



OAGC Position on ODE's ESSA Plan
March 6th, 2017

The governing board of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC) has reviewed the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) plan to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act. This document outlines areas of support as well as our recommendations to strengthen the plan to the benefit of gifted students in Ohio.

Areas of Support

Continued Inclusion of the Gifted Performance Indicator and Gifted Sub-group Value-Added Measures as part of Ohio's Accountability System – OAGC strongly supports the continued use of the gifted performance indicator as well as the gifted subgroup value-added score in Ohio's accountability system. Ohio is seen as a groundbreaking state in developing these measures. Having said that, it is clear there is room for improvement. While the indicator is a first step in showing how gifted students are performing in Ohio, there is little support or consequence for districts where gifted students are not identified and/or are not performing at the level of their potential. In many respects, the gifted sub-group is a "lesser" sub-group than other student groups in Ohio. While other student sub-groups are included in gap closing measures as well as student improvement plans, there is no mention of the gifted sub-group in Ohio's ESSA plan.

Reduction of N Size for Sub-group Gap Closing Accountability – OAGC believes that the reduction of the N-size from 30 to 15 will better assist the accountability of sub-group populations in Ohio in gap closing measures. While gifted students are not currently part of gap closing measures, OAGC supports this move as more students in affected sub-groups will be reported in all reported areas including the gifted performance indicator. Data show that gifted students in smaller districts are less likely to be identified and served in Ohio. Lowering the N size would help to shine a light on gifted students who are falling through the cracks in these districts.

Measures to Eliminate Double Testing – OAGC would prefer that Ohio did not have to use a "work-around" to eliminate double testing of middle school students taking high school courses. It would be better if students took the test for the course they are in and report those scores with no other testing required. However, as most students will take the ACT or SAT in high school, which is the work-around provision, it is unlikely that many if any students will be punished for taken advanced coursework. OAGC continues to be concerned that districts will not support accelerated opportunities for students if district report cards are negatively affected.

Recommended Improvements

Inclusion of Gifted Students in Gap Closing Measures and School Improvement Plans – Title I funds may now be used to identify and serve gifted students. In addition, states are allowed to include gifted students as a sub-group in accountability measures. Title IV funds may be used to support initiatives to improve student access to challenging curriculum. As indicated above, Ohio's gifted performance

indicator is an innovative accountability measures. Having said that, it is clear there is room for improvement. While the indicator is first step in showing how gifted students are performing in Ohio, there is little support or consequence for districts where gifted students are not identified and/or are not performing at the level of their potential. In many respects, the gifted sub-group is a “lesser” sub-group than other student groups in Ohio. While other student sub-groups are included in gap closing measures as well as student improvement plans, there is no mention of the gifted sub-group in Ohio’s ESSA plan. Ohio has been noted as one of the worst states in the country in terms of the “excellence gap,” which is the gap between the performance of economically disadvantaged gifted students and those gifted students who are not economically disadvantaged. Disparities also exist for minority vs. non-minority gifted students. Data also show that gifted students in Ohio’s rural districts are much less likely to be identified or served with appropriately trained staff. Value-added performance of these gifted students in rural districts persistently lags behind those of gifted students in suburban districts. Ohio should be addressing these issues in the ESSA plan.

Professional Development to Support Gifted Students – Districts receiving Title II funds must provide training to address the needs of gifted students. There is no mention of this in ODE’s plan. In addition, the state plans were to address gifted students. ODE outlined the current level of state support for gifted training, which is essentially Javits Gifted Online Modules. These modules are over a decade old and are not sufficient to support district needs any longer. While the State Board of Education recommended \$1 million to be spent on gifted professional development, these funds were not included in the governor’s as introduced budget. Ohio’s ESSA plan indicates that there is a shortage of special education teachers, yet there is no mention of the lack of gifted professionals across the state, which is an issue that is particularly acute in rural areas. OAGC believes the Ohio ESSA plan could strengthen the language with regard to professional development in gifted education and that the Javits modules should be removed.

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