Investigating Inequality in Advanced Learning

**Representation Index (RI)**

A representation index is a simple formula used to determine to what degree a certain population of students is represented in your high ability/high potential or “gifted” population compared to the general population. Computing a representation index is pretty simple. In order to compute an RI you will need to know the percentage of students identified as high ability/high potential who come from a given student population (% Gifted) as well as the percentage of students in your overall district population who are from that same student subgroup (% General).

\[
RI = \frac{\% \text{ Gifted}}{\% \text{ General}}
\]

For example, if your high ability population is made up of 14% African American students, but your district population is made up of 28% African Americans then your RI would be:

\[
.50 = \frac{14}{28}
\]

An RI of .50 means that African American students are represented about *half as much* in the identified population as they are in the general population. An RI of 1.0 means perfect representation, but we caution you not to focus on this as an arbitrary goal. A little more or a little less is okay. We suggest you use RIs as a way to think more critically about how your identify students for specialized programs or interventions and what policies, practices, and biases might lead to underrepresentation or overrepresentation of student sub-populations.

**Computing Your District RI for Income and Language Groups**

*Income:*

\[\]

\[
\text{\% General}
\]

\[
\text{\% Gifted}
\]

\[
\text{Your District’s RI for Income}
\]

*Language Proficiency:*

\[
\text{\% General}
\]

\[
\text{\% Gifted}
\]

\[
\text{Your District’s RI for Language Proficiency}
\]
Fining Your District’s or School’s Gifted Education Representation

Of course, you can determine how representative your identified gifted population is using your own local data (if you have it), but you can also use the US Office of Civil Rights data collection system to do the same thing for any district or school in the country. The only downside is that it’s a few years old.


2. Next, click “school & district search” in the top left corner

3. Choose if you want to search for a school or entire district using the tabs at the top of the page.
4. Type in the school / district name and select the appropriate state and click “search”

5. Up should come the search results. Click on the one you want.

6. Up will come the school or district’s overall profile. On this page you can find student subgroup enrollment in calculus, physics, chemistry, and gifted and talented programs.
7. Scroll down about 1/3 of the way. On the right hand side you will see “gifted/talented enrollment” – click that
7. Up will pop even more data regarding student subgroups and enrollment in gifted education as well as early algebra enrollment. You will then need to compare these percentages to the percentages with which each group is represented in the overall school or district in order to get an idea of proportionality. Luckily, both data pieces are provided in Step 6.

![Graph showing race/ethnicity enrollment percentages](image)

African American: \[rac{27.9\%}{48.5\%} = RI = 0.58 \]

Latinx: \[rac{20.5\%}{25.7\%} = RI = 0.80 \]
**LEP Status**

- **n = 3,511**
- **12.7%**

- **n = 56**
- **2.4%

\[
\frac{2.4\%}{12.7\%} = RI = 0.19
\]

**Disability Status**

- **n = 5,134**
- **18.1%**

- **n = 138**
- **6.0%**

\[
\frac{6\%}{18.1\%} = RI = 0.33
\]