Comments Regarding the Gifted Performance Indicator

At the April 3, 2017 Report Card Stakeholder Workgroup, a few members raised some questions about the gifted performance indicator. I thought it might be helpful to understand the history of the indicator and how it became one of the achievement indicators. I apologize for not including all of the stakeholders on this email. I only have email addresses for the State Board of Education members and Ohio General Assembly members of the committee.

The gifted indicator was introduced in the HB1 in 2011 under the Strickland administration. The indicator was one of the few ideas in HB1 that survived in the Kasich administration. The intent of the indicator was to encourage districts to provide more services to gifted students without actually mandating services for gifted students. And from that perspective, the indicator is a huge success! In 2012, gifted services had dropped to 18% of the population. The gifted performance indicator first appeared on the district report cards in 2013-2014 school year. After the introduction of the gifted indicator, services have steadily increased to over 50% this past school year. The services have increased across all district typologies, not just wealthy districts.

Why is there a service component for gifted and not the other student sub-groups? The reason is quite simple: gifted students are the only student sub-group for whom services are not mandated. Part of the indicator gives districts, parents, and policymakers critical information about the identification and service of gifted minority and economically disadvantaged students. Ohio has large gaps in this area, and the removal of the indicator would allow these gaps to go hidden, which would further hurt minority and economically-disadvantaged gifted students.

While some superintendents are not happy about the gifted performance indicator, others have embraced the challenge – again, across all district typologies. There are some legitimate concerns about the ability of rural districts to obtain the services of gifted intervention specialists. However, there are smaller districts that have tackled the problem either through providing incentives for some of their current staff to obtain a gifted intervention specialist license, or through gifted professional development training to classroom teachers as allowed under the new gifted operating standards. OAGC has pushed for more gifted funding to ESCs in order to support rural districts, but we need the support of the main education groups to push for that as well. We hope that the gifted cost study that should be available in June will help us in our efforts to secure more funding. The study along with the clear picture of gifted inequities that is available to us due to the information from the gifted performance indicator will hopeful convince policymakers to address the opportunity gap for gifted students in Ohio.

The placement of the gifted performance indicator in the achievement indicators component might not be an ideal fit, but it is working. If the achievement component indicators are removed from the report card, the gifted performance indicator needs to be moved to do a different area of the report card. Removing it completely would not serve the bests interest of gifted children, particularly those who are also part of an under-represented student population.

If you would like more information about gifted in Ohio, please view the 2017 State of Gifted in Ohio which can be downloaded at <http://www.oagc.com/files/GiftedFactSheet.Updated%2012.1.17.pdf>. Also, you may wish to view the extend of gifted inequities from the new Jack Kent Cooke foundation report. The Ohio specific report can be found at <https://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/2018_Ohio_State_Report.pdf>.

I hope the above information is helpful as you continue to review the report card. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Regards,

Ann Sheldon, Executive Director

Ohio Association for Gifted Children