2014-2015
STATE of THE STATES in GIFTED EDUCATION
POLICY AND PRACTICE DATA

SUMMARY (from the full report)

November, 2015

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN and
THE COUNCIL OF STATE DIRECTORS OF PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED

For more information:
National Association for Gifted Children, Washington, DC. www.nagc.org
ABOUT THE REPORT

The State of the States report is organized into ten key areas that combine to provide readers with a better understanding of the degree of support individual states offered to gifted and talented education for the school year 2014-2015. This is not to say that these ten areas were clearly differentiated in actual practice. There were, in fact, multiple points of overlap and influence among them.

I. STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES and II. FUNDING FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

III. MANDATES TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE GIFTED STUDENTS

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

V. DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS and VI. IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

VII. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

VIII. STAFFING AND PERSONNEL PREPARATION

IX. RELATED POLICIES AND PRACTICES

X. NEW DEVELOPMENTS, CONCERNS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

I. STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

States reported on the organization and responsibilities for gifted education by the state departments of education as well as the actions of state advisory committees. Considerations included the human capital devoted to gifted education, their authority, responsibilities, and accountability.

State education agencies (SEAs) varied widely in how they were structured, including the reporting channel for gifted and talented (GT) education. All but 7 respondents indicated that at least a portion of gifted and talented education was part of a larger department; the larger departments included curriculum and instruction (15), general education (12), special education (7), exceptional students (4), and a variety of other departments (11). The 12 general education responses marked an increase from four in the last report, although separate gifted and talented programs remained nearly the same with eight reported previously for special education and two for exceptional students. (See Appendix, Table 1.)

There also was variation in the types of programs that fall under the supervision of the SEA’s GT office. Of 40 respondents, 20 indicated that their office had supervisory responsibilities for one or more programs, including, but not limited to, Advanced Placement (AP) courses and/or exams (16), International Baccalaureate (IB) (14), concurrent enrollment in college and public school course (4), Governor’s schools (3), and on-line learning opportunities. (See Appendix, Table 1.)
STAFFING

Seventeen of 41 states reported having at least 1 SEA employee devoted full-time to gifted and talented education. Of those, most had 1 full-time employee, 2 states had 2 full-time employees and 2 states had more than 2. Three of the states with full time employees also had additional part-time GT staff, while 23 states had part-time GT staff exclusively. Some states saw increases in staffing, such as North Carolina adding another full-time employee and Connecticut reinstating the position. (See Appendix, Table 1.) Ten states provide additional GT support staff members that provide technical support and assistance to school-based educators regionally (10), at the district level (7), and in schools (6). (See Appendix, Table 2.)
Of 40 respondents, 24 reported that their state gifted education office had responsibilities for some general education or other special programs or projects that were not directly related to gifted education. This included 15 states without a full-time person devoted to GT. (See Appendix, Table 1.)

The specific activities of SEA staff varied, but it was clear that supporting local educators was a core responsibility for most. Almost all states reported SEA staff spent most of their time providing technical assistance by telephone, email, or webinar (38). SEA staff also spent time responding to parental questions (24), providing professional and staff development (21), and monitoring program compliance (20), along with providing technical assistance to schools (18) and being a liaison to statewide associations for the gifted (17). (See Appendix, Table 2.)

### Activities Requiring the Most Time from SEA Personnel

(n=40 states, up to five responses from each)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance by phone/email/webinar</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to parental questions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide professional and staff development</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor program compliance</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance to schools/districts</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison to state association for the gifted</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop state policies and/or guidelines</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve on task forces and committees</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide technical assistance by email</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants management</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information to state legislatures</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Just under half (19 out of 40) states had state gifted advisory committees. Of those states that did, the majority (14) had standing committees, while four had ad-hoc committees and two had them as part of a state special education advisory committee. (See Appendix, Table 11.) The most common specific reporting channel for both types of advisory group was the state superintendent/board of education (13). (See Appendix, Table 11.)

The advisory committees served a variety of functions, with most responsible for studying issues impacting gifted students (14), recommending or providing input on law and policies (12), making recommendations about gifted education to the state board of education (11), and/or disseminating information about gifted education throughout the state (12). Six states produced a written report within the last three years, with 5 reports being available. (See Appendix, Table 11.)
II. FUNDING FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Reporting states differed greatly in how much, if any, funds they allocated to gifted and talented education. For those states that did provide funding, they varied by the type of funding mechanism, uses at the state level, and disbursement to LEAs.

Thirty-nine states responded to the funding questions, with 27 reporting they provided funds to LEAs and 12 responding they did not. Of the 27 states that provide funds to LEAs, 22 provided a funding level for 2014-15. Those amounts ranged from $150,000 in Idaho to $157.2 million in Texas. Twelve states provided zero in state funding for 2014-15. (See Appendix, Table 34.)
Between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 school years, 14 states increased their funding for gifted and talented education (up from 12 in the last report), with increases ranging from 3% in Oklahoma to 88% in Idaho (as well as an increase in Delaware from $0 to $450,000). Five states maintained the same (non-zero) funding over those three years, while two states (Wyoming, -3%, Kansas, -4%) reported decreases in funding. (See Appendix, Table 34.)

**Funding Mechanisms**

Of the 27 states that provide funding to LEAs for gifted education services, 15 provided funding through formula allocation, 10 through allocation to LEAs specifically for gifted education services, seven through the general allocation, and five through grants to LEAs. The most commonly used funding formula was weighted funding (9). (See Appendix, Table 34.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Funding to LEAs for GT Services</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State funds available by formula allocation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State funds available for GT services</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State funds available by general allocation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State funds available by grants to LEAs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five states have ceilings on the distribution of state funds, based on percentages of average daily attendance (3) and percentages of identified students (2). Two others noted they had a cap tying it to figures from 2006 including the amount appropriated (Missouri) and student numbers (Florida). (See Appendix, Table 34.)

**Programs Funded at the State Level**

In a separate question, respondents were asked to indicate which of a variety of programs were funded at the state level. Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate and ACT/SAT/Discover tests were cited most frequently (14), followed by schools for math and science (10), summer governor’s schools (9), then virtual high schools (8), and schools for fine and performing arts (8). (See Appendix, Table 29.)
III. MANDATES TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE GIFTED STUDENTS

States vary regarding identification and services for gifted and talented students. Although some states mandate identification and/or services via state policy or law, LEAs have great flexibility in the process used and the services offered, which resulted in differences not only among states, but also among LEAs within certain states.

Of 40 responding states, 32 had some form of legal mandate related to gifted and talented education. The authority for these mandates derived from a variety of sources, including state law specific to gifted education (23), state department of education policy (11), administrative rule (10), SEA guidelines (8), and state law specific to disabled and gifted education (7). Respondents from all states provided the citations for their mandates. (See Appendix, Table 13.)
Of the 32 states reporting having mandates related to gifted and talented students, nearly all (28) required both identification and services, while 4 states required identification only. (See Appendix, Table 13.)

Of the 32 states with mandates related to gifted and talented education, 4 states fully funded the mandate at the state level, 20 partially funded the mandate, and eight did not fund the mandate. One respondent with a mandate did not provide the level of funding for at least one of the past three years. (See Appendix, Table 13.)

Respondents were asked if their states required certain services that were aligned with special education. The services that were most likely to be mandated for gifted and talented students were free appropriate public education (16) and non-discriminatory testing (16). Services such as least restrictive environment (5) and mediation (7) were less frequently required. (See Appendix, Table 13.)

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**Funding for State Gifted Mandates**

- Mandated with full funding, 4
- Mandated with partial funding, 20
- Mandated with no funding, 8

**Required GT Services Aligned with Special Education**

- Free appropriate public education: 16
- Non-discriminatory testing: 16
- None required: 15
- Dispute resolution: 13
- Due process: 12
- Individual education plan for gifted students: 9
- Child find: 8
- Mediation: 7
- Least restrictive environment: 4
- Related services: 0

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*2014-2015 State of the States in Gifted Education*
IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

This section addresses the areas in which LEAs are answerable to the state for gifted and talented education services and outcomes, as well as the data collected and reported by the state to the public.

Twenty-one of 40 responding states monitored and/or audited LEA programs for gifted and talented students through a system of reporting, submission and approval of local gifted education plans, in response to complaints, and on-site interviews, among other strategies. (See Appendix, Table 20 and Table 21.)

LOCAL GIFTED EDUCATION PLANS

Eighteen states (of 40) required LEAs to submit their gifted education plans to the SEA; the SEA must approve the plans in only 12 of them. (See Appendix, Table 21.)

Ten of the states that required state-level approval of LEA gifted plans required that the plans include descriptions of the identification processes used. Ten also required approval of plans for programming (10), program evaluation (8), teacher training (8), personnel (6), funding (5), the definition of gifted and talented used by the LEA (5), and family engagement/involvement (4). Arizona and Arkansas required LEAs to provide professional development and Colorado required that students provide specific information related to record keeping, confidentiality, early access provisions, and resolving disagreements. (See Appendix, Table 21.)
**REPORTING TO THE STATE**

Twenty-four states (of 40) required LEAs to report on their gifted education services. The criteria most frequently required in reports were service options (18), teacher training (15), program evaluation (12), a demographic breakdown of students served (10), and student achievement/performance (7). Other requirements were added by respondents including identification procedures (5). (See Appendix, Table 20.)

![LEA GT Report Requirements](image)

**STATE REPORTING**

Eleven states (of 39 reporting) include gifted education indicators—usually the number of identified students (10)—as part of district report cards or other state accountability reporting forms. Indicators also included the availability of program options such as AP/International Baccalaureate classes, (7) and dual or concurrent enrollment, (6), along with information about gifted students’ learning growth (3) and achievement/performance (2) as separate groups. (See Appendix, Table 3.)
Eleven states produced a state report on gifted education; most (9) were available online at the time of this report. (See Appendix, Table 3.)

Thirty-one states reported using NAGC’s Pre-K to 12 gifted programming standards to aid in the accountability process as well as the basis of state programming standards, evaluation tools, and reporting. For example, Alabama used them as an evaluation tool, while Louisiana used them as a reference for improving gifted and talented programming. (See Appendix, Table 38.)

V. DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS

Although there is a federal definition of giftedness in the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110 [Title IX, Part A, Definition 22] [2002]; 20 USC 7801[22] [2004]), states have the authority to determine their own definition to guide identification and programming options.

Of the 39 responding states, 37 had a state definition of gifted/talented. This definition was found in state statutes (13), state rules and regulations (23), and other sources (1), with many states’ definitions found in multiple locations. Respondents from 35 states included citations and 33 provided URLs for their states’ definitions. (See Appendix, Table 12.)

State definitions of gifted and talented encompassed multiple areas, with almost all including intellectually gifted (34) and most including academically gifted (24), performing/visual arts (21), creatively gifted (21), and/or specific academic areas (20). Far fewer state definitions included specific populations of gifted/talented students, such as low SES (9), ESL/ELL (8), culturally or ethnically diverse (8), gifted with a disability (6), or geographically isolated/rural (3). Some states address other factors such as Arkansas including task commitment and high potential. (See Appendix, Table 12.)
In most of the 37 states that had a state definition of gifted and talented, LEAs were required to use the state definition (30). However, LEAs in 7 states were not required to use the same definition that was found in state law, rule, or regulation. (See Appendix, Table 12.)

VI. IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

States vary widely on the degree to which the state guides or directs the process of identifying gifted and talented students, including which students were identified, through which methods, and at what point in their education. States also reported on corresponding program service options. As noted above, 32 states mandated the identification of gifted and talented students. This section includes more details about how much of the identification process was regulated at the state level, as well as different identification processes used and the demographics of identified gifted students.

STATE INVOLVEMENT IN IDENTIFICATION

Schools in 33 states were required to use specific criteria and/or methods to identify gifted and talented students. In 12 of those states, the criteria/methods were determined at the state level; in 21 states the criteria/methods were determined entirely at the local level; in 3 states criteria/methods were determined at both the state and local levels. Respondents from 8 states indicated that schools were not required to use specific identification criteria or methods. The majority of states (34) did provide their LEAs with some guidance on the identification process, even if the specific process to be used was not mandated. (See Appendix, Table 14 and Table 15.)
Thirty-three states provided information on the criteria or methods required for the identification of gifted and talented students. The majority of these states required the use of a multiple criteria model (19), and all 19 specified at least two types of required information. The most frequently required criteria include IQ scores (13), achievement data (13), nominations (12), a range of state-approved assessments (9), and portfolios (8). (See Appendix, Table 14.)

In 28 responding states, LEAs within the same state were not required to use the same identification process. In 19 states, policy left the identification process to the LEA and there was no state policy in 3 states. There were other aspects of the identification process that some states regulated. For example, 21 states required parent/guardian involvement in decisions related to gifted and talented identification or services. (See Appendix, Table 14 and Table 15.)

Some states had policies that affect students who relocate. Out of 39 responding states, 12 specified that gifted and talented program/service eligibility is transferrable within the same state, while most states left this decision to the LEAs, either by policy (11) or by the absence of policy (18). Far fewer (5) specified that gifted and talented eligibility may transfer from other states, again leaving the decision to the LEAs through policy (8) or by absence of a policy (20). Five states did not permit GT eligibility to transfer between states. (See Appendix, Table 29.)
HOW AND WHEN GIFTED STUDENTS WERE IDENTIFIED

Nine of 30 responding states required gifted and talented students to be identified at specific times. The most commonly required times followed parent or teacher referrals (5) or when students transfer from out of state (4).

In addition to providing information on whether states required students to be identified at specific times, respondents for 27 states provided information about when gifted and talented students were usually identified. Most states reported students being identified based on teacher referral (19) or parent referral (19), followed by identification at multiple points in K-12 (17), following student referrals (13), and transfers from out of state (10). (See Appendix, Table 15.)


**STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS GIFTED AND TALENTED**

Whether a student was identified as gifted and talented continued to depend on where he or she lives. Although 32 states reported having a mandate for identification, 18 reported 100% of their LEAs identify gifted and talented students. The rest reported a range of 16% to 99.7%, with 3 states reporting no statewide data. (See Appendix, Table 13 and Table 14.)

Due partially to this variation in identification among LEAs and also to the different definitions and identification processes used, the percent of states’ students who were identified as gifted also varied. Two states had limits on the percent of students a district may identify as gifted. These were Maine with 3-5% in the academic areas 3-5% in the arts and Connecticut with 5%.

Respondents were asked to provide information about the percentage of gifted and talented students in their state that belong to various demographic groups. This information was not universally available. With 22 states reporting data for ethnicity, 21 for gender, 15 for students with disabilities, 14 for students categorized as low SES, and 12 for English language learners (ELL). (See Appendix, Table 17 for all demographic data.)

- Eleven states reported having a greater number of female than male students identified as gifted and talented. Among the 19 states reporting on collected data (not by estimate), gender proportions ranged from 43.3% male/56.7% female (Hawaii) to 50%/50% male/female (Iowa, Maine, and North Carolina).
• It was difficult to compare ethnicity data from multiple states in a meaningful manner due to the variation in ethnicities in state populations. Readers should refer to Table 17 in the Appendix for ethnicity information for the state(s) of interest.

• Of the 12 states with information about the percentage of identified gifted students who were ELL, 7 reported 1% or fewer. The largest reported percent was in Colorado with 4.58%.

• The 15 states reporting the percentage of identified gifted students who had disabilities gave responses ranging from 0.1% (Kansas) to 6% (Washington).

• Of the 14 states reporting, the identified gifted students who were low SES varied widely, from a low of <1% (Iowa) to a high of 38.93% (Arkansas).

VII. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

Twenty-eight states reported having mandates that required services for gifted and talented students. This section contains additional information about the types of gifted programs and services required by the state, those offered by LEAs, and the students who received those services at the local level at different grade levels.

TYPES OF GIFTED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Thirty-two states reported on programs or services required for specific categories of giftedness and talent. Most of these states required services for intellectual giftedness (22) and/or gifts and talents in academic areas both general (17) and specific (16). Nine states reported that programs or services were not required.

LEAs most commonly offered services related to general academic areas (19) and visual/performing arts (19), followed by intellectual (18) and specific academic areas (18). They also offered services related to creativity (16,) and leadership (15). (See Appendix, Table 18.)
The particular components of gifted programs and services were largely left to LEA authority, but some states required specific components including differentiated instruction (12), social-emotional support (9), content-based acceleration (8), requirements on contact time (7) and academic guidance and counseling (6). Otherwise, the LEAs determined program components. (See Appendix, Table 28.)

Some states included attention to gifted students in their Response to Intervention (RtI) or MTSS frameworks. While the majority of states (30) left it up to the LEA to determine if gifted students were included in the framework, whether by no state policy (25) or state policy leaving it to the LEA to determine (5), while 9 states specifically permitted attention to gifted students. (See Appendix, Table 29.)
NAGC’s Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards also influenced the design and delivery of gifted programs and services in several states. Of the 33 respondents to an open-ended question about the use of these standards, several cited their use in the creation of program standards, evaluation tools, program design, and self-evaluation. (See Appendix, Table 38.)

**SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS**

Among the 15 respondents who were able to estimate the most frequently used delivery methods in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, the most common methods were regular classroom (11), resource room (10), cluster classrooms (8), and continuous progress/self-paced learning (7). (See Appendix, Table 23.)

Twenty-two respondents were able to estimate the most frequently used delivery methods for early elementary, or grades 1-3. The same four methods were most common at this level as in pre-K and kindergarten, albeit in a slightly different order: cluster classrooms (16), resource rooms (14), regular classrooms (14), and self-contained classrooms (9). (See Appendix, Table 23.)
Twenty-two respondents were able to estimate the most frequently used delivery methods for upper elementary, or grades 4-6. Cluster classrooms (17), resource rooms (15), subject acceleration (12), and self-contained classrooms (11) were the top delivery models. Unlike PreK-K, early elementary, and middle school, regular classrooms were not in the top three at this level. (See Appendix, Table 23.)
Among the 22 states with responses for most frequently used delivery methods in middle school, honors/advanced coursework (15) was the most common, followed by regular classrooms (14), and cluster classrooms (13). (See Appendix, Table 23.)

![Middle School Top GT Delivery Models](chart)

The 26 respondents who were able to estimate the high school delivery methods indicated that Advanced Placement (23), dual enrollment in college (18), honors/advanced coursework (17), and International Baccalaureate (12) were used most frequently. (See Appendix, Table 23.)
**WHICH STUDENTS RECEIVED SERVICES**

Of the 24 states that reported data regarding the number of gifted and talented students served, 19 reported serving all identified students. The remaining states reported serving more than 85% of identified students, with the exception of Idaho (38%) and Connecticut (56%), with Connecticut having only a mandate to identify, but not to provide services. (See Appendix, Table 16.)

Twenty-four states reported that services were required at particular grade levels. Most of those (21) required services for all grades from Kindergarten to grade 12, and another three also include pre-kindergarten. Of the remaining states, 4 required starting services later, in grade 2 (Nevada, Mississippi) or grade 3 (Maine and South Carolina) and one of those states stopped requiring services earlier, at grade 6 (Mississippi). Most states that did not require services did offer services in grades 1-12, (See Appendix, Table 19.)
This section reviews requirements for professionals in specialized gifted programs, general education teachers, and other education professionals with regard to training and professional development in gifted and talented education.
PROFESSIONALS IN GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Professionals in specialized gifted and talented programs were required to have gifted education credentials in 19 of the 29 responding states. Five states had written competencies (other than endorsement or certification standards) for teachers in GT programs. Twelve states reported 70% or more of their gifted education professionals had a gifted and talented endorsement, five reported less than 69%, and 11 did not collect data or the question was not applicable. Seventeen states provided estimates for the percentage of professionals in GT programs who received annual professional development. Responses ranged from less than 10% (3) to two states estimating 100%, and 12 states estimating between 30-85%. (See Appendix, Table 32 and Table 33.)

States Requiring Professionals Working in Gifted Programs to Have Certification or Endorsement

Out of 40 states reporting, 10 required districts to have a gifted and talented administrator, none were required to be full time and only one (Arkansas) required the administrator to have gifted and talented training. Responses varied widely regarding the percentage of LEAs that had full-time gifted and talented administrators. Percentages ranged from 80% of LEAs (Arkansas) to 1% or lower in 6 states, while 10 states were unable to report. (See Appendix, Table 22 and Table 33.)
Most general education teachers were unlikely to be required to receive any training or professional development in gifted and talented education. One state (Nevada) required, by state statute, a separate course in gifted education at the pre-service level. Twelve states reported that all pre-service teacher candidates are required to receive coursework by teacher preparation programs (9), or by LEAs (5). Twenty-five states reported discussion within-state about increasing all pre-service teachers’ knowledge and skills in working with gifted students through changes in licensure requirements (2), including reference to gifted/advanced students in state teacher preparation standards (11), and others, including gifted advocates discussing the issue (4). (See Appendix, Table 30.)

Thirty-nine states reported requirements for general education teachers to receive professional development on gifted students after initial certification with only five states requiring through policy (without any set number of hours). Twenty-three states leave it up to LEAs due to state policy (5), or absence of state policy (18), while another 11 make it voluntary. (See Appendix, Table 31.)
Thirty-nine states also reported on whether general education teachers received continuing education units (CEUs) on gifted students after initial certification. Three states required it, with only Mississippi requiring a specific number of 5 hours. Another 4 states had policy leaving it up to the LEAs to determine, 20 states had no state policy, leaving it up to the LEAs to determine, or left it voluntary (12).

Out of 38 reporting states, three required general education teachers to receive other training on gifted students after initial certification, but not specifying the number of required hours. State policy left to LEA determination in 6 states, there was no state policy in 15 states, leaving it to LEA determination; it was voluntary in 14 states. Ten states were unable to report on the percentage of general education teachers receiving this training. Of those that reported figures, the percentage ranged from 0% to 85%, with 6 states reporting that figure to be 5% or less. (See Appendix, Table 30 and Table 31.)
Regarding training for other school professionals, four states out of 35 required administrators to have coursework on the nature and needs of gifted students. Similarly, four states out of 33 required GT coursework for counselors. (See Appendix, Table 33.)

**Certifications and Degrees in Gifted and Talented Education**

Most states (29) offered a credential in gifted and talented education, although as noted above it was only required for professionals in 19 states. The number of hours required for credentialing varied, ranging from 6 to 36 credit hours. (See Appendix, Table 32.) Methods of earning hours for certification varied from course semester credit hours (25), continuing education units (8), staff development (7), and other means (11) including work and practicum experience. With degrees offering a pathway to licensure, states reported degrees with an emphasis in gifted education at the Bachelor’s (9), Master’s (33), Specialist’s (12), Ed.D. (13), and Ph.D. (10) levels along with two others in the form of supplementary licenses and a teacher preparation in gifted education certificate. (See Appendix, Table 31 and Table 32.)

**IX. Related Policies and Practices**

This section discusses areas of education policy that had or may have implications for gifted students from the time they enter kindergarten through graduation from high school.

**Acceleration and Proficiency-Based Promotion**

Academic acceleration policies were generally set at the local level. Thirteen states had policies that specifically permitted acceleration, while 12 states had policies leaving it to the LEA to determine; 15 states had no state-level policy, again leaving it to the LEA’s authority. No state reported having a policy that prohibited acceleration. (See Appendix, Table 24.)

Proficiency-based credit/promotion was more likely to be addressed at the state level, with 19 states specifically permitting the practice and 4 states prohibiting it. The remaining 14 states allowed the LEAs to determine policy, either explicitly through state policy (6) or implicitly through the absence of policy (8). (See Appendix, Table 27.)

LEAs usually determined the methods by which proficiency may be demonstrated (14). State-reported measures included end of course assessment (7), performance (5), standardized tests (4), portfolios (4), multiple choice tests (3), essays (2), lab experiments (2), or oral exam (2).

LEAs also determined the advancement options available to students who had demonstrated proficiency (17), although states reported options such as grad/course advancement (9), dual/concurrent enrollment (9), independent study (6), individualized instruction (5), cross-grade grouping (5), cluster grouping (5), internship (5), individualized education programs (5), correspondence courses (4), and other means (3) including online courses. (See Appendix, Table 27.)
Seventeen states allowed credit towards high school graduation for demonstrated proficiency, while two others left that determination to the LEA. (See Appendix, Table 27.)

**Early Entrance into Kindergarten**

Thirty-nine states reported on early entrance to Kindergarten. Seven states had policy that specifically permitted it, 19 states left it to the LEA to determine (10 with policy and 9 without), and 13 had policy that did not permit it. Of the states that permit early entrance to Kindergarten, two (MN, TX) require students to perform satisfactorily on an assessment; one (AZ) requires a “best interest of the child” determination; one requires that the child demonstrates capability warranting early admission (MD); and one state (KY) provides other guidance. (See Appendix, Table 24.)
**DUAL ENROLLMENT**

Twenty-eight states had state policy that specifically permitted dual or concurrent enrollment in a community college, college, or university. Twelve left it to LEA authority (seven with state policy and five without).

![Dual Enrollment Policy Chart](chart.png)

Ten states left the earliest grade and age of eligibility to LEA authority, but states that did specify included grade 9 (7), 10 (2), and 11 (2), with others including middle school grades without specifying which ones.

![Earliest Grade for Dual Enrollment Chart](chart2.png)

For age eligibility, 16 states left it to LEA determination, one specified age 14, another specified age 16, and eight others noted additional considerations such as those not specifying age requirements.
Twenty-two states had policy that specifically permitted high school credit to be given for courses completed at a community college or university, while five left it up to the LEA to determine (4 with state policy and one with no policy). Tuition was paid by the family (20), LEA (18), SEA (7), or other means (7) such as grants or waivers.

More states left decisions regarding dual/concurrent enrollment in middle school and high school to LEAs. Ten states had policy that specifically permitted it, 26 left it up to the LEA (16 with policy and 10 without), and 2 had policy that did not permit it. Of those 10 specifically permitting it, nine had policy permitting the middle school students to receive credit toward high school graduation for the courses in which they were dually/concurrently enrolled, but one state did not permit it. (See Appendix, Table 25 and Table 26.)

X. NEW DEVELOPMENTS, CONCERNS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Respondents were asked if there had been any recent changes to their state rules and regulations that might impact GT education. Of the 33 who responded, 30 named one or more changes, with wide variation among those changes. Some experienced funding changes, ranging from general increases (Nevada) to specific supports such as the restoration of summer
programs in Arkansas and the expansion of dual enrollment to grades 9-10 in Minnesota. Other states experienced new or different sources of funding. Idaho’s schools superintendent included GT as a line budget item, Nebraska began using general funds instead of lottery money, and Iowa enacted new legislation providing funding to districts.

Some states reported new or updated requirements for LEA planning. Delaware enacted regulations requiring LEAs to plan for service and implementation, while Minnesota mandated districts adopt guidelines for assessing and identifying students for participation in GT programs. Pennsylvania required LEAs to develop comprehensive plans, while Colorado updated requirements for LEAs to write annual targets for improving student achievement and/or growth.

States offered a variety of resources including video libraries (South Carolina), lists of tests for identification (Arizona), online differentiation courses for teachers (Hawaii) and curriculum resources (Indiana). Montana’s state Office of Public Instruction is set to release guidance for program development, offerings, and strategies, while North Carolina created new state government divisions to oversee GT programs and Colorado increased the number of regional network centers to better serve rural areas.

States cited the importance of partnerships including advocacy groups providing support (California, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Wyoming) by following legislative sessions (Utah) or pushing for revision to funding (Virginia), and partnering with NAGC to increase awareness and support (Arizona). States had higher education institutions conducting relevant work such as validating and scaling-up nontraditional methods to identify historically underserved populations (California) or partnered with them (South Carolina). States also cited partnerships with other groups including such as a gifted work group and legislative task force in Mississippi and Missouri’s Advisory Council that presented its first report.

Other states also had initiatives to support underrepresented populations of gifted and talented learners, such as Virginia. Arizona partnered with ELL and Title I programs. Colorado implemented twice-exceptional professional development and Texas developed a twice-exceptional website. Georgia and Utah reported focusing on low-income groups.

There were other positive changes in programming and policies such as dual-enrollment (Rhode Island) ACCEL acceleration law (Florida), voluntary gifted endorsement (Illinois), hybrid programming of face-to-face offerings with technology for students (Kansas), early Kindergarten and graduation from high school (Kentucky), Young Scholars Programs (Minnesota), and updating Rule 3 for high-ability learners (Nebraska).

States reported changes for teachers such as an increase in qualifications for GT teachers (Delaware), a requirement for teachers to be highly qualified (Colorado), and endorsements (Illinois). Wisconsin has districts combining comprehensive strategies (identification, programming, family engagement) to identify and serve underrepresented students.
Washington’s legislature added the K-12 Highly Capable Students Program (HCP) to the state’s basic education requirements. Districts were given the 2013-14 school year to develop their Grades K-12 HCP and began serving identified students at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year. (See Appendix, Table 37 for the full state responses on developments and innovations.)

Eighteen states reported there will be changes to GT teacher training or curriculum planning as the Common Core is implemented. Eighteen states reported that the change is being made at the state level, an increase from 11 in the previous report, with districts doing the work in 5 of the states, down from 14 in the previous report. This increase in state rather than LEA level work seems to run contrary to the pattern of primarily LEA control observed throughout the rest of the data. Twelve states were not making changes to GT teacher training or curriculum planning in alignment with the Common Core. (See Appendix, Table 38.)

**Concerns**

Respondents were asked to rate forces in terms of the positive or negative effects on the delivery of gifted education services in their state within the past two years on a scale ranging from very negative to very positive (coded -3 to 3 for the purposes of this analysis). They were also given the choice of not applicable. Most responses ranged from slightly negative to slightly positive. However, there were several factors with average responses above 1.0 or below -1.0, or otherwise notable response profiles. (See Appendix, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7.)

- The most positively rated force was state mandate (1.63), however, 6 states rated this as not applicable. The labeled lack of state mandate was rated negatively at -0.94 with no positive ratings and 18 raters choosing not applicable. (See Appendix, Table 4.)
- Forces related to funding were rated across a range. Change in state funding for education (average -0.04) was rated negatively. Change in state funding for gifted education (average 0.44) was rated positively. The only force in this category that was phrased as a negative was a decrease in general education formula (funding or FTE) (average -1.13). (See Appendix, Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6.)
- Professional development initiatives in gifted education were rated positively (average 1.44), with five rating it as not applicable. (See Appendix, Table 5.)
- Compliance/monitoring was rated as a positive force (average 0.97) in states that reported it was applicable to them. Conversely, lack of compliance/monitoring was rated negatively (average -0.44). (See Appendix, Table 5 and Table 6.)
- Two other forces, differentiated instruction (average 1.28) and focus on needs in STEM (average 1.37), had high ratings and none rated not applicable. (See Appendix, Table 6.) Two forces were related to concerns about gifted education’s omission from federal education law. Both of these forces, federal K-12 education law focus on struggling learners (average -.63) and lack of recognition of GT students in federal education law (average -1.62) were rated negatively, with none rating positively or not applicable (See Appendix, Table 4 and Table 5.)

Three forces were rated as neutral, with nearly as many ratings at either end of the spectrum and most at 0. The ability grouping debate split states with a resulting average rating of exactly 0.00, while charter schools averaged 0.10. Similarly, the rating of state assessments was 0.03.
However, that seems perhaps in contrast to the focus on student growth for accountability that rated third highest with an average of 1.41. (See Appendix, Table 36.)

Common Core state standards were viewed by most as positive, with an average rating of 0.86, with only 3 negative responses. Likewise, implementation of the Common Core (average 1.00) received no negative responses, although 9 states rated it as not applicable. The Response to Intervention (RtI) framework was viewed as slightly less positive (average .97), but only received 2 negative responses. (See Appendix, Table 7.) Other programming elements such as acceleration implementation (0.97) and standards based instruction (0.97) were rated positively, as was the initiative of effective teacher and principal reform.

Respondents were also asked to name other positive and/or negative forces affecting gifted education in their states, and 22 did so. Of those, 13 named positive forces including statements about state requirements for services (6), support from states’ department of education leadership initiatives, increases in advanced offerings and initiatives, support from advocacy groups, and legislation. However, legislation also factored in the negative forces, along with funding challenges and a lack of trained personnel. (See Appendix, Table 7.)
**Future Directions**

Respondents were asked how federal policy could potentially benefit gifted students. The most cited benefit was increased accountability for GT students learning (31), followed by increasing teachers’ capacity to differentiate curriculum (27), and conducting research to determine and disseminate best practices (25). (See Appendix, Table 36.)

![Bar chart showing ways federal policy could benefit gifted students and families](chart.png)

Respondents were asked to rate the degree of attention needed to 17 different areas. Ratings ranged from most in need of attention to least in need of attention (coded from -2 to 2 in this analysis). Respondents indicated that all areas needed attention, though the degree of need varied. Ratings differed from the previous report. Of note, inclusion of underrepresented students in gifted education (e.g., low SES, ethnicity, disabled, ELL, rural) was singled out last time for the number of negative responses it received, yet this time it rated highest in need for attention (average 1.38). Funding for gifted education which ranked first last time, was fourth this time (average 1.19), following national mandate for gifted education (average 1.33) and pre-service training at the undergraduate level in gifted education average 1.27). The theme of teacher training continued with professional training for general education teachers to provide gifted/talented instruction (average 1.16) rating fifth. However, teaching standards for licensure/endorsement ranked next to last (-0.56), just ahead of state definition of gifted (-0.64). (See Appendix, Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10.)
### Areas of Gifted Needing Attention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Least in need of attention</th>
<th>Not in need of attention</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>In need of attention</th>
<th>Most in need of attention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State definition of gifted</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Mastery of math in elementary teachers of the GT</td>
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<td>Mastery of science in elementary teachers of the GT</td>
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<td>Use of alternative assessments</td>
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<td>Curriculum that differentiates state standards</td>
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<td>Use of above-grade level state assessments</td>
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<td>Class/district assessments of above-grade mastery</td>
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<td>Pre-service training at undergraduate level in GT</td>
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**Number of Responses**