

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS ON EDUCATING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WHO ARE GIFTED

The primary purpose of this research study was to examine elementary school principals' perceptions, based on their perceptions and lived experiences, of best practices, service delivery models, and instructional methods that support the education of students who are gifted in a large urban school district. The findings from this study contribute to the existing gap in the literature on this subject. In this study the researcher aimed to determine the essence of the experience as "perceived by the participant." Of interest to this research study are the perceptions and lived experiences, the first-hand accounts and impressions, of the elementary school principals, and specifically how they support programs for students who are gifted on the campus of his or her elementary school.

This study brings to light the importance of innovative approaches when implementing programs for students who are gifted. Effective and highly effective principals do not rely solely on state standards and district recommendations for curriculum and instructional materials when developing their programs and service delivery models for gifted. To implement out-of-the-box thinking regarding instruction for students who are gifted, principals must collaborate and consider the contributions of their teachers on meeting the academic needs of students who are gifted. Principals also need to allow opportunities for teachers to participate in meaningful professional development to deepen their understanding of the characteristics of students who are gifted. Further, principals need to maximize opportunities for students who are gifted to have access to instruction that meet their unique learning needs. Principals must maintain open lines of communication regarding best practices for teaching students who are gifted and value their teachers' contributions in identifying new instructional materials, service delivery models and

professional development. Principals must remain aware of their teachers' contributions, interest and needs to further their professional learning in educating students who are gifted, and fund programs that will further meet academic needs.

Demographic Data of the Participating Principals and Their Elementary Schools

	Participating elementary schools		
	<u>ES#1</u>	<u>ES#2</u>	<u>ES#3</u>
Principal years of experience	2	4.5	4
Principal ethnicity	Caucasian	Caucasian	Afr American
School identified as Title 1	N	N	N
Total student enrollment	1,187	625	1,258
Number of students identified as gifted	175	130	125
Percentage of student population who are gifted	15	21	10
Total number of teachers on campus	76	60	80
Total number of teachers with gifted endorsement	3	4	7

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