



# Presentation to the State Board of Education

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## The Ohio Association for Gifted Children

- Founded in 1952, OAGC is the oldest gifted association in the country including the National Association for Gifted Children, which was founded in Ohio.
- OAGC's mission statement – “To promote and support the development of gifted students through dissemination of information, advocacy on their behalf, encouragement of affiliate organizations, and to promote research and education for gifted children.”
- OAGC has four divisions:
  - Coordinator
  - Higher Education
  - Parent and Family
  - Teacher
- 1200+ members and over 30 local affiliate organizations



## The Ohio Association for Gifted Children cont'd

- OAGC is run by a governing board. The strength of the organization is the unfailing commitment to children first. Communication is our key strategy.
- The OAGC website serves as a one-stop shop for gifted information – [www.oagc.com](http://www.oagc.com)
- What can OAGC do for the State Board of Education
  - ✓ Develop and disseminate surveys
  - ✓ Develop cost and policy data
  - ✓ Provide case studies from districts and families
  - ✓ Communicate information between the board and the gifted community



## Why Do We Advocate for Gifted Children?

- Gifted children are one of if not the most misunderstood student population in Ohio.
- Gifted children are not covered by the cloak of political correctness. Two persistent myths. For a great overview of the top ten myths, please go to [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDJst-y\\_ptl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDJst-y_ptl).
- Funding and service for gifted children is a case of zip code roulette in Ohio. Gifted children are not all white, suburban children in excellent rated school districts.
- Without strong public gifted education programs, not all gifted children will “make it on their own.” Gifted children represent 20% of the dropout rate. Guess which gifted children don’t make it?



## Why Do We Advocate for Gifted Children?

**NAEP data and the Other Achievement Gap.** – A recent study released by the University of Indiana provided ample evidence that the emphasis on proficiency has exacerbated the other achievement gap between high achieving low income and minority students and their higher income, non-minority peers. Based on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Advanced Placement data, it is clear that what advocates have long suspected is true. In Ohio as well as most other states the gap is widening between high achieving low-income and minority students and their higher income, non-minority peers. This “other gap” is a result of an accountability system that has no incentives for the performance of high achieving students. When public schools de-emphasize the needs of high achieving students, the students who suffer are those whose families cannot afford other options for their children.

For a copy of the full report, please go to: [www.oagc.com/files/ExcellenceGapBrief210.pdf](http://www.oagc.com/files/ExcellenceGapBrief210.pdf) .



## General Gifted Education Funding & Service Facts

- Approximately 280,000 or 16% of Ohio's students are identified as gifted in Ohio across the four areas of superior cognitive, specific academic (reading, writing, math, social studies, and science), creative thinking, and visual and performing arts.
- Last year, state funding supported units for about 20% of all students identified in Ohio.
- In 1998, 43% of identified gifted students were reported as served. That percentage has dropped to less than 22%. State funding for gifted services has been stagnant for over a decade.
- *The number of gifted students served decreased from 70,667 in 2007/2008 school year to 60,733 in 2008/2009, which is a 16% drop in service in one year.*
- *The drop from 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 could be worse. Gifted coordinators are particularly vulnerable to cuts.*



## General Gifted Education Funding & Service Facts cont'd

- Under the previous gifted funding system, while all districts received gifted identification funding, not all districts received gifted unit funding. Districts had to specifically request units, and not all districts requesting funds received them. In Ohio, there are huge service inequities for gifted students. The disparity cuts across wealth and race. In essence, parents of gifted students play a form of service roulette. One district in a county may provide services; the district beside it may not. And it may not necessarily have anything to do with the relative wealth or student population of the district.
- Only one district and one community school reports that all of gifted students are served in Ohio. Approximately 100 districts do not provide any gifted services.



## General Gifted Education Funding & Service Facts cont'd

- While the lack of state funding for gifted services contributes greatly to the inequitable system of gifted education across the state, the accountability system exacerbates the problem.
- Currently, there is no specific mandate to provide services to gifted students. There is no report card measure. We have failed as a state to ensure that students who are identified as gifted receive appropriate levels of service. The new gifted performance indicator required under HB1 could help to correct this.



## Gifted Funding: Then and Now

### **Before the Ohio Evidence Based Model (OEBM)**

- The previous funding system provided \$33 million to fund gifted coordinator and intervention specialist units directly to districts, \$8 million to fund units to ESCs and another \$5 million in funds for gifted identification. Total funding equaled approximately \$48 million. While the value of unit was unreasonably low (averaging \$37,000), no state share was applied to any of this funding.
- Wealthy districts receiving a gifted unit received the same funding as a poorer district.
- In addition, \$1.8 million was provided for Summer Honors Institutes for gifted high school students.



## Gifted Funding: Then and Now After the OEBM

Arguably, in more than any other area of education, gifted education funding was the most changed element in the OEBM formula. Gifted is now broken into four different components and included in the foundation formula. These elements include: gifted coordinators, gifted intervention specialists (GIS), gifted identification, and gifted professional development. The gifted identification and coordinator factor are fully funded now. The GIS and GIS PD (professional development) factors are phased in over the next ten years. For 2010, direct district funding is \$47 million. In FY2011, the amount increases to \$59 million within the formula. In addition, \$8 million of funding is included each year for ESCs. The big changes in funding are:

- All districts now receive gifted funding for both identification and service.
- All gifted funding has state share applied.
- Funding is not tied directly to units – even at the ESC level.***
- Gifted maintenance of effort provision is in place for the current biennium.
- Development of a gifted performance indicator is required for the report card.



## Gifted in the Transitional Period of '09/'10 & '10/'11

There are significant issues with the gifted transitional aid requirements. These requirements were put in place to ensure that gifted services and staff were protected during the transition from gifted unit funding to these requirements.

- Because the gifted maintenance of effort provision called for districts to maintain state spending levels rather than service or staff levels, many districts are cutting services. As gifted unit funding never covered the full cost of a coordinator or intervention specialist, districts are cutting gifted staff even if they are receiving the same amount of funding as they did last year for gifted staff. This is also happening at ESCs that are receiving the same funding as last year, but the funding is no longer linked directly to a unit. The bottom line is that some districts have cut gifted staff and services even though they received the same or more gifted funding than in past years.



## Gifted in the Transitional Period of '09/'10 & '10/'11

- Some districts appear to be unaware of what the required minimal level of spending is for each district. Some districts are not spending anything. Many more are planning to cut spending next year.
- Gifted identification funds were not included in transitional aid. Districts receiving low state share did lose this amount of funding, which impacts the proper identification of students. This is a significant issue for wealthy districts, but the impact is felt in all districts as the spending rules for the gifted identification formula have not been developed. Districts are cutting back significantly on gifted identification.
- Some districts are receiving little or nothing in overall transitional aid even though they have gifted spending requirements based on gifted unit funding that technically should be in transitional aid. These districts are beginning to cut gifted staff.



## Gifted in the Transitional Period of '09/'10 & '10/'11 cont'd

- Districts that received services through ESCs received no gifted transitional aid –The issue is particularly problematic for those wealthy districts that received services through the ESC last year as those funds are not included in transitional aid.



## OEBM Accountability Issues Need to be Clarified Soon or Gifted Education will Decline Further

- A phased-in mandate needs to mirror phased-in funding levels for the protection of both students and districts. HB1 requires a gifted performance indicator to be developed by December, 2011. The language gives the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education a good deal of latitude to develop an appropriate accountability measures for gifted services that can be phased-in. Without a mandate or some other form of significant accountability, the new gifted formula under HB1 will fail to work as designed. The end result will be that inequity of services will continue across the state. This is a particular concern for urban and rural districts, where services are low overall.
- Gifted education should be one of the Core Academic Strategies that are required of all districts including those rated as excellent. Language in HB1 already indicates all districts must comply with the gifted spending rules in FY2012, but the spending rules need to be developed (quickly) to reinforce that this is the case.



## OEBM Accountability Issues Need to be Clarified Soon or Gifted Education will Decline Further (cont'd)

- Proof of qualified gifted coordinator services should be required before gifted intervention specialist funds flow as is required in the previous funding system. With the new spending formula, the staffing rule that linked coordinator services to gifted intervention specialist funding have been decoupled. These rules need to be re-established quickly.
- Coordinator and GIS services need to be limited to a maximum ADM or organizational unit level. This is a particular problem in ESCs where a gifted coordinator may be contracted to support multiple districts.



## The Old Gifted Unit Funding system did not Apply State Share to the Gifted Components While the OEBM System Does.

- This is a significant issue. If there is some way to maintain the gifted component in the OEBM formula but allow full funding (no local share) of the component, it will allow all districts to remain whole on gifted funding.
- There is considerable confusion about whether districts are required to spend to the gifted formula amount in FY 2012 or only to the amount covered by state share. If districts need only spend to the state share amount, many districts with low or zero state share will gut gifted services. These districts are currently the districts that have supported gifted services under the unit funding system.
- The State Board School funding sub-committee report included a plan to phase-in new gifted funding in a way that would allow wealthier districts to be held harmless. Perhaps, the mechanics of that plan can be reviewed and adopted in the gifted spending rules. As a side note, the weights developed under this model were both on an ADM and gifted count basis. Certain activities (e.g. program development, identification) go beyond the gifted student population.



## Specific Formula Changes that May/Will Require ORC Changes

- **Need to include phased-in mandate language in OAC or ORC to ensure that gifted services are not reduced even as more state funding is provided.** At a minimum, conflicting spending requirements language needs to be resolved. Regardless, of the funding system (e.g. organizational units, weights, or the gifted unit model) without accountability for the funds, gifted children will not be served.
- **In order to maintain consistency in the funding model, the gifted coordinator formula should be changed from ADM to the organizational unit basis.** The optimal number can be developed through district cost surveys or the gifted self-reports. There need to be minimum levels of coordinator funding established.
- **The salary levels for gifted coordinators and gifted intervention specialists may be insufficient.** These salaries should be evaluated based on district cost surveys and salary data already captured by ODE.



## Specific Formula Changes that May/Will Require ORC Changes Cont'd

- **Maintenance of Effort for Districts and ESCs Needs to Relate Back to Level of Gifted Services/Staff** – If ESC funding is maintained for the next biennium, it should be on a unit basis. Maintenance of effort for districts needs to relate to 2009 service levels to gifted students rather than state spending levels.
- **The gifted identification spending formula may be too low.** Again, cost surveys could capture the correct amount. Also, as stated earlier, perhaps no local share factor should be applied to this component of the formula.
- **The enrichment language needs to be clarified to exclude gifted references to ensure access to AP and PSEO courses.**



## Non-Funding Issues

**Accountability System Overhaul** – It is clear that the focus of Ohio’s accountability system on minimum levels of proficiency has created perverse disincentives for districts to support the needs of all children safely above the proficiency line, particularly high ability students. Until the accountability system is overhauled to reflect true excellence, we do a disservice to students, the public at large and the districts that truly are offering excellence across a spectrum of needs. Specific areas of concern include the following:

- **Excellent rankings in Ohio do not necessarily reflect any true measure of excellence.** The rating simply means that many districts are excellent in moving the majority of their students over a minimum proficiency line. The accountability system should be redesigned to reward districts that are truly offering excellent opportunities for all students of various needs across a continuum of services.



## Non-Funding Issues Cont'd

### Excellent District Preliminary Analysis Shows Some Interesting Statistics:

- 85 excellent rated districts had ACT scores below the state average.
- 106 districts have college remediation rates above the state average.
- 167 districts serve less than 20% of the identified gifted population. 39 districts serve 0 gifted students.
- 69 districts had negative value-added growth in reading for the 3 or more of the 5 grade levels tested.
- 51 districts offer no AP courses.
- 114 districts report that they accelerate 0 students.
- 135 districts report less than 50% of their graduates enter college.
- 206 districts have less than 50% of their graduates taking the Ohio Core curriculum.



## Non-Funding Issues Cont'd

- **Cut scores for accelerated and advanced scores are misleading.** First, there is no accelerated or advanced material on any of the grade level Ohio Achievement or Ohio Graduation tests. Many parents wrongly are receiving the impression that their children are accelerated or advanced on test scores where the percentage of item passage to reach these levels are surprisingly low.
- **These misleading labels help drive state level policies that exempt districts from best practices and mandates due to “high” level performance.** For instance, one excellent rated school districts has met only 16 out of 30 performance indicators, has an average ACT score of 19, has a college remediation rate of 64%, has identified well under the state average number of gifted students and serves less than 30% of those identified.



## Non-Funding Issues Cont'd

- **Districts should be rewarded for promoting acceleration opportunities in the accountability system.** This recommendation is necessary to ensure that the model state acceleration policy is put into practice across the state. Small districts in particular are loath to accelerate students in many cases for fear of hurting their performance ratings.
  
- **Assessment on Demand** – Students should be allowed to take required state assessments when they are ready to show mastery. The rigid adherence to age/grade level assessments unnecessarily impedes the continuous progress of many Ohio students



## Non-Funding Issues Cont'd

✓ **Credit Flexibility and Course Mastery Exams** – The Credit Flexibility Plan is a good start, but falls short of what is needed in Ohio. It is disappointing that the one element of the original credit flexibility plan – state set cut scores on existing national exams (e.g. Advanced Placement, ACT end of course exams etc.) -- so that districts don't have to all set the scores was not implemented. Some students need to show course mastery to eliminate coursework altogether. OAGC is also concerned that some districts plan to charge for credit flex options.