other. It's not us. It's not the teachers that are the magic. It's not the activities that are the magic. It's the kids and the way then that you teach them and how you question them. That is what matters. If you turn a blind eye to that, then you are just ignoring that there is a real difference in those kids. I think a lot of people are willing to ignore it. It is sad.

When educators allow PTP students to work together they are able to further each other's thinking and push them to achieve their goals.

Discussion

The present study examined teacher practices with young gifted learners to create recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the PTP through a close look at the program as it is implemented in four Kentucky school districts. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What are teachers' understandings of the characteristics and needs of young gifted learners in the PTP?

2. What are the teacher practices regarding meeting the needs of young gifted learners?

3. What is the relationship between teacher behavior and research recommendations?

Based on the views from gifted coordinators who were interviewed and teachers who took the survey, this research indicated teachers are confident in their understanding of the characteristics of young gifted students. Teachers strive to recognize potential in students early on, regardless of their backgrounds (Hardesty et al., 2014). Early recognition is beneficial because the student will be able to participate in PTP where they can continue to be challenged. Teachers might notice the advanced vocabularies of students (Chance, 2006) or their need to write and reflect on certain topics (Hertzog & Bennett, 2003). Their advanced skills on new topics may give teachers clues that they are high potential learners.

Many researchers believe about half of identified gifted students never realize their complete intellectual or creative capabilities (El-Abd et al., 2019). Teacher collaboration will help build confidence in recognizing high potential in the arts. Of the teachers who participated in the survey, only 58.3% are confident in their ability to recognize high potential in the arts. Collaboration among teachers is key to selecting PTP students. Instruction on what those abilities look like from art, music, and physical education teachers could be greatly beneficial for students and teachers alike. There are usually special area teachers who are experts in their fields within each school building.

Each of the interviewees stated that they led some type of annual professional development for their staff on the needs of gifted students. This aligns with the survey

results where 45% of teachers state they received classroom resources occasionally. Focused instruction on gifted students may be found at a faculty meeting or professional learning community (PLC) meeting. At the beginning of the year the focus is usually on what to look for when recommending high potential students for PTP (Chance, 2006). Plucker and Peters (2016) indicated professional development often shifts to focused sessions on how to serve students. During those meetings teachers are able to ask clarifying questions to better understand how to meet the needs of their high potential students.

More finite training can be led on how to assist high potential students with making connections to different content areas as well as seeing the big picture in lessons (Samuels, 2005). Assessments for PTP students are also a focus as test taking strategies and test anxiety are concerns (Assouline et al., 2001). Many PTP students struggle with perfectionism (Kitano, 2006). Currently, a major focus in schools is the social-emotional well-being of all students. Gifted and high potential students face their own challenges each day, such as feeling isolated and misunderstood. Harris & Plucker (2014) stated professional development can focus on helping PTP students cope with their multitude of emotions. A beneficial professional development training for all staff would be how to have positive attitudes with PTP students while working with their idiosyncrasies (Vialle et al., 2001). The findings of this study support Chance, Plucker and Peters by showing professional development focused on gifted and high potential learners would be helpful in identification and serving students.

Parke and Neese (1988) indicated that differentiation is an effective means of meeting the needs of gifted students and allowing them to grow in the regular classroom.

Teachers in this study, both in survey and interview responses indicated that they use differentiation to meet their students' needs. Based on the teacher survey, 75% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they regularly differentiate in their classroom. Yet, teachers may not understand what differentiation looks like past minor modifications to instruction. This is an alarming percentage because though it is the majority it is not close to every primary teacher in the building. Schools are relying on teachers to differentiate for their high potential students and not every teacher is focused on differentiating. Students in primary grades are often with the same teacher all day. Therefore, some students may be receiving very little differentiated instruction or not be receiving differentiated instruction at all. Morelock and Morrison (1999) found that teachers often make minor adjustments to lessons to meet the needs of their students. Roberts and Inman (2013) stated that differentiation is a method of teaching that puts learners first. The findings from this study support those of Parke and Neese as well as Morelock and Morrison by showing teachers are most comfortable using differentiation and it is often used in the classroom to support gifted learners.

Research has shown that students learn at different rates and in different ways (Connelly, 2008). Some learners will not be able to stay caught up due to their special needs while other high potential learners will likely become bored and frustrated. The findings of this study indicate that although teachers felt comfortable in identifying gifted students they did not always practice modifying instruction or content for these learners. Plucker and Peters (2016) determined that changing instruction to meet the needs of all students is difficult for teachers to master. These practices are made easier when paired

with ability grouping. That pairing creates a smaller range of abilities for teachers to focus on (Plucker et al., 2017).

Consistency is lacking across these four school districts on how student needs are being met. The state has left it up to districts and schools to determine their own best practices for meeting the needs of high potential learners. Based on the survey results, 80% of teachers agree or strongly agree with the school policy regarding PTP students. However, 21% of teachers do not implement a growth plan with PTP students and 24% never create or monitor individual goals with PTP students. Plucker and Peters (2016) indicated that states and districts often have to determine gifted and high potential identification and service practices. Pardeck and Murphy (2006) advocate for consistent gifted policies across the United States. Therefore, the PTP foundation that learners receive looks very different depending on their teachers, school, and district.

In addition to the differences of service delivery, parental involvement looks different at each school. The findings of this study indicate that some schools and districts allow parents to recommend their child for PTP assessing, while others do not. Parents might be asked to fill out a survey about their child's behaviors and interests. Parents may advocate for their child to be a part of PTP. Pardeck and Murphy (2006) state that parents can provide crucial input to schools about their child. They see the spontaneous learning that happens at home with their child on a daily basis (Herzog & Bennett, 2003). High potential learners are often motivated by strong parental support (Robinson et al., 2002). Schools may provide information for parents on how to further assist their PTP child at home. The findings of this study support the work of Pardeck and

Murphy as well as Hertzog and Bennett by showing that parents are a critical element in the PTP process.

Recommendations

Based on interviews and survey results, there are seven recommendations for schools and districts regarding the PTP and young students with high potential.

1. Increase district support: District support can be provided in a variety of ways. Districts should examine all available funding sources and determine which funds can be used most effectively for gifted education. There are ways to provide teachers working with PTP students support that show they are valued that do not cost money such as providing a dedicated space for PTP students to work together and insuring there is time reserved for PTP students to use a school's technology resources.
2. Provide professional learning for teachers: Perceptions influence recognition of giftedness; therefore, providing professional development for teachers is crucial.
3. Encourage collaboration among teachers: Teachers are considered experts in their field. Increased gifted identification and services can be accomplished in schools where staff collaborate.
4. Train and support all teachers in differentiation: Teachers should be given resources and training to be able to effectively manage differentiation in their classrooms.
5. Support ability grouping: Schools should consider ability grouping as an option to carry out differentiation in the classroom. Teachers need training on how flexible grouping is achieved based on pretest data.

6. Create and monitor growth plans and goal setting: Goals and growth plans should be in place for high ability students just like they are for those below grade level.
7. Share information about PTP with parents: Parents need ideas on how to continue learning at home. Resources should be supplied in a language and method parents are able to access.

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. One limitation is the small sample size for the survey. Another is self-report for the survey and interviews. There is no way to verify that what was said in the interviews or in the survey represents what occurs in the classrooms and schools. Another limitation is that the researcher only sampled four districts in one state so the findings cannot be generalized beyond those limited districts. These limitations could be addressed in future research.

Conclusion

This research study is unique because it focused on existing practices in four different Kentucky school districts. It is important to note that all districts in which a coordinator was interviewed rely on some form of achievement testing as a source for PTP selection which was STAR testing, MAP testing, or another format depending on the district. Achievement data provided just one piece of evidence that can be used to select students for PTP. One district also uses the CogAT screener to give further documentation for PTP selection.

All schools represented in the study endeavor to meet the needs of PTP students the best way they can with their limited resources. There was a consensus from all interviews that there is a need for more staff in gifted education at the school and district

levels. It is challenging for each of the interviewees to complete their multitude of required tasks because often their responsibilities extend beyond gifted services. They might also be the person in charge of professional development, Response to Intervention services, or a host of other duties. They may also be part-time staff.

In addition to differing job requirements, there are also differences among the schools and districts interviewed in how they meet with students. Some schools focus on differentiated work in the classroom where gifted personnel may go in and collaborate with the primary teachers. Other schools meet with their PTP students monthly or weekly in small pull-out groups. Interviewees are grappling with how to supplement the lessons taught in the classroom. Two of the districts offer enrichment programs for students. One of the districts does this during the school day and offers classes such as cooking, Lego robotics, and CSI. The other district does this on weekends during the fall months where students have the opportunity to select from a variety of different classes that will enhance their learning.

Many research studies focus on gifted and talented students, but there is a very little research on primary gifted students (Adelson & Carpenter, 2011; Chance, 2006; Walsh et al., 2012). High potential students in kindergarten through third grade are somewhat of a mystery due to their various abilities and lack of consistency in their daily school instruction. The challenge now is to assess these approaches. There is an obligation for further meticulous research that examines teacher performance with PTP students.

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Appendix A

Table 1

School District Information

School Name	Grade levels	Free/reduced lunch	Racial Information
LCAES	Preschool-8th grade	54.2% economically disadvantaged *Whole school receives free lunch	90.5% Caucasian 4.7% 2 races 3.3% Hispanic 1.5% Other
SCES	1st-3rd grade	66.2% free and reduced lunch	76.3% Caucasian 9.1% 2 races 8.5% African American 6.1% Other
JRESWC	Preschool-6th grade	30.7% free and reduced lunch	74.4% Caucasian 10.6% Asian 7.3% Hispanic 7.7% Other
WCAES	Preschool-6th grade	46.3% free and reduced lunch	72.4% Caucasian 10.4% Asian 5.9% Hispanic 11.3% Other
CTEPS	Preschool-6th grade	48.2% free and reduced lunch	69.2% Caucasian 9% Hispanic 7.6% Asian 14.2% Other
CESOC	Kindergarten-5th grade	31.2% free and reduced lunch	81.7% Caucasian 10.7% Hispanic 5.7% 2 races 1.9% Other
OCKES	Kindergarten-5th grade	85.1% free and reduced lunch	40% Caucasian 25.7% African American 17.8% Hispanic 16.5% Other

Note: From District Report Card by the Kentucky Department of Education, 2018

Table 2

Interviewee's Years in Education

Interviewee	Position Title	Years in the Education Field	Years working with Gifted Students
1 Ms. Johnson	Gifted Coordinator	30	13
2 Ms. Downing	Gifted Teacher	39	2
3 Ms. Smith	PTP Coordinator	15	9
4 Ms. Kirk	Curriculum Coordinator	15	8
5 Ms. Sims	Curriculum Coordinator	15	5
6 Ms. Adams	Gifted Coordinator	18	2
7 Ms. Rogers	Curriculum Coordinator	27	11

Table 3

Survey Participant's Years in Education

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Years	68	1	39	14.04	8.412

Table 4

Descriptive Survey Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic	70	2	5	4.24	.550
Creative	70	2	5	4.01	.648
Leadership	71	2	5	4.18	.568
Arts	70	2	5	3.60	.875
Capable_to_meet_needs	70	2	5	3.89	.733
Differentiate	69	2	5	3.99	.737
Understand_Purpose	70	2	5	3.91	.830
School_Policy	68	2	5	4.06	.770
School_Plan	70	2	5	3.87	.931
School_Meets_Needs	69	1	5	3.77	1.002
Valid N (listwise)	65				

Table 5

Differentiated Classroom Instruction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	3	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Occasionally	4	5.7	5.7	10.0
	Monthly	2	2.9	2.9	12.9
	Weekly	21	30.0	30.0	42.9
	Daily	40	57.1	57.1	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 6

Pullout Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	7	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Occasionally	12	17.1	17.1	27.1
	Monthly	22	31.4	31.4	58.6
	Weekly	27	38.6	38.6	97.1
	Daily	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

Table 7

School Meets Needs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	4.3	4.3	4.3
	Disagree	5	7.1	7.2	11.6
	Neutral	11	15.7	15.9	27.5
	Agree	36	51.4	52.2	79.7
	Strongly Agree	14	20.0	20.3	100.0
	Total	69	98.6	100.0	
Total		70	100.0		

Table 8

Classroom Teachers Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	15	21.4	21.7	21.7
	Occasionally	32	45.7	46.4	68.1
	Monthly	10	14.3	14.5	82.6
	Weekly	7	10.0	10.1	92.8
	Daily	5	7.1	7.2	100.0
	Total	69	98.6	100.0	

Figure A

Participants response to how well they can identify academically gifted young students

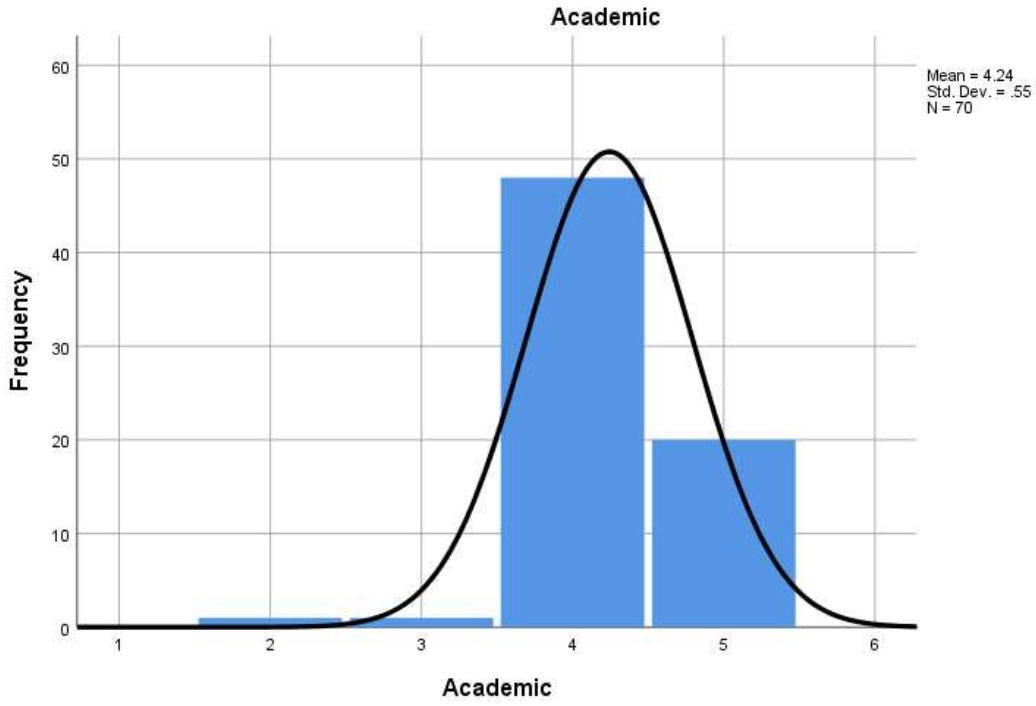


Figure B

Participants response to how well they can identify creatively gifted young students

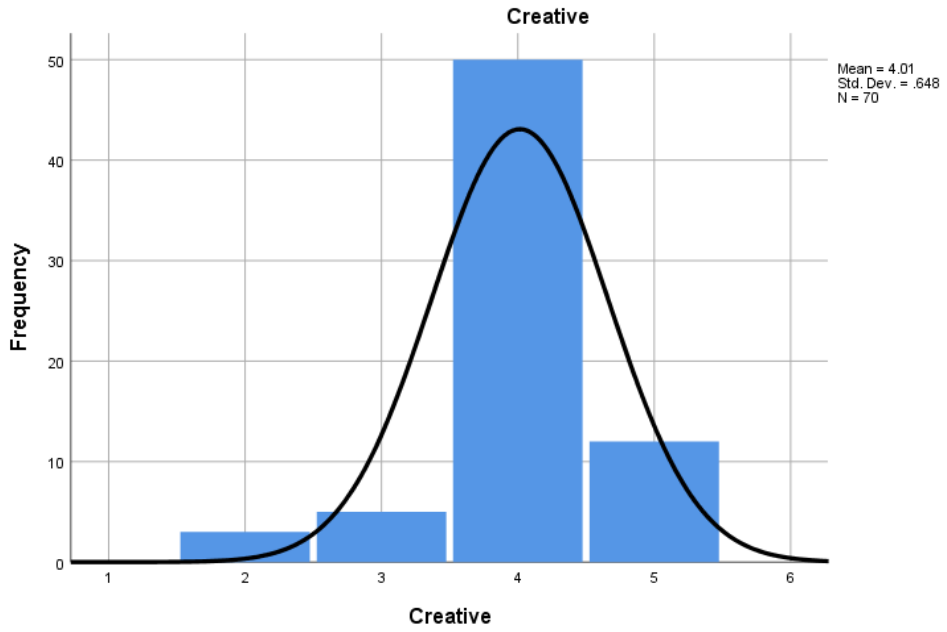


Figure C

Participants response to how well they can identify leadership gifted young students

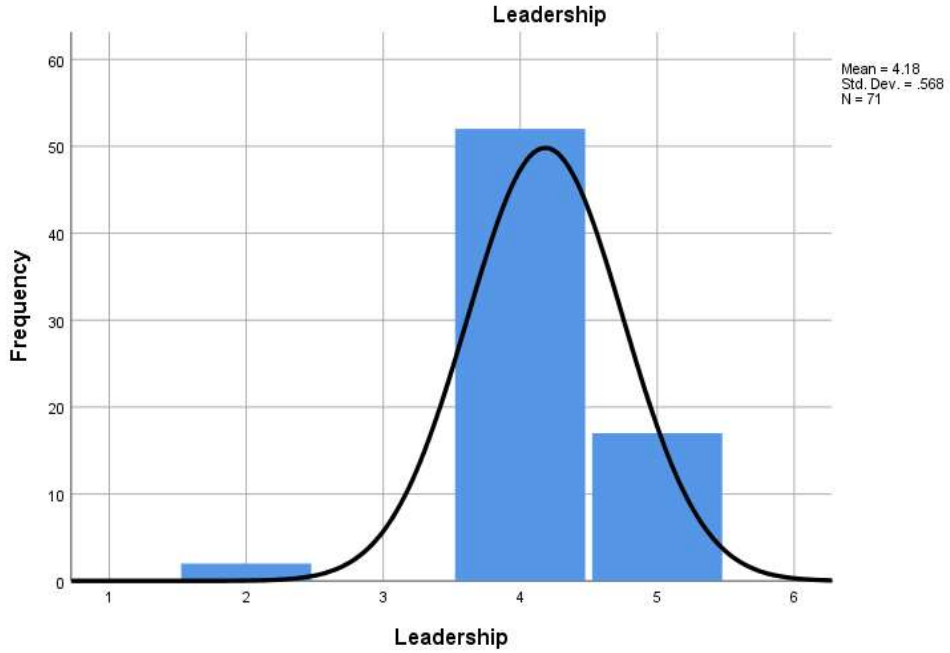


Figure D

Participants response to how well they can identify arts gifted young students

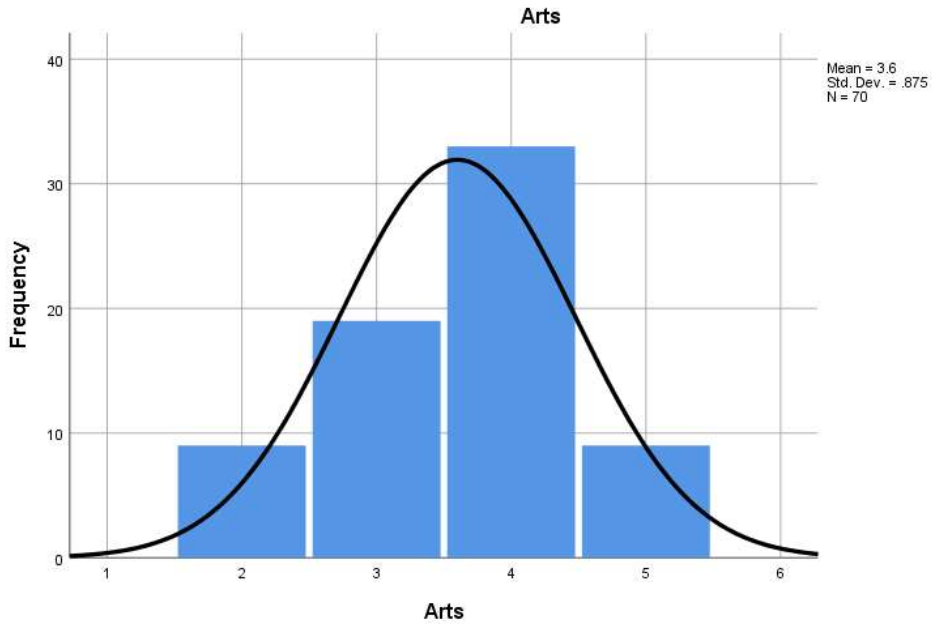


Figure E

Participants response to how often they set individual goals for PTP students

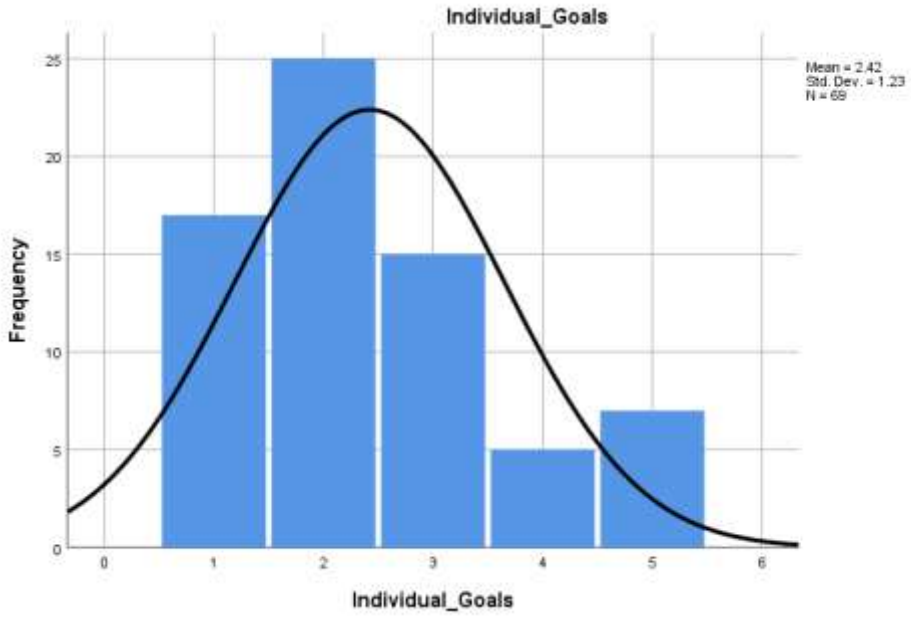
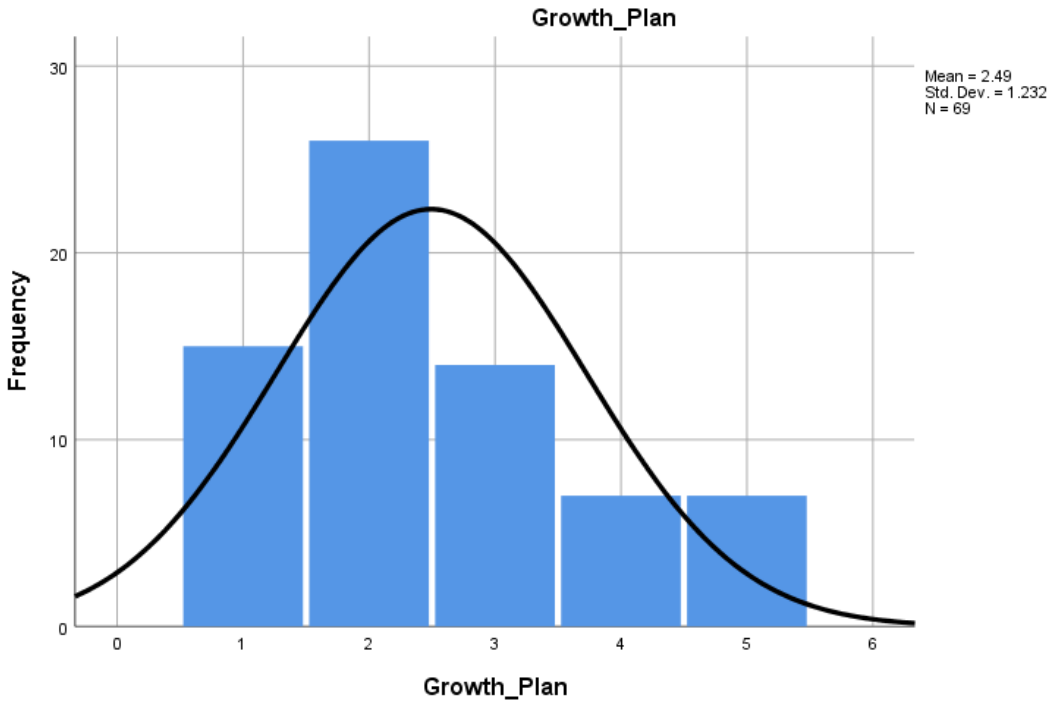


Figure F

Participants response to how often they use Growth Plans with PTP students



Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What do you believe is the purpose of Primary Talent Pool? Elaborate.

2. What do you believe are effective strategies for selecting students for Primary Talent Pool?

3. What services should be in place to develop the potential of children in Primary Talent Pool in: Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Creativity, Art, Music, Dance, and Leadership?

4. How are teachers supported in addressing the needs (often created by their strengths) of their primary students with advanced abilities?

5. What are the barriers to selecting students for the primary talent pool?

6. What are the barriers to providing services for students in the primary talent pool?

7. How are teachers making sure that the needs of students selected for the primary talent pool are being met in the regular classroom?

Appendix C

Primary Talent Pool Survey Questions

Q1 What district do you work for?

Q2 What is the name of your school?

Q3 How many years have you been teaching?

Q4 How many graduate level courses have you had in gifted education?

Q5 Have you or someone in your close family ever participated in Primary Talent Pool or Gifted Education?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Not Sure (3)

Q6 The following questions are on a scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of young students with high ACADEMIC potential. (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of young students with high CREATIVE potential. (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of young students with high LEADERSHIP potential. (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident in my ability to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of young students with high VISUAL/PERFORMING ARTS potential. (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel capable of meeting the needs of young advanced learners in my classroom. (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I regularly differentiate the curriculum to address the needs of young advanced learners in my classroom. (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I have a clear understanding of the purpose of the Primary Talent Pool. (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school has a clear policy for referring students for the Primary Talent Pool. (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school's Primary Talent Pool has a systematic plan to nurture the potential in young children. (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school's Primary Talent Pool meets the needs of those selected to participate. (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q7 The following items are on a scale of Never, Occasionally, Monthly, Weekly, and Daily.

	Never (1)	Occasionally (2)	Monthly (3)	Weekly (4)	Daily (5)
Students in Primary Talent Pool receive pull-out services. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Students in Primary Talent Pool receive differentiated classroom instruction. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Students in Primary Talent Pool have individual goals that are monitored throughout the year. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Growth in areas of strength are tracked for each student in Primary Talent Pool. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Classroom teachers are given resources to support students who are selected for Primary Talent Pool. (5)	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 How are primary teachers informed about nominating students for the Primary Talent Pool? (Select One Answer)

- ○ Written information (1)
- ○ Presentation at a faculty meeting (2)
- ○ Face-to-face conversation with gifted coordinator or g/t teacher (3)
- ○ Other (4)

Q9 How is information about Primary Talent Pool provided to parents?

- ☐ No information is provided to parents. (1)
- ☐ Parents are provided information notifying them that their child is being CONSIDERED for the Primary Talent Pool. (2)
- ☐ Parents are asked to complete a survey about their child. (3)
- ☐ Parents are provided information notifying them their child has been SELECTED for the Primary Talent Pool. (4)
- ☐ Parents are invited to an orientation meeting after their child has been selected for the Primary Talent Pool. (5)
- ☐ Parents are provided information about how to nurture their high potential learner and what resources are available from the school and in the community. (6)
- ☐ Parents are involved in developing a personalized learning plan for their primary child. (7)

Q10 Is information provided to parents in a variety of languages?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ Maybe (2)
- ○ No (3)

Q11 Which students make up the screening pool for the Primary Talent Pool?

- ☐ All primary students (1)
- ☐ Primary students who score at a certain level on a universal screener such as STAR or MAP (2)
- ☐ Students who are performing at an advanced level in the classroom (3)
- ☐ Students who are reading above grade level (4)
- ☐ Students who are doing math above grade level (5)
- ☐ Students who think creatively (out of the box thinkers with original ideas) (6)
- ☐ Students who show advanced art ability (7)
- ☐ Students who show advanced music ability (8)
- ☐ Students who are leaders among their peers (9)

Q12 When are students selected for the Primary Talent Pool?

- ○ In the fall (1)
- ○ Mid-year (2)
- ○ In the spring (3)
- ○ Ongoing (4)

Q13 Are any of the following factors taken into consideration when considering students for the Primary Talent Pool?

- ☐ Minority status (1)
- ☐ Primary language (2)
- ☐ Environmental influences (3)
- ☐ Economic conditions (4)
- ☐ Disabilities (5)

End of Block: Default Question Block