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## PARENT EXPERIENCES IN ADVOCATING FOR THEIR ADVANCED CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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PARENT EXPERIENCES IN ADVOCATING FOR THEIR ADVANCED CHILDREN IN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A Specialist Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Specialist in Gifted Education and Talent Development

The School of Teacher Education  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

By  
Kathryn Adams


May, 2024


PARENT EXPERIENCES IN ADVOCATING FOR THEIR ADVANCED CHILDREN IN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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## ABSTRACT

### PARENT EXPERIENCES IN ADVOCATING FOR THEIR ADVANCED CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

When students are identified for advanced services, this does not necessarily mean that they suddenly have everything they need to be successful. However, to ensure their success, many parents call, email, question, and in general, advocate for their child's best interests. Parents advocating for their child in gifted services is critical to ensuring that their child's individual needs are being addressed. In some cases, teachers and school systems do not have all of the information and education they need to support each and every child in gifted services. Therefore, the dynamic between schools and parents is paramount. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the experiences that parents have in advocating for their elementary-aged children in gifted services.

This study includes five parents from Kentucky. Each parent's interview was recorded and transcribed. The data were analyzed, and three primary themes emerged in response to the research question: 1) Initiation of communication is crucial, 2) Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate, and 3) Quality of services is a major concern.

Keywords: gifted education, elementary schools, parents, advocacy

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## Introduction

The amalgamation of underachievement, underidentification, lack of state and national mandates and definitions, and the unique social, emotional, and academic needs of gifted and advanced students has resulted in a system fraught with issues that leave parents with the role of advocating for their child's best interests at school. According to the National Association for Gifted Children, schools may not be completely effective in providing services for gifted children, leaving many parents feeling that their children's needs simply are not being met (Harris, 2017). Parents of gifted or advanced children have noted several areas in which they feel unsatisfied with their child's education: the capability of schools to meet the wide range of needs of their student, challenging and adequate programming options, social isolation of their child, the communication with and navigation of schools (Matthews & Jolly, 2020). Parents have sought to find the best possible educational opportunities, whether that is public or private, traditional or nontraditional. However, Matthews and Jolly explained, "Regardless of the type of educational environment they selected, parents felt that they (rather than their child's teacher or other school staff) bore the main responsibility for ensuring that the child's academic and social and emotional needs were met" (p. 342).

The research examined parent experiences with advocating for their children at the school level. Interviews of parents of elementary-aged children were used to gather information for the research question: What are the experiences of parents advocating for their children in advanced education in elementary schools?

## Literature Review

Advocacy is related to several different arenas such as political issues, civil rights, human rights, and more, and many definitions exist in these areas as well as in education. "Advocacy is



the presenting of a position and providing reasons why others should adopt it. You present, teach, and advocate your position and its rationale,” (Johnson and Johnson, 1991, as cited in Hertzog, 2003, p. 67). Dettmer (1995, as cited in Robinson & Moon, 2003) explained advocacy as "giving active support to a cause, putting out a call to take a position on an issue, and acting to see that it is resolved in a particular way" (p. 8). However, a more parent-friendly definition states that advocacy is “a set of activities designed to change the allocation of resources to improve opportunities for the education of gifted and talented students” (Gallagher, 1983, as cited in Robinson & Moon, 2003, p. 8). Furthermore, Roberts (2018) provides a more thorough definition: “advocates speak out on behalf of practices or services that will allow gifted children to make continuous progress and/or support their cognitive and socioemotional needs” (p. 451). Advocacy can be for both cognitive and socioemotional needs and can take place in a variety of locations and manners such as at home, in schools, or in support or admonishment of district, state, or local policies (Duquette et al., 2011).

Advocacy has a long history regarding gifted education with the creation of federal legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, and the Every Student Succeeds Act (Roberts, 2018). While these acts help to support advanced students on a national level, many states still do not have mandatory identification and service legislation. According to Jolly and Robins (2018), “The level of service remains variable, and research visibility and funding remain uneven in comparison to similar special education programs” (p. 26). There is still a long way to go in gifted services at a national level; however, for the purpose of this study, advocacy starts from the ground up – with parents.

Parents have a variety of opportunities and actions they can make to advocate for their children. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) offers specific recommendations for parents when advocating for services: speaking with teachers, requesting meetings with administration, and attending annual meetings and review. When working within the school, parents must also be aware of the specific chain of command within the school. Furthermore, emphasis for parents and schools is to focus on what a child needs, not necessarily on what the school is not providing. Many classroom teachers may not even be aware of the specific learning needs of a child until a parent becomes involved (Harris, 2017). Activities for parents may include volunteering in a classroom, attending events at the school, or even being involved in governance or school-based councils (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). However, research regarding each type of activity parents conducted at the school level as well as the rate of success of each activity is limited.

An example of school-based activism is school-based councils, a more formalized type of advocacy at the school level. School-based councils bring together parents, educators, students, and/or members of the community to make decisions about the schools. Councils vary from school to school regarding membership and the level of decision-making. However, these councils can be an avenue for parents to advocate for their children's needs in gifted education such as programs, support, and identification (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007).

#### Parental Advocacy Research

Little research has been conducted in a more general sense as to the experiences of parents in schools, with research focusing on more specific areas such as twice-exceptional, marginalized groups, and geographic areas. However, Duquette applied the four dimensions of advocacy (awareness, seeking information, presenting the case, and monitoring), originally for

students with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, to parents of students identified with intellectual giftedness (Duquette et al., 2011). This research, see Figure 1, revealed that parents may be in multiple areas of the four types of advocacy at one time, with activities continuing within each domain. Furthermore, specific catalysts for parental advocacy were noted: performance levels of their student, making a decision to act, meeting educators for the first time, and developing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (Duquette et al., 2011, p. 505). Duquette’s research also supported Hertzog’s research in identifying two types of advocacy styles: “the strong champion” and “the quiet relationship builder.” Parents often took on a stronger, more adversarial stance at times, but many opt to have strong working relationships with teachers.

Figure 1.

*Duquette’s Four Dimensions*

Major Category	Subcategory
Awareness	Teachers’ comments, group testing results, parents’ observations
Seeking information	Giftedness, assessments, programs, district policies, sources, frequency
Presenting the case	First meeting, representatives, educating teachers
Monitoring	IEP, reasons for monitoring, frequency
Successful school experience	School: Factors that facilitated (challenging curriculum, knowledgeable teachers, friends, extracurricular activities); factors that hindered (policies, lack of knowledge about giftedness, attitudes of educators) Child: Character traits that facilitated (work ethic, optimism, desire to please parent, self-motivation); character traits that hindered (shyness, low self-confidence, impatience, inability to accept failure)

*Note.* From “Advocacy Experiences of Parents of Children Identified with Intellectual

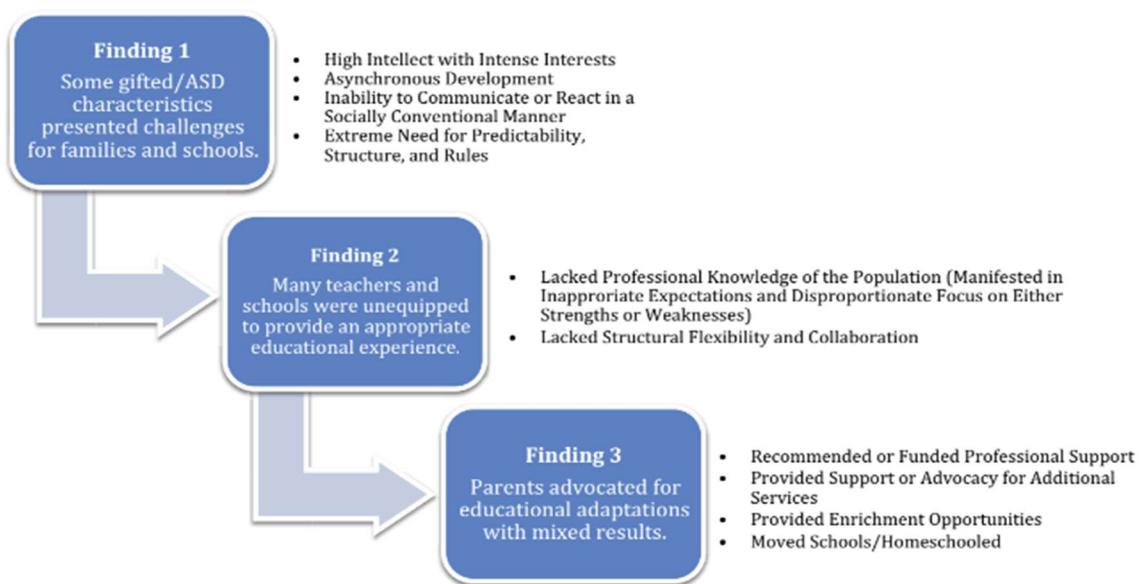
Giftedness,” by C. Duquette, S. Orders, S. Fullarton, & K. Robertson-Grewal, 2011, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 34(3), p. 497. Copyright 2011 by Prufrock Press Inc.

In the Besnoy et al. (2015) study on parental advocacy for twice-exceptional students, it was found that parents need to understand the “exceptionality-specific jargon, vocabulary, and procedures.” (p. 119). This idea is supported by Weber and Stanley’s research on parental workshops, where knowledge of gifted education as well as education for parents on how to best support their child was needed (2012). This study expands on the feelings of parents and how their lack of knowledge and fear for their child’s future forces them to become advocates and working partners with their child’s teachers (Besnoy et al., 2015).

Rubenstein’s research focuses on twice-exceptional children, but more specifically on students who were identified as autistic. However, the model presented in their findings (see Figure 2) outlines an advocacy process. First, the specific needs of a child present challenges. Next, many educators were not well-versed in how to best support these diverse learners. Finally, parents advocated for their children, some with positive and some with negative results (Rubenstein et al., 2015).

Figure 2.

*Rubenstein’s Findings*



*Note.* From “Lived Experiences of Parents of Gifted Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Struggle to Find Appropriate Experiences,” by L. D. Rubenstein, N. Schelling, S. M. Wilczynski, & E. N. Hooks, 2015, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 59(4), p. 289. Copyright 2015 by National Association for Gifted Children.

In a study on twice-exceptional Asian-American students by Park et al. (2018), parents also experienced difficulty navigating school systems and found themselves in a position where they had to advocate because students' needs were not adequately addressed. Even more revealing is that parents found it easier to get accommodations for their child's disability rather than their giftedness. Finally, many Asian-American parents lost faith and trust in their child's school during the advocacy process (Park et al., 2018).

In the Bicknell (2014) study on students identified as mathematically gifted, it was noted that “Parents often have to go through layers of official channels and wait months at the start of the school year before their children are appropriately recognized and challenged. Some have to repeat this same process in subsequent years” (p. 84). In this study, parents who held a high-level of confidence in making a positive impact on their child's education were more likely to advocate for their child. Parents in this study were given a specific role and level of environment to define their advocacy. Roles included: motivators, research providers, monitors, mathematical content advisers, and mathematical learning advisers. This study emphasized the relationship between schools and parents and the positive impact this relationship has on student achievement (Bicknell, 2014).

In a study by Huff et al. (2005), the experiences of parents of African American students identified as gifted were explored. Again, lack of knowledge surrounding school bureaucracy and gifted education was an issue. Parents often had mixed results when it came to advocating.

Furthermore, the lack of educator training on the unique needs of African American gifted students was highlighted in this research.

In one study by Hoover-Dempsey (2005), parental advocacy was studied to determine why parents became involved in their child's education. Parental involvement was shown to be greatly determined by schools and the way parents understand their role in their child's education. If a school does not actively try to involve parents, there will be less involvement and vice versa. Additionally, the way that schools are responsive to the real-world contexts of parents' time and responsibilities determines the level of involvement they have at school and in their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

#### Impact of Parental Involvement

While the role of the parent in a child's life is very important, the tasks and responsibilities specifically associated with parents who advocate for a gifted student can benefit the entire ecosystem of a child's education. Advocacy helps parents support their children more effectively, assists teachers in meeting the unique needs of gifted students, and may be a catalyst for new initiatives and change at the school level or even higher. When it comes to gifted education, especially for culturally diverse students, it is imperative that "teachers should work with parents to build a positive self-concept in culturally different children" (Coleman & Shah-Coltrane., 2015, p. 72). Parents have a tremendous amount of knowledge that teachers can harness. Furthermore, this research shows that parents have a very strong role in addressing underrepresentation in gifted education programs.

First, parental involvement has a positive impact on student achievement and psychological processes. However, the levels of involvement of parents also rely on their understanding of involvement, feeling like they are capable of helping their child, as well as how

they receive “invitations” to be involved (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Parents, to be involved, must feel that it is their role to do so, which varies based on their own school experiences, cultural implications, as well as how others parent around them. Additionally, when parents receive invitations from teachers to become involved, student performance improves (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). If conditions are right, parents become a positive influence on their child’s education as well as their psychological development.

Furthermore, students identified as gifted and talented have unique needs. Parents often are able to recognize the individual needs of their children, and thus are in a crucial position to support their child. According to Morawska and Sander (2009), “Forty percent of gifted children state that they feel different from other children, and feeling different is associated with lower self-esteem and more difficulties in relationships with peers” (p. 164). Thus, in order to meet the unique needs of their child, parents must be advocating for their child at school in regard to their services. Additionally, another study of twice-exceptional children explained, “...primary caregivers may play a major role in the academic success of their twice-exceptional children, first by recognizing their children’s gifts as well as disabilities and then by assuming responsibility for the development of their children’s potential by seeking professional evaluations, providing or securing educational supports...” (Neumeister et al., 2013, p. 269). Parent advocacy involves developing the potential of their child and helping secure the appropriate services.

In one study of parental advocacy for cultural diversity in gifted education, researchers noticed gain on behalf of educators. Grantham explained, “Educators struggle to know how they can best meet the social and cultural needs of diverse groups of students, particularly when their backgrounds differ from those of their students” (Grantham et al., 2005, p. 145). Parents have a

very strong understanding of their child and when teachers and parents combine their knowledge, they can better ensure students are properly identified and supported in their education environment.

In the case of a more structured type of parent advocacy, school-based councils, researchers observed: “In several instances, we witnessed an iterative process in which parent participation in school governance fostered a groundswell of activism around school issues that led to significant change in schools...” (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007, p. 601). Parents were able to identify and express the specific needs of their children in schools which furthered services provided in schools such as instructions for multilingual learners or health services (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007).

#### Barriers to Parental Involvement

As noted in the studies above, parents face many barriers to advocating for their children and these barriers may be a catalyst for change to a child’s education experience. For example, the inability to have a role in a school community has led to movements that exist outside of the school (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). These parents faced roadblock after roadblock, often waiting months to hear back from school officials and instead of being demotivated and deflated, they were impassioned by the difficulties they faced at the school level (Bicknell, 2014). This is not always the case, as Besnoy et al. (2015) explained that as parents lose confidence in their actions to advocate, “Their passion to ensure that their child’s needs are met often interferes with their ability to be effective advocates” (Besnoy et al., 2015, p. 110). Thus, a focus on barriers to participation of parents at the school level is required, specifically on the following: lack of a base knowledge of their child’s identification, intimidation and confusion surrounding school procedures, and societal perceptions.



First, there is a general lack of knowledge regarding gifted education for both parents and teachers. Fleming (2013) cited one parent: "You can't push and advocate for a program you don't know exists, isn't in your language, or you have never had experience with yourself" (p. 3). Parents simply do not know enough, and advocacy may begin with parents simply asking schools for necessary information. As mentioned previously, teachers may not have the proper training to understand how to best support gifted students (Harris, 2017).

Next, parents struggled to understand how to best navigate and negotiate with the schools themselves. Some parents perceived lack of information, irregularity of communication, and lack of transparency surrounding assessment processes and testing instruments as barriers. (Mun et al., 2021). Furthermore, "Invitations to involvement from important others are often key motivators of parents' decisions to become involved" (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p. 110). Parents need invitations from three areas: general information from schools, teachers, and the student (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). When parents do not understand the processes and do not receive adequate invitations from the school system, they do not become strong advocates. Additionally, "School personnel may dismiss parents as pushy or blame the struggling child for being lazy" (Neumeister et al., 2013, p. 269). The negative perceptions from schools can inhibit advocacy by parents.

These barriers described by Harris (2017) and Roberts (2018) emphasize that parents must not give up; they must be persistent in gaining the support of the school so that the child may receive appropriate services. Parents in a study by Rubenstein et al. (2015) echo these sentiments as their efforts were tireless and ongoing in the pursuit of supporting their students. Shatkin and Gershberg (2007) explain that principals and teachers may feel very resistant to parent involvement at the beginning due to insecurities around their position or job and a lack of

trust in the parents' ability to be involved in an effective manner. It should also be noted that advocacy is something that must be renewed each year with every new classroom and new teacher (Harris, 2017). Roberts (2018) explained in reference to parents, "If not you, then who?" (p. 457). This is a sentiment that is carried by parents and needs to be accepted by teachers and administrators.

### Methodology

The study gathered information regarding the advocacy experiences of parents with gifted elementary-aged children. Before reaching out to potential participants, approval was provided by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Western Kentucky University (Appendix B). Participants were recruited through a program called "Super Saturdays" which provides learning opportunities for gifted learners through Western Kentucky University's Center for Gifted Studies. Leaders within the organization asked for parents to provide their contact information if they would like to participate in this study; seven parents volunteered, two of whom are married to each other (their interview was conducted as one).

Six parents who volunteered were contacted; one parent did not respond to phone calls or emails; therefore, five interviews were conducted. Parents were contacted via email and phone while interviews were conducted via video call or phone call. Virtual interviews allowed for recordings for transcription purposes. Pseudonyms are utilized to protect their identities. Note that the married couple were interviewed together. All interviewees reviewed and signed the informed consent document provided by the university's IRB (Appendix C).

Each interview was conducted one-on-one with a set of 10 open-ended interview questions designed to inquire about their experiences advocating for their children in gifted programming at elementary schools. However, if clarification was required, follow-up questions

were asked. The questions for the interview were developed based primarily on the research conducted by Duquette (2011). See Appendix A for the complete list of questions.

## Results

The interviewees were selected on a volunteer basis, and of those who volunteered, five were ultimately interviewed (83%). The results were analyzed and developed into a table which can be found in Appendix D. Sub-categories for each question were developed based on parent responses to help quantify their experiences.

The first prompt, *Describe your child and how they were determined for advanced services*, resulted in 100% of respondents indicating that their child was tested and this test determined their child's eligibility for gifted or advanced services. Parent 1 stated, "When he started fourth grade, I got a letter sent home saying that he did exceptionally well on the creativity portion of the testing." However, Parent 5 (20%) indicated that their child applied for the advanced services, but the teacher provided that form based on class performance. Parent 5 explained: "So the school kind of helped determine that with their work and testing for high potential." Parent 5 was the anomaly in the identification process in that there was a more formal application process that was communicated to parents by the teacher or school employee. Note that this parent was the only one with children in a private school; the other four (80%) had students in the public school system.

Parents were then prompted: *Describe the educational accommodations and services the school has provided and how the school is meeting your child's needs*. All parents (100%) were provided with information leading them to attend Super Saturdays; a given when considering the sampling. Parent 2, after being prompted to explain how they heard about Super Saturdays, stated, "Through the school newsletter... hey this might be a great opportunity!" Regarding pull-

out programs, 80% of parents indicated that their elementary-aged child was removed from class regularly or semi-regularly for gifted or advanced services. Parent 1 said, “Basically, what the school is providing is a once-a-week pull-out for them which includes really the entire school.” Only 40% indicated that the child was receiving accelerated coursework during the school day. Parent 3 explained, “Last year was a little different. It was about halfway through the year, and they started just pulling him out...he was still in the classroom, but he was just on headphones and the computer working on fifth grade [workbooks].” Parents indicated that their child attended “academies” during the school week--some sort of programming at another school with students who were also identified for gifted or advanced services. Parent 3 described these services: “...he got chosen for [the] Academy here...and so he goes there once a week and so we hear about that all the time.” However, of those four parents, 50% (2) had to apply and 50% (2) indicated that their child was simply provided that opportunity.

The third question asked: *How do you perceive your advocacy with the school and your participation in your child's education?* Based on the interviews, 40% of interviewees exhibited characteristics of a “strong champion” and 60% gave indications of a “quiet relationship builder.” Parent 2, a strong champion, said, “We're gonna drive right through. We need to go to the district office, we will.” In contrast, Parent 4 stated, “We ran into issues along the way in trying to deal with those [people] in a very cordial and very easy to get along with manner.” Parents 3-5 exhibited traits of relationship builders; Parents 1 and 2 showcased qualities more related to that of a strong champion.

Parents were then asked: *Do you monitor your son/daughter's progress in school? How do you do this?* Five parents (100%) monitored their child's progress through communication with teachers. All five (100%) parents utilized grades to track their child's progress. Parent 4

responded, “Mostly talking to the teachers as much as I can.” Parent 4 said, “can keep up with his progress through...they have a portal.” Of the parents interviewed, 60% (3) noted that they spoke directly to their child to track their learning development. Parent 2 noted, “...through conversations with them about their understanding of certain subjects. What's happening? How are you doing? Do you have any questions? Is everything clear? Do you need our help to follow up?”

Furthermore, when prompted about the satisfaction with the level of participation, progress and their experience in advanced programming, two parents (40%) conveyed an overall positive experience: “Yes, I'm happy as we are” (Parent 5). In contrast, one parent (20%) expressed a mostly negative experience. Parent 1 stated: “This is not as in-depth and extensive as I thought it would be.” The remaining parents (40%) indicated both positive and negative experiences. Parent 4, after moving schools, explained, “At the other school, they didn't really try to help or anything.”

Parents were then prompted to explore the types of communications they had received regarding gifted or advanced services: *How often does someone from the school reach out to you? What do they usually reach out to you about? What do you usually reach out to each other about?* Among the interviewees, only 1 (20%) indicated that they were in frequent communication with the school about their child. Four (80%) indicated that communication from the school was not a regular occurrence. Parent 3 noted “they really don't reach out to us at all.” When prompted about who initiated contact, 80% (4 out of 5) indicated that they were typically the party that initiated contact. Parent 1 responded when prompted about frequency of school-initiated contact: “That was the only time. They sent me the letter that says, your child has been accepted, or identified.” Parents did note, however, that they received physical letters, had

infrequent in-person meetings, received newsletters, or were sent email updates. The nature of the questions and responses did not yield consistent responses to produce meaningful data.

Question 7 delved into the parents' concerns or desires for change regarding their child's education experiences: *What concerns do you have about your child's development and learning? How have you tried to address these concerns? What is the main thing you would change about your child's school experiences?* Parents expressed two concerns in regard to their child's education development: access to opportunities and being appropriately challenged. Four parents (80%) indicated opportunities as a critical component and the same amount noted that opportunities were a major concern. Parent 2 explained: "We just really wanted them to take advantage of all the opportunities." Parent 4 noted that they had issues where "they wouldn't challenge him."

Regarding seeking information and support, parents were asked: *Describe your support system. Where do you turn when you have questions? How do you seek information when you need to advocate for your child in school?* All five interviewees reached out to the school for support. Parent 1 explained, "When I had called and was trying to figure out on the \_\_\_\_\_ Public School's web page about... what test is it that he took. What did it contain?" Only one parent (20%) spoke with other parents of children in gifted programs at their schools. Of the five interviewed, three explained that they researched online in their own time. Parent 2 explained that they found the handbook for their school "online." All five (100%) sought support from outside the school, and given the sampling, this is expected. According to Parent 2, in addition to the Super Saturday events, they "were also part of the Duke TIP" in the past.

Furthermore, each person was asked: *What things have hindered your progress and what things have facilitated your progress when advocating for your son/daughter's needs?* Four

parents (80%) indicated that the lack of knowledge about giftedness and programming hindered their advocacy. Parent 2 said, “I was constantly asking, what's happening? What’s available? How often do they meet? What do these different groupings mean? It's not really clear.” Three parents (60%) indicated communication to be a barrier to advocacy. Parent 1 stated, “I didn’t even know that they had a school coordinator. That's how out of tune I was with everything.”

To conclude each interview, parents were asked: *Please make any other comments you would like about your experiences advocating.* Two of the parents did not have any additional comments to make. However, three parents (60%) all referenced that persistence was required in advocating for their child. Parent 2 said, “Keep asking questions.” The other two parents expressed similar sentiments.

Based upon the results of the interview, three common themes were distilled, which are explored in the next section.

*Themes*

1. Initiation of communication is crucial.
2. Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.
3. Quality of services is a major concern.

Each of the themes was applied to the questions indicated below in Table 1. See Appendix D for a full breakdown of each question and their subcategories.

Table 1

*Theme and Question Analysis*

Theme	Question
1) Initiation of communication is crucial.	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10

2) Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.	2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9
3) Quality of services is a major concern.	2, 5, 7

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore and answer the following research question: *What are the experiences of parents advocating for their children in advanced education in elementary schools?* In seeking to answer this question, three themes emerged: 1) Initiation of communication is crucial. 2) Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate. 3) Quality of services is a major concern. These themes are intertwined in that communication, or lack thereof, was initiated to ensure the quality of services a student received which was a catalyst for knowledge-seeking behaviors.

### Theme 1: Initiation of Communication is Crucial

Communication, specifically the initiation of communication by parents or by a representative of the school resulted in several notable experiences:

- Initial communication by schools is a catalyst for parents to advocate.
- Parents showcased two common communication styles: strong champion or quiet relationship builder.
- The frequency of communication from both parties is a factor in developing positive and/or negative experiences for parents.
- Communication can be a barrier or a benefit to parents as knowledge seekers.

Parents sought information as a result of the student being identified through testing or through the observation by a teacher that there was a need for testing. The start of each parent's journey to advocate for gifted services began after initial contact by the school. However, all



their paths were different. For Parent 1, when a letter was sent home, that was the first time they learned what gifted and talented was. Parent 1 explained, “I got a letter sent home saying that he did exceptionally well on the creativity portion of the testing. To be honest with you, I didn’t even know that was a thing.” Another parent (P2) had a math teacher take special interest and spoke to them about testing. Parent 3’s child was in special education, and it was actually the special education team that tested for eligibility. Parent 4 found out through the primary talent pool. Parent 5 found out through testing and academic observation of a teacher. All parents were communicated with in different ways; however, the parent that seemed to express the most negative experiences, only had the letter sent home and no other information. All other parents were in communication with the teacher. According to Duquette (2011), parental advocacy begins at these crucial moments of communication: testing results and observation of performance by educators. Interestingly, no parent identified their own children as gifted prior to school intervention, despite strong research showing that parents are extremely reliable in identifying and offering information about supporting their child (Mun et al., 2021). In answering the research question, parents experienced an initial communication from a school representative which became a call to action to advocate.

Parents all saw themselves as advocates for their children in one way or another; however, each parent felt a strong pull to initiate conversations with schools as either a “strong champion” (2 parents) or a “quiet relationship builder” (3 parents). This is consistent with Duquette (2011). Parent 2, a strong champion, said, “I actually went down to the district office to ask more questions and clarify things. When you really don’t know, you don’t know what to expect.” Another parent (4), a quiet champion explained, “There’s a lot really that I would have done differently. I would have probably pushed harder earlier to get more services. I try not to be

really pushy with anybody in the school system. I was feeling my way and learning my role as much as he was, as a student as a parent in that role so I would have pushed earlier.” Upon reflection, this parent expressed that they were trying not to be pushy and work with the system. This parent went so far as to change school districts because the first school “...didn't really want to do much. It was messy.” According to Rubenstein (2015) a key finding was that parents’ advocacy does not always yield strong results which may have parents changing schools. Parent 3 explained, “I haven't grasped how this teacher has gone to handle this one this year. I've had some conversations with her and it's kind of went in one ear and out the other. She hasn't been as open as the past couple of year's teachers.” The parents are still in this current predicament where the teacher is not as responsive to individualizing for the needs of the child. As supported by Bicknell (2014), the strong champions were driven by their understanding and pushed their way through the roadblock; on the other hand, quiet relationship builders, when met with difficulties, backed down or changed schools. Parents initiated communication with the schools to advocate for their children; however, the strong relationship builders had more successes. In answer to the research question, parent experiences in engaging with schools as advocates were driven by their personal philosophy and demeanor as an advocate.

The parent that felt mostly positive about their experiences, was one of the few who indicated that they received frequent communication from their school. When it came to initiating communication, four (80%) parents expressed that they were the ones to initiate communications and all indicated that communication, when initiated, was rare. With little communication being initiated by the schools aside from the initial awareness letter, as noted by Duquette (2014), parents oscillated between seeking information and monitoring their child's progress. Parents also continued these activities simultaneously. All parents sought help from the

school. Only one parent sought information from other parents, which is a critical area because working together collaboratively could help parents begin new school-based initiatives (Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007). No school had a parent group working cooperatively. Some parents (60%) spent time researching online. Due to the sample, all five parents had services that supported their child outside of the school, which is not necessarily negative, as the information was provided by the school. Thus, in response to the research question, parents experienced a sense of limited communication which drove a need for some to look for services outside of the school system. The first theme, that initiation of communication is crucial, shows that parent experiences, positive or negative, were strongly tied to the communications they received and communication that they initiated.

#### Theme 2: Knowledge is Necessary to be an Advocate

The second theme reveals parents as knowledge seekers throughout their experiences as an advocate which resulted in several points:

- Seeking knowledge is a primary form of advocacy for parents.
- The initial communication to parents pushed parents to be knowledge seekers.
- Parents all sought knowledge on how to support their children by frequently monitoring their progress.

In attempting to describe the educational accommodations, all parents were able to identify some form of services. Parents primarily noted that their child participated in a pull-out program, had accelerated coursework, were provided services at another school during the day, or was referred to outside services. Parents expressed that they needed to know which services were available for their children. Parent 1 spent a lot of time calling the school asking about what exactly gifted services were and what was different from the other classes and stated, “There’s

absolutely nothing different. I honestly think that what the services that she's been providing...I don't think anything is being done differently." As discussed by Fleming (2013), if parents are unaware of what giftedness even means, it is hard to ask the right questions and gain knowledge about the services being provided. The interview showed that even when there was a lack of communication from the school itself, parents kept coming back for more information. This is consistent with research conducted by Duquette (2011) and the Four Dimensions (Figure 2) in that after awareness of a student's high potential, parents began seeking information about the services. Parent 1 stated, "I want to see what needs to be done differently. There was none of that. If he did something specific. I need to know what I need to nurture." Referring to the research question, parents experienced a phase where they sought information to become more knowledgeable; they wanted to see what was being done differently so that their child's needs were being met.

To ensure high quality services, parents monitored their child's progress frequently. All five (100%) participants attempted to communicate directly with teachers as well as tracked their child's grades. Three parents noted that they worked directly with their child to determine their progress. Parents also felt that they had to monitor progress more frequently and in-depth because they were struggling to know what was happening in the schools. Parent 3 went on to explain that this year has been different compared to teachers in the past: "...without physically going to the school or emailing and hoping she emails me back and trying to reach out... I might have to start doing that...because he comes home and he's just bored." In trying to determine what services were being provided, parents felt frustrated that they could not get the information they needed which is supported by Mun (2021). On the other hand, Parent 4 expressed positive sentiments as her children have been in the same school system since birth and monitoring was a

bit easier because they were in frequent communication: "...following the school day the teacher sending them the information in the email and the paperwork...I try to [read] like the instruction they give me and so that's it." This parent felt secure in what was happening at the school level. While their experiences varied, when parents became frustrated, they chose to learn more about their child's needs to better serve them.

### Theme 3: Quality of Services is a Major Concern

The third theme centered around each parent's drive to understand the quality of services their child was receiving, which showcases three primary experiences:

- Post-identification, parents' primary concern was the services being provided.
- The level of satisfaction a parent felt correlated with the quality of services and how they were meeting the needs of the child.
- Parents' primary focus of knowledge seeking was learning how they could provide the services to support their students.

Regarding the level of satisfaction with the services and programming of their child, two parents felt they had mostly positive experiences, one had mostly negative, and two had a mixture of positive and negative. As supported by Besnoy's research the parents' concern for the services being provided was a major motivator for communication and advocacy. Many wondered if their child was being challenged. Both parent 1 and parent 3 were concerned about what was being done to challenge and support their child. In further support of findings by Park et al. (2008), parent 4 found it easier to get services for their child's IEP than through the gifted services department. Parent 4 explained, "Really the specialized gifted education he got was through the SPED department. There wasn't as much involvement in the gifted and talented side." To summarize their experiences, the quality of services is an area of concern, but when

parents were unsatisfied, they typically chose to help students themselves or go outside of the school if they met barriers with teachers or gifted education departments.

Parents expressed concerns for their child's experiences and learning development specifically in understanding what their child needed as well as having those needs met through services. Parent 2 stated, "We just really wanted them to take advantage of all the opportunities." Furthermore, Parent 3 said, "...just try to grasp socially if they're around the same grade level of what they're doing. But my main thing is just trying to find something that he doesn't know...it's really hard with certain subjects." This parent, on her own, was trying to further her child's education as she felt that her child was unchallenged in school. Interestingly, many parents felt like they did not know how best to support their children but gave evidence that they were very aware of their child's needs and wants in helping them to pursue their interests and knowing that they learn at a different pace. Overall, parents felt they did not have the abilities themselves, nor did they feel the school was adequately providing enough opportunities for their child; therefore, they sought support from outside sources.

### Synthesis of Themes

All in all, parents' advocacy experiences revealed that perseverance is a critical component of knowledge seeking as a parent communicates for high-quality services for their child. As supported by Harris (2017) and Roberts (2018), parents learned to not give up, going so far as to show up at school or go to the district offices. Parent 2 stated, "It's just, you can't take no, you gotta keep asking questions." As supported by Bicknell (2014) some parents became driven by the issues they face to become strong advocates for their students. Parents felt a lack of control and understanding when it came to assessments, feedback, and support services which is supported by Mun (2021).

In summary, interview responses revealed three interconnected themes: quality of services at the center and knowledge and communication pushing the other to motivate parents to advocate for their child (Figure 3). The initiation of communication by parents stemmed from the lack of information they received from the schools, resulting in negative perceived experiences by the parents. However, initiation by the school resulted in more positively perceived experiences. When they felt like their child was not receiving quality services, this resulted in the initiation of communication by parents. If the school initiated conversations, parents felt more knowledgeable about their child as well as the quality of services being received. However, parents did initiate conversations with the schools to improve their knowledge and understanding of the services being provided. Overall, parents experienced varying degrees of communication which either enhanced or inhibited their pursuit of knowledge in ensuring that their child was receiving the services they needed to succeed.

Figure 3.

*Synthesis of Themes*



*Note.* This figure represents the three themes and their interconnectedness. With the desire to serve their child’s needs and ensure quality services, parents often ended up as knowledge seekers and communication initiators, either simultaneously, or vacillating between the two.

## Limitations

This study had several limitations; first, the small sample size and source. Only five parents were interviewed and all five were already very active advocates in supporting their child's education due to their participation in Super Saturdays and their willingness to be part of the study. Also, the school systems and students were unfamiliar before interviewing the parents. Perhaps having more knowledge of the district as well as access to parents who are already in communication with the researcher, could have provided more layers or levels of advocacy. Additionally, all five parents were from the same part of Kentucky, four of whom were in the same school system. In the future, a larger sample size, selecting participants from a district with which the researcher is familiar, and targeting a wider geographical reach could yield stronger results.

Another limitation was the telecommunication format, as all parents were interviewed from a great distance with the mixed success of technology: some with video and some without. The ability to build trust and rapport with the subjects as well as successfully develop follow-up questions was inhibited. If another study were to be conducted, in-person interviews could help provide more detailed responses from the parents.

The unique situations of the parents such as one having a twice-exceptional child and another whose first language was not English, may have provided some limitations. One parent's child was identified through the special education department first, which is where most of the services came through, even communications about gifted education. Furthermore, one parent's first language was not English, and some terminology was difficult to comprehend for both parties.



Despite the limitations, the responses garnered from all five subjects yielded a clear perception of the experiences of parents advocating for their elementary-aged children with high potential and advanced services.

### Implications

While this research does offer a glimpse into the experiences of parents of students in gifted programs at the elementary level, additional questions and concerns arise:

1. *How might teachers and schools work to make parents feel a strong invitation and sense of belonging in advocating for their students?*
2. *How might teachers and parents work together collaboratively to support the student?*
3. *What is the teacher perspective regarding parental involvement and advocacy?*
4. *What is the parent's understanding of their efficacy as an advocate?*

Teacher knowledge about gifted students and working collaboratively with parents is crucial. For example, Parent 3 explained that with a new teacher the next academic year, a lot changed: "...it has kind of [gone] in one ear and out the other. She hasn't been as open as the past couple of years teachers.... So, he's doing he's fine [but] he's not challenged. I think they're focusing so much on trying to get everybody up to the grade level." Research by Mun et al. (2021) has shown that parents do have a lot of knowledge about their students, and teachers can leverage the information.

Furthermore, teachers and schools must understand the parents' perspectives. Parent 1 said, "So the communication is not good. But I do show up to the school unannounced and say, "I need to talk." Parent 2 mirrored this idea in that, "the biggest thing is that you can't take no for an answer. There is a lot going on, our children are one of many." A Likert scale could offer a

glimpse into the parents own understanding of their roles as a parent and how these roles are constructed based on their experiences. For example, parents could indicate their relationships with schools, the frequency of communication, their attitude toward the school systems, etc. This could be utilized to help teachers understand parents and how to best facilitate a partnership (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Parents who feel a strong sense of advocacy will seek answers regardless of the school's willingness to work with them.

Research by Mun et al. (2021) has shown that parents have a strong ability to identify giftedness in their children; however, none of the interviewees identified their students as gifted before the schools did. In helping parents be advocates, their education must begin before identification and testing. The findings in this study did not interview any parent who identified their child first, so further research is needed in this area.

Finally, further research into parents who have stopped advocacy or who do not advocate is needed. Parents who have given up in the face of many obstacles should be interviewed to determine their experiences. A larger sample could also identify strong advocates. Overall, a larger study should be conducted to provide a greater understanding of parents and their experiences.

### Conclusion

This research sought to understand parent perspectives on advocating for their elementary-aged children in gifted services. A small sample of parents were interviewed from a specific area of Kentucky. These interviews yielded a strong understanding of parent's motivations as well as actions in advocating for their students. When communication was strong from both parties, positive experiences were the result. When communication was one-sided, issues arose. According to Mun et al. (2021): "Communication and engagement with parents are

arguably the most important element within a bi-directional capacity building network of school and parents” (p. 550). Parents in this study became involved in Super Saturdays because they were invited to do so through general school communications.

Findings by Duquette (2021) strongly connected to this study in that all five parents were easily identified as one parent type or another. While educators may perceive parents as “aggressive,” parents may feel they are just doing their job in advocating for their children. With this understanding of parents, educators, administrators, and other stakeholders may better collaborate with parents. Moreover, the four dimensions, as developed by Duquette (2021), are easily applicable to this study: “...many of the parents... regularly sought information, made the case for their child’s needs by educating teachers, and constantly monitored how their son or daughter was doing in school” (Duquette et al., 2021, p. 505). Parents in this study sought to monitor their child’s progress, reached out to teachers, and sought out information. Parents were not necessarily only advocating in one manner at a time, rather, they actively engaged in multiple forms of advocacy at one time.

Additionally, when it comes to barriers, some research has shown that parents may lose confidence in their abilities as advocates (Besnoy, 2015). However, this study revealed that all parents continued to advocate for their children, whether that was simply through monitoring their progress or reaching out to other organizations for support. While advocating directly with the school may have lessened, advocating for their child’s education did not.

To reference Grantham’s (2005) research on teacher-parent collaborations, none of the parents interviewed had experienced true collaborations with their school systems. While some may have had strong communications with teachers and educators, there were no formal systems in place developed by the school systems.

In answering the research question — *What are the experiences of parents advocating for their children in advanced education in elementary schools?* — several themes are considered: communication, knowledge, and quality of services. More positive experiences for parents as advocates can result from confirmation of high-quality services, high-frequency and high-quality communications, as well as the development of knowledge on both the parents' side as well as those held accountable for educating their children.

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions

1. Describe your child and how they were determined for advanced services.
2. Describe the educational accommodations and services the school has provided and how the school is meeting your child's needs.
3. How do you perceive your advocacy with the school and your participation in your child's education?
4. Do you monitor your son/daughter's progress in school? How do you do this?
5. Are you satisfied with the level of participation, progress, and their experience in advanced programming in general?
6. How often does someone from the school reach out to you? What do they usually reach out to you about? What do you usually reach out to each other about?
7. What concerns do you have about your child's development and learning? How have you tried to address these concerns? What is the main thing you would change about your child's school experiences?
8. Describe your support system. Where do you turn when you have questions? How do you seek information when you need to advocate for your child in school?
9. What things have hindered your progress and what things have facilitated your progress when advocating for your son/daughter's needs?
10. Please make any other comments you would like about your experiences advocating.

## APPENDIX B

### IRB Approval



*INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY*

DATE: October 20, 2023

TO: Kathryn Adams  
FROM: Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [2118424-1] Parent experiences advocating for their advanced learner in elementary schools

REFERENCE #: IRB# 24-109

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: October 20, 2023

EXPIRATION DATE: October 20, 2024

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a *signed* consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of October 20, 2024.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Pyles at (270) 745-3360 or [Robin.Pyles@wku.edu](mailto:Robin.Pyles@wku.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Western Kentucky University (WKU) IRB's records.

# APPENDIX C

## Informed Consent Document



### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Project Title:** Parent experiences advocating for their advanced learner in elementary schools.

**Investigator:** Kathryn Adams, graduate student, Western Kentucky University - Center of Gifted Students email: [kathryn.adams@jefferson.kyschools.us](mailto:kathryn.adams@jefferson.kyschools.us)

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project.

**You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this research study.**

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

- 1. Nature and Purpose of the Project:** The purpose of this study will be to understand the experiences of parents advocating for their advanced learners in elementary schools.
- 2. Explanation of Procedures:** You are being asked to participate in a study regarding your current perceptions about advocating for your advanced learner in elementary schools. Your participation will involve the completion of an interview that will require 30-45 minutes of your time to complete.
- 3. Discomfort and Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants as a result of their participation in this study. The risks associated with participation in this research are minimal and no more than that encountered in everyday activities.
- 4. Benefits:** The anticipated benefit is a clearer understanding of parent advocacy experiences that may assist teachers and administrators to better communicate and collaborate with parents and guardians during future interactions.
- 5. Confidentiality:** All data will be kept in a secure manner. Records will be viewed, stored, and maintained in private, secure files only accessible by the P.I. and advising faculty for a minimum of three years following the study. Publications or presentations related to this study will not include identifiable references to subjects' identities.

WKU IRB# 24-109  
Approved: 10/20/2023  
End Date: 10/20/2024  
EXPEDITED  
Original: 10/20/2023



APPENDIX D

Question Analysis

Themes	Question	Sub-Category	Quantity
Initiation of communication is crucial.	#1 Describe your child and how they were determined for advanced services.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students were tested to determine eligibility for services.</li> <li>2. Students who had high potential in the classroom.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5 (100%)</li> <li>2. 1 (20%)</li> </ol>
<p>Initiation of communication is crucial.</p> <p>Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.</p> <p>Quality of services is a major concern.</p>	#2 Describe the educational accommodations and services the school has provided and how the school is meeting your child’s needs.	<p>Parents indicated the following services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students were placed in a “pull-out program” which removed them from their daily classroom.</li> <li>2. Student was provided accelerated coursework.</li> <li>3. Students were provided additional services at another school during the school day.</li> <li>4. Parents were referred to services outside of the school.</li> </ol>	<p>4/5 (80%)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2/5 (40%)</li> <li>2. 4/5 (80%)</li> <li>3. 5 (100%)</li> <li>4. 3/5 (60%)</li> </ol>
<p>Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.</p> <p>Initiation of communication is crucial.</p>	#3 How do you perceive your advocacy with the school and your participation in your child’s education?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The parent exhibited characteristics of a “strong champion.”</li> <li>2. The parent exhibited characteristics of a “quiet relationship builder”.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2/5 (40%)</li> <li>2. 3/5 (60%)</li> </ol>
Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.	#4 Do you monitor your son/daughter’s progress in school? How do you do this?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring occurred through communication with teachers.</li> <li>2. Grades helped parents monitor progress.</li> <li>3. Parents communicated</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5 (100%)</li> <li>2. 5 (100%)</li> <li>3. 3 (60%)</li> </ol>

		directly with their student to gauge their progress.	
Quality of services is a major concern.	<b>#5</b> Are you satisfied with the level of participation, progress and their experience in advanced programming in general?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The parent expressed mostly positive experiences.</li> <li>2. The parent expressed mostly negative experiences.</li> <li>3. The parent expressed mixed experiences: both positive and negative.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2 (40%)</li> <li>2. 1 (20%)</li> <li>3. 2 (40%)</li> </ol>
Initiation of communication is crucial.	<b>#6</b> How often does someone from the school reach out to you? What do they usually reach out to you about? What do you usually reach out to each other about?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent indicated communication frequency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rarely</li> <li>● Sometimes</li> <li>● Often</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. The school typically initiated contact.</li> <li>3. The parent typically initiated contact.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rarely: 4 (80%) Sometimes: Often: 1 (20%)</li> <li>2. School Initiated: 1 (20%)</li> <li>3. Parent Initiated: 4 (80%)</li> </ol>
Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.  Quality of services is a major concern.	<b>#7</b> What concerns do you have about your child's development and learning? How have you tried to address these concerns? What is the main thing you would change about your child's school experiences?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents expressed that ensuring that their child was challenged was a priority.</li> <li>2. Parents noted that different opportunities were critical.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4 (80%)</li> <li>2. 4 (80%)</li> </ol>
Initiation of communication is crucial.  Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.	<b>#8</b> Describe your support system. Where do you turn when you have questions? How do you seek information when you need to advocate for	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents sought support from the school.</li> <li>2. Parents sought out other parents of children in gifted programming.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5 (100%)</li> <li>2. 1 (20%)</li> <li>3. 3 (60%)</li> <li>4. 5 (100%)</li> </ol>

	your child in school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Parent researched information available online.</li> <li>4. Parents looked to outside organizations of the school for additional opportunities or support.</li> </ol>	
<p>Initiation of communication is crucial.</p> <p>Knowledge is necessary to be an advocate.</p>	<b>#9</b> What things have hindered your progress and what things have facilitated your progress when advocating for your son/daughter's needs?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents indicated that the lack of knowledge about giftedness and programming hindered their advocacy.</li> <li>2. Parents indicated communication to be a barrier to advocacy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4 (80%)</li> <li>2. 3 (60%)</li> </ol>
<p>Initiation of communication is crucial.</p>	<b>#10</b> Please make any other comments you would like about your experiences advocating.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents indicated persistence was crucial in advocating for their child.</li> <li>2. Parents did not have any additional comments.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3 (60%)</li> <li>2. 2 (40%)</li> </ol>



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