



Response to the Ohio 8 Letter Regarding the Gifted Dashboard Proposal
February 6, 2014

In a letter dated January 8, 2014 to Accountability Chair, Tom Gunlock, the Ohio Urban 8 Coalition outlined their concerns regarding a draft outline of a gifted dashboard and performance indicator. The Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC) respects the concerns of the Ohio 8, and we wish to respond to some of those concerns in this document. Apparently, only two of the Ohio 8 Coalition districts were provided the draft. However, we would still like to acknowledge the concerns that the Ohio 8 organization has voiced. It is our understanding that the Ohio 8 has not seen any drafts of the ODE proposal. We would welcome their feedback on the ODE proposal as well.

Much of the Urban 8 feedback was a philosophical discussion about how giftedness should be defined or measured and its stability over time. These are sensitive topics, and international experts in the field disagree on many of the points discussed by the Ohio 8. However, a discussion of the gifted performance indicator and gifted dashboard development in Ohio is not the place for that conversation. As giftedness is defined very specifically in Ohio law, further debate is irrelevant to this issue.

Along those same lines, the general feedback about needed training is also unrelated to the development of a GPI. It is assumed communication is needed any time ODE introduces something new, and this would be no different. That should not be a deterrent to implementing a legally required accountability tool. Training related to any of the individual components should be readily available through licensed gifted coordinators and specialists, ODE, ESCs, and other field-based resources. Again, that issue is separate from the development of the actual tool. The proposed dashboard elements are totally in alignment with the Ohio Teacher and Principal Evaluation System's standards. The two tables in **Appendix A** show some of these standards and how they would relate. The elements in the proposal are designed to empower districts, principals and teachers to appropriately meet these new standards for the teaching profession. They are in direct alignment and support the proper implementation of successful, research-based practices to improve student achievement.

The general feedback also suggested that collecting the data for the measures would be burdensome. However, none of the measures use data that is not already reported to ODE. Districts are already required to report screened, assessed, identified, and served data annually. Value added and achievement scores are already calculated. Advanced placement and ACT and SAT performance are also reported and slated to go on the state report card in 2015. All this dashboard model does is collect the existing data in a single location for the public and districts to easily review as a whole body of evidence and disaggregates some of it to make it more understandable to the public and useful for districts looking to develop action plans for improvement.

In looking at the model-specific feedback, there are several areas with which we agree. First and foremost, the Ohio Association for Gifted Children also is concerned about finalizing a GPI before the revision to the operating standards is complete. A strong definition of service is essential the development of the gifted performance indicator. The standard for service must be meaningful and consistent across the state so that there is common understanding and compliance to each type of

service across the state. Service needs to mean more than physically clustering gifted students in a classroom with no additional curricular or instructional changes. It must be more than providing 30 minutes of enrichment once per week or month. In the absence of a new, robust definition, perhaps guidelines for what constitutes service, at the very least, will need to be defined for the purposes of the gifted performance indicator. We also agree there are some components that will need additional clarification to determine the value they contribute to the GPI.

Next, OAGC also agrees that a GPI is only useful to the public and to districts if it is specific enough to emphasize strengths and weaknesses in a district's approach and effectiveness of gifted services. While the model put forth by the gifted community and reviewed by the Ohio 8 may not be an ideal format, we believe it is much closer to a strengths/needs review than the model proposed by the Ohio Department of Education. Unfortunately, the ODE proposed model was not provided to the Ohio 8 for their review. Their feedback on that model would be valuable as the discussion of the GPI moves forward. The model reviewed by the Ohio 8 allowed for a checklist of sorts with 18 different areas in which districts can demonstrate reasonable efforts to identify and serve gifted students. That model allows districts and the public to know exactly what is and is not being done and allows districts to pinpoint specific areas for improvement.

One area of concern voiced by the Ohio 8 was a narrow focus on districts as "good" or "bad." This is not the goal of the OAGC. However, all indicators ultimately have a met/not met status. School districts are already rated and ranked on the basis of the state report card measures and the various new ranking metrics. Gifted additions will only provide a more accurate lens to help demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in an area not currently well-measured. It is simply providing more data for all to examine with objectivity.

The Ohio 8 response noted a concern about being penalized for identifying a small number of gifted students. Districts have been required to screen, identify, and assess gifted students since the 1980s. Too many districts ignore the law on the proper identification of gifted students. If a district screens more students, it will have a higher probability of identifying more students. Special care needs to be taken with underrepresented populations that may need different assessment tools for proper identification.

Another area of concern from the Ohio 8 was with the inclusion of value added reporting for gifted learners. This is also required by law and is already part of the state reporting, so it makes sense to include it in the GPI. We recognize there are many concerns in the field about ceiling effects, regression to the mean, and sample sizes. However, that discussion is again outside the scope of the GPI since value added is determined by other legislation and regulations. It should be noted that value added is a group measure, so unless all of the students are hitting the ceiling on every test taken, theoretically, the impact should be minimal. Depending upon the size of the group the impact of one student will not cause a district to be in the "red." Standard error of measure helps to account for students who score beyond the average range. The availability of above grade level testing would certainly be a help, as would calculating scores in the fall and spring of the same year over the same material, but that is not currently available in Ohio. It is repeatedly addressed in value added trainings that the ceiling effect and regression to the mean for our Ohio measures has been taken into account. If that is not the case, then ODE needs to clarify this issue. Every district, school and classroom teacher should run a scale score frequency distribution report on the gifted student sub-group to determine whether there truly are gifted students who are at the ceiling. Those students should very likely be considered for acceleration.

The Ohio 8 letter indicated a concern that student achievement was beyond their control due to variances in student motivation and other personal factors. We would argue that such influences are true for all students, gifted or otherwise. Therefore, the impact on a GPI calculation would be no different than any other report card indicator for all students. Similarly, the Ohio 8 correctly noted that not all gifted students are gifted in all areas. The organization was mistaken, though, that the achievement measures do not account for that. Both proposed models would limit the inclusion of achievement scores only if the students are identified as gifted in superior cognitive ability or the area tested.

Finally, the Ohio 8 indicated a concern of the cost of the assessment needed in order to meet the screened and assessed component of the indicator model. We would like to remind them that the current budget legislation provides districts with \$5 per enrolled student for the sole purpose of gifted identification. Considering most districts do not screen all grade levels, the pool of money each district receives for gifted identification should cover the cost of screening students in a way that ensures sufficient opportunity for students with exceptional abilities to be identified.

The Ohio 8 concluded their feedback with the following statement:

"Overall, the Ohio 8 envisions a gifted dashboard that shows the resources available, fidelity of implementation and outcomes for as many students of uncanny potential and thirst that a district can identify."

The Ohio Association for Gifted Children shares that vision and believes the dashboard model reviewed by the Ohio 8 is an effort that more closely matches that vision than the model proposed by ODE.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact me at anngift@aol.com or 614-325-1185.

Sincerely,

Ann E. Sheldon, Executive Director
Ohio Association for Gifted Children

Appendix A

Ohio Principal Performance Rating Rubric

Standards/Elements	Skilled Category Requirements	Accomplished Category Requirements
Standard 1: Continuous Improvement; Element 1.2	<p>Principal identifies goal areas that promote high levels of achievement for all students and staff.</p> <p>Knowledge of the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession is used to support teachers' professional growth.</p>	<p>Principal collaboratively develops and sets measurable goals that promote high levels of student and staff achievement.</p> <p>Principal establishes and reinforces individual staff contributions towards the attainment of the school-wide goals by monitoring progress through the use of data.</p>
Standard 2: Instruction; Element 2.3	<p>Principal monitors the identification and instruction of students of diverse abilities and supports staff in implementing state and local policies.</p> <p>Principal uses disaggregated achievement data to determine the performance and needs of particular students and groups and regularly examines school-wide students' performance data to determine under- and over-identification of students in gifted or special education.</p>	<p>Principal is directly involved in instructional issues for all students.</p> <p>Principal fosters systemic discussions regarding instructional needs of all students including students identified as gifted, students with disabilities and at-risk students.</p>
Standard 2: Instruction; Element 2.5	<p>Principal models the use of data to inform and make decisions about student progress.</p> <p>Principal monitors staff knowledge and use of data and impact of this knowledge on student achievement.</p>	<p>Principal provides on-going learning opportunities that facilitate staff to learn how to collect, analyze, interpret and use data on student progress.</p> <p>Principal facilitates teachers' use of assessment data to continually design and adapt instruction based on student needs.</p>
Standard 2: Instruction; Element 2.6	<p>Principal uses staff input and student data to identify professional development needs in order to set short- and long-term professional development goals and takes action to meet these goals.</p>	<p>Principal regularly modifies short- and long- term professional goals based on analysis of student, staff, and community evidence.</p> <p>Principal uses data to determine if professional development activities</p>

	Principal facilitates professional development opportunities that support classroom instruction.	strengthen teachers' instructional skills to enhance student learning.
Standard 3: Principals allocate resources & manage school operations in order to ensure a safe & productive learning environment. Element: 3.2	Principal assesses how well the physical, social and cultural environment supports student and staff needs. Principal ensures that staff members treat students with respect.	Principal promotes the effective use of identified physical and cultural resources and strategies to address the physical and mental health needs of students and staff. Principal ensures that staff members treat students, parents and members of the community with respect.
Standard 3: (see above); Element 3.3	Principal develops a budget aligned to student and staff needs.	Principal assesses the use of resources, including technology, in the context of school operations and develops a budget aligned to student and staff needs. Principal procures additional financial resources for the school to support students and staff learning.
Standard 5: Principals engage parents and community members in the educational process and create an environment where community resources support student learning, achievement and well-being. Element: 5.2	Principal regularly practices two-way communication with parents about expectations for student learning needs and progress. Principal provides parents and students with relevant information about available school services (instructional, behavioral, and psychological) to address student learning needs.	Principal actively recruits and utilizes parent and community volunteers as appropriate for the school's instructional program. Principal uses technology and other resources as appropriate to maximize the communication with parents and community members about student learning.

Teacher Performance Evaluation Rubric

Category/Topic/Teaching Standard	Skilled Category Requirements	Accomplished Category Requirements
Instructional Planning: Assessment Data (Standard 3: Assessment)	The teacher demonstrates an understanding that assessment is a means of evaluating and supporting student learning through effectively incorporating diagnostic, formative, and/or summative assessments into lesson planning. The teacher employs a variety of formal and informal assessment	The teacher purposefully plans assessments and differentiates assessment choices to match the full range of student needs, abilities, and learning styles, incorporating a range of appropriate diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments into lesson plans. Student learning needs are accurately

	techniques to collect evidence of students' knowledge and skills and analyzes data to effectively inform instructional planning and delivery.	identified through an analysis of student data; the teacher uses assessment data to identify student strengths and areas for student growth.
Instructional Planning: Knowledge of Students (Standard 1: Students)	<p>The teacher demonstrates familiarity with students' background knowledge and experiences and describes multiple procedures used to obtain this information.</p> <p>The teacher's instructional plan draws upon an accurate analysis of the students' development, readiness for learning, preferred learning styles, and backgrounds and prior experiences.</p>	<p>The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the purpose and value of learning about students' background experiences, demonstrates familiarity with each students' background knowledge and experiences, and describes multiple procedures used to obtain this information.</p> <p>The teacher's analysis of student data (student development, student learning and preferred learning styles, and student backgrounds/prior experiences) accurately connects the data to specific instructional strategies and plans.</p> <p>The teacher plans for and can articulate specific strategies, content, and delivery that will meet the needs of individual students and groups of students.</p>
Instruction and Assessment: Differentiation (Standard 1: Students; Standard 4: Instruction and Assessment: Differentiation (Standard 1: Students; Standard 4: Instruction))	The teacher supports the learning needs of students through a variety of strategies, materials, and/or pacing that make learning accessible and challenging for the group.	The teacher matches strategies, materials, and/or pacing to students' individual needs, to make learning accessible and challenging for all students in the classroom. The teacher effectively uses independent, collaborative and whole-class instruction to support individual learning goals and provides varied options for how students will demonstrate mastery.
Instruction & Assessment: Resources (Standard 2: Content; Standard 4: Instruction)	Instructional materials and resources are aligned to the instructional purposes and are appropriate for students' learning styles and needs, actively engaging students.	Instructional materials and resources are aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students, and actively engage them in ownership of their learning.