

**ARKANSAS ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR THE EDUCATION OF
GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN**

**REPORT
JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021**

***ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
2021***



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

ARKANSAS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

**Haley Jones
Chairperson**

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Johnny Key, Secretary
Arkansas Department of Education**

OFFICE OF EDUCATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

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2020-2021
GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
GIFTED/TALENTED EDUCATION

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GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR GIFTED EDUCATION

July 2021

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson
Governor of the State of Arkansas
State Capitol
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Hutchinson:

Arkansas continues to rank high among national state leaders in Gifted Education. The Council is pleased to share good news about Arkansas strides in Gifted Education. We offer our recommendations and thoughts to ensure continued growth in serving our academically strong students who will be in the forefront of leadership and who will grow the economy and business of Arkansas.

Act 56 Selection of Outstanding Gifted Programs: The Council recognized the following districts as Outstanding Gifted Programs in 2020:

School Districts less than 1,000 students: Paris
School Districts 1,000-3,000 students: Berryville
School Districts greater than 3,000 students: Fayetteville

Advanced Placement: The State of Arkansas continues to be a national leader in the growth of Advanced Placement college level courses. AP in Arkansas serves a nationally recognized diverse population of students statewide. Arkansas is one of the few states that pays the AP exam fees for all or part of the costs of public school students taking the Advanced Placement exams.

Summer Enrichment Programs (AEGIS programs): ACT 814 provides an appropriation for Academic Enrichment for the Gifted in Summer, allowing for many schools and other organizations around the state to take advantage of offering summer programs. During summer of 2020, due to COVID-19, AEGIS programs did not occur. Funds were appropriated to more organizations for special summer offerings to youth across Arkansas.

The Arkansas Governor's School (AGS) was held virtually during the summer of 2020. The transition to virtual went very well and the program was hugely successful. The Advisory Council had its July meeting via Zoom and received an update from AGS leadership. The Council was very impressed with the good work that was taking place.

The Advisory Council requests your continued support of Gifted Education as you examine the following recommendations:

- 1. Gifted Services in Charter Schools and Districts with Charter-Like Waivers (Act 1240 of 2015):** Remove the option of a waiver of services to gifted and talented students (6-42-101 et seq.) or a waiver of the ADE Rules for Gifted and Talented

Program Approval Standards (18) or of Pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement classes. As the number of students enrolled in Open Enrollment Charter Schools continues to grow along with the students in districts seeking charter-like waivers (Act 1240), the monitoring of the services to gifted students described in the charter agreements should be reviewed by the Office of Gifted and Talented to ensure students are being served as described in a school's approved charter. Services to gifted students should be monitored by trained, licensed GT personnel in the Office of Gifted and Talented to ensure equitable services. The Council notes that only four Open Enrollment Charter Schools have chosen not to waive the Standards for Gifted Program Approval. As more students enroll in Open Enrollment Charter Schools and attend schools in districts with charter-like waivers, it is important for the ADE's Office of Gifted and Talented to be involved in the accountability process of evaluating gifted services to ensure that the unique educational needs of gifted students are met.

2. **ACT 56 Funding Increase:** The award provided for the winners of the ACT 56 Outstanding Gifted Programs in § 6-42-104 (6)(A) and (B) should be increased from the current maximum amount of \$3,000 per award to \$5,000 per award. The amount of the award has not been raised since its inception more than twenty years ago. The amount of the award should be increased to promote services for gifted students that go beyond minimum standards.

Thank you for supporting Gifted Education and for allowing the Council to provide you with recommendations for further enhancement of Gifted Education services for all students of Arkansas.

Haley Jones
Chair, 2020-2021
Governor's Advisory Council for Gifted and Talented Education

STATUS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020-2021

2020-2021 Recommendations of the Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children

1. **Gifted Services in Charter Schools and Districts with Charter-Like Waivers (Act 1240 of 2015)**

Recommendation: Remove the option of a waiver of services to gifted and talented students (6-42-101 et seq.) or a waiver of the DESE Rules for Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards or of Advanced Placement classes.

Rationale: In Arkansas, receiving gifted services has been correlated with increased student achievement (OEP Blog Post, Appendix #). As the number of students enrolled in Open Enrollment Charter Schools continues to grow along with the students in districts seeking charter-like waivers (Act 1240), the monitoring of the services to gifted students described in the charter agreements should be reviewed by the Office of Gifted and Talented to ensure students are being served as described in the school's approved charter. Services to gifted students should be monitored by trained, licensed GT personnel in the Office of Gifted and Talented to ensure equitable services.

The Council notes that 21 of 24 Open Enrollment Charters operating during 2020-2021 school year have approved waivers related to gifted services. If approximately 5% of students enrolled in these schools are in need of gifted services, then the educational needs of 940 students may be unmet. As more students enroll in Open Enrollment Charter Schools and attend schools in districts with charter-like waivers, the Council thinks it is important for DESE's Office of Gifted and Talented to be involved in supporting the schools in providing services to gifted students and in the accountability process of evaluating gifted services to ensure that the unique educational and social and emotional needs of gifted students are met.

Status: Not Fulfilled

2. **ACT 56 Funding Increase**

Recommendation: The award provided for the winners of the ACT 56 Outstanding Gifted Programs in § 6-42-104 (6)(A) and (B) should be increased from the current maximum amount of \$3,000 per award to \$5,000 per award.

Rationale: The amount of the award has not been raised since its inception more than twenty years ago. The amount of the award should be increased to incentivize providing gifted services that exceed minimum standards.

Status: Not Fulfilled

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2021-2022

Recommendations of the **Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children** **2021-2022**

Priority 1. Gifted Services in Charter Schools and Districts with Charter-Like Waivers (Act 1240 of 2015)

Recommendation: Remove the option of a waiver of services to gifted and talented students (6-42-101 et seq.) or a waiver of the DESE Rules for Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards or of Advanced Placement classes.

Rationale: In Arkansas, receiving gifted services has been correlated with increased student achievement (OEP Blog Post, Appendix J). As the number of students enrolled in Open Enrollment Charter Schools continues to grow along with the students in districts seeking charter-like waivers (Act 1240), the monitoring of the services to gifted students described in the charter agreements should be reviewed by the Office of Gifted and Talented to ensure students are being served as described in the school's approved charter. Services to gifted students should be monitored by trained, licensed GT personnel in the Office of Gifted and Talented to ensure equitable services.

The Council notes that 21 of 24 Open Enrollment Charters operating during 2020-2021 school year have approved waivers related to gifted services. If approximately 5% of students enrolled in these schools are in need of gifted services, then the educational needs of 940 students may be unmet. As more students enroll in Open Enrollment Charter Schools and attend schools in districts with charter-like waivers, it is important for DESE's Office of Gifted and Talented to be involved in supporting the schools in providing services to gifted students and in the accountability process of evaluating gifted services to ensure that the unique educational and social and emotional needs of gifted students are met.

Priority 2. ACT 56 Funding Increase

Recommendation: The award provided for the winners of the ACT 56 Outstanding Gifted Programs in § 6-42-104 (6)(A) and (B) should be increased from the current maximum amount of \$3,000 per award to \$5,000 per award.

Rationale: In Arkansas, receiving gifted services has been correlated with increased student achievement (OEP Blog Post, Appendix J).

The amount of the award should be increased to incentivize providing gifted services that exceed minimum standards. The amount of the award has not been raised since its inception more than twenty years ago. Increased funding will allow programs to expand exemplary services for gifted students.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF GIFTED EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS

Responding to the concern for educational programming for gifted and talented students, the Arkansas General Assembly passed Act 106 of 1979. This legislation established the Office for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children, to include an administrator to direct the state program and funds were appropriated to provide financial assistance to school districts operating programs for gifted and talented students.

Guidelines were developed to provide information to assist districts in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for gifted and talented students. The document, Education of Gifted and Talented Students: Guidelines for Local Education Agencies, was approved by the State Board of Education in 1981.

Since that time, a number of pieces of legislation enacted have had a profound effect on gifted education.

Act 445 of 1983, the Quality Education Act, established minimum standards for accreditation of public schools and authorized the State Board to name a committee to recommend regulations, criteria, and minimum standards. The Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools, which were adopted by the State Board of Education February 22, 1984, included a provision that all districts must provide a program for gifted and talented students.

Act 34 of 1983, First Extraordinary Session, the School Finance Act, provided funding for districts that were developing or operating programs for gifted and talented students. The Department of Education was directed to set aside annually, beginning in 1984-85, funds for program development, not to exceed \$6 million. Districts which were operating approved programs were eligible to receive funds based on an “add on” weight of .25 for each student identified as gifted and talented (funding was based on no more than five percent of the district’s average daily membership).

The original guidelines developed to assist districts were then refined and updated and became the Rules and Regulations for Gifted Education in Arkansas. The document, Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards, was approved by the State Board in 1987, revised in 1999 and again in 2009.

Act 917 of 1995 changed the funding process to local school districts regarding gifted and talented students. The new law stipulated an expenditure requirement replacing the funding provision that had previously existed. This expenditure requirement reads: Local school districts shall expend from state and local revenues not less than the following amounts for gifted and talented programs, in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education – the previous year’s average daily membership participating in gifted and talented programs, up to five percent (5%) of the previous year’s average daily membership, multiplied by fifteen hundredths (.15) times the base local revenue per student. The following

definition shall guide districts in providing services and opportunities for students identified as gifted and talented in Arkansas:

Gifted and talented children and youth are those of high potential or ability whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and/or services.

Possession of these talents and gifts, or the potential for their development, will be evidenced through an interaction of above average intellectual ability, task commitment and/or motivation, and creative ability.

Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards, 2009, outline standards that every school district in Arkansas must meet in order to provide an approved gifted program for students in their districts. These are minimum, not optimum, standards and enable school districts to establish equitable criteria for identification of gifted and talented students, establish programs which will lead to appropriate educational opportunities for these students, and establish procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions of these educational opportunities. Districts are encouraged to go beyond the standards in providing educational opportunities for their gifted and talented students. Standards include the areas of community involvement, staff development, personnel, identification, program options, curriculum, and evaluation. Evidence verifying compliance with the standards should be kept on file at the district and available for review by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education when the district is monitored. Districts submit an annual program approval application to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education detailing how the district will serve gifted students. In 2012-13, this application changed from an electronic application that was printed and mailed to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to an online form. The submission of policies and procedures for schools being monitored was embedded in their online program approval application.

At that time, each district was monitored by staff members of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Gifted and Talented, every three years.

Beginning in 2015-2016, districts began receiving Technical Assistance Visits (TAVs) rather than monitoring visits. Visits were designed to help districts create a plan to correct any compliance issues with Gifted and Talented (GT) Standards to allow for the approval of GT programs. In 2017-18 the online Gifted and Talented Program Approval Application was revised to address only the annual requirements for GT services as established in GT Standards. The last year of visiting districts in cycles was 2017-18. Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, Technical Assistance Visits to districts are based primarily on established risk and need. However, a sample of programs are visited based on random selection to ensure all districts remain compliant. Onsite visits had been reduced from full days to half days in previous years, but in order to provide better technical assistance, full day visits to districts have been reinstated. GT policies and evidence of compliance with GT Standards are reviewed during on-site visits. If a district is not in compliance with GT Standards, a plan is developed to bring the district into compliance.

Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) courses are often utilized to serve gifted students at the secondary level. Rules are in place to help ensure that high schools offer at least one AP course in each core content area. [These rules](#) also specify that teachers must receive specific training to teach AP or Pre-AP, and students must complete the entire course and exam to receive weighted credit. Details about funding available for teacher training and for materials and equipment grants for AP courses are also contained in these rules. Schools receive incentive funds to utilize for improving their AP Program for each student score of three or higher on AP exams. Please see attachments for more information about the success Arkansas students are experiencing in AP.

The **Arkansas Governor's School**, a four-week or six-week residential program for gifted and talented students in the summer before their senior year, was established in 1980 and has operated each summer thereafter. Students are nominated for the Arkansas Governor's School (AGS) through their public, private, or home schools and are selected by a committee appointed by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. Selection is based on merit, measured by high intellectual potential, outstanding ability in an academic or artistic area, creativity, task commitment, and social/emotional maturity. Efforts are made to ensure a representative distribution from all school districts in the state, balanced proportions of male and female students, and an ethnic composition reflective of the state's demographic patterns. Members of the Governor's Advisory Council participate in the student and faculty selection processes.

Students are selected for content area classes in one of eight fields: choral music, drama, English/language arts, instrumental music, mathematics, natural science, social science, or visual arts. They also attend classes in general conceptual development and personal and social development. In addition, guest speakers, significant films, concerts, and dramatic productions provide experiences beyond the AGS classroom curriculum. The AGS curriculum does not replicate that of high school or college. Students are exposed to topics outside the traditional curriculum and are encouraged to become a member of a "community of learners."

The **Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children** was established with Act 106 of 1979. The council consists of nine members, appointed by the Governor, who are interested in the education of gifted and talented children.

Act 56 of 1983 authorized the Advisory Council to select annually up to three programs for gifted and talented students for recognition as outstanding programs. The Council may make awards of not more than \$3,000 to each of the recognized programs. Blind screening is used and districts are judged against those of similar size. Criteria for recognition include how a district's program has exceeded minimum standards, innovative and creative aspects, and appropriateness of the program for the size of the district.

Act 814 of 2015 appropriated funds for grants for Academic Enrichment for the Gifted and Talented in Summer Programs (AEGIS). AEGIS grants may be awarded to public or private agencies for the establishment of annual summer residential or day programs.

ARKANSAS GOVERNOR’S SCHOOL

Arkansas Governor’s School, inaugurated in 1980, celebrated its 41st year during the 2020 summer session. Approximately 15,700 students have been a part of this unique learning experience. In 2020, 440 students representing 114 high schools were accepted to attend AGS for four weeks at Arkansas Tech University. Thirty-five of these students were the only student attending from their high schools and 13 high schools had only two students attending.

The AGS curriculum was designed to (1) focus on contemporary and futuristic topics and issues and (2) provoke curiosity and inquiry from AGS students. AGS was divided into three areas of study: Area I (Visual Art, Choral Music, Drama, Instrumental Music, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, and Cybersecurity), Area II (Conceptual Development), and Area III (Personal and Social Development). As the host site, Arkansas Tech’s curriculum adhered to the rules governing AGS while also introducing a central thematic thread: technology. The incorporation of the central theme promoted integrated learning and discussion across Area I, II and III. Technological questions affect all areas. This central theme offered a relevant topic of reflection for contemporary students.

Arkansas Tech University will host the 2021 AGS from July 5th – August 1st.

Appendix C

STATE SUPPORT FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Pre-AP and AP Teacher Training

Summer 2020 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Training: \$692,450 was awarded to fund Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement teacher training held at Arkansas State University; the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Teachers Trained

99	ASTATE
205	UAF
<u>596</u>	UALR
900	Total

Nine Pre-AP Readiness Trainings were hosted by Crowley's Ridge and Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperatives. The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education provided grants totaling \$26,700 to support these Pre-AP Trainings.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Weighted Credit and AP Training Approval Committee approved a number of options to satisfy training requirements for AP and Pre-AP teachers in accordance with flexibility allowed by legislation passed in the 2019 session and DESE Rules Governing Grading and Course Credit.

Equipment and Materials Grants to AP Teachers

Grants totaling \$45,155.75 were awarded to 54 teachers of Advanced Placement courses to buy items needed for their AP classes.

AP Incentive Money for Scores of 3, 4, or 5

Arkansas high schools received \$50 for each qualifying score of 3, 4, or 5 earned by a student on an AP Exam as incentive money for AP programs. Schools received a total of \$838,450 to support their AP programs.

Appendix D

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM DATA

2020 Arkansas Highlights - AP[®] Participation and Performance:

- The number of Arkansas students taking AP exams in 2020 was 21,262, representing a 20.3% decrease from 2019 (26,684). **Due to COVID-19, taking the AP exam was not required in order to receive weighted credit for AP courses completed during the 2019-2020 school year.*
- The number of AP exams taken in 2020 was 36,765, a decrease of 20.5% from the previous year (46,247).
- There was a 0.3% decrease in the number of exams with scores of 3 or higher (16,789 exams) in 2020 compared with the increase in 2019 of 3.8% (16,844 exams).
- 5,537 Arkansas students used fee waivers for their exams in 2020.
- The most popular AP exams in Arkansas were English Language (5,945), US History (5,037), English Literature (3,969), World History (3,851), Biology (2,158), Psychology (2,146), Calculus AB (1,594), and Human Geography (1,403).

AP: 2020 AP Participation and Performance - Arkansas

Overall Participation

Total	Student Ct	% Change	
Total	21,262	-20.3%	100.0%

Participation By Gender

Gender	Student Ct	% Change						
Female	12,697	-19.5%	59.7%					
Male	8,504	-22.1%	40.0%					
Another	61	Null	0.3%					

Participation by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Student Ct	% Change						
American Indian	230	22.3%	1.1%					
Asian	937	-4.2%	4.4%					
Black	2,052	-38.5%	9.7%					
Hispanic or Latino	2,921	-20.2%	13.7%					
Pacific Islander	43	-41.9%	0.2%					
White	13,428	-19.4%	63.2%					
Two or more races	1,131	-11.0%	5.3%					
Other	0	Null	0.0%					
No Response	520	1.6%	2.4%					

Fee Reduction Usage

Students receiving Fee Reductions	5,537	26.0%						
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Overall Performance

Total	Exams Taken	% Change	Exams with score of 3, 4 or 5	% Change
Total	36,765	-20.5%	16,789	-0.3%

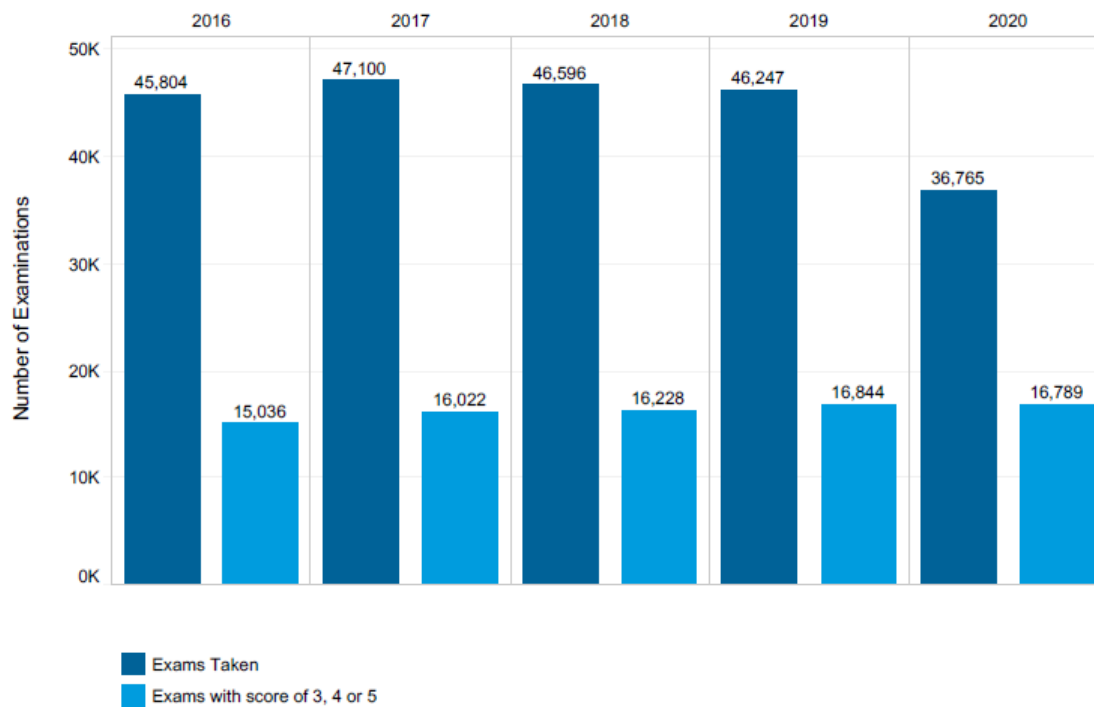
Performance by Gender

Gender	Exams Taken	% Change	Exams with score of 3, 4 or 5	% Change
Female	21,393	-21.0%	9,573	5.2%
Male	15,293	-20.2%	7,179	-7.3%
Another	79		37	

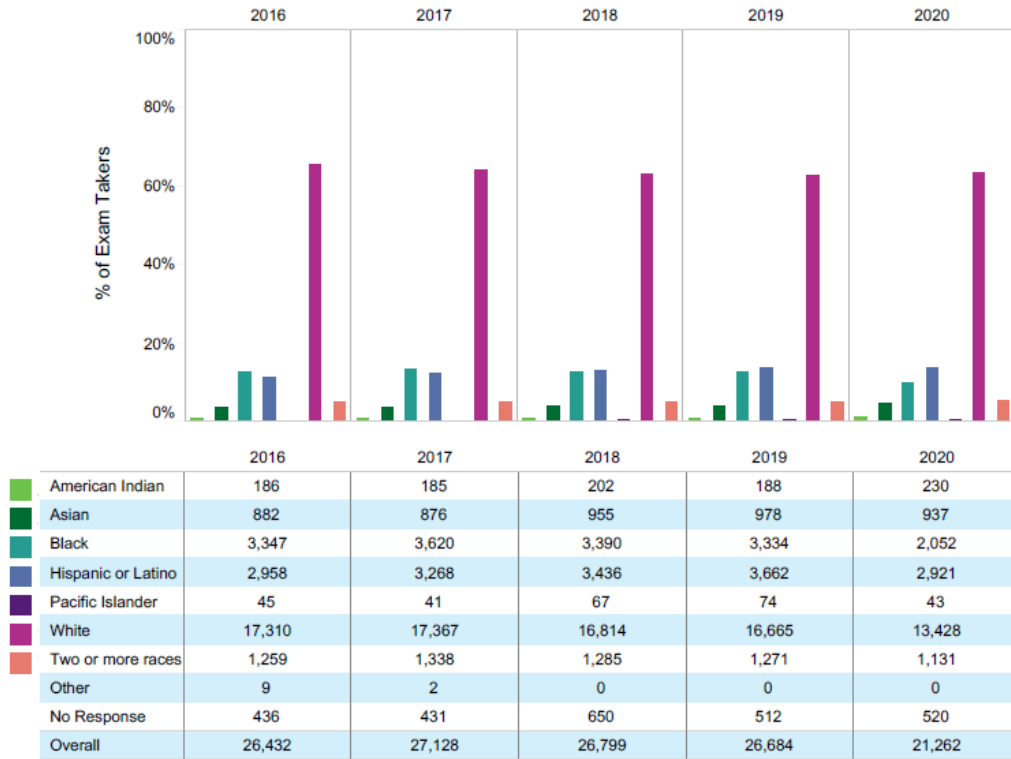
Performance by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Exams Taken	% Change	Exams with score of 3, 4 or 5	% Change
American Indian	325	16.9%	130	64.6%
Asian	2,349	-3.0%	1,563	6.8%
Black	3,246	-41.5%	683	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino	4,750	-22.6%	1,937	-2.8%
Pacific Islander	61	-38.4%	18	50.0%
White	23,310	-19.2%	11,249	-3.2%
Two or more races	1,939	-12.2%	872	2.8%
Other	0			
No Response	785	14.4%	337	126.2%

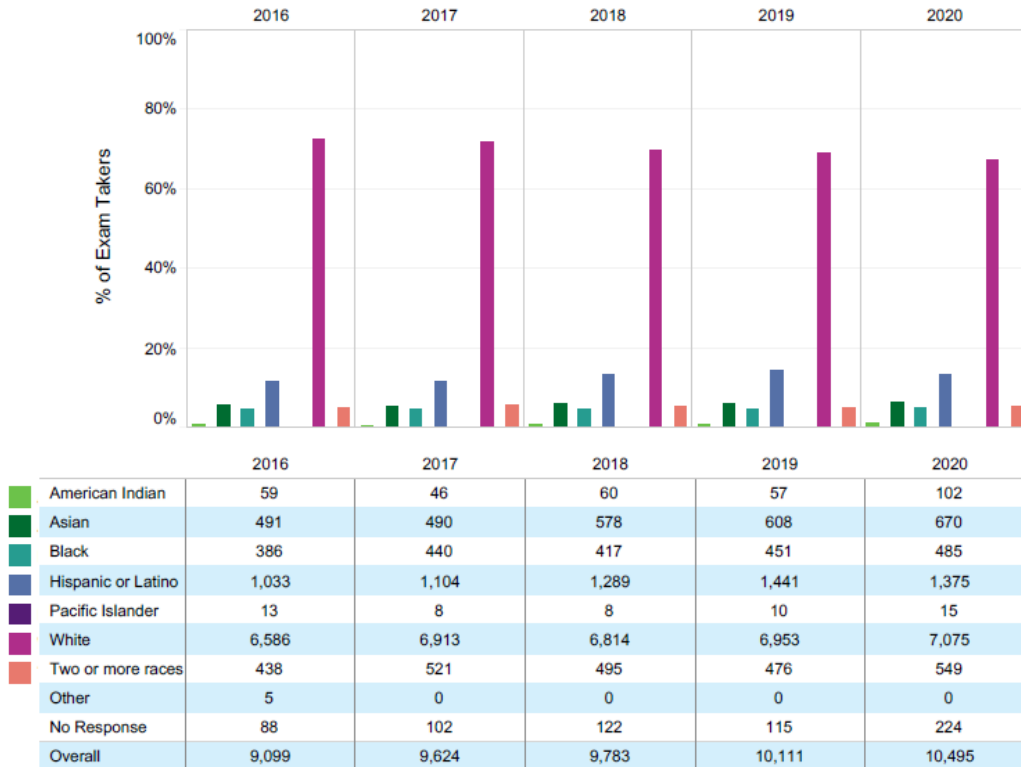
AP: Number of Exams and Number of Exams with Scores of 3, 4 or 5



AP: Participation by Race/Ethnicity - Students Taking One or More Exam



AP Performance by Race/Ethnicity - Students with Scores of 3, 4 or 5



ARKANSAS ADVANCED INITIATIVE for MATH and SCIENCE (AR AIMS) AP Training and Incentive Program

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, Inc. is an affiliate of the National Math and Science Initiative. The program invites schools to apply for participation in the program to strengthen the teaching of AP® mathematics, science, and English courses and to build enrollment and increase the number of students taking and earning qualifying scores on AP® exams in these subjects.

2020-21 Summary - Submitted by Lynn Harrison-Bullard, AIMS President

We currently have over 40 schools requesting active partnerships for 2021-22 and we still have meetings with districts to discuss a partnership this month. And, some currently active schools have indicated they will remain active but haven't yet returned their Letters of Agreement because waiting on superintendent signatures or because of administrative changes. Regardless, schools obviously value being a partner of AR AIMS and recognize the need for our support especially during the next rebuilding year.

Over 100 schools in the state have been AR AIMS partner schools since 2008. After 3 years of an active partnership (pay for service) many of these schools move to maintenance status (don't receive on-site or virtual mentoring) but still use AR AIMS resources and attend AR AIMS professional development or contact the directors with questions. Some schools have remained active partners (receive mentoring on-site and/or virtually) throughout the years.

AR AIMS has served high schools in Arkansas since 2008 but in 2019 we offered active partner options for our middle and junior high schools, grades 6-9. Many districts are taking advantage of the opportunity for a stronger vertical alignment, an aligned skills/content progression curriculum, common language, and strategies continuity 6-12. Many schools are asking our support in non-PreAP/AP classrooms. While we've focused primarily on AP and PreAP teachers, we do encourage schools to open the doors to advanced classes beginning in the 6th grade to start early to scaffold learning using the best practice skills and resources so that more students are prepared for advanced level classes. Our work involves helping teachers become more effective for all students.

Immodestly, I'll just say that our PD is second to none. Arkansas teachers will tell you it's what they need. 96% of our 2020-21 PD Evaluation Surveys this year indicated that AR AIMS PD was exceptional or highly beneficial; 3.2% indicated beneficial. Our *AR AIMS Infused Laying the Foundation* professional development for grades 6-10 is a handy, effective, easy-to-access resource for active, rigorous lessons, labs, activities that teachers need for high level student interaction and learning. We took NMSI's LTF and infused and aligned it with the Arkansas Standards; we embedded ACT Aspire prep resources and periodic assessments. Even during the restrictions of Covid, our virtual workshops that granted access to our GoogleSites were meaningful, active, resourceful--and full! For the more recent updates for upcoming 2021-22 [PD, our Preview Digital Content Sites, and other AR AIMS events, please click here](#). If you'd like to

pop in to visit our workshops, please let me know. Science is this week and math will be next. We have approximately 250 teachers registered for our summer LTF workshops.

We got permission from the chancellor and offered a modified version of our AP Prep Boot Camp at UA Little Rock, June 29-July 2 in the College of Business. We offered AP Lang, AP Bio, AP Chem, and AP Cal. About 50 students took part in this year's camp; it was our first live event and very exciting. Student and presenter evaluations were very positive. UA Fayetteville is still cautious about additional students on campus and our funding doesn't include other colleges this year. Next school year, we will be offering Saturday Prep Days again instead of a week long summer camp with the cooperative and PCCC in Helena; Walton Family Foundation is funding support to the Delta and NW AR areas.

As always as our schools request different services, we listen and adapt. This year many schools found our virtual support to be most beneficial. Therefore, we changed our service options for the 2021-22 school year and will offer our traditional in-person/on-site mentoring, an all virtual mentoring, as well as a blended mentoring option. Please click this link for [Costs and Service options](#) for next year; click here if you'd like to see a [Program Application for Cohort 13](#) that offers a reference for our specific services.

Even though many of our schools' AP Exam scores did increase in 2020 (we don't have access to 2021 yet), we are not including the Covid data in our progressive analysis due to the many factors involved. We are pleased of course that our schools do attribute their successes to our intervention. We had also just begun to collect and itemize benchmark data and progress data for the ACT Aspire. We will resume that analysis this year.

AR AIMS is here to provide that extra support to Arkansas schools so they can meet fully their specific and unique goals, grades 6-12. We have expanded our services and include varying options to meet each schools' needs. We do not have a prescribed service but rather we assist individual good teachers to become the best teachers they can be. In short, we reinforce, supplement the current initiatives and requirements of their schools and ADE through individual and group coaching, modeling, and supporting. We offer resources and gentle guidance to the individual teacher as she/he works to incorporate best teaching strategies to ensure the most productive teaching atmosphere. The state of AR AIMS 2021 is strong!

Appendix F

INTERVENTION BLOCK GRANTS

The Office of Gifted & Talented and Advanced Placement managed the five Intervention Block Grants that support programs that involve many identified gifted and talented (GT) students in the state. The programs include Destination Imagination, Creativity in Arkansas, the State Science Fair, Arkansas History Day, and the Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association.

Appendix G

DUKE TALENT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM (TIP)

The Duke Talent Identification Program 7th Grade Talent Search sponsored by Duke University in Durham, North Carolina recognized students with high mathematical, verbal, or general intellectual ability from a 16-state geographic region. Seventh graders took the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the ACT assessment. Students meeting scoring criteria were invited to recognition ceremonies and encouraged to participate in various educational programs offered by local, state, and national agencies.

Duke is creating a new unit in the Office of Academic Affairs to better align the existing important and diverse precollege activities with Duke's current educational priorities and operational practices. Students served by Duke TIP will be a principal focus of this unit, which will oversee all Duke's precollege programs and ensure they meet the highest standards of quality, reflect the best practices in education and are tightly linked with Duke's extraordinary academic community.

As Duke redesigns their precollege and talented offerings, they will not resume the talent search with above-level testing, but will instead be looking at new ways to identify students and facilitate their access to these enrichment programs. Duke will continue to work with families who participated in prior talent searches to provide the promised programs, research, and resources, which will remain available at tip.duke.edu.

In the last year of the Duke TIP talent search program (2019), 463 Arkansas students out of the 1,311 who were tested qualified for the State Recognition Ceremony which was hosted by The Jodie Mahony Center for Gifted Education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Appendix H

ACT 56 AWARDS

Act 56 authorized the Advisory Council to select annually up to three programs for gifted and talented students for recognition as outstanding programs. The Council may make awards of not more than \$3,000 to the recognized programs.

The award recipients for the 2020-2021 school year were the Paris School District (for districts with fewer than 1,000 students); the Berryville School District (for districts of more than 1,000, but fewer than 3,000 students); and the Fayetteville School District (for school districts with more than 3000 students). The Lamar and Rogers School Districts received Honorable Mention in their categories.

Applications are made available through a Commissioner's Memo posted on the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education's Website. Criteria for recognition include ways in which a district's program has exceeded minimum standards, innovative and creative aspects of the program, and appropriateness of the program for the size of the district.

Blind screening is used, and districts are judged against those of similar size.

Appendix I

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT FOR GIFTED & TALENTED IN SUMMER (AEGIS) PROGRAMS

2020 AEGIS Programs

Act 814 of the 2015 legislative session appropriated funds for Academic Enrichment for the Gifted and Talented in Summer Programs (AEGIS). AEGIS grants may be awarded to public or private agencies for the establishment of annual summer residential or day programs. Nine programs totaling \$158,757.63 were approved for funding; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, none of these programs were in operation during the summer of 2020.

Appendix J

OFFICE FOR EDUCATION POLICY STUDY ON BENEFITS OF PROGRAMMING FOR GIFTED STUDENTS

[Do Students in Arkansas' Gifted Programs Perform Better?](#)

In The View from the OEP on May 12, 2021 at 12:56 pm

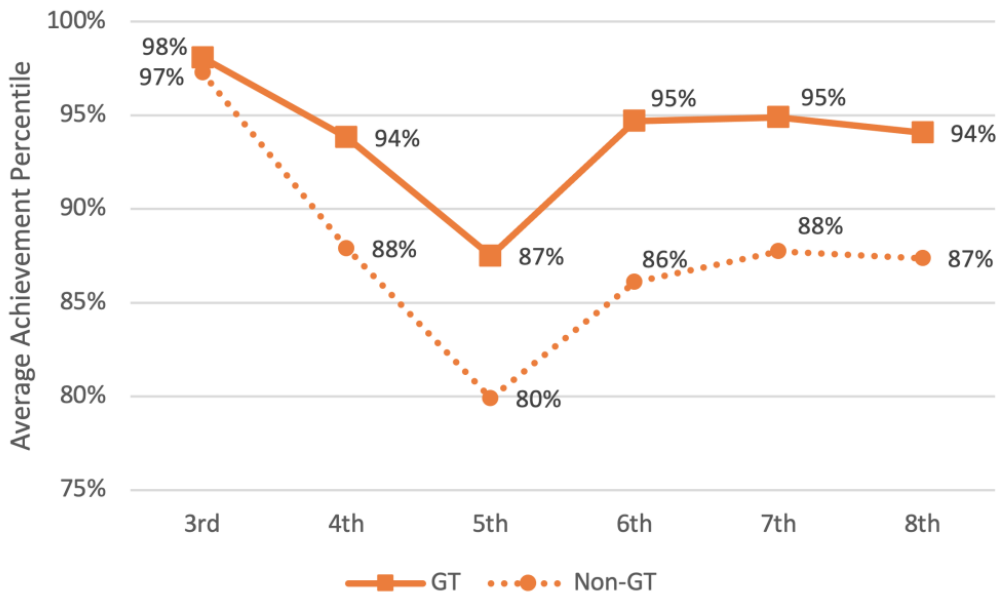
You might have heard lately that **gifted programs don't provide much of an academic benefit**. The study, by Christopher Redding and Jason Grissom, was based on a nationally representative sample, and examined student test scores in addition to other student outcomes like attendance and engagement in school. The findings have caused some to question the value of gifted programming.

Here at OEP, we have been digging into gifted education in Arkansas. Our **previous research** found that 30% of the highest achieving 3rd graders are not identified as gifted, and that the biggest factor in a high-achiever not being identified is an economically disadvantaged background.

In our newest research, we examine how the longer-term achievement of high-achieving Arkansas students who are identified as gifted compared to similarly high-achieving students who are not identified as gifted. We operationalize high-achieving as scoring at or above the 95th percentile statewide on the 3rd grade state assessment. We follow five groups of these high achieving 3rd graders through 8th grade, and examine how their scores change over time.

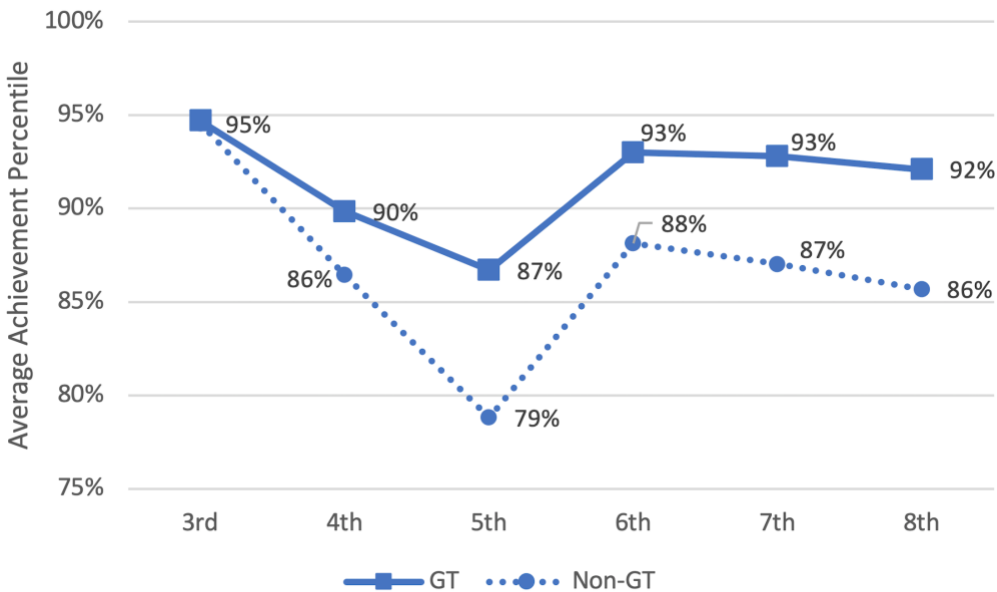
You can read the **policy brief** or the **full paper** for more details, but we find **large, statistically significant gains in academic achievement for high-achieving students who were identified as gifted**. The relationship was more pronounced in mathematics achievement than in literacy achievement. The findings are consistent across our five independent cohorts.

For the purpose of illustration, check out the graphs below which represent the average statewide achievement percentile for the group of high-achieving students who were in 3rd grade in 2013-14 and 8th grade in 2017-18. The top graph (orange lines) shows mathematics achievement, while the bottom graph (blue lines) shows literacy achievement. In both content areas, although student performance was similar in 3rd grade, **students who were identified as G/T consistently demonstrate higher achievement in every year that follows**.



| Average Percentile on

Mathematics Assessment, Cohort 5. N=1,688



Average Percentile on

Literacy Assessment, Cohort 5. N=1,615

A couple things are important to note:

- The average achievement percentile for G/T and Non-G/T students drop in both math and literacy before rising again. When examining performance over time for a sample selected for very high achievement on the third grade test, we expect that the sample's average score will move somewhat closer to the statewide average (the 50th percentile).
- Students in our study completed three different exams over the time period examined: Benchmark, PARCC, and ACT Aspire. Although we standardized the scores to z-scores to allow comparison over time, the PARCC results for all of our groups are consistently lower than the preceding or subsequent scores. This group of students took the

Benchmark exams in 3rd and 4th grade, the PARCC assessment in 5th grade, and the ACT Aspire in 6th through 8th grades.

- These graphs are simple illustrations of descriptive trends, and do not control for any student or district characteristics.

In order to account for other factors that we believe would impact student achievement, we conduct multivariate regressions by year and subject for our 5 cohorts of high-achieving 3rd graders. We find G/T identification is associated with math scores that are between 10% and 39% higher (depending on the grade and year) than those of similarly high-achieving students who were not identified as G/T. In literacy the relationship was somewhat less pronounced, as G/T identification is associated with literacy scores that are between 4% and 24% higher (depending on the grade and year) than those of similarly high-achieving students who were not identified as G/T.

Even though this study does not provide causal inferences, it highlights a consistent positive association between gifted services and longer-term student academic achievement for those students that perform in the top 5% on third grade state assessments of literacy and mathematics. This is in contrast to other studies that have found little to no impacts (e.g., Adelson et al., 2012; Redding and Grissom, in press).

The association between academic growth and gifted education may range from curriculum, peer effects, to teachers' ability to identify the right students who are most likely to benefit from gifted services provided, the motivational or labeling effect of being identified as gifted, in addition to the basic set of individual differences in characteristics or aptitudes that selected students may bring. While we cannot identify what aspects of gifted education in Arkansas casually contribute, individually or in combination, to increased student achievement, our findings are valuable because they provide an academic window into what happens from the 3rd through 8th grade to high achieving students across Arkansas who are and are not identified as G/T.

We note that state assessment scores do not address all the aspects of Arkansas' G/T model and thus the associations we pick up may not necessarily capture those aspects of identification and programming.

However, it seems like the current G/T process in Arkansas is working for students. School districts at the minimum should keep their G/T practices to help high potential and ability students until any causal mechanism is detected. Though G/T seems to be associated with positive academic outcomes for students, this does not rule out improvements or expansions to the identification or programming processes that might be useful, such as using mathematics and literacy measures as selection tools not just as evaluation tools. Additionally, the success of Arkansas, in a sense, may illuminate useful strategies that may lead to more effective educational opportunities for high achieving students in other states and regions.

AGATE/AAGEA STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF GIFTED PROGRAMS

GIFTED PROGRAMS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ARKANSAS

[Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education \(AGATE\)](#) and the [Arkansas Association of Gifted Education Administrators \(AAGEA\)](#) jointly want to provide a variety of fact-based support for members to answer the question, “Are Gifted Programs Making a Difference in Arkansas?” A rationale for gifted services is provided [here](#) by AAGEA.

An April 2021 study by Redding/Grissom covered in [the Hechinger Report](#) proposed broad generalizations that nationwide gifted and talented (G/T) services provide little or no academic boost for students. It was an alarming headline that got the attention of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and several other important stakeholders nationwide. When reviewing the report, several concerns are evident with the studies cited. Small numbers of students are included in the data sets, definitions of types and amounts of services provided for students are unclear, and the studies focus almost exclusively on standardized test scores to measure the impact of gifted programs.

[NAGC released an immediate response](#), but simply put, giftedness is a local context with states and districts using a wide variety of identification assessments and program options for student services. To broadly paint all gifted programs nationally with one brush is an overgeneralization and misses the value and variances of gifted programs at the local level.

Equally, and perhaps more importantly, Arkansas has evidence to the contrary. Looking at data from a newly released policy brief from the University of Arkansas Office for Education Policy (OEP), JAVITS Stem Programs, and annual local district evaluation data postulates a different story of meaningful and worthwhile personal and academic growth of identified gifted students in our state.

The [study](#) released in May 2021 by OEP uses methods similar in rigor to the Redding/Grissom study; however, specifically focuses on the state of Arkansas and uncovers quite large replicated and robust associations between gifted ID/programming/services and academic growth, evidenced through standardized test scores. The Executive Director of OEP, Dr. Sarah McKenzie, states:

Using regression analysis and controlling for student and district characteristics, we find that students who received gifted services demonstrated statistically significantly greater academic growth on math and reading achievement across the time period examined than similarly high achieving peers that were not identified as gifted.

The OEP policy brief illustrates that *G/T DOES matter* and students can and do benefit from educational services as captured by growth in test scores.

Developed in Arkansas at the Jodie Mahony Center for Gifted Education and implemented in urban and rural schools, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Starters and STEM Starters+ served Grade 1-5 students using creatively challenging engineering, science, and non-fiction literacy curricula to encourage early emerging STEM talents. General educators who received training through the program were more likely to recognize academic talent in students and to recommend them for gifted program identification. Students who participated in [STEM Starters](#) had higher science content and process skill achievement than those who did not participate. Those who participated in [STEM Starters+](#) had higher science and engineering achievement and engagement in Grade 1. Several replication studies found that gifted students in grades 2-4 who participated in STEM Starters+ had higher achievement on above-level science achievement tests.

There are additional evidence-based models funded nationwide by JAVITS that document improved student achievement and affective outcomes in real-world school settings. Developed at the National Research Center on Gifted Education (NRCGE), [Project SPARK](#) engaged K-2 teachers in recognizing and responding to high-potential behaviors and examined influences on achievement with advanced learning opportunities. Findings from Project SPARK indicated treatment effects on mathematics achievement were linked to program participation, that participating schools contributed a larger and more diverse pool of students to gifted program services than comparison schools. The Talent Identification and Career Education (TICE) developed at the University of Iowa uses an expanded rural school talent search model and a hybrid career exploration curriculum to give students the opportunity to identify and develop in academic, psychosocial, and career domains. Researchers report that the academic success of students from traditionally underrepresented groups improves when (1) they are identified early and (2) their learning is connected to potential career goals and their communities.

Annually, local district evaluations are required by [Arkansas Gifted and Talented Standards](#) (10.00), and when aligned well with definition, program goals, identification, and services can provide significant student impact data (see DESE Presentation on G/T Program Evaluation, [Part 1](#), [Part 3](#)). Most program evaluations are dependent upon individual context, methods used to evaluate such programs, and include appropriate outcomes tailored to the identification and programming purposes of G/T. These evaluation reports are shared with stakeholders as well as the DESE Office of Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement (OGTAP).

Gifted services impact numerous outcomes that achievement scores do not intend to capture. Longitudinal studies of the gifted illustrate that providing services to meet the needs of gifted students is helpful to develop student talents and improve outcomes in education, occupation, and creative areas years later in life.

John Hattie developed a way of synthesizing various influences in different meta-analyses according to their effect size. In his ground-breaking study, "[Visible Learning](#)," he ranked 150 influences that are related to learning outcomes from very positive effects to very negative effects. Hattie found the average effect size of all the interventions he studied was 0.40. Therefore, he decided to judge the success of influences relative to this 'hinge point' to find an answer to the question "What works best in education?" More importantly for educators of gifted students, "What works best in gifted education?" Various programming options utilized in gifted

education, in particular acceleration (.68), creativity programs (.62), and enrichment (.53), were determined to have a positive effect size related to student achievement.

Students receiving gifted services have special needs that often require a range of services, including academic programming and/or social/emotional guidance. All students have the right and deserve the opportunity, no matter their age or grade (K-12), to experience new learning every day.

AGATE and AAGEA concur that more research is needed related to G/T programs, their effectiveness, and do engage in continual conversations on how best to identify and serve the needs of gifted students. Effectiveness of gifted programming is not based solely on test scores or short-term outcomes, but on a broad array of outcomes. It is important to highlight from Arkansas data that *context matters*, and that no individual study – most certainly not the Grissom/Redding study or any lone national study – can give conclusive answers or evidence about programming for the gifted.