



# **Gifted in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

## **A Report of Findings and Recommendations**

**Prepared by the  
2002 Ohio Gifted Task Force  
Columbus, Ohio**

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## Executive Summary

In the foreword to *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (Ross, 1993), former U.S. Department of Education Secretary Richard W. Riley spoke of children with gifts and talents in relation to our country's economic growth: "Our neglect for these students makes it impossible for Americans to compete in a global economy demanding their skills" (p. iii). The National Excellence report documents how our country wastes "one of its most precious resources...the gifts, talents, and high interests of many of its students" (p. 1). At a time when Ohio desires to become a leader in high-tech enterprises to meet the challenges of a global economy, its youngest citizens with the greatest potential to become the future leaders and creators of these enterprises often are not challenged.

In response, Dr. Susan Tave Zelman, Ohio's state superintendent of public instruction, commissioned the Ohio Gifted Task Force to make recommendations as to how Ohio could develop this "most precious resource" to benefit individual children and to improve the future economic success of our state. In the summer of 2002, the Task Force met six times over the course of two months to review the status of gifted education in Ohio and the latest state and national research on best practices in gifted education.

After reviewing their experiences with gifted education in Ohio in the context of this research, the Task Force found that current practice has not dramatically improved educational opportunities for children who are gifted. Indeed, the warning of a "quiet crisis in educating talented students" (Ross, 1993, p. 5) is still relevant. Although Ohio, since 1984, has addressed the identification of children who are gifted, districts are not required by state law to provide appropriate services to meet the needs of these students.

The Task Force's analysis of their experiences with gifted education in Ohio in the context of the latest research and best professional practice resulted in the following findings related to the status of education for children who are gifted in Ohio:

- **Finding 1: Policy:** Policies at both state and local levels should promote educational opportunities for children who are gifted. Many local board of education policies present barriers to best practices in the education of children who are gifted. Further, some state procedures and other policies may be detrimental to the provision of services for these children.
- **Finding 2: Accountability:** Currently, schools are not held accountable for ensuring that children who are gifted are served according to their needs. There is no system in place to ensure these children reach their full potential. Ohio's report card system, while addressing district results in proficiency, does not specifically address children who are gifted. In addition, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has not yet addressed the gifted population in the state accountability system or in the guidelines and subsequent documents from the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind)*. If Ohio is to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a leader in gifted education, accountability for all children, including children who are gifted, will need to be an integral component of all policy and accountability decisions.

- **Finding 3: Services and Identification:** Currently, districts are not required to offer any services to children who are identified as gifted. A recent survey indicated that during the 1998-1999 school year, of the 236,804 children identified as gifted in Ohio, only 103,087, or 43.5 percent, were receiving any kind of service. Of those receiving services, only 41,245, or 40 percent, were receiving services through state funding. Without a system that supports acceleration, differentiation options and other appropriate services, the probability increases that children who are gifted will become alienated from school.

It is critical to accurately identify children's gifted areas to know what services to provide. Ohio Administrative Code (3301-51-15) requires districts to identify in the areas of superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative ability and visual and performing arts ability. Even though Ohio has mandated that districts identify children from kindergarten through grade 12, too little emphasis has been placed on the early identification of children who are gifted. In addition, many special populations go unnoticed in the identification process. Without attention to these underrepresented populations, appropriate services cannot be planned or provided.

- **Finding 4: Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted:** Current teacher preparation programs in Ohio do not require any coursework in differentiated instruction, assessment or appropriate service options for children who are gifted. According to Passow and Rudinski (1993), most states acknowledge the crucial role of teachers in the identification and education of the gifted and the need for providing staff development. Without adequate knowledge, attitudes and skills, teachers are unable to provide differentiated instruction to children who are gifted. From the results of the Ohio Survey on Gifted Education, Joyce Van Tassel-Baska (1997) found that staff development on the needs of gifted students was often infrequent or nonexistent for Ohio teachers.
- **Finding 5: Funding:** Ohio school districts vary widely in the options and services available to children identified as gifted. Those with more local resources are able to offer additional services, in contrast to districts that depend on state dollars alone. Even with local dollars, however, only 8 percent of districts reported that all of their identified gifted students were receiving services during the 1998-1999 school year. Van Tassel-Baska (1997) reported: "State funding is pivotal to maintaining gifted programs in the state of Ohio."
- **Finding 6: Leadership:** ODE currently funds two consultants for gifted. To build capacity for the task force's recommendations, it is critical for additional staff to be funded to serve Ohio's school districts. Technical assistance, policy review and development, professional development and accountability are critical activities of state leadership.
- **Finding 7: Families and Community:** VanTassel-Baska (1997) recommends stronger parent involvement in local programming in Ohio districts. Families and community are an integral part of all children's education. It is imperative that ODE and local districts acknowledge the importance of families in the entire process of educating our children who are gifted.

While it is critical for Ohio educational leaders to "leave no child behind" in the plans to reform the education system, it is equally important to "hold no child back" from maximizing his or her abilities and potential contributions to society. Ohio can no longer tell its brightest students "not yet" or "we can't teach you that" when they strive to move faster than their peers through the

traditional school curriculum. Providing an appropriate education for children who are gifted is indeed an investment in our economy and, ultimately, a successful future for our state.

Accordingly, the Task Force offered the following four broad recommendations and action steps that will move Ohio to the forefront nationally in providing an appropriate education for children who are gifted:

- **Recommendation 1: Policy:** ODE will address the needs of children who are gifted in all policies and standards, including *the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind)*. For example, the method developed to determine adequate yearly progress (AYP) must be able to measure the growth of children who are gifted.

State policies will be developed to support high expectations for all children and provide children who are gifted with numerous opportunities for reaching their potential. Such policies, adopted by the State Board of Education, will be implemented in all school districts.

ODE will review current policies that may contain barriers to the education of children who are gifted. Further, ODE also will establish state policy that will require local boards of education to examine and remove local policies that present barriers to children who are gifted from reaching their full potential.

- **Recommendation 2: Accountability:** Ohio will define “adequate yearly progress” for children who are gifted and use a state accountability system that overcomes the challenges of assessing the growth of gifted children. All districts will be held accountable for a level of growth consistent with each gifted child’s written education plan (WEP). This should include, but not be limited to, growth in achievement, creative production and social and emotional skills. Accountability for services will be included in Ohio’s accountability system, including the Local Report Card. Although accountability for an individual child’s growth is the ultimate goal, the overall accountability system will also include measures of the critical components of quality services for children who are gifted, such as family involvement, educational planning and utilization of resources.
- **Recommendation 3: Services and Identification:** By 2012, all districts in the state of Ohio will assess and identify children for giftedness using best practices. In addition, those children identified as gifted will receive appropriate services based upon their identified areas of strength in appropriate settings at the local, regional and state level.
- **Recommendation 4: Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted:** All educators in Ohio will have the skills and abilities they need to plan, develop and deliver services to children who are gifted. To develop these skills, all educators, including teachers, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists and other support service providers will have formal training in meeting both the academic and the social and emotional needs of children who are gifted. It is critical that teachers have the skills to provide instruction in a differentiated manner. Therefore, it is recommended that ODE work with the Ohio Board of Regents to ensure all teachers have appropriate preservice and inservice training.

Finally, the Task Force describes action steps to successfully implement their recommendations by the year 2012. Implementing many of these action steps requires changes in state and local policies, while others may require more substantial changes in law and increased funding of services for children who are gifted. The Ohio Gifted Task Force firmly believes that all of the recommendations are critical if Ohio is to achieve its bold mission of becoming a national leader in the education of all children, including those who are gifted, by 2012.

## Introduction

*The education of all children, regardless of background or disability...must always be a national priority. One of the most important goals of my Administration is to support states and local communities in creating and maintaining a system of public education where no child is left behind.*

—President George W. Bush, Executive Order 13227

Our nation was founded on the democratic principles that no barrier shall be raised to the pursuit of health, happiness, liberty and justice. Society benefits when all children can advance to the highest level of their talents and abilities.

With the Marland report in 1972, Congress first recognized a need to provide more educational opportunities for children who are gifted. This report indicated that 57.5 percent of schools surveyed reported no gifted individuals among their students. The report showed that 21 states offered no services to gifted students – resulting in at least 500,000 gifted students in the U. S. receiving no special instruction.

The 1993 report by the U. S. Department of Education, *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (Ross, 1993), calls this a “quiet crisis” in the education of gifted and talented children. In 2002, Ohio followed the national lead to address how education can be reformed to meet the needs of all children including children who are gifted.

Ohio is committed to raising the bar for all children and recognizes that the education of children who are gifted must with align the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) by striving to balance excellence with equity in raising the bar for all children. This includes children who are gifted who also are economically disadvantaged, from diverse racial and ethnic groups, those with disabilities and those with Limited English Proficiency.

Ohio's State Board of Education has recognized the historical difficulties faced by children who are gifted in accessing the individualized education necessary to ensure that their abilities are realized. Indicators show that children who are gifted are most frequently the population that gets the least amount of attention in terms of reform efforts, allocation of resources and respect for their potential contributions to society.

Research has shown the following:

- Children who are gifted drop out of school when their specific academic needs are not met. Frequently, these at risk gifted students are the ones who go unrecognized and unserved in our local schools.
- Children who are gifted and are not challenged as they progress through K-12 schools are often not ready to accept the challenge of higher education. This causes them to drop out of college or not attempt to enroll.
- Sisk (1987) reports that 85 percent or more children who are gifted are underachievers. When children are not allowed to move or reach beyond what they have accomplished, they often become bored, discouraged, frustrated and angry and feel diminished as persons.

- Teachers who have access to information about gifted child needs and characteristics are better able to assess them and to provide opportunities for appropriate services. Shaklee and Hansford (1992), in writing about underidentified populations, say, “If educators do not think of particular children as gifted, they limit their ability to look at these children.” Accurate observations and assessments of children are dependent on the attitudes, knowledge and skills of the classroom teacher and other service providers.
- Children who are gifted can also have a disability that hinders their success unless the proper interventions are provided. These twice-exceptional children may receive special education services, but gifted services are often not even considered.

In 2002, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) initiated the Ohio Gifted Task Force to study gifted education in our state and to make recommendations that will move Ohio into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a leader in the education of children who are gifted. This effort supports President Bush’s desire to establish a “culture of accountability” for results, to increase academic achievement for all children, to provide positive interventions for children who are gifted and to facilitate open dialogue with parents, teachers, families and communities.

The provisions that states make regarding mandates, funding and administrative leadership are directly correlated to the level of services provided to gifted students, with the most important area being appropriate mandated services (Coleman, Gallagher, & Foster, 1994). Ohio must provide this type of leadership if it wants to serve as “a moral and political base for parents and educators to ensure gifted and talented students have their unique educational needs met” (p. 195).

Although Ohio has a long history of support for gifted education, much must be done in the next decade to meet the challenges set forth in ESEA for a new era in education for all school children. Consequently, in June 2002, Susan Tave Zelman, superintendent of public instruction, requested the formation of a state-level task force to make recommendations that would make Ohio the national leader for educating our children who are gifted. Although the timeline for the Task Force was short, the group reviewed best practices in gifted education from across the nation to build upon the extensive research that has been done in Ohio in recent years. The Task Force applied the principles of the ESEA to their task of moving gifted education into the future in Ohio, including accountability for results, research-based programs and teaching methods, collaboration and full information and options for parents and families. The following report from the Task Force represents these principles.

## **The 2002 Ohio Gifted Task Force Critical Findings**

The 2002 Ohio Gifted Task Force reviewed the history of gifted education in Ohio, the policies and procedures from several states, current research on best practices in gifted education, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), and their professional experiences with the education of all students, including those who are gifted. The Task Force identified seven critical findings that must be considered if Ohio is to become the national leader in gifted education by 2012.

### **Finding 1: Policy**

Policies at both state and local levels should promote educational opportunities for children who are gifted. Many local board of education policies present barriers to best practices in the education of children who are gifted. Further, some state procedures and other policies may be detrimental to the provision of services for these children.

### **Finding 2: Accountability**

Currently, schools are not held accountable for ensuring that children who are gifted are served according to their needs. There is no system in place to ensure these children reach their full potential. Ohio's report card system, while addressing district results in proficiency, does not specifically address children who are gifted. In addition, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has not yet addressed the gifted population in the state accountability system or in the guidelines and subsequent documents from ESEA. If Ohio is to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a leader in gifted education, accountability for all children, including children who are gifted, will need to be an integral component of all policy and accountability decisions.

### **Finding 3: Services and Identification**

Currently, districts are not required to offer any services to children who are identified as gifted. A recent survey indicated that during the 1998-1999 school year, of the 236,804 children identified as gifted in Ohio, only 103,087, or 43.5 percent, were receiving any kind of service. Of those receiving services, only 41,245, or 40 percent, were receiving services through state funding. Without a system that supports acceleration, differentiation options and other appropriate services, the probability increases that children who are gifted will become alienated from school.

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**Finding 4: Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted**

Current teacher preparation programs in Ohio do not require any coursework in differentiated instruction, assessment or appropriate service options for children who are gifted. According to Passow and Rudinski (1993), most states acknowledge the crucial role of teachers in the identification and education of the gifted and the need for providing staff development. Without adequate knowledge, attitudes and skills, teachers are unable to provide differentiated instruction to children who are gifted. From the results of the Ohio Survey on Gifted Education, Joyce Van Tassel-Baska (1997) found that staff development on the needs of gifted students was often infrequent or nonexistent for Ohio teachers.

**Finding 5: Funding**

Ohio school districts vary widely in the options and services available to children identified as gifted. Those with more local resources are able to offer additional services, in contrast to districts that depend on state dollars alone. Even with local dollars, however, only 8 percent of districts reported that all of their identified gifted students were receiving services during the 1998-1999 school year. Van Tassel-Baska (1997) reported: “State funding is pivotal to maintaining gifted programs in the state of Ohio.”

**Finding 6: Leadership**

ODE currently funds two consultants for gifted. To build capacity for the Task Force’s recommendations, it is critical for additional staff to be funded to serve Ohio’s school districts. Technical assistance, policy review and development, professional development and accountability are critical activities of state leadership.

**Finding 7: Families and Community**

VanTassel-Baska (1997) recommends stronger parent involvement in local programming in Ohio districts. Families and community are an integral part of all children’s education. It is imperative that ODE and local districts acknowledge the importance of families in the entire process of educating our children who are gifted.

## 2002 Ohio Gifted Task Force's Recommendations

Based on its critical findings, the 2002 Ohio Gifted Task Force submits the following four recommendations for Susan Tave Zelman, superintendent of public instruction, to consider. It is the Task Force's belief that these recommendations provide the foundation required to guide Ohio into the 21st century as the leader in the education of children who are gifted.

In addition, the Task Force submits Actions for Success which are the essential building blocks to form the foundation for the recommendations. The Task Force members are honored to have had this opportunity to support the state of Ohio in its bold mission to be nationally recognized for its excellence in the education for all children, including those who are gifted.

### **Recommendation 1: Policy**

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) will address the needs of children who are gifted in all policies and standards, including the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind)*. For example, the method developed to determine adequate yearly progress (AYP) must be able to measure the growth of children who are gifted.

State policies will be developed to support high expectations for all children and provide children who are gifted with numerous opportunities for reaching their potential. Such policies, adopted by the State Board of Education, will be implemented in all school districts.

ODE will review current policies that may contain barriers to the education of children who are gifted. Further, ODE also will establish state policy that will require local boards of education to examine and remove local policies that present barriers to children who are gifted from reaching their full potential.

### **Recommendation 2: Accountability**

Ohio will define "adequate yearly progress" for children who are gifted and use a state accountability system that overcomes the challenges of assessing the growth of gifted children. All districts will be held accountable for a level of growth consistent with each gifted child's written education plan (WEP). This should include, but not be limited to, growth in achievement, creative production and social and emotional skills. Accountability for services will be included in Ohio's accountability system, including the Local Report Card. Although accountability for an individual child's growth is the ultimate goal, the overall accountability system will also include measures of the critical components of quality services for children who are gifted, such as family involvement, educational planning and utilization of resources.

### **Recommendation 3: Services and Identification**

By 2012, all districts in the state of Ohio will assess and identify children for giftedness using best practices. In addition, those children identified as gifted will receive appropriate services based upon their identified areas of strength in appropriate settings at the local, regional and state level.

**Recommendation 4: Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted**

All educators in Ohio will have the skills and abilities they need to plan, develop and deliver services to children who are gifted. To develop these skills, all educators, including teachers, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists and other support service providers will have formal training in meeting both the academic and the social and emotional needs of children who are gifted. It is critical that teachers have the skills to provide instruction in a differentiated manner. Therefore, it is recommended that ODE work with the Ohio Board of Regents to ensure all teachers have appropriate preservice and inservice training.

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State policies will be developed that support high expectations for all children and provide children who are gifted with numerous opportunities for reaching their potential. Such policies, adopted by the State Board of Education, will be implemented in all school districts.

ODE will review current policies that may contain barriers to the education of children who are gifted. Further, ODE also will establish state policy that will require local boards of education to examine and remove local policies that present barriers to children who are gifted reaching their full potential.

### Critical Need: A Brief Discussion

Policy, both state and local, is the single most critical element in education. Some state and local policies promote good educational practices for all children, while others create barriers for certain populations of children.

State and local boards of education must review current policies to ascertain if they promote sound educational practices for all children and to ensure there are no unintended consequences for children of special populations, including children who are gifted. These policies must be changed with consideration for the achievement and success of all children.

The state will develop policy regarding accountability, services, teacher training and opportunities for children who are gifted to ensure these children are not left behind and to recognize that their individual needs of “closing the gap” may be very different than current perceptions in the local school district. These state policies must guide and direct a local board of education’s policy development to be accountable to and for all children and remove any real or false barriers to the opportunities for children who are gifted.

### Actions for Success

#### Action 1.1: Barriers to Academic Growth

Statewide organizations and local educational agencies will repeal policies which contain specific barriers to academic growth, including those involving eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities due to enrollment in college-level courses during the school day or other gifted services. In general, children should be allowed to complete and receive appropriate credit on their school record for the content they are ready to or have mastered.

### **Action 1.2: Policy Decisions**

The needs of children who are gifted will be considered in every policy decision, including but not limited to, policies related to assessment, professional development, teacher preparation, curriculum, data collection and support and district accountability. This includes not only policies adopted by the State Board and ODE, but also decisions by other agencies, such as the School Facilities Commission and Ohio SchoolNet, that may impact children who are gifted.

### **Action 1.3: Acceleration**

Acceleration in state standards, grade levels, specific subject areas and/or statewide assessments will be an acknowledged and accepted option as is individually appropriate for children who are gifted. Such numbers will be reported on the Local Report Card and each local educational agency will have a board policy promoting acceleration at every level, including the option to skip kindergarten. ODE will provide guidelines for these district policies.

### **Action 1.4: Early Admission to School**

Local educational agencies will have board policies to ensure adequate assessment before the traditional enrollment age based on family or community referral for early admission to school. Districts will provide public notice that parents can refer their children for early entrance. ODE will develop criteria to help districts decide if a child should begin school before the traditional enrollment age.

### **Action 1.5: Flexible Grouping**

All districts will develop a policy that addresses how the district will use flexible grouping to deliver instructional services to children who are gifted. ODE will develop guidelines to help districts identify flexible strategies that benefit all children, including those who are identified as gifted.

### **Action 1.6: Regional Resources**

State and regional service providers will work with their constituents to facilitate regional sharing of resources for serving children who are gifted. This will include sharing information on available district and regional services with parents and collaborating to offer new services.

### **Action 1.7: ODE Gifted Membership**

ODE centers, offices, commissions, initiatives and task forces should include input from the gifted community and staff with gifted expertise.

### **Action 1.8: Research and Development**

Funding will be continued for research and development on important issues in gifted education, including, but not limited to, effective assessment practices, appropriate identification procedures, value-added assessment, above grade level assessment, curriculum development, implications of the ESEA, the most effective services for the different areas of giftedness and the costs associated with these services.

Research and development projects will be awarded to school districts and other organizations through a competitive grant process. Funded projects will have a strong evaluation component, should use some project staff with gifted expertise and create products that can be disseminated

to districts and the gifted community. ODE will be provided adequate funding to administer, oversee and disseminate the results and products from such grants.

An immediate need is to complete projects that implement and document district model sites that exemplify an identification system and a continuum of services for children who are gifted from kindergarten through grade 12. The continuum of services will include, at a minimum, options listed in Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15 (D) and be based on existing best practice service models. The rigorous evaluation of these district sites will reflect the ability of services to meet the specific needs of children, the impact of services on student growth and the effectiveness of service models and service options within the district. The final report for these projects must document the cost of implementation of the services and the specific administrative components that influence the outcomes of the services for children who are gifted.

## **Recommendation 2: Accountability**

Ohio will define “adequate yearly progress” for children who are gifted and use a state accountability system that overcomes the challenges of assessing the growth of gifted children. All districts will be held accountable for a level of growth consistent with each gifted child’s written education plan (WEP). This should include, but not be limited to, growth in achievement, creative production and social and emotional skills. Accountability for services will be included in Ohio’s accountability system, including the Local Report Card. Although accountability for an individual child’s growth is the ultimate goal, the overall accountability system will also include measures of the critical components of quality services for children who are gifted, such as family involvement, educational planning and utilization of resources.

### **Critical Need: A Brief Discussion**

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), enacted on January 8, 2002, expanded choices for parents, focused resources on proven educational methods and provided increased accountability for results. In Ohio, accountability for results focuses on strong content standards of what every child should know and learn. In addition, each child’s progress and achievement is measured yearly. Statewide, a clear mission is communicated to schools, local educational agencies and institutions of higher education about their role in accountability for students’ academic achievement, improving teacher performance and facilitating parent options in the education of their children.

Ohio will set goals for gifted education in alignment with the ESEA and shall define “adequate yearly progress” toward goals for gifted education, measure and report achievement of these goals and take action when local educational agencies fail to make progress.

The accountability system will also ensure that children who are gifted demonstrate their current knowledge and skills. For most children who are gifted, the proficiency test given to measure progress is not difficult enough to show growth. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) will hold local educational agencies accountable for the success and advancement of children who are gifted.

Setting goals for children who are gifted is the first step toward accountability. Historically, our nation has had inconsistent and often low expectations for children who are gifted. Ohio will ensure that all children who are gifted make strides towards challenging and appropriate goals.

### **Actions for Success**

#### **Action 2.1: State Accountability System**

Districts’ available services for children who are gifted and their growth in achievement will be included in the state’s accountability system, currently the Local Report Card. The system will include an accountability standard reflecting yearly child growth. An assessment system that can

measure the growth of individual children who are gifted will be used. This system could include but would not be limited to value-added assessment and/or above grade level assessments.

**Action 2.2: Statewide Data**

ODE will further develop the statewide data collection and analysis system to be easily accessible and include appropriate data regarding children who are gifted in order to inform policy decisions by relevant stakeholders.

**Action 2.3: Demographic Analysis**

Districts will annually compare the demographics of their school district with the demographics of their identified and their served children who are gifted. This comparison will be used to determine if any groups are underidentified and/or underserved. Districts would use this data to make improvements in local identification and service placement procedures.

**Action 2.4: ESEA and School Choice**

If a school is required to offer school choice as directed by ESEA, all identified children who are gifted at that school will be informed of the gifted services available at the schools within the district to which they could transfer.

**Action 2.5: Strategic Planning**

As set forth in Ohio's Operating Standards for schools 3301-35-03 (Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement), each school district's strategic plan will include identification and services to children who are gifted.

- The local committee will include families and professionals from the gifted community.
- The strategic plan should address compliance Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15, *Identification and Services for Children Who Are Gifted*.
- The district will review local data regarding effectiveness of current identification practices and service offerings when developing the district strategic plan.

**Action 2.6: Funding**

Districts will be held accountable for the appropriate use of funds allocated by the state for gifted services, training and assessment. Districts receiving state gifted funds will earmark these funds specifically for services for children who are gifted. These state funds will have a separate accountability procedure subject to fiscal audit. Funds allocated to serve children who are gifted will be used to provide services for children who are gifted

**Action 2.7: Written Educational Plans**

Districts are expected to encourage families to be active participants in the development of a student's written educational plan (WEP). Districts will provide annual feedback to families on their child's progress related to the WEP and the state's assessment system. If an annual review of the WEP suggests that a child's identified needs are not being met, the district and the family will work together to modify the plan as needed.

ODE will develop standards for written education plans for children who are gifted. All children who are identified as gifted and are receiving services will have a WEP that specifically addresses their area(s) of strength and links to the state curriculum content standards. If a child has both a WEP and an individual education plan (IEP) because of a disability, the WEP and IEP will be coordinated by the district.

**Action 2.8: Ohio Department of Education (ODE)**

Adequate funding will be provided to ODE to fund the personnel and resources needed to implement all recommendations of the Gifted Task Force. This would include, but not be limited to, funding for technical assistance, district oversight and accountability and professional development.

ODE and other service providers will provide technical assistance to districts. Critical topics for technical assistance sessions include assessments and procedures used to identify children who are gifted, accurate reporting of identified children who are gifted in each of the four areas, as specified in OAC 3301-51-15 to the state data collection system (EMIS) and implementation of a continuum of services for children who are gifted.

**Action 2.9: Compliance with OAC**

All districts in Ohio will be in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code (ORC, the Law) and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC, the Rule, 3301-51-15) *Identification and Services for Children Who Are Gifted*. All districts will operate in accordance with currently approved policies and procedures. ODE will support district compliance through monitoring and technical assistance. A leveled progression of sanctions and rewards will be developed to ensure compliance and promote best practices in the education of children who are gifted.

**Action 2.10: Proficiency Scores**

The Ohio Department of Education will study the impact, if any, of individual student proficiency score assignments on the identification of and services for children who are gifted. The proficiency score assignment, or “credit” for a high score, of children with high ability should not be considered when referring a child for assessment, recommending a child for services that meet in a different school building or for transferring a child to another school through redistricting. ODE will make any changes needed to eliminate any unintended consequences of the Local Report Card system for children who are gifted.

## Recommendation 3: Services and Identification

By 2012, all districts in the state of Ohio will assess and identify children for giftedness using best practices. In addition, those children identified as gifted will receive appropriate services based upon their identified areas of strength in appropriate settings at the local, regional and state level.

### Critical Need: A Brief Discussion

A continuum of services for children who are gifted requires careful planning. Numerous studies, including the federal report *National Excellence: A Case for Developing American's Talent* (Ross, 1993), document that the needs of our nation's gifted and talented children are not being met. Although some services are provided during the school day, many of the services for these children are viewed as extra curricular and are provided only on a limited basis in some school systems, when money is available.

According to the *Mandated Educational Opportunities for Gifted and Talented Students Position Statement* (NAGC, 1994), needs of gifted and talented children have been well documented by research and federal studies. To "educate all our children and allow America to compete in a global economy and all fields of human endeavor, the nation must provide an environment in which gifted and talented children, along with all of our children, can reach their full potential" (p. 1).

Each service delivery option selected for children with high ability should be chosen and designed to work smoothly with other service delivery options. The days of gifted programs that can operate in isolation have passed, and connection with the regular school program and with Ohio's operating standards is critical. Working jointly with others to achieve a shared goal includes both efforts within the educational system and outside efforts to form partnerships with businesses and community members. For example, the special needs of children who are gifted can be met in part through mentorships and scholarships with business and community members.

### Actions for Success

#### Action 3.1: Effective Services

Based on best practices, the National Association for Gifted Children standards, standards from other states and the comprehensive evaluations of the continuum of services at each model site (see Action 1.8), services for all recognized areas of giftedness should be evaluated as to overall effectiveness, along with identification of the specific costs and policies required to implement each service. Based on these evaluations, service options would be added or removed from the menu of services in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3301-51-15.

Data regarding specific costs associated with a continuum of services outlined in OAC 3301-51-15 will be collected. A primary source for this data will be the model service projects described

in Action 1.8. This data will be used to develop a hybrid funding system described in Action 3.3, including a review of the 1:2000 and 1:5000 ratios for staffing currently listed in OAC 3301-51-15.

**Action 3.2: Phase-in of Mandated Services**

Services for all identified children who are gifted will be phased in over several years to meet the 2012 deadline. Districts will provide services from the list of state supported services listed in Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15. A timeline and process with specific benchmarks will be developed by a task force under the direction of ODE to phase in services and funding by 2012.

**Action 3.3: Hybrid Funding System**

A hybrid funding system, including both units and weights that will provide adequate and equitable funding to school districts for fully mandated services, will be developed. This new system will include funding for a system of units to ensure district accountability. State-funded personnel would provide or coordinate services for children who are gifted.

Additionally, a weighted funding system will be developed to address local district needs including, but not limited to, professional development, technology, guidance and counseling, educational materials, assessment and evaluation.

Small school districts and others with special needs that create barriers to serving children who are gifted will be eligible for special funds and other technical assistance for staff development. This may require an adjustment of the unit funding ratios to reflect the need for a minimum personnel level in small districts.

**Action 3.4: State and Regional Services**

ODE should establish a structure that will allow it to work with the Ohio Board of Regents, regional service providers, the gifted community, businesses and local communities to develop, organize and fund statewide and regional student resources, including but not limited to summer programs, regional and state high schools, distance learning courses and magnet programs. This would include continuation of the Summer Honors Institutes and Martin W. Essex School for the Gifted, in addition to adding new services to meet identified needs of students K-12 that cannot be met by individual schools and districts. Implementation procedures for current programs should be reviewed by the Ohio Department of Education and improved as needed.

**Action 3.5: State Curriculum Content Standards**

The state curriculum content standards and course of study models currently provide an opportunity to meet the needs of identified children who are gifted at each grade level. ODE will provide technical assistance to districts to help them differentiate instruction based on the curriculum content standards within a K-12 continuum of services for children who are gifted. This would include, but not be limited to, enrichment, rapid pacing and acceleration through both the content of the standards and the related assessments. ODE also will develop guidelines on how the content standards can be used as a framework for accelerating children in specific content areas or whole grade levels.

### **Action 3.6: High-level Coursework**

All districts will provide identified children who are gifted the opportunity to access high level content (e.g., Advanced Placement and college level) in their areas of identification. This can be accomplished through onsite courses, distance learning, post secondary enrollment options and other opportunities as appropriate.

### **Action 3.7: Counseling Services**

An appropriate continuum of services for children who are gifted will include academic advising, social and emotional services and vocational and career services. School personnel licensed in professional school counseling and school psychology with training in gifted education will provide intervention services.

### **Action 3.8: Special Populations**

The state will recognize and make accommodations for identifying and serving the needs of traditionally underserved special populations, including highly gifted children, young children, children with disabilities, members of ethnic or racial minorities, Limited English Proficient children and those who are economically disadvantaged. Services for these populations could include but should not be limited to:

- Bilingual gifted services;
- Talent development programs; and
- Vocational/career counseling and guidance.

### **Action 3.9: Information Resources**

ODE, in consultation with the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, Consortium of Ohio Coordinators for the Gifted and other stakeholders, will develop parent resources that districts will use to educate parents and the community-at-large about issues in gifted education. In addition to explaining state law and rules related to gifted education, these resources will help parents understand the meaning of identification, the value of services and the special academic, social and emotional needs of children who are gifted. Districts would develop similar resources that explain the services offered in their district.

### **Action 3.10: Community Informational Meetings**

At least once each academic year, districts will hold an information meeting related to children who are gifted. This meeting would discuss gifted services available in the district and/or provide appropriate education for community members on the characteristics and needs of children who are gifted. Districts could collaborate to offer regional meetings. These meetings should be held in central locations and transportation for economically disadvantaged families should be facilitated. ODE's annual regional meetings will also include an update session regarding children who are gifted.

### **Action 3.11: Parent Mentor Program**

ODE will develop a parent mentor program for parents of children who are gifted, modeled after the current mentor program for parents of children with disabilities.

**Action 3.12: Assessment and Identification Committee**

ODE will appoint an Assessment and Identification Committee comprised of experts in gifted education and assessment to ensure that the identification provisions of the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code are reviewed and updated regularly. The committee should be racially and ethnically diverse and include professionals who are knowledgeable about disabilities, diversity and poverty. This committee will regularly review and revise the procedures and approved assessment instruments for identification in each area of giftedness. The committee will also review current research and best practices to recommend changes in the specific areas in which children are identified as gifted.

## **Recommendation 4. Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted**

All educators in Ohio will have the skills and abilities they need to plan, develop and deliver services to children who are gifted. To develop these skills, all educators, including teachers, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists and other support service providers will have formal training in meeting both the academic and the social and emotional needs of children who are gifted. It is critical that teachers have the skills to provide instruction in a differentiated manner. Therefore, it is recommended that the ODE work with the Ohio Board of Regents to ensure all teachers have appropriate preservice and inservice training.

### **Critical Need: A Brief Discussion**

Teachers who spend a substantial amount of time with gifted and talented students in an academic setting, whether homogenous or heterogeneous, need specific knowledge and skills to meet the goals of differentiated education.

In many classrooms, one-size-fits-all instruction is pervasive. At the same time, these classrooms are becoming more academically diverse and classroom teachers are being asked to be primary service providers for the full range of academic diversity, including students who are gifted.

According to Clark (1997), few educational decisions have as much influence on the gifted program as teacher selection. With some services for children who are gifted offered in the general classroom, it is critical that preservice teachers have knowledge and skills to work with this special population.

### **Actions for Success**

#### **Action 4.1: Educator Licensure**

To obtain or renew a license, teachers, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists and other appropriate support personnel will complete content or other experiences approved by ODE in meeting the needs of children who are gifted. If Ohio moves to a system of performance-based licensure standards, such standards will include critical areas related to children who are gifted, including comprehensive services, differentiation options, assessment and social and emotional needs.

#### **Action 4.2: Gifted Intervention Specialist Licensure**

The state will review the licensure standards for the Gifted Intervention Specialist license and align them with Council for Exceptional Children and National Association for Gifted Children standards. Licensure requirements in gifted education should be based on a conceptual framework derived from research on the nature of giftedness, the unique needs of gifted and talented children and the methodologies best suited to meeting these needs.

An immediate need is to eliminate the reading requirements for the Gifted Intervention Specialist license, as it does not reflect these standards. It is worth noting that the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, the Consortium of Ohio Coordinators of the Gifted and representatives of Ohio colleges and universities with gifted licensure programs have already presented this need to the Governor's Commission on Teaching Success and to Committee I of the Teacher Education and Licensure Advisory Commission.

**Action 4.3: Professional Development**

The state will develop a process for funding approved gifted professional development programs through regional or statewide service providers and institutions of higher education for all licensed personnel.

The state will require evidence, according to specific standards or benchmarks, of continuing gifted professional development for licensure renewal for all educators, including administrators and support personnel. Each school district will ensure that all educators who work with children who are gifted have a minimum number of approved clock hours of inservice training in gifted education each year.

Increased funding will be provided to ODE to develop, incorporate and implement inservice opportunities for current educators. These inservice sessions will be offered at no cost to attendees.

**Action 4.4: State Commission**

The state will establish a Gifted State Commission appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The commission will include educators, ODE staff, gifted stakeholders and representatives from institutions of higher education that prepare teachers. In addition to helping to implement the other recommendations in this section, the Commission will oversee the quality and quantity of preparation of teachers, administrators, counselors, specialists and other personnel who work with children who are gifted.

**Action 4.5: University Center**

The state will establish a comprehensive university center, based on a competitive contract, dedicated to research and development in the area of gifted education. The center will include a residential service for the highly gifted and a comprehensive professional preparation program. Children and educators throughout the state should be able to access the classes offered via distance learning and planned seminars. This center will be responsible for aggregating research on gifted education, as well as conducting research in Ohio.

**Action 4.6: Recruitment and Retention**

The state will establish competitive grants and contracts to institutions of higher education and other appropriate educational organizations to increase the number of personnel trained to work with children who are gifted throughout the state. This could include stipends to educators to complete gifted licensure.

## Critical Need for Recommendation 1: Policy

The Council for Exceptional Children's public policy in education of the gifted and talented states that:

*Special education for the gifted is not a question of advantage to the individual versus advantage to society. It is a matter of advantage to both. Society has an urgent and accelerated need to develop the abilities and talents of those who promise high contribution. To ignore this obligation and this resource is not only short sighted but does violence to the basic concept of full educational opportunity for all. (p. 19, 1993)*

Policies should promote academic growth for all children while not prohibiting any child's individual growth. Unfortunately, many Ohio school districts have local policies that prohibit the individual needs and achievement of many children, including those who are gifted.

Examples of such barriers include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Acceleration:** A school district that refuses to accelerate any children at any grade level is arbitrarily reducing educational opportunities for these children.
- **High School Credit:** Often children at middle and junior high schools are not given credit on their high school transcripts for advanced work that they complete. Such decisions regarding awarding credit should be determined by families and children, in collaboration with the school district personnel, not just by board policy and/or a principal's decision.
- **Early Admission:** Current Ohio law and policy does not permit children to skip kindergarten and move to first grade.
- **Post Secondary Enrollment Options:** Currently, post secondary enrollment options are only available for children in grades 9 through 12. This option needs to be available to highly gifted children regardless of age or grade level.

According to the National Association for Gifted Children's *Acceleration Position Statement* (1992):

*Research documents the academic benefits and positive outcomes of personal acceleration for carefully selected students...The goals of acceleration are to adjust the pace of instruction to the student's capability, to provide an appropriate level of challenge, and to reduce the time period necessary for students to complete traditional schooling. When acceleration has been effective in achieving these goals, highly capable individuals are prepared to begin contributing to society at an earlier age. Although instructional adaptations, such as compacting, telescoping, and curriculum revision, which allow more economic use of time are desirable practices for exceptionally talented students, there are situations in which such modifications are insufficient in fulfilling the academic potential of all highly capable children. Personal acceleration is called for in these cases. (p. 1)*

When teachers instruct at a high level, children at all levels rise to meet the challenge. This is the guiding philosophy of Hank Levin who founded the Accelerated Schools Project (Levin 1987 and 1994) in response to the negative efforts of remedial education. When children are given material at a remedial level, children develop low expectations because the teachers have low expectations. According to Levin, these children develop their low expectations because the teachers have low expectations, and the gap between these children and others is widened. When we raise standards for all, we bring the level up and narrow the gap between high and low achieving children and allow children who are gifted to work at their individual level of learning. All district policies that are barriers to acceleration for advanced learners should be removed. This will allow all children to move at their own pace and not be limited by grade level or age.

Early admission to college is a researched and widely accepted best practice. Early admission practices can include: advanced standing, early graduation, Advanced Placement programs and the International Baccalaureate Program. Research by Fox (1979) and Morgan, Tennant, & Gold (1980) show evidence to support this practice in subject areas.

Children who are gifted and take high school classes even though they are not yet in high school must receive high school credit for the advanced courses. Without this credit and the corresponding opportunity to graduate early, many children who are gifted are left to mark time in their later high school years.

The diversity of services available to children who are gifted in Ohio's school districts is great. Due to small numbers of students and a lack of teaching staff, Advanced Placement and honors classes are often not an option, unless provided online. Clearly the opportunity to attend and take advantage of college level classes has been an important option in the available continuum of services for children who are gifted. Unfortunately, in some school districts there are barriers to accessing post secondary enrollment options, where many who are ready for this option, but are unable to enroll due to age.

Early admission to all levels of schooling is a program option. The principle behind early admission is that some children who are gifted are ready for instruction in specific areas before their age peers and should be permitted to step around the typical age barriers. Early entrance to elementary school is one example. Research supports this practice, although it has not been widely implemented. Obstacles to early entrance come from attitudes of schools and families, as well as school regulations and state laws.

Children may be able to read, do arithmetic or speak fluently and logically as early as two and one-half or three years of age (Gross & Feldhusen, 1990). Proctor, Feldhusen and Black (1988) reviewed the literature on early admission and found that it is a sound approach if guidelines are established for assessing and placing such children in school.

## Critical Need for Recommendation 2: Accountability

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, will bring a new degree of accountability to the public schools. Susan Tave Zelman, superintendent of public instruction, (2002) says expectations are rising for public education and schools are beginning to respond to the pressure for high standards and better performance. For gifted children, high standards refer to the opportunity to access education options at their ability level and in their area of giftedness. Standards require educators to clearly identify what a child should know and be able to do. For the gifted child, the identification process will indicate their level of ability and area of strength.

The written educational plan (WEP) according to Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15 states: "Instruction shall be based on the identified gifted child's individual needs using the district's continuum of services." For those gifted students identified and served, instruction is planned and guided by a WEP and is consistent with the areas in which the child was identified as gifted. It is important when writing the plan to include the child since the plan is for him/her and the parent(s) need to have ownership in their child's education.

It is critical that the family is involved in the child's education. This is no less true for special populations, such as children who are gifted. School districts and parents need to meet together to assess the child's needs and examine options for services. This should occur through the WEP process, but is even more effective when parents are treated as partners in the total educational process.

Beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, the ESEA requires annual Local Report Cards with a range of information, including statewide student achievement, with data broken down by subgroup and information on the performance of school districts in making adequately yearly progress (AYP). Districts must also provide report cards, including district-wide and school-by-school data. Ohio's Local Report Card must expand to include educational accountability for children who are gifted.

According to Ohio Revised Code 3424.04 (B) (2), district identification policies must assure "inclusion in screening and assessment procedures for minority and disadvantaged students, children with disabilities, and students for whom English is a second language." It is important for Ohio school districts to compare the demographics of their whole district with the demographics of children identified as gifted. These special populations of children who are gifted need to have services that address their cultural, linguistic and psychological characteristics. "Gifted programs for culturally different youngsters must be suited to them, not merely offered as take-it-or-leave-it basis, and not designed and implemented with only little deliberation about their psychological, cultural and linguistic characteristics" (Bernal, 1979, p. 397).

It is important that those who deliver services have the knowledge and skills to work with the gifted child. While Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15 specifies the coordinator of gifted services and the intervention specialist as the key personnel for delivery of services to children who are gifted, services are also delivered by general classroom teachers, arts specialists and guidance personnel.

While no formal study has been conducted on the impact that the Local Report Card and proficiency testing have on gifted services, members of the Task Force have shared many anecdotal reports of significant impacts.

- In districts where gifted services are offered in only one building to improve efficiency, building-level proficiency results are polarized within the district.
- Some teachers and administrators discourage referral for identification and participation in gifted services if those services would require the child to transfer to another school in the district, taking a high score on the proficiency test out of the building.
- Parents have been told that their children cannot skip a grade because they would miss taking one of the proficiency tests.

ODE must determine if these anecdotes reflect the reality in some districts and take steps to ensure that the important need for the Local Report Card does not have unintended consequences for children who are gifted.

### **Critical Need for Recommendation 3: Services and Identification**

Services for children who are gifted need to be aligned with regular education services to assist with appropriate curriculum differentiation. They must be coordinated with other specialized education programs, such as those for students with Limited English Proficiency and children with disabilities, to ensure that all the needs of dual-exceptional children are being met (VanTassel-Baska, 1991; VanTassel-Baska, Patton, & Prillaman, 1991).

In selecting appropriate service delivery options for school districts in Ohio, the district's strategic planning committee needs to:

1. Recognize all four gifted ability areas (superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative thinking ability and visual or performing arts ability);
2. Identify the specific educational needs of these children; and
3. Assess the resources that are available in the school district for meeting the needs of these children.

This process offers a greater chance that service delivery options and settings will be chosen to fit children's needs rather than the children fitting into the service delivery option. In addition, services to children who are gifted should reflect their written educational plans (WEP) and, specifically, match the identified gifted area with an appropriate setting. Davis and Rimm (1998) suggest that the "design of a comprehensive program plan includes the alignment of program level goals and objectives with specific exemplary classroom materials, resources, activities and teaching units."

Many Ohio school districts have traditionally provided some experiences for children who are gifted in the areas of superior cognitive ability and specific academic ability by initiating resource rooms for content enrichment and acceleration for elementary children. Some high schools and middle schools offer honor courses, Advanced Placement, post secondary enrollment options and educational options. The other two areas, creative thinking ability and visual and performing arts ability are often overlooked in providing services in these areas, since this may require additional funding for the specialized teachers and resources.

Ohio has identified children who have creative thinking ability and districts need to provide educational learning experiences for these children. According to Feldhusen (1985), we must "access creativity as a component of giftedness and nurture it as a major concern in educational programs for the gifted." Programs focusing on creative thinking ability need to have an educational environment that allows diversity, rather than pressures toward conformity in the educational systems. Creatively talented children may be prone to some degree of frustration in a conventional education environment. Services for these children should emphasize individualizing instruction in enrichment opportunities and independent projects consistent with personal interest, preferred learning style and appropriate learning pace.

Services in the visual and performing arts have been limited in Ohio for those identified, since there are no requirements to have a specialist serve these children's needs. According to Seeley (1989) an arts curriculum is essential for children with high potential in the arts. Those talented

in the arts have been found to have distinctive personality profiles. For the artist, learning experiences in the arts provide emotional outlets and a medium for expression that words and numbers cannot.

Direct service for children who are gifted in Ohio can take place through clusters in the regular classroom, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms and magnet schools. Indirect services are learning environments for the gifted in general education, such as Advanced Placement, educational options, post secondary enrollment options and the general classroom. Research shows that children who are gifted need to interact with those who can challenge them. For the highly gifted, ability grouping would justifiably comprise the major part of their educational experience. But they need even more to be with those who share their excitement, who can follow their ideas and who understand and accept their way of learning. Some form of grouping with intellectual peers is necessary for understanding and acceptance.

The gifted-only services cited in the research as best practices for children who are gifted were the same options that the Ohio districts described in their service plans submitted to ODE in 2000. In Ohio, 268 of the districts reported intent to offer “gifted only” services for their students in grades K through 12 at least a part of a day. The services reported generally fall into the following categories: (1) self-contained classroom; (2) resource room; (3) cluster grouping; or 4) magnet school. Other “gifted only” options that districts described were acceleration, grade skipping and early entrance.

Research strongly supports identified children who are gifted needing educational opportunities to learn and interact with other children who are their intellectual peers (Feldhusen, 1998, Kulik & Kulik 1990; Renzulli & Reis, 1991; Rogers, 1991, 1999; Stanley, 1991). Kulik and Kulik (1987) found that bright children improve their performance in separate classrooms and that comprehensive grouping of children has no effect on achievement of the general student population. In addition, separate groups enhance the self-concept and social situations of gifted pupils. Rogers (1991) finds from her analysis of five meta-analyses (Kulik, 1985; Kulik & Kulik, 1982, 1984, 1990; Vaughan, 1990), two best-evidence syntheses (Slavin, 1987, 1990) and one ethnographic-survey research syntheses (Gamoran & Berends, 1987) that:

*While full-time ability grouping for regular instruction makes no discernible difference in the academic achievement of average and low ability students . . . it does produce substantial academic gains for gifted students enrolled full-time in special programs for the gifted and talented. (p. x)*

Another area to consider in planning services for children who are gifted is social and emotional needs. The emotional needs of gifted students often seem to take second place to their academic progress. There is an assumption among some educators that if gifted students are doing well in the academic arenas, they should not have any special needs in emotional development. This approach has resulted in the limited use of counseling and psychological support services for gifted students. Yet many of these students have problems with perfectionism, have intense feelings around moral and ethical issues and deep concerns about social problems at an early age when they may not be emotionally equipped to cope with their own feelings.

It is critical that the family be involved in the child's education. School districts and parents need to meet together to assess the child's needs and examine options for academic and support services. This should occur through the written educational plan process, but is even more effective when parents are treated as partners in their child's educational process. Further, parent education is a critical piece, particularly when considering a gifted child's social and emotional needs.

The National Association for Gifted Children (1995) believes that gifted children also require appropriate affective services including gifted-focused counseling interventions and career-development guidance programs if they are to develop their potential. The National Association for Gifted Children recommends that these services be designed to:

- *Provide orientation to gifted programming, including information about the selection process and the social, emotional, and academic implications of the giftedness*
- *Enhance relationships with others, including both those who are identified as gifted and those who are not*
- *Assist with long-term life planning, including opportunities to deal with issues related to multi-potentiality*
- *Provide counseling that addresses the increased incidence of perfectionism, unrealistic goals, emotional intensity, moral concerns, and the resultant stress and lower achievement in the gifted population*

*Some gifted and talented children, because of heightened intellectual and social and emotional needs, may experience difficulties that require professional intervention. NAGC believes that it is imperative that those who provide services at such times have expertise in understanding the impact of giftedness on a child's development (p. 1).*

Another important need is to provide appropriate services for children with disabilities who are also identified as gifted. Many people might assume that the number of twice-exceptional children is small, but the numbers are higher than most expect, and the needs of these children are great. Although Davis and Rimm (1994) estimated that there are 120,000 to 180,000 children who are gifted with disabilities in public schools, Whitmore (1981) suggests that the figure may be as high as 540,000.

Although programs for the gifted can sometimes be initiated at relatively modest cost, it is important that funds for this purpose be earmarked at local, state or national levels. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) states specifically in its *Public Policy and Legislation Information: Education of the Gifted and Talented*, that:

*Principal expenditures should be directed toward the employment of leadership personnel, the development of methods and programs, and of particular importance at the local level, the preparation of persons for the support and implementation of such methods and programs in the schools.*

*The importance of optimal educational services for the gifted and talented merits the expenditure of funds in appropriate amounts toward this end by all levels of government as well as by other sources. (p. 20, 1993)*

Budgetary matters must be considered at the time planning takes place for identification strategies, instructional program alternatives and needed evaluation data. Since the passage of House Bill 282, Ohio has provided funding to school districts for the assessment needs in identification of children who are gifted. This money allows districts to purchase testing material and equipment, provide opportunity for staff training for the identification of children who are gifted and contract services (individuals to give tests and other service) for identification of children who are gifted.

Ohio should consider the funding of instructional program alternatives for children who are gifted. With funding from ODE, each district must account for the expenditure of state funds as provided by rule of the State Board of Education. Some programs and services clearly cost more than others and priorities may need to be made in light of available dollars.

## **Critical Need for Recommendation 4: Educators Who Serve Children Who Are Gifted**

The finest service plan for the education of children who are gifted is of little use without effective instructional personnel. According to Clark (1997), few educational decisions have as much influence on the gifted program as teacher selection. With some services for children who are gifted offered in the general classroom it is critical that preservice teachers have knowledge and skill to work with this special population.

The National Association for Gifted Children's *Standards for Graduate Programs in Gifted Education* is parallel to NCATE's *Refined Standards* (Parker, 1996). Four categories were adopted: Conceptual Framework (what should be taught); Candidates for Graduate Programs in Gifted Education (who should teach children who are gifted); Professional Education Faculty (who should prepare teachers to work with children who are gifted); and Resources (human, financial, technological, library and other media resources necessary to offer quality programs for the preparation of gifted education professionals). Within these four categories, there are indicators that can be translated into teacher outcomes which specify what teachers should know and be able to do. The Standards determine the knowledge (course work) and skills (practical experience) a teacher of children who are gifted needs to be effective. A plan for a comprehensive professional development program is vital to a successful continuum of services for children who are gifted and must be provided for all school staff, including general classroom teachers and staff new to the district.

The Gifted Task Force recommends a Gifted State Commission (see Action 4.4) to oversee the quality and quantity of preparation with reference to the NCATE standards of teachers, administrators, counselors, specialists and other personnel who work with children who are gifted. Only qualified personnel should be involved in the education of gifted learners.

When individual professional development plans are in place for each educator, the coordinator and/or supervisor can use them to plan a master staff development program for gifted education services in the district. This will provide a road map for determining which staff members have common needs that can be met through group workshops, courses and/or conferences. Specific attention to follow-up and implementation of new skills or practices should be an integral part of the individual professional development plan to ensure the integration of new knowledge and transfer of skills into practice. In districts that have a shortage of gifted education teachers or intervention specialists, staff development activities could include working toward gifted licensure, training in Advanced Placement courses or pursuing advanced courses of study to expand course offerings.

It is critical that the educational staff be provided with time and other support for the preparation and development of differentiated education of gifted learners with written educational plans, materials and curriculum. School personnel require support for their specific efforts related to the education of gifted learners and they must be released from their professional duties to participate in staff development efforts in gifted education.

Van Tassel-Baska (1986) suggests the five ideas for assuring the effectiveness of gifted professional development programs:

1. Real needs regarding gifted education, as well as perceived needs, must be included;
2. Inservice should be based on the level of knowledge and experience that gifted programming personnel have;
3. Training should be targeted toward specific outcomes for individuals and groups. An example would be a program for teachers which emphasizes strategies and techniques for teachers who work with children who are gifted at the elementary level;
4. Follow-up observations and monitoring are critical to the effectiveness of inservices; and
5. Techniques and ideas for continuing staff development are essential.

In a national survey conducted by State Department Directors of Gifted Education (Cross & Dobbs, 1987), topics were identified as preferred goals of professional development for teachers of the gifted. Most significant is knowledge of educational and psychological needs of the gifted and talented, application of a variety of instructional models and/or educational strategies appropriate for use with the gifted and ability to modify, adapt and design appropriate curricular units of study for use with the gifted.

Other important topics identified were:

- The characteristics of and identification procedures for academically, creatively, culturally diverse and twice-exceptional gifted learners;
- Ability to incorporate instructional strategies for gifted into the regular curriculum; and
- Knowledge of appropriate methods of program and student education recommended for use with gifted learners.

These teachers require high standards for solid verbal abilities and content knowledge. Verbal abilities and content knowledge matter most in preparation and certification systems according to the report *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge* (Paige, 2002) that defines “highly qualified teachers.”

To use best practice methods for the education of gifted children and to continue to have qualified teachers for children who are gifted, the Task Force recommends the establishment of a University Center for Gifted Education. This Center would collect data, issue grants, establish a resource system to school districts, create a technology system for advanced course work and provide services to the profoundly gifted child.

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## Appendix A

### Glossary

**Above Grade Level Assessment.** Near their ceilings, standardized tests can be inaccurate; the numbers of items in any category of skill is necessarily small so that the test can be comprehensive. If a child gets all the items right, the school has no idea what the child's actual achievement level is. Above grade level assessment (out-of-level testing) should be administered to students who score in the top ranges so that their achievement levels can be clearly assessed and accurate placement can be made.

**Accelerated Assessment.** This type of assessment is very similar to above grade level assessment, except that the out-of-level testing takes place in the context of a formal assessment system where all students at a grade level normally take a specific test tied to the curriculum at that grade level. In other words, if a student in fifth grade takes a state assessment tied to the sixth grade curriculum, that student would be taking an accelerated assessment.

**Acceleration of Content.** Students move through curriculum materials and concepts at an accelerated rate by curriculum compacting, telescoping content or receiving credit by examination. Content acceleration can result in students completing selected content in less time than is usually required. Researchers report that acceleration is positive (Alexander & Skinner, 1980; Anderson, 1960; Braga, 1969; Brody & Benbow, 1987; Gallagher, 1966).

**Adequate Yearly Progress.** Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as the annual growth needed in the percentage of students who achieve academic proficiency such that 100 percent proficiency is reached by all students in 12 years. AYP provides separate, measurable objectives for all children and for specific groups (disadvantaged, racial/ethnic, disabled, Limited English Proficient). Ohio will submit its definition of AYP to the U.S. Department of Education in May 2003.

**Advanced Placement.** A program of college-level courses and examinations sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board in New York City. Advanced Placement (AP) can take the form of an honors class, an advanced course, a tutorial or an independent study. AP courses often take more time and go into greater depth than usual high school courses. AP examinations are given each year in the spring and result in credit or advanced standing in participating colleges and universities.

**Appropriate Learning Pace.** For a gifted child, the appropriate learning pace is moving through educational material at the child's level of ability; usually it is rapid pacing, a form of acceleration that creates less risk of stress or emotional problems for the child.

**Assessment.** Measurement of student achievement of performance goals and objectives [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35-01 (B) (1)].

**Average Daily Membership.** Average daily membership (ADM) is the number of children that are counted to generate state funds under the Ohio School Foundation Funding Program.

**Career Explorations.** Experiences that create an opportunity for learners to discover what resources are available in the community, learn how to retrieve various kinds of information, develop areas of interest and make contacts with individuals, businesses and agencies with expertise in an area of interest. Career exploration is looking at career opportunities. Children may attend seminars that give a broad range of possible careers and then choose specific areas to investigate, interview individuals in the selected career fields and intern with an adult in a chosen career (Betts, 1997).

**Ceiling Effect.** The ceiling in testing vocabulary means the upper ability that can be measured by a particular test. Children who score in the high 90 percentiles, “topping out” the test, are in danger of having their abilities underestimated.

**Cluster Grouping.** Clustering gifted children within the regular classroom with their age peers. Clustering at least five gifted children in the regular classroom gives them a more appropriate learning environment if the teacher is aware of and tries to meet their differentiated needs (Clark, 1997).

**Content Standards.** For Ohio, content standards are defined statements that describe the knowledge and skills that students should attain—often called the “what” of “what students should know and be able to do.” They indicate the ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning and investigating, as well as important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas and knowledge essential to the discipline.

**Continuum of Services.** A variety of service delivery options rather than just one option must be available for children who are gifted at all grade levels. A continuum of services is based on evidence that giftedness is multifaceted and may manifest itself in many different ways and to many degrees across groups of identified gifted learners.

**Creative Thinking Ability.** A student shall be identified as exhibiting creative thinking ability superior to children of a similar age if, within the previous 24 months, the student scored one standard deviation above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual or group intelligence test and also did either of the following: (1) attained a sufficient score, as established by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), on an approved individual or group test of creative ability; or (2) exhibited sufficient performance, as established by ODE, on an approved checklist of creative behaviors.

**Curriculum Compacting.** A system designed to provide necessary evidence regarding a student’s mastery of the skills and concepts required in the regular curriculum. This method of pre-test and post-test content leads the way to make more appropriate use of a gifted student’s time. Once the skill or concept has been learned, it becomes wasteful to have the student keep reviewing the information or skill again and again. Curriculum compacting has three major objectives: (1) to create a more challenging learning environment; (2) to guarantee proficiency in the basic curriculum; and (3) to “buy time” for more appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities (Renzulli & Reis, 1986, p. 232). Curriculum compacting is a valuable tool to be used with any curriculum plan as an aid in differentiating the content area.

**Differentiation.** A basic principle underlying curriculum development for the gifted. This premise suggests that the experiences for these children must be qualitatively different from the basic program provided for all children (Maker, 1982). Ward (1961) coined the expression “differential education for the gifted” in the late 1950s. Kaplan (1986) writes that “the ultimate goals of a differentiated curriculum are that it recognizes the characteristics of gifted, provides reinforcement or practice for the development of these characteristics and extends the recognized characteristics to further levels of development” (p. 182). The principles of a differentiated curriculum for the gifted, as developed by the Curriculum Council of the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented (Kaplan, 1986), provide this framework for appropriately differentiating curriculum for children who are gifted.

**Distance Learning.** A planned teaching and learning experience that uses a wide spectrum of technologies to reach learners at a distance and is designed to encourage learner interaction.

**Early Entrance.** Enrolling a high ability child in school at an age that is younger than usual, based on the child’s readiness for school.

**Educational Options.** The intent of educational options is to allow educators, scientists, artists, business persons, parents and others to work together to prepare children for a rapidly changing world in which their potential can best be realized. School districts may provide educational options to meet specialized student needs or interests under rule 3301-35-06 (G) of the Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools. The provision of educational options, if any, will be available to children of the district.

The standards define educational options as an experience or activities, which may be provided in accordance with board policy to supplement the regular school program. Such options may include correspondence courses, educational travel, independent study, mentor programs and tutorial programs. Educational options may be used as additional curricular tools to expand, enrich and improve children’s experiences and perspectives. Opportunities for children to participate in learning situations which utilize business and community resources may now be linked to promotion or translated into credit-earning courses through the application of educational options.

**EMIS.** This is an acronym for the Ohio Department of Education’s Education Management Information System, a statewide data system used by a wide variety of users for tasks ranging from record keeping to policy analysis.

**Enrichment.** Disciplines of learning not normally found in the regular curriculum using in-depth material to enhance the core curriculum. Examples of enrichment approaches are teaching research skills, higher level or critical thinking, meta-cognitive skills and thematic connections.

**ESEA.** The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, reauthorized as the *No Child Left Behind Act*, was enacted in January 2002.

**Families, to include parents, primary guardians.** Parent, guardian or other person having charge or care of a child means either parent unless the parents are separated or divorced or their marriage has been dissolved or annulled, in which case parent means the parent who is the residential parent and legal custodian of the child. If the child is in the legal or permanent custody of a person other than a parent or government agency, parent means that person or government agency. When a child is a resident of a home, as defined in section 3313.64 of the Ohio Revised Code, and the child's parent is not a resident of this state, parent, guardian or other person having charge or care of a child means the head of the home.

**Flexible Grouping.** A grouping strategy that places students in groups for instructional purposes, such as pacing content, differentiation and interest areas. These groups are based on an assessment of the current skill level of each student and are reviewed and changed as the content of instruction changes.

**Grade Acceleration (Grade Skipping).** The process where children move through age-graded classes in less time than their age peers. This can be done by grade skipping, moving through cross-graded or nongraded classes in two rather than 3 years, or Advanced Placement (Clark, 1997).

**Guidance.** These services include any that help gifted students discover their strengths, understand the emotional self, develop an awareness of self and express emotions. Services may include individual counseling, small group discussion and parent support. Topics of discussion might include decision-making, goal setting, listening skills, management skills and social skills.

**Honors Classes.** Classes that provide advanced content to gifted learners, i.e., these classes are also usually open to all children who choose to enroll. Just because bright children are grouped together, the material still must be differentiated. The content, materials and strategies are modified to meet the needs of gifted learners. The practice of grouping the children together will not, by itself, ensure that the class is accomplishing that goal.

**Hybrid Funding System.** A hybrid funding system, including both units and weights, provides adequate and equitable funding to school districts for fully mandated services. This system will include funding for a system of units to ensure district accountability. State-funded personnel would provide or coordinate services for children who are gifted. A weighted component would cover non-personnel expenses.

**Identification.** The process used to determine children who are gifted in superior cognitive ability, specific academic ability, creative thinking ability or visual or performing arts ability.

**Independent Project.** An educational activity involving advanced or in-depth work that an individual student pursues under the direction of a teacher.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP).** Individualized education program or IEP means a written plan for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in accordance with paragraphs (D) through (K) of rule 3301-51-07 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

**International Baccalaureate (IB) Program.** A program which demands a high level of subject mastery. The IB program is a two-year program outline, although it is quite flexible and a school is permitted to write its own component, based on the strengths and interests of the children involved. The resulting diploma is recognized by the major European universities. Many American universities also allow full college credit.

**Local Report Card.** Annual report generated by the Ohio Department of Education which designates whether a district rates as effective, in continuous improvement, under academic watch or academic emergency in accordance with provisions of section 3302.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

**Magnet.** A school that provides learning experiences for children who are identified as gifted. The school may be designed based on area of giftedness, such as a science magnet school or a school for the performing arts.

**Mandate.** A mandate is an order. In the case of gifted education, a mandate would mean an order to provide an appropriate education for gifted students.

**Mentorships.** Gifted learners work with an expert on a one-on-one basis in an area of interest. A mentor is a guide, advisor, role model, counselor and friend who helps advance a student's knowledge in a particular field. Mentorships differ from internships in that the gifted learners are not confined to specific tasks or agencies (Swassing & Fichter, 1991). A mentorship can be implemented in all areas of giftedness during school or after school.

**Ohio SchoolNet.** An independent state agency established in 1997 that administers the state's multimillion dollar investment in Ohio's companion technology programs.

**Post Secondary Enrollment Options.** Allows children to enroll in nonsectarian college-level courses and receive college credit and/or credit toward graduation from high school. Students participating in this program elect one of two options. Under option "A", students may elect to receive only college credit, in which case the cost is borne entirely by the students and student's parents. Under option "B", students may elect to receive both college and high school credit, in which case the students' attendance will be subsidized by direct payments to the college from the school district's state foundation funding.

**Rapid Pacing.** Rapid pacing is a form of acceleration, but it takes place on a lesson-to-lesson basis and within lessons.

**Regional Service Providers.** The regional service providers create and sustain self-renewing learning communities to transform education in Ohio so that all learners can achieve their full potential to contribute to a democratic society. A critical function of the regional service providers is to facilitate linkages, communication and team building through the ongoing development and support of networks.

**Research.** A method to develop research skills. As children develop their independent studies, they experience excitement and involvement in high-interest projects. Gifted learners need to

become familiar with the skills of historical research, descriptive research and experimental research as tools for future learning and thinking. Renzulli (1977) states that learning the skills to do research and carrying out independent study helps develop skills to investigate real problems in a manner consistent with their preferred style of learning.

**Resource Room.** An instructional setting used to enrich the regular school program with a minimum amount of time allowed for participation, after which the students return to the regular classroom. If a resource room is available as part of a well-planned and well-integrated program, it provides a source of enriching experience and adds to the options available to teachers working to develop special interests and special talents for gifted students (Clark, 1997).

**School Facilities Commission.** The purpose of Ohio's School Facilities Commission is to provide funding, management oversight and technical assistance to local school districts for construction and renovation of school facilities to provide an appropriate learning environment for Ohio's school children.

**Self-Contained Classroom.** An instructional setting in which the teacher differentiates in the depth of examination; range of supporting activities, such as foreign language, debate, music and art; emphasis on purposeful learning; and intense involvement provided. The self-contained classroom varies the learning environment, content and process, and it accommodates the individual learning styles of gifted children.

**Service Delivery Options.** Service delivery options for Ohio school districts, according to Ohio Revised Code 3324.07, are differentiated curriculum, cluster grouping, mentorships, accelerated course work, the post secondary enrollment option program under chapter 3365 of the Ohio Revised Code, Advanced PlacementA, honors classes, magnet school, self-contained classrooms, independent study and other options identified in Rules adopted by the Ohio Department of Education.

**Social and Emotional.** Refers to children who are gifted may have problems, such as perfectionism, intense feelings around moral and ethical issues, and deep concerns about social problems at an early age when they may not be emotionally equipped to cope with their own feelings.

**Specific Academic Ability.** A student shall be identified as exhibiting specific academic ability superior to that of children of similar age in a specific academic ability field if, within the preceding 24 months, the student performs at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile at the national level on an approved individual or group standardized achievement test of specific ability in that field. A student may be identified as gifted in more than one specific academic ability field.

**Superior Cognitive Ability.** A student shall be identified as exhibiting superior cognitive ability if the student did either of the following within the preceding 24 months: (1) scored two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual standardized intelligence test administered by a licensed psychologist or (2) accomplished any one of the following: (a) scored at least two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved standardized group intelligence

test; (b) performed at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on an approved individual or group standardized basic or composite battery of a nationally normed achievement test; or (c) attained an approved score on one or more above-grade level standardized, nationally normed approved tests.

**Support Service Providers.** Professionals such as school counselors, art specialists and speech pathologists who provide additional services to children who are gifted.

**Underidentified Populations.** According to Ohio Revised Code 3324.04, underidentified populations are minority and disadvantaged students, children with disabilities and students for whom English is a second language.

**Underserved Special Populations.** Underidentified special populations who are not receiving appropriate services. According to Passow (1986), “The goals are the same; the standards are the same for advantaged and disadvantaged. It is the strategies and program structure which differ because individualization and differentiation must take into account the personal and cultural characteristics of the student and the milieu in which he/she functions.” (pp. 160-161)

**Value-added Assessment.** Assessment system to measure student growth.

**Visual or Performing Arts Ability.** A student shall be identified as exhibiting visual or performing arts ability superior to that of children of similar age if the student has done both of the following: (1) demonstrated through a display of work, an audition or other performance or exhibition superior ability in a visual or performing arts area; and (2) exhibited sufficient performance, as established by ODE, on an approved checklist of behaviors related to a specific arts area.

**Written Educational Plan (WEP).** A plan of instruction based on identified gifted children’s individual needs using the district’s continuum of services.

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## Appendix B

### Historical Overview of Gifted Education in Ohio

#### The 1950s

Ohio has a rich background in gifted education beginning with the nationally and internationally recognized *Cleveland Plan*, known as the *Major Works Program*, the earliest continuous program in the nation for children who are gifted. A self-contained gifted classroom was defined as a result of this program that began in 1922. As early as 1959, 16 percent of Ohio's schools had programs for the gifted. At this time, the legislature appropriated funds for research and demonstration model projects that were awarded to local school districts.

#### The 1960s

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) employed the first supervisor of gifted programs in 1960 to provide technical assistance to school districts. The 1960 state survey of school districts showed that two percent of all children in Ohio's public schools were identified as gifted. In 1963, the position of state supervisor was eliminated due to budget reductions.

#### The 1970s

Ohio's first strategic plan for the education of children who are gifted was developed and the state supervisor for gifted was reinstated in 1975. This early work led to the first appropriation for gifted foundation unit funding for school districts. This funding paid the salary for the employment of a gifted coordinator and/or a teacher of the gifted. Another Ohio initiative for children who are gifted was the Martin W. Essex School for the Gifted, a summer educational experience for selected gifted high school juniors.

#### The 1980s

In 1984, the State Board of Education adopted the *Rule for School Foundations Units for Gifted Children*. In 1986, ODE instituted the Summer Honors Institutes for gifted high school children, held on state university campuses throughout Ohio. Funds were awarded through a grant process. In 1989, private colleges joined the state universities in applying for the grants to provide these Institutes.

In 1987, Ohio enacted legislation mandating the identification of all children who are gifted. This was followed by federal legislation, the *Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act*, which authorized the U.S. Department of Education to provide funds to encourage research, demonstration projects and personnel training. ODE has applied for and received three Javits grants from 1990 through 2003.

#### The 1990s

In March 1990, the Ohio superintendent of public instruction created a task force to develop a strategic plan for gifted education for the 1990's. This task force, a broadly representative group comprised of practitioners and parents, published its results a year later. This first task force

wrote a mission statement, belief statements and five goals to reflect Ohio's beliefs for the education of children who are gifted. Their belief statements were as follows:

- The Ohio Department of Education should have a significant responsibility for the education of children who are gifted;
- All children who are gifted should receive appropriate educational and support services;
- Appropriate and varied measures should be used to identify all children who are gifted;
- Schools and communities should understand the importance of their roles in the appropriate education of children who are gifted;
- There should be identifiable outcomes for the education of children who are gifted; and
- There should be ongoing and multifaceted evaluation of programs involving children who are gifted.

Their mission statement for the education of children who are gifted was to prepare each of them to be a contributing member of society by providing appropriate programs and services designed to develop and maximize their unique abilities and enhance personal growth.

### **2000 to Date**

In 1999, the Ohio Legislature passed House Bill 282, which required that all school districts in Ohio have a policy and plan for the identification of children who are gifted. Policy and plans were sent by each school district and approved by ODE throughout 2000. In early 2000, the State Board of Education adopted Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-15, which applied to all children who are gifted, not just those receiving services supported by state foundation units.

## **Appendix C**

### **Members of the 2002 Ohio Task Force**

**Susan Amidon, Ph.D.**, is the Supervisor of Able and Talented Programs for the Westerville City School District. In addition to her many years of experience in gifted education, she has been a science curriculum coordinator, career technical program coordinator and Adjunct Professor for Ashland University. Dr. Amidon has published several articles and book chapters regarding gifted education and presented at local, state, national and international conferences.

**Carolyn Collins** serves as president of the Ohio School Counselor Association. She has provided school counseling services to students at the elementary, middle and high school levels, currently having supervised Akron's elementary counselors.

**Libby Davis** is president of the Consortium of Ohio Coordinators for the Gifted. She has served as the Coordinator of Gifted Services for the Erie-Huron-Ottawa Educational Service Center since 1989. Ms. Davis was the recipient of three ODE Innovative Model Project Grants for Gifted Education and has presented at numerous state, national and international conferences for gifted education.

**Donna Y. Ford, Ph.D.**, is a professor of education at the Ohio State University where she teaches gifted education courses. For the past decade, Professor Ford has addressed issues related to recruiting and retaining culturally diverse students in gifted education. Her specific foci are testing and assessment, multicultural education, family involvement and promoting minority student achievement.

**Sharon Phillips** teaches gifted elementary school students for the Federal Hocking Local School District in rural southeastern Ohio. She holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and has more than 15 years experience with gifted education. Ms. Phillips received Ohio University's Life Long Learning Award of Recognition for Outstanding Achievement in Teaching and is a nominee for the Ohio Association for Gifted Children's 2002 Teacher of the Year.

**Ann Sheldon** is the Executive Director for the Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC). During her 10 years with OAGC, she has been a leading advocate for Ohio children who are gifted. She has served as an expert witness on gifted funding and service issues in Ohio and has led two gifted cost studies. Prior to her involvement with OAGC, Ms. Sheldon was a business consultant specializing in financial, systems and organizational analysis.

**Thomas M. Stephens, Ph.D.**, is Professor Emeritus, College of Education, the Ohio State University; Research Director, School of Education, the University of Dayton-Columbus; and Executive Director of the School Study Council of Ohio. Dr. Stephens was the first ODE consultant in gifted education. A licensed psychologist, he is the recipient of numerous awards and has authored more than 100 journal articles and 10 textbooks.

**Fred Wolfe** is superintendent of the Franklin County Educational Service Center in Columbus. He is currently in his 35<sup>th</sup> year in public education, including 31 years as an administrator. Mr. Wolfe has been a member of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators for 26 years.

**Patricia Lyden Yank** is a kindergarten teacher with the Youngstown City School District. She earned her bachelor's degree at the University of Cincinnati in elementary education and her master's degree from Youngstown State University in early childhood education. Ms. Yank is an executive board member of the Youngstown Education Association, co-chair of her district-level curriculum and instruction committee and a member of the Ohio Learning First Alliance.