



Gifted: The Big Picture

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Objectives

- Bring to remembrance some foundational principles of gifted education
- Provide a small peak at gifted from a national perspective
- Encourage reflective thought concerning your role in gifted education
- Challenge you to be active in advocacy

Gifted Education: Why Bother?

- The country needs these children to be highly educated in order to ensure its long-term competitiveness, security and innovation.
- These high ability students also deserve and education that meets their needs and enhances their futures, just like all children.

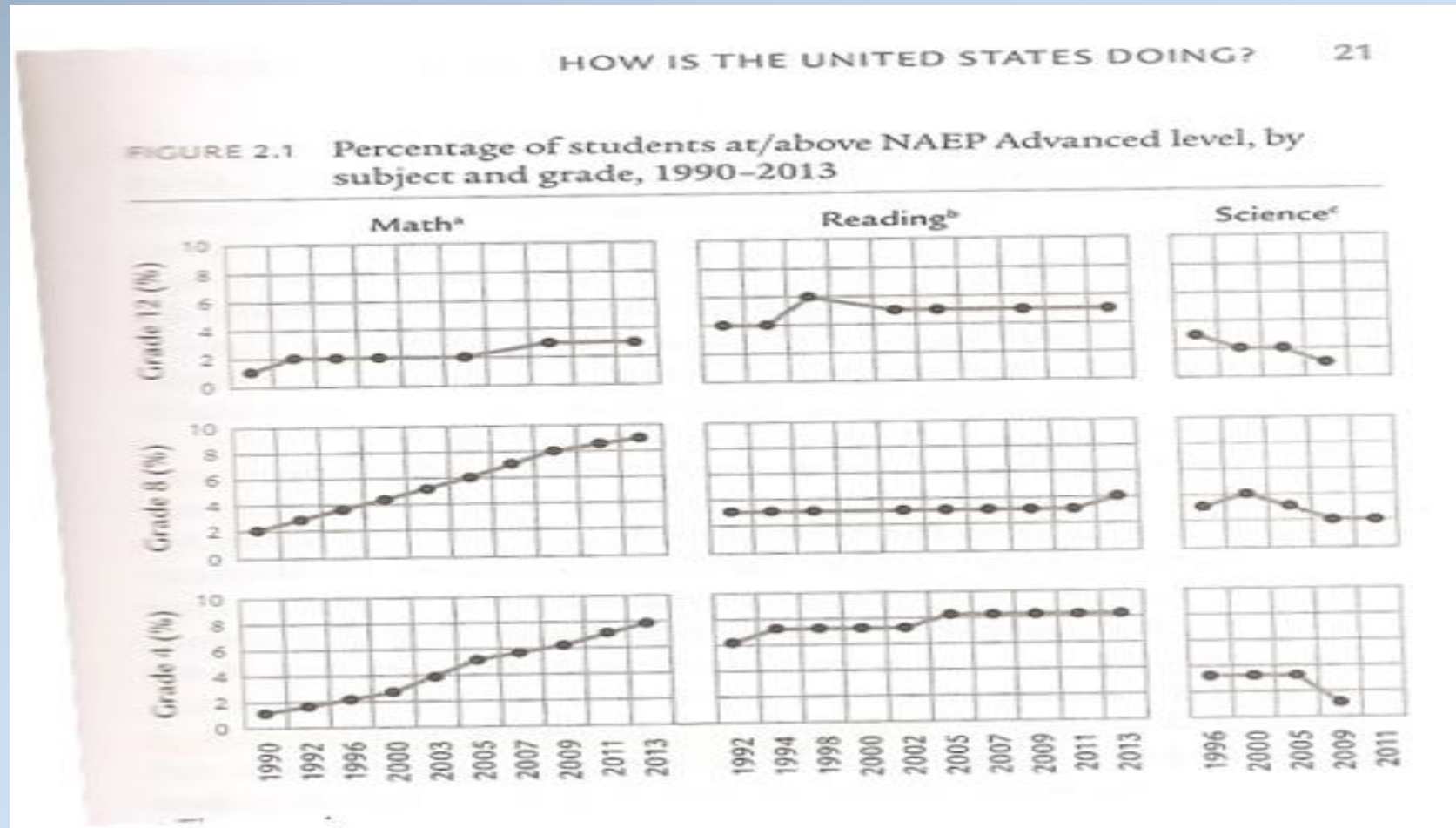
Finn & Wright, 2015

Minding the GAPS



- Achievement Gap
- Excellence Gap

How does the US stack up?



How does the US stack up?

- Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)
- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

Why such obvious neglect?

- Ideology
- Definitional Disputes
- Identification Challenges
- Variability of Services/Practice
- Lack of Reliable Data
- Uncertain Efficacy of Current Practice
- Lack of Political Support

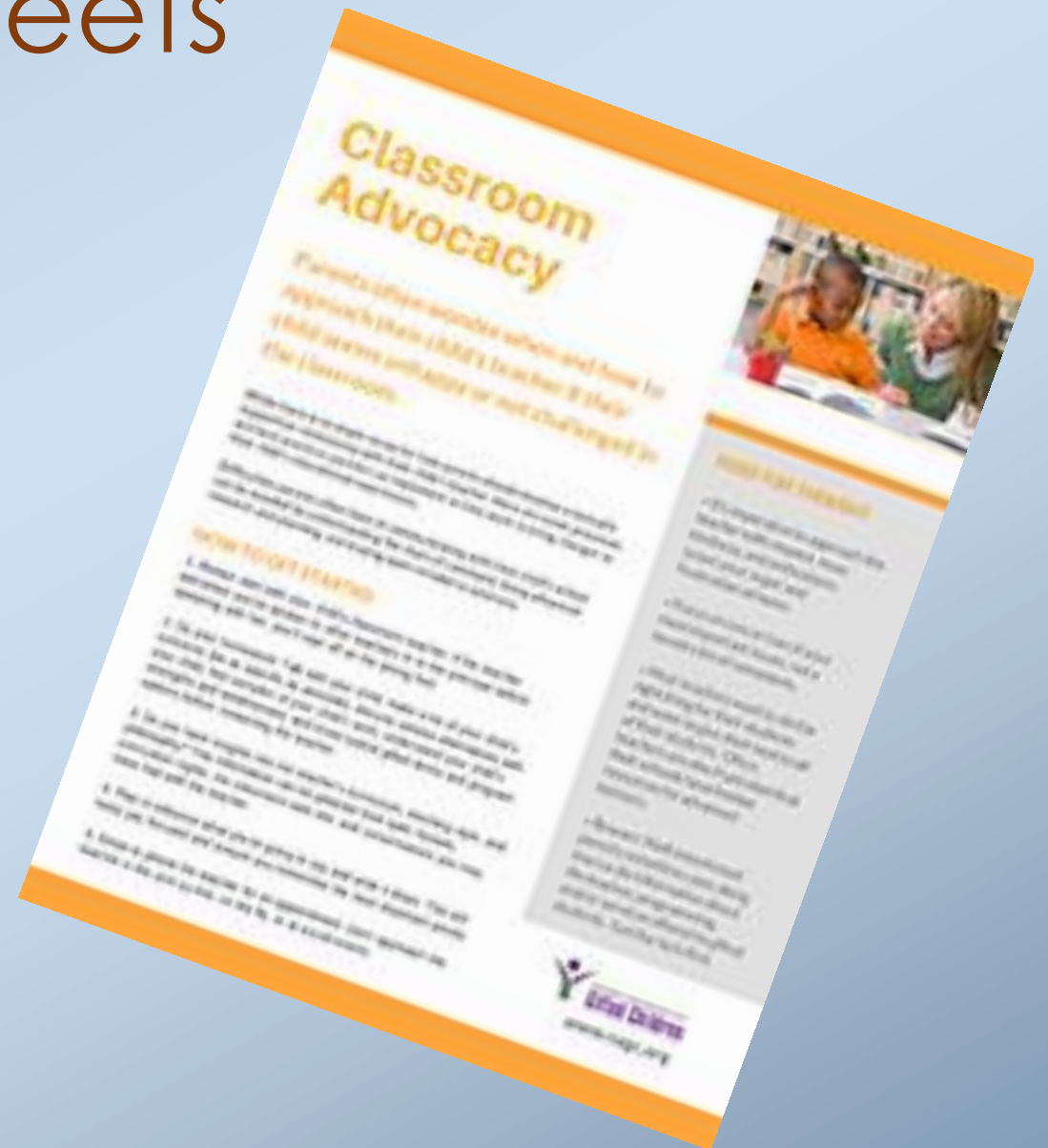
Finn & Wright, 2015

Gifted at the National Level

- ESSA
- JAVITS
- Secretary of Education Priorities
- NAGC

NAGC Parent TIP Sheets

- Acceleration
- Advocating for Gifted Services
- Arts
- Assessments for Identification
- Asynchronous Development
- Classroom Advocacy
- Early Childhood
- Making Friends
- Nurturing Creativity
- Perfectionism



State of the States

- Last one done was 2014-15 –working to improve the data collection
- Titled “Turning a Blind Eye: Neglecting the Needs of the Gifted and Talented Through Limited Accountability, Oversight, and Reporting”

State of the States –Limited Public Accountability

- 28 states have no gifted education performance indicators on their report cards
- 19 states do not monitor local GT programs (Kansas doesn't require districts to submit overall GT plans for approval)
- Only 7 states require districts to report GT student achievement/performance
- Fewer than half the states have at least one employee in their state dept dedicated to full-time gifted (Kansas does not)
- Only 20 states report sub-pops for gifted students

State of the States – Barriers to Access & Services

- Only 12 states have policies that require school districts to accept GT identification from another district within the state (in Kansas, special education law guides this)
- 5 states have explicit policies that do not allow their schools to accept GT eligibility granted in another states, nearly 30 states leave decision to local districts
- 13 states expressly prohibit early entrance to Kindergarten – 19 states leave such decision to local districts (Kansas districts typically do not admit students early due to funding restrictions)
- 2 states prohibit students from being dually enrolled in both middle school and high school (Kansas policy specifically permits)
- 4 states prohibit proficiency-based promotion or the advancement of students by subject (Kansas policy specifically permits)

State of the States – Teacher Prep & Training

- 19 of 29 responding states require teachers in gifted programs to hold a specialized credential or endorsement (Kansas does)
- Only 10 of 40 states report requiring school districts to have a dedicated GT administrator
- Only ONE state (Nevada) statutorily requires all teachers to receive training in gifted and talented education through a separate course before beginning their classroom service.

State of the States –Good news

- For students in upper elementary, the three most commonly used delivery methods were cluster classrooms, resource rooms, and subject acceleration. (In the past – regular classroom instruction ranked second.)
- Fourteen states increased funding for gifted education
- 25 states reported having discussions about strengthening pre-service licensure requirements for all teachers that require increased exposure to the knowledge and skills needed to identify and serve gifted students.

How about Kansas?

- Mandates gifted identification, but districts determine eligibility process and services locally
- Defines gifted as intellectually gifted
- Specifically permits acceleration
- Doesn't require gen ed teachers to receive training on gifted students after initial teacher certification
- Requires GT endorsement/certification for professionals working in specialized gifted ed programs

How about Kansas?

- Doesn't report on achievement or growth of gifted students
- KSDE gifted coordinator is part time in gifted
- Gifted Education is under Special Education
- Gifted IEPs
- Gifted representation on state special education advisory council (SEAC)
- Local districts are not required to have a GT administrator
- The Kansas Association for the Gifted, Talented, and Creative

Blue Valley Unified School District

- Employs Gifted Education teachers at every school in the district with two teachers at each high school
- Identifies about 8% of student population – well above state average of 2-3%
- Administrator managing gifted education who has specialization within the field.
- Very active Parent Group - BVPAGE 😊

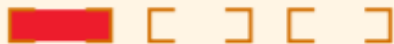
Thomas Fordham Institute (Rating the Ratings)

KANSAS

1 Assigns to schools annual ratings that are clear and intuitive

1

WEAK



2 Encourages schools to focus on all students, not just low performers

2

WEAK



3 Measures all schools fairly, including those with high rates of poverty

3

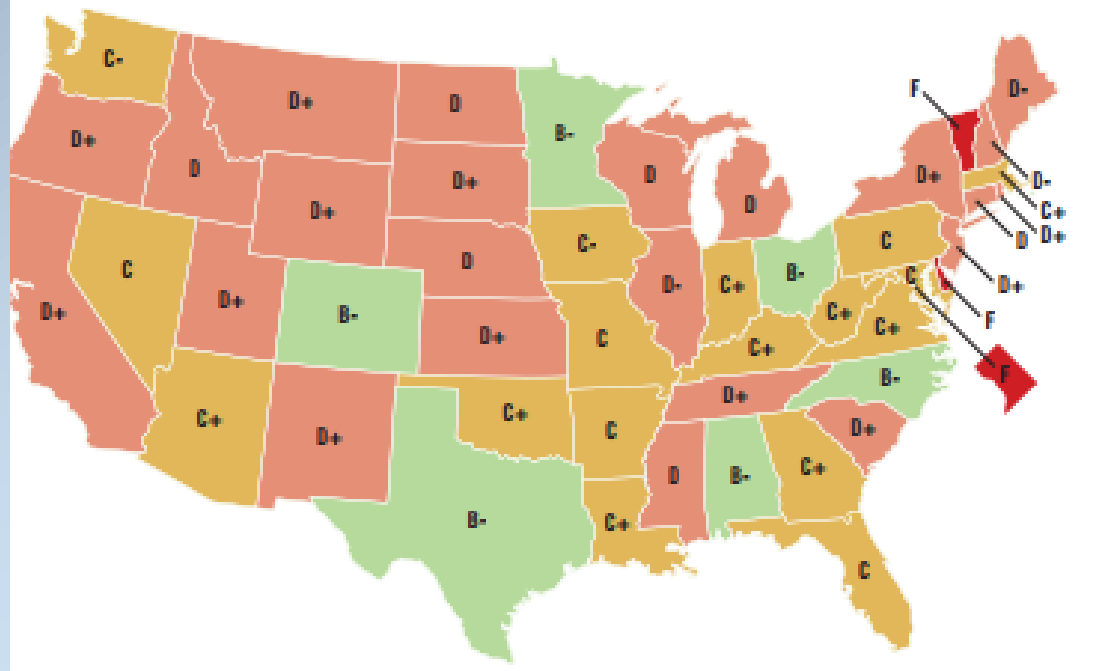
STRONG



Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students

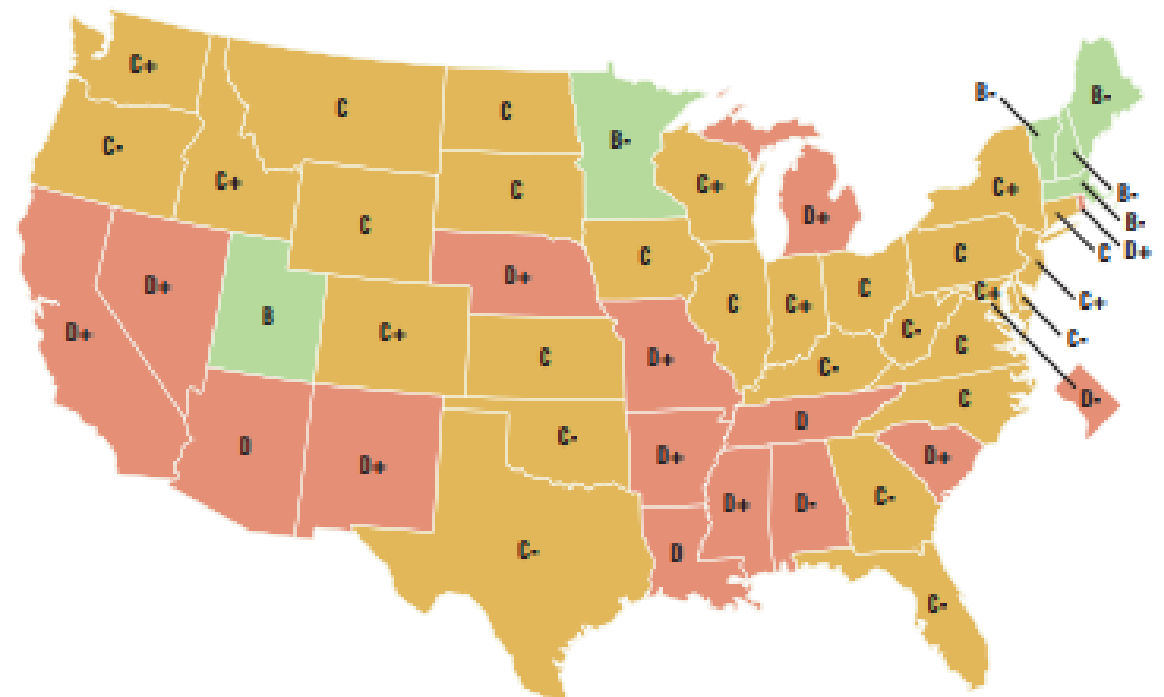
INPUT GRADES:

State Policy Support for Advanced Learning



OUTCOME GRADES:

Advanced Student Performance and Excellence Gaps



Attributes of Strong Gifted Programs

- Parents and Educators partners in this vision
- Casts a wide net for identification
- Provide a variety of program options/services
- Defensible curriculum that is above and beyond
- Spend time and money on appropriate staff development
- Trained educators
- Administrative support

Gifted Children

1. They have special needs.
2. They need collaborative support from both home and school.
3. Gifted students don't "take care of themselves."
4. They may require any of a range of services, including academic programming and social and emotional guidance.

Gifted Children

5. They need opportunities to be with other gifted students.
6. Gifted students deserve to feel value in themselves, not only in their ability and successes.
7. They mature at different rates in different domains.

Gifted Children

8. They are not all typical “teacher-pleasers.”
9. Gifted students exist across cultural, gender and socio-economic groups.
10. They need strong advocates.



ADVOCATE for Gifted Students

- With students themselves
- Within your building and district
- Within your circle of influence
- With decision makers

Advocacy Tips

- **Know your information**
- **Use the facts**
- **Have clear and concise message**
- **Nurture relationships and work collaboratively**
- **Engage the public**
- **Be confident and passionate**
- **Follow up and don't give up**
- **Say thank you – follow the Golden Rule**

Why Advocate?

"Unless someone like you cares
a whole awful lot, Nothing is
going to get better. It's not."

- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



Pitfalls to Avoid

- Using an adversarial approach
- Assume others are not bright or knowledgeable
- Being impatient
- When working together, don't undermine each other
- Avoid rambling and talking about yourself

Effective Advocates

- ❖ Attitude
- ❖ Flexible
- ❖ Fair
- ❖ Organized
- ❖ Informed
- ❖ Published
- ❖ Global Problem-Solver



NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL GROUP
OF THOUGHTFUL COMMITTED CITIZENS
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD:
INDEED IT'S THE ONLY THING
THAT EVER HAS.

MARGARET MEAD

References

- Failing Our Brightest Kids: The Global Challenge of Educating High-Ability Students, Chester E. Finn, Jr, and Brandon L. Wright, Harvard Education Press, 2015
- Turning A Blind Eye: Neglecting the Needs of the Gifted and Talented Through Limited Accountability, Oversight, and Reporting, 2014-15 State of the Nation in Gifted Education
- Rating the Ratings: An Analysis of the 51 ESSA Accountability Plans, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Brandon L. Wright and Michael J. Petrilli, 2017
- Executive Summary Equal Talents, Unequal Opportunities: A Report Card on State Support for Academically Talented Low-Income Students, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, Plucker, Giancola, Healey, Arndt, and Wang, March 2015

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