

# Ohio Gifted Community School Feasibility Study





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# Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

The Ohio Department of Education requested a study examining the feasibility of establishing 16 start-up community schools to serve gifted students. The study was commissioned in order to meet the requirements of Amended Substitute House Bill 64:

*The Department of Education, in conjunction with an association of education service centers in this state and an association that advocates for gifted children in the state, shall complete a feasibility analysis of the establishment of a start-up community school in each of the sixteen regions of the Educational Regional Service System to serve primarily identified gifted students. Not later than July 1, 2016, the Department shall submit the analysis to the chairpersons of the standing committees and subcommittees of the House of Representatives and the Senate principally responsible for education policy and finance. Am. Sub. HB 64, Ohio Revised Code, Section 263.590*

In order to complete the feasibility study, researchers from the Ohio Education Research Center analyzed data on Ohio's gifted students and gathered information from the following key informants:

- Parents of school-aged students identified as gifted in Ohio
- School-aged students identified as gifted in Ohio
- Gifted college students who previously attended K-12 school in Ohio
- Staff from the Ohio Association for Gifted Students
- Public School Superintendents
- Gifted Coordinators/Gifted Intervention Specialists
- Administrators, parents, teachers and students at the Menlo Park Academy—Ohio's current community school serving only gifted students
- Staff from the Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West (experienced sponsor of community schools and current sponsor of Menlo Park Academy)
- Ohio Department of Education
- Staff from The Thomas B. Fordham Institute

## Snapshot of Findings

The findings from this study support the feasibility of establishing start-up community schools that serve gifted students, particularly in the Educational Service System regions in Ohio that contain large population centers. The findings do not confirm the feasibility of establishing these schools in all 16 Educational Service System regions. It may be feasible to establish these schools in all 16 regions, but that determination would require detailed, region-specific market

and cost analyses, especially in the rural, sparsely-populated regions. Those detailed analyses were beyond the scope of this study.

### **Critical factors to be addressed as Ohio considers additional community schools for gifted students:**

- Parents and other stakeholders interviewed for this study are generally supportive of the option of community schools for gifted students as one component of a range of services for students identified as gifted. A large percentage of identified gifted students in Ohio are not currently being provided gifted educational services. There is a need for additional options for gifted students at all grade bands and for all types of identified giftedness.
- Ohio laws regarding where community schools can be chartered will require modification if any of these schools are piloted outside of a public school district designated “challenged” (Ohio Revised Code Section 3314.02).
- Equity considerations must be recognized when creating regional community schools and other services for gifted students. Gifted experts discussed the problem in some school districts of under-identification of poor and minority gifted students. Poor students and students without parents who can advocate for them are less likely to be able to access options such as community schools. Even in urban areas proximity is an issue, especially for poor students, as parents of young children often do not see public transit as a safe option. Additional resources and innovations for transportation, such as a hub model using the career tech centers as transportation hubs, could alleviate some of these equity concerns.
- The ability to recruit and retain the appropriate personnel, including licensed support services such as school psychologists and school counselors, is critical to the successful start-up and sustainability of high-quality community schools for gifted students. The gifted education experts interviewed for this study perceived that one challenge would be staffing additional gifted community schools with the right personnel.
- The questions regarding the availability of personnel to launch multiple, high-quality community schools is related the consideration of sufficient, state-funded start-up resources for these schools. In order to ensure high-quality schools for gifted learners, an investment in planning the educational models, then recruiting/developing the right personnel, would be needed.

- While many parents, students, gifted education experts, and advocates for gifted students were supportive of the idea of developing gifted-serving community schools, all stressed that this is one component of a much larger need to expand services to gifted children. Resources for serving this type of exceptional learner in all school settings are critically needed. In fact, virtually all key informants interviewed for this study stressed that there should be a requirement as well as resources for all public schools and districts to adequately serve all identified gifted students in Ohio, similar to the requirement for specialized services to other exceptional learners such as those with learning and developmental disabilities.
- The public school district superintendents interviewed for this study perceived that the start up of gifted community schools would have some negative impact on public school districts that lose students to these new schools. Districts would lose the state subsidy for these students, which is a negative fiscal impact. They would lose the inclusion of these high-achieving students in their outcome metrics. Superintendents interviewed also stressed that gifted students are an important part of their school community and losing even a portion of them would be a loss to everyone in the district.
- Stakeholders interviewed for this study contributed ideas for other models such as consortiums of school districts, Educational Service Centers (ESCs), and other resource providers that could co-manage programs for gifted students in a central location such as a regional career and technical center. The students could remain affiliated with their school district while receiving specialized services at a central location with gifted students from other districts one or more days per week.

How best to serve Ohio's gifted students is a critical concern for parents, students, educators, and policymakers in Ohio. Those who called for and contributed to this report have provided insight and illuminated important considerations as Ohio moves forward in this effort.

## Introduction

*Providing equitable access to an appropriate continuum of needed services for all students who are gifted is critical to the future of Ohio. It is especially important due to the positive impact gifted students can bring to Ohio's economic, scholarly, and aesthetic future. The skills this particular group of students brings with them will positively impact Ohio for generations to come (Ohio State Board of Education, 2003).*

The state of Ohio defines a gifted student as one who “performs or shows potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment.” In Ohio students can be identified as gifted in the areas of superior cognitive ability (general intelligence), specific academic ability (reading, math, social studies, and/or science), creative thinking ability, and visual-performing arts ability (Ohio Department of Education, 2016a).

The Ohio General Assembly requested a study examining the feasibility of establishing 16 start-up community schools to serve gifted students. The specific language of the request, from Amended Substitute House Bill 64, is as follows:

The Department of Education, in conjunction with an association of education service centers in this state and an association that advocates for gifted children in the state, shall complete a feasibility analysis of the establishment of a start-up community school in each of the sixteen regions of the Educational Regional Service System to serve primarily identified gifted students. Not later than July 1, 2016, the Department shall submit the analysis to the chairpersons of the standing committees and subcommittees of the House of Representatives and the Senate principally responsible for education policy and finance.

*Am. Sub. HB 64, Ohio Revised Code, Section 263.590*

The study was conducted by researchers at the Ohio Education Research Center at the request of the Ohio Department of Education's Office for Exceptional Children. As directed by the legislative language, the study team worked with the Ohio Association for Gifted Children and staff from various Educational Service Centers (ESCs) to design the study and conduct the research.

The study includes information on the potential viable demand for community schools serving primarily identified gifted students, the scope of services and models these schools would need to consider, potential partners (including the State's role) in developing these new community schools, and other important considerations for those involved in making decisions about how best to serve Ohio's gifted students.

## Methods

On April 13, 2016, the Ohio Department of Education convened a Gifted Community School Feasibility Study Committee comprised of Ohio teachers, administrators, parents and other stakeholders with expertise and interest in the best ways to serve gifted children. The committee was formed with recommendations from the Ohio Association of Gifted Children (OAGC) and the Ohio ESC Association, as directed by the legislation. The committee's charge was to help shape the scope and methodology of the study and develop the key research questions to be addressed. Appendix A contains a list of study committee members and the list of research questions that was developed based on the committee's input.

### Parent/Stakeholder Survey

The Gifted Community School Feasibility Study Committee stressed the critical need for information from parents and other stakeholders. The parent perspective is essential for investigating viable demand for new community schools for gifted students, as well as the types of services that these new schools should provide. Based on information provided by the study committee, researchers developed an online survey instrument (see Appendix B) and deployed it in partnership with the OAGC. The OAGC maintains a contact list comprised of parents of gifted children, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders concerned with gifted education. The OAGC sent the URL link to the survey to their master mailing list and used social media to encourage stakeholders to participate.

The survey was deployed on June 1, 2016, and remained available through June 17, 2016. In total, 854 individuals responded to the survey, including 592 parents of current K-12 gifted students in Ohio, 56 parents of gifted students who had already graduated, 79 teachers, and 127 other stakeholders, including administrators, school board members, and coordinators of gifted services. Data from this survey are included in the various sections of this report.

### Site Visit to Menlo Park Academy

There is currently one community school in Ohio that serves only gifted students (only those identified as superior cognitive). This community school is called the Menlo Park Academy and is located in the Cleveland, Ohio area. The Menlo Park Academy's enrollment was 405 students in the 2015-16 academic year. Students from 40 public school districts in the region were enrolled. The Menlo Park Academy is sponsored by the ESC of Lake Erie West. Representatives from both the Menlo Park Academy and the ESC of Lake Erie West were on the study committee and attended the April 13 study design meeting. At that meeting, participants stressed the need to include information about the Menlo Park Academy as part of the feasibility study, since the academy is currently the only example of an Ohio community school serving gifted students.

On May 23, 2016, researchers from the Ohio Education Research Center visited the Menlo Park Academy for a full-day site visit. They were able to interview administrators, teachers, parents, students, and board members as well as observe classrooms and activities. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed using the study's key research questions as a framework for analysis. Information gathered during this site visit is included throughout this report.

### Key Informant Interviews

The project team conducted telephone and in-person interviews with 36 individuals across Ohio in May and June 2016 (see Appendix C for interview questions). These key informant interviews are in addition to the interviews conducted with more than 30 parents, students, teachers, administrators and school board members at Menlo Park Academy. Key informants interviewed for this study included:

- Parents with school-aged children identified as gifted in Ohio (n=7)
- School-aged students identified as gifted in Ohio (n=8)
- Gifted college students who previously attended K-12 school in Ohio (n=3)
- Staff from the Ohio Association for Gifted Students (n=1)
- Public School Superintendents (n=3)
- Gifted Coordinators/Gifted Intervention Specialists (n=5)
- Staff from the Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West (experienced sponsor of community schools and current sponsor of Menlo Park Academy) (n=1)
- Ohio Department of Education staff (n=6)
- Staff from The Thomas B. Fordham Institute (n=2)

### Ohio Department of Education Data Analysis

The Ohio Department of Education maintains current data on gifted education in Ohio, including the number of gifted students identified (by type of giftedness) and served by local education associations (LEAs), and the number of licensed gifted educators. In addition, the Ohio School Report Card includes a *Gifted* indicator. These data were disaggregated by the 16 Ohio Educational Regional Service System regions where appropriate.

### Research on National Models

As background, the study team examined current literature and gathered information on various models of gifted education (See Appendix D).

## Definitions

**Feasibility-** For the purpose of this study, *feasibility* is defined as an assessment of both the ability to implement (practicability) and the likelihood of successful implementation/sustainability.

**Gifted-** The state of Ohio defines a *gifted* student as one who performs or shows potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of section 3324.03 of Ohio Revised Code. Students can be identified as gifted in the areas of superior cognitive ability (general intelligence), specific academic ability (reading, math, social studies, and/or science), creative thinking ability, and visual-performing arts ability (Ohio Department of Education, 2016a).

**Superior Cognitive Gifted-** In Ohio, a child is identified as *Superior Cognitive Gifted* if the child did either of the following within the preceding twenty-four months: Scored two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual standardized intelligence test administered by a licensed or certified school psychologist or licensed psychologist; OR accomplished any one of the following: (a) Scored at least two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved standardized group intelligence test; (b) Performed at or above the ninety-fifth percentile on an approved individual or group standardized basic or composite battery of a nationally normed achievement test or; (c) Attained an approved score on one or more above grade-level standardized, nationally normed approved tests.

**Specific Academic Ability Gifted-** In Ohio, a child is identified as *Specific Academic Ability Gifted* if, within the preceding twenty-four months the child performs at or above the ninety-fifth percentile at the national level on an approved individual or group standardized achievement test of specific academic ability in that field. A child may be identified as gifted in more than one specific academic ability field.

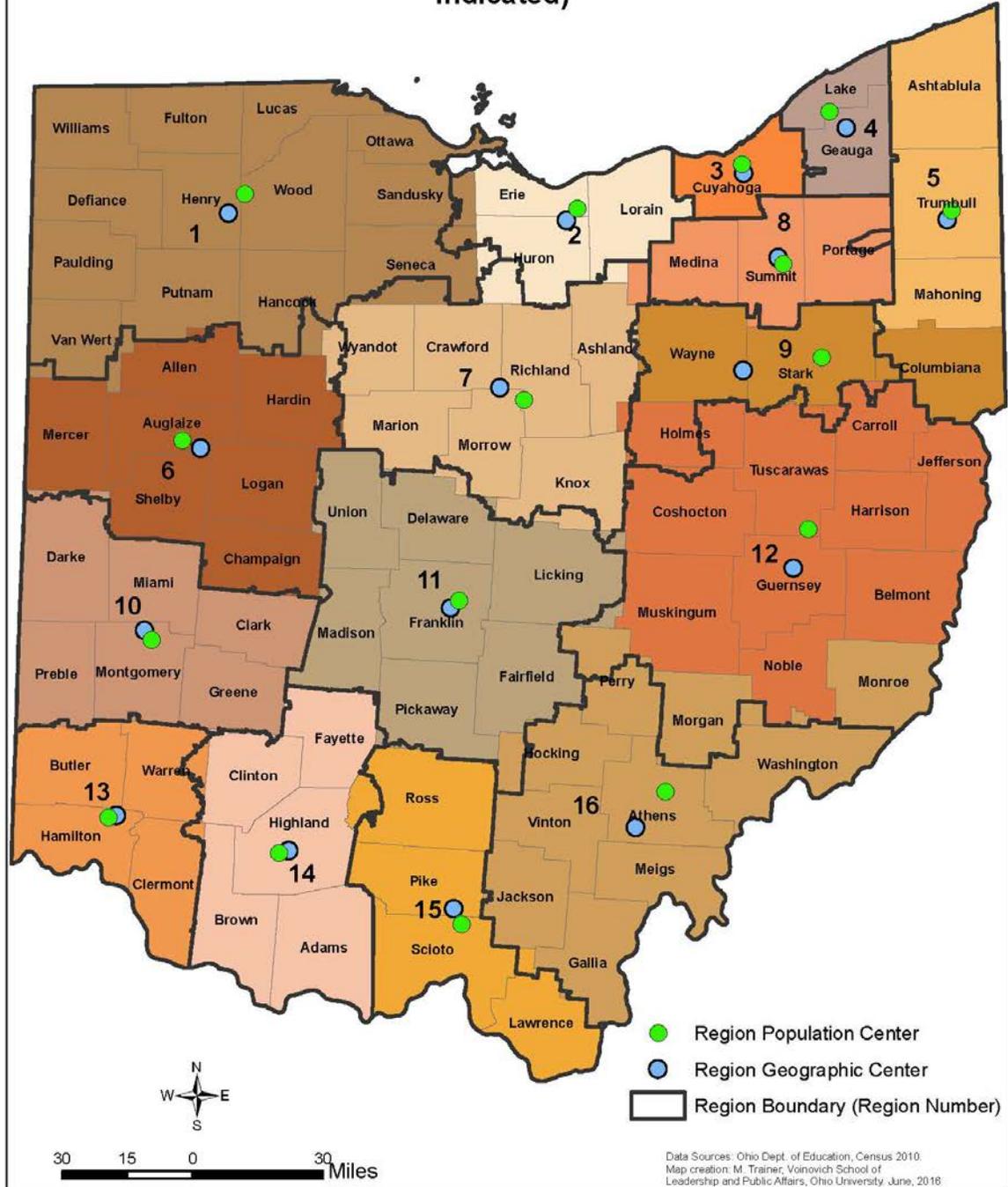
**Creative Thinking Ability Gifted-** In Ohio, a child is identified as *Creative Thinking Ability Gifted* if, within the previous twenty-four months, the child scored one standard deviation above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual or group intelligence test and also did either of the following: (a) Attained a sufficient score, as established by the department of education, on an approved individual or group test of creative ability; or (b) Exhibited sufficient performance, as established by the department of education, on an approved checklist by a trained individual of creative behaviors.

**Visual and Performing Arts Gifted-** In Ohio, a child is identified as *Visual and Performing Arts Gifted* if the child has done both of the following: (a) Demonstrated to a trained

individual through a display of work, an audition, or other performance or exhibition, superior ability in a visual or performing arts area; and (b) Exhibited to a trained individual sufficient performance, as established by the department of education, on an approved checklist of behaviors related to a specific arts area.

**Ohio Educational Regional Service System Regions-** In 2005, the Ohio General Assembly established 16 *Educational Regional Service System regions* to support state and regional school improvement initiatives and promote a simplified approach to regional service delivery. The regions were originally identified by county boundaries, but the legislation allowed the State Board of Education to establish a process whereby school districts could transfer to another region by 2009 (Ohio Educational Service Center Association, 2008). A few school districts opted to transfer, but the regions remain relatively similar to those first established in 2005. For this study, the Educational Regional Service System Regions are defined as the 16 regions as they exist after the district transfers. Figure 1 outlines the 16 regional boundaries and locates both the geographic and population centroids of each region.

**Figure 1. Ohio's Educational Regional Service System Regions (With Geographic and Population Centroids Indicated)**



# Findings

## Potential Demand

An important component of determining the feasibility of establishing 16 community schools serving gifted students, one in each the 16 Educational Regional Service System regions of Ohio, is determining the potential demand for these schools among families of gifted students. To assess demand, researchers included multiple data sources, including the current population of gifted students in Ohio, the percentage of gifted students currently being served, the enrollment of Ohio's only community school for gifted students, and parent feedback on the need for and viability of these community schools.

## Ohio's gifted students

In the 2014-15 academic year, 246,520 students in Ohio's 609 public school districts were identified as gifted. These quarter of a million students represent approximately 15 percent of the total enrollment in Ohio's 609 public school districts. The number of gifted students varies significantly by Ohio's Educational Regional Service System regions. This variation is based mostly on population density, although the percentage of students identified as gifted also varies by region. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the large variation in the number and the percentage of gifted students by Educational Regional Service System Region.

- The **number** of identified gifted students ranges from a high of 54,119 students in Region 11 (Franklin and surrounding counties) to a low of 3,218 students in Region 14 (five Southern Ohio counties).
- The **percentage** of identified gifted students ranges from a high of 20% in Region 11 (Franklin and surrounding counties) to a low of 9% in Region 15 (four Southern Ohio counties).

Figure 2. Number of Students Identified as Gifted by Region

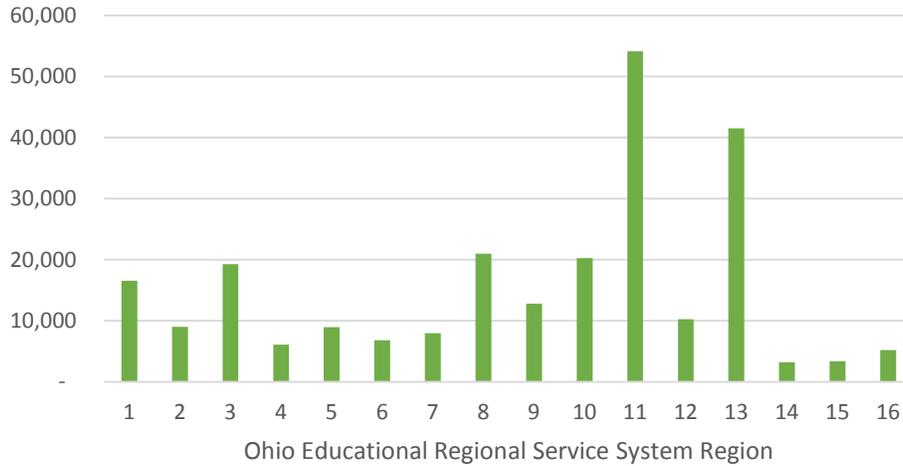
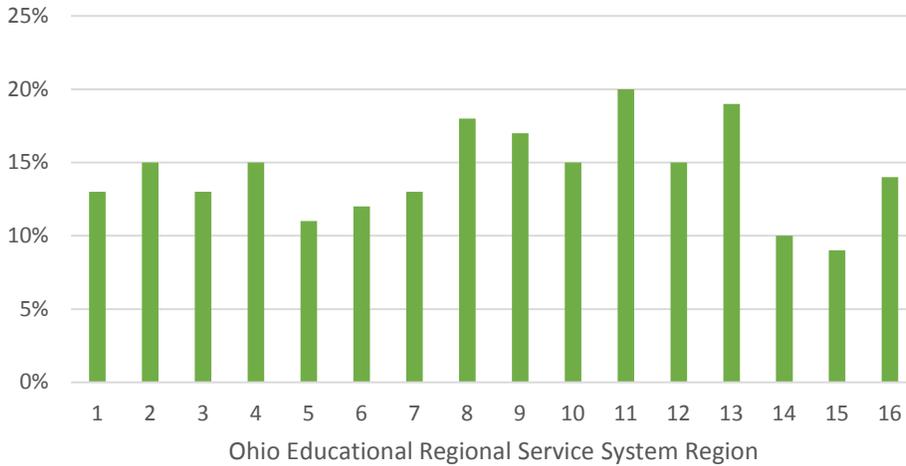


Figure 3. Percent of Students Identified as Gifted by Region



The variation in the sheer number of identified gifted students among Ohio’s 16 Educational Service System regions has important implications for the viable demand of community schools specifically for gifted students in each of the 16 regions. The parents of gifted students surveyed and interviewed for this study cited transportation/location as one of the major potential prohibiting factors that would deter them from making the decision to withdraw their gifted child/children from their current LEA and enroll them in a community school for gifted students that was not located in their community. Some of the Educational Service System Regions are quite large geographically, with relatively low population density and relatively low numbers of identified K-12 gifted students.

Another way to examine the data is to look at the square miles of each region and calculate a number of gifted students per square mile. This calculation is crude, as the population in general is not distributed evenly across any of the regions, nor is the population of gifted students. There are no available home address data for identified gifted students, so the precise population density variation cannot be illustrated. However, this approximation of the relative density of gifted students per square mile across the 16 Educational Regional Service System Regions is another way of examining viable demand for community schools in all regions. Table 1 illustrates the difference in the number of gifted students per square mile across Ohio. The size of the Educational Regional Service Center regions ranges from 460 square miles in Region 3 (Cuyahoga County) to 5,688 square miles in Region 1 (multiple counties in rural Northwest Ohio). Seven of the 16 regions have fewer than five identified gifted students per square mile, as compared to Region 3, with 42 students per square mile.

As the research on gifted identification and interviews with experts on gifted children support, economically-disadvantaged gifted students concentrated in poor rural areas and inner-city urban areas may be under-identified (Robinson, et al., 2007; Smutny, 2003). Region 15, for example, made up of some of Ohio’s most economically-disadvantaged Appalachian counties, has only 9 percent of its students identified as gifted—less than half of the percentage of gifted students identified in Central Ohio (see Figure 3). However, even if Region 15 doubled its percentage of identified gifted students from 9 percent to 18 percent, the density of gifted students per square mile would only increase from approximately 2 students per square mile to approximately 3 students per square mile.

For a community school to be sustainable financially, the enrollment must reach a minimum of 125-150 students (Ohio Department of Education, 2016b).

In Region 14, 150 students would amount to 5 percent of the gifted student population that is spread across 2,457 square miles.

The Menlo Park Academy, Ohio’s only community school serving gifted children exclusively, is located in Region 3, with the highest concentration of gifted students per square mile and the smallest geographic region. Menlo Park has an enrollment of 400 students and draws from 40

**Table 1. Approximate Density of Gifted Students by Region**

Region	Square miles	Gifted students per square mile
1	5688.48	3
2	1238.23	7
3	459.58	42
4	635.16	10
5	1764.54	5
6	3061.05	2
7	3079.17	3
8	1348.06	16
9	1672.96	8
10	2717.76	7
11	3607.99	15
12	4930.04	2
13	1749.32	24
14	2456.95	1
15	2209.95	2
16	4603.06	1

public school districts in 7 counties in that area of Ohio (Menlo Park Academy draws students from other regions in addition to Region 3). Menlo Park does have a waiting list for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, but also actively markets its program in the Greater Cleveland area in order to continue to increase enrollment in that densely-populated region.

In summary, based on these delineated factors: (a) the data on number of identified gifted students per region; (b) the variation in geographic area (commute time); (c) the feedback from parents about transportation as a barrier; (d) the density of gifted students per square mile; (e) the perceived quality of alternatives currently available; and (f) the Menlo Park Academy's enrollment of a sufficient number of students from a 7-county region in the Cleveland area, it is feasible from a potential demand perspective to start up gifted-serving community schools in the Educational Service Center regions with large population centers but not clearly feasible in the rural, sparsely-populated regions. Additional, targeted market research (beyond the scope of this project) would be necessary to determine sufficient market demand by region.

### **Gifted students who are currently not served**

Another data point to consider when determining the potential demand for additional options for gifted students is the percentage of students who are identified as gifted but currently not being served. Ohio's public school districts receive state funding for gifted education based on a formula that provides \$37,340 per 1,100 ADM for gifted instruction and \$37,340 per 3,300 ADM for coordination of gifted services (the majority of Ohio's school districts have less than 3,300 ADM). The superintendents, Gifted Intervention Specialists/Gifted Coordinators, and parents we interviewed for this study stressed that there are insufficient resources, even with supplemental resources from the district, to provide adequate gifted programming for all identified gifted students. Indeed, the "Gifted" indicator on Ohio's school accountability report cards illuminates this fact. In 2014-15 only 13 of Ohio's 609 school districts met the indicator, which includes the percentage of identified gifted students who are served with programming specific to their exceptionality. Under current Ohio law, districts must identify gifted students but there is no mandate to serve them. Funding to serve these exceptional learners is relatively low compared to the funding to serve students with other exceptionalities and for whom there is a mandate to provide adequate, specialized educational services.

The Ohio Department of Education maintains data on the percentage of gifted students served by LEA. These data are listed by grade bands (K-3, 4-8, and 9-12) and by academically gifted and fine and performing arts gifted. Data on academically gifted are available for a majority, but not all, 609 public school districts, and much of the fine and performing arts gifted data are not available. From the available data, it is evident that a large percentage of gifted students in Ohio are currently not being provided gifted services, and only a handful of districts are able to serve all identified gifted students. There is also a large district-to-district variation in the

percentage of gifted students being provided gifted services. For example, for grades 4-8 students identified as academically gifted, 84 public school districts served fewer than one-quarter of those students in 2014-15; only twelve districts served all of their identified academically gifted in grades 4-8. The median percentage of academically gifted students in grades 4-8 served, where half the districts served a higher percentage and half served a lower percentage, was 51 percent.

**Table 2. District by district variation in the percentage of identified academically gifted students who were provided gifted services in 2014-15**

<b>Academically gifted</b>	<b>Lowest % served</b>	<b>Highest % served</b>	<b>Median % served</b>
Grades K-3	0.1%	100% (36 districts)	48%
Grades 4-8	0.3%	100% (19 districts)	51%
Grades 9-12	0.7%	100% (12 districts)	48%

Analysis of interview and open-ended survey response data identified as a major theme parents’ experiences and perceptions regarding the lack of adequate services for gifted students. For example, researchers interviewed two parents with two gifted children in a suburban, high wealth district in Central Ohio. These parents had been very pleased with the programming their older daughter (now in 5<sup>th</sup> grade) was receiving in the primary grades until a local tax levy failed and personnel were cut. When their older daughter was in the primary grades, the district employed a Gifted Intervention Specialist (GIS) to work exclusively with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. Gifted students were receiving specialized services multiple days per week. The parents saw this as very valuable, as the teachers were focusing on grit, resilience and very much supported the work of the classroom teachers. After a local levy failure, the GIS was cut. Teachers were unable to adequately serve the needs of these gifted students. The parents described as an example a teacher their 5<sup>th</sup> grade daughter had last year, who the parents saw as a very good teacher. This teacher was frustrated because he knew that the gifted students in his classroom were not being adequately served, but his resources were stretched to the limit. These parents were supportive of the idea of community schools for gifted students, but stressed that the ideal situation would be to serve gifted students within the schools in their own community by ensuring adequate resources and mandating services for identified gifted students that are similar to mandates to serve students with developmental disabilities. One of the parents described the distribution of student IQs and questioned why there are mandates to serve exceptional students with unique needs on the low end of the distribution, but no mandates to serve exceptional students with unique needs

at the high end of the distribution. Open-ended survey responses and interviews with other parents, students, and stakeholders described similar personal experiences of frustration when trying to access adequate gifted educational services.

### **Parent feedback on demand for gifted community schools**

Researchers solicited input from parents, gifted education experts and other stakeholders through a statewide survey and individual or group interviews. The statewide parent-stakeholder survey deployed as part of this feasibility study yielded 854 valid responses, including:

- 592 parents/guardians of school-aged gifted students in Ohio
- 56 parents/guardians of a gifted student who has graduated from an Ohio high school
- 79 K-12 teachers
- 127 other stakeholders

The demographic profile of the school-aged gifted children of parent respondents was:

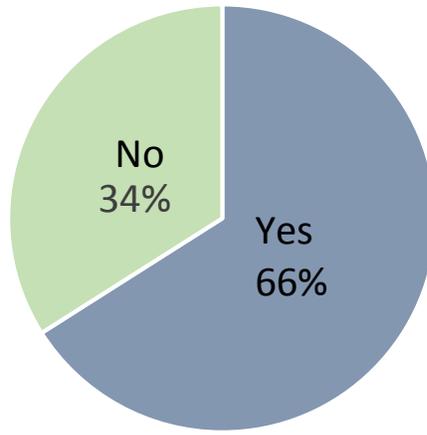
- Race: 92% White; 5% Asian; 3% Black or African American
- Ethnicity: 3% Hispanic or Latino
- Age ranges: 5 through 18; Modal age = 10; 75% of respondents children were ages 8-14
- Types of giftedness of respondents' child/children (note that child can be identified with more than one type of giftedness and some respondents had multiple gifted children):
  - Superior Cognitive = 82%
  - Specific Academic Ability = 69%
  - Creative Thinking Ability = 22%
  - Visual and Performing Arts = 9%
- Approximately 12 percent of responding parents indicated that their gifted child/children has been identified as having one or more of the 13 disabilities identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These gifted children are identified as “twice exceptional.”

All 16 Educational Regional Service Regions were represented, but some regions had a small number of respondents, so survey results are not reported by region.

Close to three quarters (73%) of the parents of current K-12 gifted students indicated that their gifted child/children currently received educational services that are specific to gifted children. Those parents were then asked if they were satisfied with the educational services being provided to their gifted child/children. As Figure 4 indicates, a majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with these current services.

Figure 4. "Are you satisfied with the educational services being provided to your gifted child/children?" (n=429)

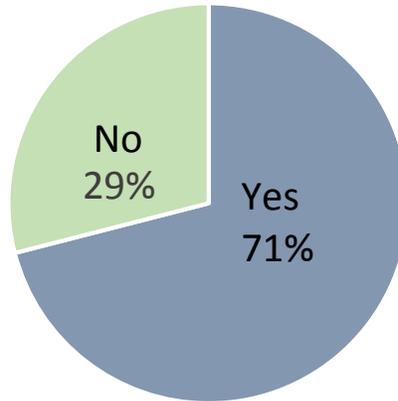
Parents of current K-12 gifted students were asked if their child is currently receiving educational services specific to gifted children. 73% of the respondents answered, "Yes." Those 429 parents whose children are receiving gifted services were then asked if they were satisfied with those services.



All 592 responding parents of school-aged gifted students in Ohio were asked, "If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in a tuition-free Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you consider that option for your children?" Of the 577 parents who responded to this question, 71 percent indicated that they would consider this option. Of those who would consider the option for their child/children, 82 percent indicated that they would be willing and able to arrange transportation for their child if the community school was outside their community of residence.

Figure 5. Parents' response to question asking if they would consider enrolling their gifted child in a community school specifically designed for gifted children (n=577)

All parent respondents to the survey were asked, "If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in a tuition-free Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you consider that option for your child/children?"



Parents of gifted children had the option of providing additional details regarding what might compel them and/or what might prohibit them from considering the option of enrolling their gifted child/children in a community school serving only gifted children (see Appendix B for precise wording of items). Approximately 240 of the 592 parent respondents provided open-ended responses to these items. Researchers analyzed the open-ended responses and the major themes are illustrated in Table 3. A challenging academic environment with teachers who specialize in instructing gifted students and perceived failure of the current system to adequately serve gifted students were the top reasons that would compel parents to consider the option of enrolling their child in a community school for gifted children. Distance, transportation issues, lack of a diverse student population, and program quality concerns were the most cited reasons that would prohibit parents from considering this option.

**Table 3. Major themes from parent comments regarding what would compel or prohibit them from enrolling their gifted child in a community school that only serves children identified as gifted**

What would compel enrollment	What would prohibit enrollment
Challenging/engaging curriculum	Distance
Individualized instruction	Transportation
Teachers trained to work with gifted and twice exceptional students	Location (safe area, building)
Failure of current system to meet gifted student needs	Disconnection from child’s own community and peers
Ability for student to be with similar students	Lack of diversity—children need to learn to work with all types of people in the real world
Proximity	Teacher training/retention
Appropriate social and emotional supports	Lack of opportunities for extra-curricular activities Program quality/concern about community school

**Other stakeholders’ perspectives on demand for gifted community schools**

Respondents to the online survey deployed as part of this study also included parents of Ohio gifted students who had already graduated from high school as well as other stakeholders, including teachers and gifted advocates. Parents of former K-12 gifted students were asked,

*When your gifted child was in K-12 school, if you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their school and enrolling them in a tuition-free Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only served children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you have considered that option?*

Of the 54 parents of former Ohio K-12 gifted students who responded, 72 percent said they would have considered this community school option. Reasons cited included parents’ perception that their gifted students were not challenged when they were in K-12 school, teachers were not adequately equipped to serve gifted students, and the interventions that their gifted children received were inadequate (e.g. one or two hours of specialized services per week).

Parents and other stakeholders responding to the survey were generally supportive of the development of additional community schools for gifted students as one component of a broadened scope of services for these students, including adequate funding and a mandate to serve gifted students in their school districts, more Gifted Intervention Specialists, and professional development for teachers specific to the instruction of gifted learners. “Identify them and serve them, just as you would any exceptional student population” is a quote from one stakeholder indicative of a strong theme in the survey respondents.

### **Menlo Park Academy as an example of demand for gifted student options**

Menlo Park Academy is an eight-year old, K-8 community school located on the western side of Cleveland. The school was founded by a group of parents and originally served fewer than 40 full-time students. The story of Menlo Park Academy is informative for understanding the demand for this type of school. The school has grown rapidly since its original charter was approved, currently serving over 400 students from 40 school districts in the region, with the highest demand, and waiting lists, for grades 1-3. As students move into intermediate and middle school grades, a number return to their home districts in order to take advantage of sports or other extracurricular activities. The school accepts only students meeting the Ohio definition of superior cognitive gifted, using the methods or assessment instruments approved by the state. The school is currently located in a former Catholic school and is filled to capacity. The board and administration are currently working on a facilities project with plans to move to a larger, more modern facility in 2017-18. This will allow them to clear their waiting list, recruit/accept additional superior cognitive students, and perhaps add a 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort. The school does not have close working relationships with most neighboring public school districts. They recruit using word of mouth, media outlets, and open house events. Some neighboring districts, if within the 30-minute threshold for busing, bus students to Menlo Park Academy. The majority of students are transported by individual parents or parent carpools.

### **Scope of Services**

In determining the feasibility of start-up community schools for gifted students, one important consideration is the scope of services that families of Ohio’s gifted students need and want. This scope includes the types of educational services, the types of giftedness that need additional services, and the ages/grades at which services should be targeted.

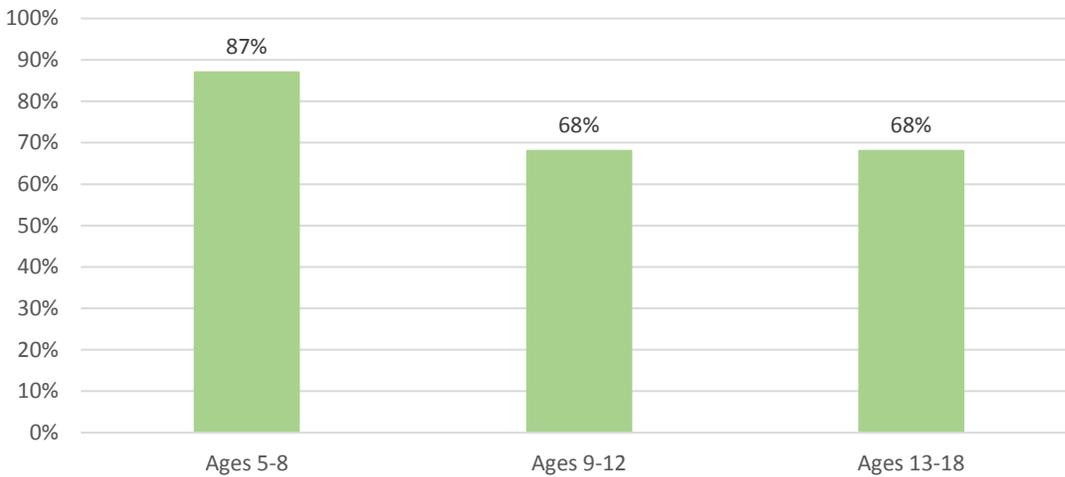
The information collected as part of this study clearly identifies the need for additional options (such as specialized community schools) for students identified as superior cognitive and especially those superior cognitive students who have high need for social-emotional supports and who may even be identified as “twice exceptional.” In the 2014-15 academic year, there were 84,707 students identified as Superior Cognitive in Ohio’s public school districts, and less than half of them (40,188) were receiving services for their Superior Cognitive giftedness. Eighty-two percent of the parent survey respondents indicated that at least one of their gifted

children were identified as Superior Cognitive. In our interviews with parents and students at Menlo Park Academy (this gifted community school serves only superior cognitive students), other parents and students around the state, and gifted education experts, all voiced a need for more specialized services for superior cognitive students. They indicated that these students are often unchallenged in the traditional school setting and that traditional pull-out programs once or more times per week or even grade acceleration do not meet the needs of many of these gifted students. Stakeholders cited a misconception that “these students are really smart, they will be OK” as commonly held and one that does not serve the superior cognitive gifted student.

While the need/viability of additional specialized schools for superior cognitive gifted students was clearly supported by the data collected for this study, we heard from parents, students, gifted education specialists and others that additional options for subject-area giftedness and visual and performing arts giftedness are also important to consider.

The most clearly viable targeted grade bands are in the K-6 range, as there are currently more options for 7-12 students through programs such as College Credit Plus. Parents interviewed were in large agreement that they would have a more difficult time or would not make the decision to pull their upper-grade students from their current school and enroll them in a community school because of the students’ attachment to their school. Barring other barriers, the decision would be more easily made if the students were in the primary grades. While the demand appears somewhat stronger in the elementary grades, the high school students and Gifted Intervention Specialists we reached for this study voiced a need for additional options for gifted high school students. Options offered include one or more residential high schools co-located with universities, similar to Kentucky and other states’ models. Two Ohio students interviewed for this study were currently finishing their high school coursework and enrolled in college at age 16. One of these students attends Mary Baldwin College in Virginia, which offers a residential dual enrollment program for high school students. Figure 6 indicates parents’ of current gifted students consideration of enrolling their child in a gifted community school by age of the students.

Figure 6. Percent of parents responding that they would consider enrolling their gifted child in a community school specifically designed for gifted children by age of gifted children



## Models

### Menlo Park Academy

Menlo Park Academy administrators described multiple strategies used to address individual academic needs of the superior cognitive students. These include whole grade acceleration, subject acceleration, interest or ability grouping, curriculum compacting, enrichment, and individualized study. Both teachers and administrators interviewed indicated that enrichment of subject matter is critical. Acceleration ignores potential maturity constraints in students; depth of content provides an opportunity for individual interests to be explored. Enrichment includes a wide variety of opportunities for competitions in many areas, guest speakers, unique study or experimental projects, and field trips.

Autonomy in developing curriculum has been a critical factor in designing successful programs and serving this group of exceptional learners. However, professional development time and funding is needed to assist teachers in understanding the challenges of gifted students and how to design appropriate pedagogies and behavior management strategies. Approximately 25% of the student body at Menlo Park Academy is identified as twice exceptional or demonstrates social/emotional counseling needs. The school has established a strong, dedicated counseling staff, including a noted psychologist, Dr. S. Rimm, with national recognition in researching and helping gifted students. Among the challenges are issues of self-esteem, underachievement, perfectionism, and high anxiety.

One of the biggest challenges for the school is funding. Historically, Menlo Park has been able to leverage a pool of highly talented, parent volunteers who have addressed operational, financial, and other needs at no cost. Administrators interviewed indicated that volunteers in these roles has saved the school approximately \$100,000 annually. However, as the school has grown, functions have required formalization of both process and staffing. Parents continue to be more significantly involved than generally is the case in traditional schools. Parents also pay an annual activity fee of \$500 and a technology fee of \$75. The school has recently engaged consultants to assist them with assessing and accessing grant funding from non-profit, business, and governmental agencies. Menlo Park is self-operated and administrators noted that payment to a third-party operator would further stress the budget.

### **Other models suggested by parents/stakeholders**

Stakeholders interviewed for this study contributed ideas for other ways to serve gifted students within their current school districts. One general model that was described by multiple stakeholders was consortiums of school districts, ESCs and other resource providers that could co-manage programs for gifted students in a central location such as a regional career technical center. The students could remain affiliated with their school district while receiving specialized services at a central location with gifted students from other districts one or more days per week. Gifted students would spend a significant amount of time with their gifted peers, while also remaining in a diverse environment. School districts already provide transportation to career technical centers, so the transportation barrier would be minimized.

Because the expert panel assembled to design this study was aware that transportation would be a barrier for parents as they consider the option of regional schools for their gifted children, the study team included a question about online options for gifted students. The question specifically asked if parents would consider a gifted community school that was structured in a way that the majority of the instruction was delivered in an online format and the students were only required to travel to the school building one day per week or one day every two weeks. Only 21 percent of parents indicated that they would even consider that option. The reasons parents opposed the online option were the lack of interaction/socialization with other students and teachers and the fact that parents work so no one would be home to monitor the student.

### **Potential Partners**

If new community schools for gifted students are developed, key partners will be critical to their success. Each new school will need a sponsor in order to become established as a community school in Ohio. Any organization that qualifies under current Ohio law as a sponsor of an Ohio public community school is a potential partner in the start up of these proposed schools for gifted students. The legislation that required this feasibility study listed ESCs as a

partner in the study phase. Indeed, one or more ESCs could serve as sponsors of these community schools. The ESC of Lake Erie West currently sponsors the Menlo Park Academy and could sponsor additional gifted community schools. Other ESCs may be interested in sponsorship based on the geographic location of these schools in Ohio's educational service regions.

In order to explore the interest of other potential partners for sponsorship, researchers contacted the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Fordham sponsors of a number of community schools in Ohio that serve high achieving students. Representatives from the Institute expressed support for the concept of community schools focused on gifted students and an interest in exploring sponsorship if the start-up entities were interested and could meet Fordham's specific requirements for start-up community schools. Fordham's interest indicates the likelihood that developers of these start-up schools could identify appropriate sponsors.

In addition to sponsorship, the successful start up and operation of high-quality community schools serving this exceptional population of students will require partnerships with expertise in gifted education. Menlo Park Academy contracts with the Family Achievement Clinic, a private counseling practice in Cleveland with specific expertise in the social-emotional needs of gifted students. Menlo Park Academy's administrators, teachers, and parents who were interviewed all stressed the critical importance of this support service for the population of superior cognitive students served. Because findings from this study indicate that the most viable demand for gifted-focused community schools is from families of students with superior cognitive abilities, many of whom having unique social-emotional needs, community schools serving these students will need to hire or contract for psychological and counseling services with expertise serving this population.

Additional partnerships may include contracted educational specialists (e.g., Gifted Intervention Specialists from ESCs), food service, transportation, financial management, and other services. These partnerships would be identified during the design period for each school.

## **Additional Considerations**

### **Changes to Current Law**

If Ohio moves forward to launch additional community schools targeted specifically for gifted students, Ohio laws regarding where community schools can be chartered would need to be modified. Currently, start-up community schools are permitted to charter only inside the boundaries of one of Ohio's Big 8 urban districts or a public school district designated "challenged" (Ohio Revised Code Section 3314.02).

## Adequate Licensed Personnel

The gifted education experts and parents consulted for this study all stressed that the right teachers, administrators, and licensed support personnel such as school counselors are critical for any school serving gifted students. Research on gifted education indicates that teachers that are well trained in Gifted and Talented Education and who are energetic and flexible are key to setting up successful, specialized schools or classrooms. Teachers must be able to address the social and emotional challenges, along with the academic ones, that many gifted students face (Rogers, 2002). Additionally, due to the potential for a high level of social and emotional needs by this population, strong counseling supports are needed (Robinson, et al., 2007).

Ohio currently offers a licensure and endorsement of Gifted Intervention Specialist (GIS), indicating that a teacher has successfully completed a series of courses that focus on the gifted student exceptionalities and the best methods for teaching these students. While there are teachers who do not hold such a licensure that are skilled at teaching gifted students, the experts consulted for this study stressed the need for most teachers and administrators in any gifted school to have specialized licensure, ensuring that they have at least a base knowledge of the pedagogy and special considerations for educating gifted students, including how to deal with issues such as perfectionism and underperformance. Parents interviewed stressed frustration with teachers who were not knowledgeable regarding the best ways to educate gifted children. Often these teachers used methods such as assigning more of the same work with the same level of intellectual rigor, or assigning deeper learning activities as homework or “extra” work that the gifted students could do.

Six universities in Ohio offer programs that lead to a Gifted Intervention Specialist endorsement on an Ohio teacher’s license. The universities offering this coursework (often six required courses) are Ashland University, Cleveland State University, Muskingum University, the University of Cincinnati, Wright State University, and Xavier University. Three of these universities offer the program online. In addition, Muskingum University and Xavier University offer a graduate program that leads to a Gifted Intervention Specialist licensure (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2016).

In the 2014-15 academic year, there were 2,803 teachers employed in Ohio with some kind of “gifted” endorsement on their teaching license. Table 4 indicates the distribution of these teachers by region. If a teacher was assigned to schools in more than one region, he or she appears in counts for both regions, so there are some duplicates in the data. Teachers in the N/A category were employed by newer organizations such as community schools that do not have a regional assignment.

Table 4. Employed Ohio Teachers with Gifted Intervention Specialist Credentials by Educational Regional Service System Region – 2014-15

Region	Count of Teachers
1	156
2	92
3	291
4	70
5	108
6	64
7	77
8	176
9	120
10	193
11	407
12	77
13	395
14	23
15	29
16	51
N/A*	474

\* Teachers in the N/A category were employed by newer organizations such as community schools that do not have a regional assignment.

The teachers represented in Table 4 are currently employed in Ohio schools. Based on available data, it cannot be determined that there is any surplus of qualified teachers with gifted endorsements who are not currently employed and who would seek employment in these new schools. The gifted education experts interviewed for this study voiced a perception from personal experience that personnel with credentials to serve gifted students are often hard to find. It is also unclear if the new community schools could draw enough experienced teachers with gifted endorsements to a brand new, start-up community school, as community schools often pay less than public school districts. Start-up and operational funding to incentivize qualified teachers to join these new organizations, as well as adequate funding for professional development for teachers who may have a proclivity for teaching gifted learners but who do not yet have their gifted endorsement, is also an important consideration.

## Potential Impact on Public School Districts

The Ohio public school district superintendents interviewed for this study acknowledged that districts struggle to find adequate resources and personnel to serve the spectrum of gifted students adequately, and they struggle with the gifted accountability indicator. For example, one superintendent of a small district indicated that the resources provided for gifted services do not even cover the cost of the district's only gifted coordinator who serves three elementaries and a middle school. The Gifted Coordinators and Gifted Intervention Specialists interviewed were all employed by ESCs and serve one or more school districts. They also stressed the inadequate funding for specialized personnel, plus inadequate pre-service and in-service professional development for all classroom teachers regarding instructional practices for gifted students.

The superintendents interviewed perceived that even a small number of gifted students transferring to a community school will have a negative financial impact on school districts. Another superintendent stressed that the spectrum of exceptional learners is part of the rich fabric of the school community and that the gifted students add great value to the curricular and extra-curricular experiences for all students. Losing some of these students would be a loss to the entire district, from his perspective. Public School districts would also lose the inclusion of these high-achieving students' test scores as part of the districts' outcome metrics. Almost all the parents interviewed for this study and many parents who responded to the survey indicated that the ideal situation for their gifted child would be adequate programming within their school district so that the child can remain a part of his or her local school and community, interact with a diversity of students, participate in extra-curricular activities and not have to manage a commute and other logistics that would likely go along with transferring to a community school in another location. Parents interviewed suggested a hybrid model, where their gifted child could remain in their current school but be pulled out (perhaps along with students from other school districts) one or more days per week for specialized programming that served their unique needs. This and other models of better serving gifted students within their own communities and schools was stressed by many parents and other stakeholders.

## Conclusion

The data collected for this study support the feasibility of establishing additional, start-up community schools that serve primarily gifted students in Educational Service System regions that are located in Ohio's large urban centers, similar to the current location of Menlo Park Academy in the Cleveland metropolitan area. Researchers were unable to determine the feasibility of establishing these schools in all 16 Educational Regional Service Regions. Determining the feasibility of establishing gifted-serving community schools in more rural, less

populated regions requires a more detailed, region-specific market and financial analysis beyond the scope of this study.

The rationale for this determination of feasibility includes the large number of gifted students in Ohio, the percentage of these identified exceptional learners who are currently not provided services, parent and student demand for services, gifted education practitioners' confirmation of the unmet need for specialized services for this population, and the fact that there is currently one example of a community school serving superior cognitive students in the Cleveland area that has been operating and growing in enrollment for 8 years.

The need for additional options for gifted students spans all K-12 grade bands. While the demand appears somewhat stronger in the elementary grades and there are more options for 7-12 students through programs such as College Credit Plus and Advanced Placement, the high school students and Gifted Intervention Specialists we reached for this study voiced a need for additional options for gifted high school students. Options offered include one or more residential high schools co-located with universities, similar to Kentucky and other states' models.

Additional research in the start-up phase can identify the types of giftedness that would be best served by these schools. Our research for this initial feasibility study clearly identifies the need for additional options (such as specialized community schools) for students identified as superior cognitive (approximately one-third of the gifted students in Ohio) and especially those superior cognitive students who have high need for social-emotional supports and who may even be identified as "twice exceptional." However, we heard from parents, students, gifted education specialists and others that additional options for subject-area giftedness and visual and performing arts giftedness are also needed. Market research in the start-up phase of community school development would enable developers to specify programming and types of giftedness served. If one or more community schools are developed, their specialization could be based on regional need and expertise of the developers.

### **Conditions and considerations for success**

As Ohio policymakers and practitioners work to best serve gifted students, and consider the development of gifted-serving community schools as one component of that effort, the results of this feasibility study offer the following conditions and considerations:

#### **Changes in current law**

Ohio laws regarding where community schools can be chartered will need to be modified if any of these schools are piloted outside of one of Ohio's Big 8 urban district boundaries or outside of a public school district designated "challenged" (Ohio Revised Code Section 3314.02).

### **Identification and equity considerations**

Equity considerations must also be recognized when creating regional community schools and other services for gifted students. Gifted experts interviewed for this study stressed the issue of under-identification of poor and minority gifted students in some districts. This under-identification issue is supported by research on gifted education and potentially impacts demand for gifted services in some regions of the state that currently have a lower percentage of students identified as gifted as compared to other regions.

Poor students and students without parents who can advocate for them are less likely to be able to access options such as community schools. Establishing a community school that is in another community could mean that this option is inaccessible to some gifted students who might otherwise choose this option. Even in urban areas proximity is an issue, especially for poor students, as parents of young children often do not see public transit as a safe option. Additional resources and innovations for transportation, such as a hub model using the career techs as transportation hubs, could alleviate some of these equity concerns.

### **Staffing and resources to ensure quality**

The ability to recruit and retain the appropriate personnel, including licensed support services such as school psychologists and school counselors, is critical to the successful start up and sustainability of high-quality community schools for gifted students. Gifted experts interviewed for this study indicated a lack of qualified Gifted Intervention Specialists. This study did not include a gifted educator supply and demand analysis. The planning phase of any new gifted-serving community schools should include the determination of availability of sufficient, skilled teachers, counselors, psychologists and administrators who would be willing to move to a start-up community school.

The questions regarding the availability of personnel to launch multiple high-quality community schools are related to the consideration of sufficient, state-funded start-up resources for these schools. Ohio formerly provided start-up dollars for planning new community schools and then operating dollars for the first three years of operation. This funding ended in 2010 (Ohio Department of Education, 2016b). In order to ensure high-quality schools for gifted learners, an investment in planning the appropriate educational models, then recruiting the right personnel would be critical.

### **Community schools as one component of larger effort to serve gifted students**

While many parents, students, gifted education experts, and advocates for gifted students were supportive of the idea of developing gifted-serving community schools, all stressed that this is one component of a much larger need to expand services to gifted children. Even if these schools were developed in all 16 educational service regions of Ohio, they would not meet all the needs of Ohio's gifted students and their families. Several factors would keep a significant

percentage (perhaps the majority) of gifted students from accessing these community schools, including distance, a desire to remain connected to the local community and peer group, as well as an aspiration for these students to interact with a variety of peers and attain the social skills needed to succeed in multiple environments.

Resources for serving this type of exceptional learner in all school settings are critically needed. In fact, virtually all key informants interviewed for this study stressed that there should be a requirement as well as resources for all public schools and districts to adequately serve all identified gifted students in Ohio, similar to the requirement for specialized services to other exceptional learners, such as those with learning and developmental disabilities. Additionally, concerns surfaced on the diverse approaches to gifted identification across the state and a need to broadly assess all students very early – prior to third grade.

It is important to note that the public school district superintendents interviewed for this study voiced concerns that the launch of these schools would also have some negative impact on public school districts that would lose students to these new schools. Superintendents perceived that districts would lose the state subsidy for these students, which is a negative fiscal impact. They also stressed that gifted students are an important part of their school community and losing even a portion of them would be a loss to everyone in the district. Stakeholders interviewed for this study contributed ideas for consortiums of school districts, ESCs and other resource providers that could co-manage programs for gifted students in a central location such as a regional career-technical center. The students could remain affiliated with their school district, while receiving specialized services at a central location with gifted students from other districts one or more days per week.

How best to serve Ohio's gifted students is a critical concern for parents, students, educators, and policymakers in Ohio. Those who called for and contributed to this report have provided insight and illuminated important considerations as Ohio moves forward in this effort.

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# Appendix A-Study Committee and Research Questions

## Gifted Community School Feasibility Study Committee

Recommendations from Ohio Association of Gifted Children		
Ann Sheldon	Ohio Association for Gifted Children	Executive Director
Curt Bradshaw	Southern Ohio ESC	ESC Gifted Coordinator
Karen Rohde	Berea Schools	Gifted Coordinator
Jennifer Hyatt	Fairview Park City Schools	Gifted Coordinator
Marilyn Kramer	ECOESC	Director of Gifted Services
Susan Larson	Muskingum Valley ESC	Gifted Coordinator
Brian Billings	Anthony Wayne Local Schools	Director of Gifted Services
Deb Allen	Medina County	
Sarah Hallerman		Parent - Dublin Schools
Michael Triplett		Parent - New Albany
Eileen Brady		Parent - Clinton-Massie
Anne Flick		Parent and part-time gifted coordinator
Amy Bain		Parent of now adult gifted children and retired gifted coordinator
Recommendations from Ohio ESC Association		
Dwayne Arnold	North Point ESC	
Heather O'Donnell	Midwest Regional ESC	Superintendent of ESC
Chuck Wiggins	Warren County ESC	
Craig Burford	Executive Director	Ohio ESC Association
Others		
Suzanne	McFarland	Menlo Park Academy (Gifted Community School)
April	Morin	ESC of Lake Erie West (Gifted Community School Sponsor)
Ranay	Nunamaker	ESC of Lake Erie West (Gifted Community School Sponsor)
ODE Team		
Sue Zake	Jessica Voltolini	
Mike Demczyk	Michael Harlow	
Jennifer Felker	Maria Lohr	
Matt Cohen	Frank Stoy	
Eben Dowell	Wendy Stoica	

## Ohio Regional Gifted Community School Feasibility Study

### Research Questions Rev. 5.2.16

#### DEMAND

1. Is there sufficient demand among families of gifted students for 16 regional gifted community schools in each of the 16 regions of Ohio's Educational Regional Service System?
2. Is the demand equal: 1) across grade levels (e.g. elementary vs. high school); 2) across type of gifted identification (e.g. superior cognitive vs. arts)?
3. What are some of the specific gifted service demands that could be addressed by these 16 regional gifted community schools?
4. Are families of gifted students willing to transfer their students out of their current public school district/private school and into a community school?
5. Could sufficient numbers of students physically access the school, particularly in the rural areas of the state? Are there equity issues in terms of physical access, cost of transportation?
6. What is the statewide distribution of identified/served gifted students? Does it differ by region?

#### SCOPE OF SERVICES

7. How should the scope of services provided by these 16 gifted community schools be determined?
8. Would schools be standardized across all 16 regions, or specialized by demand or sponsor/operator prerogative?

#### MODELS

9. Are there other successful models of gifted community schools in Ohio and elsewhere? What do these models look like?
10. Are their models of successful virtual schools, residential schools, mix of brick-and-mortar/virtual that serve only gifted students?

#### PARTNERS/LOGISTICS

11. What entities need to be involved in developing and operating these 16 regional gifted community schools?
12. Are there existing entities/partners in Ohio or nationally that have an interest in partnering to develop these schools?
13. What criteria for sponsor/operator are best-suited to partner for gifted community schools?
14. Which sponsors/operators would have interest and capability to maintain one or more schools of this type?
15. What is the State's capacity to incentivize and oversee the start-up of these schools?
16. What would the State's ongoing role be?
17. Would/should the State consider direct sponsorship?
18. What would be the impacts (positive and negative) on current Ohio school districts if these 16 gifted community schools start up?

19. Based on most viable models (viability determined by demand, feedback from potential customers, existing models...) what would be the cost to develop and operate these community schools?
20. Is there sufficient current human capital to staff 16 gifted community schools?

# Appendix B-Gifted Community School Feasibility Parent Survey

Q1 Ohio Gifted Community School Feasibility Study Parent/Stakeholder Survey The Ohio Education Research Center, on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education, is conducting a survey of parents and others interested in educational services for children identified as gifted. The purpose of this survey is to help assess the feasibility of establishing 16 community schools around the state that serve only gifted students. This study is being conducted to meet the requirements of Ohio House Bill 64. The survey is an opportunity for you to provide insight and information for the feasibility study. It is important to know that this is a study of whether or not these new schools could be developed. They may or may not be developed. This study is meant to provide information to lawmakers and others who want to figure out the best ways to serve gifted students. The survey is anonymous and there are no risks to you for participating. Your participation is completely voluntary. We thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

Q2 Are you:

- A parent/guardian of a school-aged gifted student (1)
- A parent/guardian of a gifted student who has already graduated from high school (2)
- A K-12 teacher (3)
- Other (Please indicate your relationship to gifted education.) (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Q3 Please indicate the age(s) of your gifted child/children:

- Child 1: (1)
- Child 2: (2)
- Child 3: (3)
- Child 4: (4)

Q4 Please indicate the race of your gifted child/children:

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)
- White (5)

Q5 Is your gifted child/children Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q6 County of residence:

Q7 Type(s) of giftedness identified in your child:

- Superior Cognitive Ability (1)
- Specific Academic Ability (2)
- Creative Thinking Ability (3)
- Visual or Performing Arts Ability (4)

Q8 Has your gifted child/children been identified as having one or more of the 13 disabilities identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q9 How old was your child/children when first identified as gifted?

- Child 1: (1)
- Child 2: (2)
- Child 3: (3)
- Child 4: (4)

Q10 Where was your child assessed when identified as gifted?

- Public school (1)
- Private school (2)
- Non school-based testing facility or psychologist (3)
- Other (Please specify.) (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Q11 Is your child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gifted children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Is your child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gifted child...  
Yes Is Selected

Q12 What services are they receiving that are specific to gifted children?

Answer If Is your child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gifted children? Yes Is Selected

Q13 Where is your child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gifted children? (Check all that apply.)

- Public School District (1)
- Public Community School (2)
- Private School (3)
- Other (Please describe.) (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Answer If Is your child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gifted children? Yes Is Selected

Q14 Are you satisfied with the educational services being provided to your gifted child/children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Are you satisfied with the educational services being provided to your gifted No Is Selected

Q15 Please describe why you are not satisfied with the educational services being provided to your gifted child/children.

Q16 If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in a tuition-free Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you consider that option for your child/children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in an Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children ident... Yes Is Selected

Q17 Would you be willing and able to arrange transportation for your child to attend a tuition-free public community school for gifted children if the school was not within your current school district boundaries?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in an Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified... Yes Is Selected

Q18 Describe what (if anything) would compel you to enroll your child in a tuition-free public community school that only serves children identified as gifted.

Q19 Describe what (if anything) would prohibit you from making the decision to enroll your child in a tuition-free public community school that only serves children identified as gifted?

Q20 If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in an Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you consider that option for your child/children if the school was structured in a way that the majority of the instruction was delivered in an online format and the students were only required to travel to the school building periodically (e.g. one day per week or one day every 2 weeks)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in an Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified... Yes Is Selected

Q21 Describe what (if anything) would compel you to enroll your child in a public community school that only serves children identified as gifted, and the school was structured in a way that the majority of the instruction was delivered in an online format and the students were only required to travel to the school building periodically (e.g. one day per week or one day every 2 weeks)?

Q22 Describe what (if anything) would prohibit you from making the decision to enroll your child in a public community school that only serves children identified as gifted, and the school was structured in a way that the majority of the instruction was delivered in an online format and the students were only required to travel to the school building periodically (e.g. one day per week or one day every 2 weeks)?

Answer If If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in an Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified... Yes Is Selected

Q23 If you would consider enrolling your child in an Ohio community school that serves only children identified as gifted, would you be willing and able to be an active volunteer in support of the school?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q24 How do you think your gifted child/children could best be served by Ohio's K-12 education system?

FOR PARENTS OF FORMER GIFTED STUDENTS

Q25 Did your gifted child/children receive educational services that are specific to gifted children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Did your gifted child/children receive educational services that are specific to gifted children? Yes Is Selected

Q26 What services did they receive that are specific to gifted children?

Answer If Did your gifted child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gift... Yes Is Selected

Q27 Where did your child/children receive educational services that are specific to gifted children? (Check all that apply.)

- Public School District (1)
- Public Community School (2)
- Private School (3)
- Other (Please describe.) (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Answer If Did your gifted child/children currently receiving educational services that are specific to gift... Yes Is Selected

Q28 Were you satisfied with the educational services provided to your gifted child/children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Were you satisfied with the educational services provided to your gifted child/children? No Is Selected

Q29 Please describe why you were not satisfied with the educational services provided to your gifted child/children.

Q30 When your gifted child/children was in K-12 school, if you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their school and enrolling them in a tuition-free Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only served children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you have considered that option for your child/children?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If When your gifted child/children were in K-12 school, if you had the option of withdrawing your ch... Yes Is Selected

Q31 Would you have been willing and able to arrange transportation for your child to attend a tuition-free public community school for gifted children if the school was not within your current school district boundaries?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If When your gifted child/children were in K-12 school, if you had the option of withdrawing your ch... Yes Is Selected

Q32 Describe what (if anything) would have compelled you to enroll your child in a tuition-free public community school that only served children identified as gifted.

Q33 Describe what (if anything) would have prohibited you from making the decision to enroll your child in a tuition-free public community school that only served children identified as gifted?

Q34 How do you think gifted children could best be served by Ohio's K-12 education system?

FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Q35 If parents of gifted students in Ohio had the option of withdrawing their child/children from their current school and enrolling them in a tuition-free Ohio public community school in their area of the state that only served children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, what would be the pros and cons of that option?

- Pros: (1)
- Cons: (2)

Q36 How do you think gifted children could best be served by Ohio's K-12 education system?

# Appendix C-Stakeholder Interview Questions

## Ohio Regional Gifted Community School Feasibility Study

### DRAFT: Parent Interview/ Focus Group Protocol

Hi everyone. Thanks for meeting with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is \_\_\_\_\_ and we are from the Voinovich School at Ohio University. The purpose of the study is to assess the feasibility of establishing 16 community schools around the state that serve only gifted students. This study is being conducted to meet the requirements of Ohio House Bill 64. The discussion is an opportunity for you to provide insight and information for the feasibility study from your perspective as a parent of a gifted student in Ohio. It is important that we hear from parents for this study and we thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

It is important to know that this is a study of whether or not these new schools could be developed. They may or may not be developed. This study is meant to provide information to lawmakers and others who want to figure out the best ways to serve gifted students.

We have some questions we're going to ask, but there are no right or wrong answers. Please tell us your thoughts and opinions. This is supposed to be more like a conversation, so please respond to me and others without raising your hand or waiting to be called on. For some questions, I may ask each person for a response, but you can pass if you don't want to answer the question. I would ask that only one person talk at a time. In order to cover everything we need to today, I may need to move the conversation on if we go too long on a given topic. Feel free to ask for clarification if needed.

We would like to audio record the discussion so we don't miss anything. The recording will be used for the evaluation only and will be erased once the report is complete. The report will not include your names, though we may use a quote or two from the group without identifying who said it. If at any time you don't want to participate, feel uncomfortable, or want to stop, this discussion is absolutely voluntary. You can choose not to answer any of the questions. There are no risks to you from your participation. What questions do you have before we start?

Introductions:

1. We can get started by having everyone introduce themselves. Please tell us your first name and the age of your gifted child/children.
2. What type(s) of giftedness does your child/children have?

3. At what age was your child identified as gifted? Was the identification made by his/her school or somewhere else?

Current/past experiences:

4. What types of services specifically for gifted children does your child currently receive? From where?
5. What do you value the most about the services being provided to your gifted student?
6. Are there services/experience that you would like your gifted student to receive that he/she is not currently receiving?
7. Is your son or daughter involved in extracurricular activities, clubs, or events? If so, what? And where?
8. How much/in what ways are you involved in your child's education as a parent.
9. What else would you like to tell me about your son or daughter's school experience that I may have missed?

Perspective on new community schools for gifted students:

10. If you had the option of withdrawing your child/children from their current school and enrolling them in an Ohio public community school in your area of the state that only serves children identified as gifted and provided educational services specifically designed for gifted children, would you consider that option for your child/children?

(discuss various pros and cons and considerations)

11. What are your thoughts as a parent of online or blended learning (part online and part face-to-face) options for serving gifted students.
12. If there were a residential community school option for gifted students, would you consider that? Why or why not?
13. For middle school (7-8<sup>th</sup> grade) parents. What are your son's/daughter's plans for high school?
14. What are some of the most important things that Ohio should consider when they are thinking about developing additional schools for gifted students?

## Ohio Regional Gifted Community School Feasibility Study

### DRAFT: Gifted Student Interview/ Focus Group Protocol

Hi everyone. Thanks for meeting with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is \_\_\_\_\_ and we are from the Voinovich School at Ohio University. The purpose of the study is to assess the feasibility of establishing 16 community schools around the state that serve only gifted students. This study is being conducted to meet the requirements of Ohio House Bill 64. The discussion is an opportunity for you to provide insight and information for the feasibility study from your perspective as a gifted student in Ohio. It is important that we hear from students for this study and we thank you for your time and willingness to participate.

It is important to know that this is a study of whether or not these new schools could be developed. They may or may not be developed. This study is meant to provide information to lawmakers and others who want to figure out the best ways to serve gifted students.

We have some questions we're going to ask, but there are no right or wrong answers. Please tell us your thoughts and opinions. This is supposed to be more like a conversation, so please respond to me and others without raising your hand or waiting to be called on. For some questions, I may ask each person for a response, but you can pass if you don't want to answer the question. I would ask that only one person talk at a time. In order to cover everything we need to today, I may need to move the conversation on if we go too long on a given topic. Feel free to ask for clarification if needed.

We would like to audio record the discussion so we don't miss anything. The recording will be used the evaluation only and will be erased once the report is complete. The report will not include your names, though we may use a quote or two from the group without identifying who said it. If at any time you don't want to participate, feel uncomfortable, or want to stop, this discussion is absolutely voluntary. There are no risks to you for participating in the study. You can choose not to answer any of the questions. What questions do you have before we start?

Introductions:

1. We can get started by having everyone introduce themselves. Please tell us your first name and what grade you are currently in (or just completed).
2. You are all identified as gifted students, what type(s) of giftedness do you have?

Current/past experiences:

3. What programs or activities does your current school offer you as a gifted student?
4. Do you think you have a “different” experience in school than students who are not identified as gifted? Why or why not?
5. What do you value the most about your current school experiences?
6. Is there anything you wish your school offered you as a gifted student that you are not currently being offered?
7. Are you involved in extracurricular activities, clubs, or events through your school? If so, what are some of the things you are involved in?
8. What else would you like to tell me about your school experience that I may have missed

Perspective on new community schools for gifted students:

9. If you had an opportunity to go to a school where all the students were identified as gifted students, how would you feel about that? (Probe: ask for pros and cons)
10. What would you think about leaving your current school district and enrolling in another school with students from several other school districts who were all gifted? (Probe: pros and cons)
11. What would you think about going to school outside the community where you currently live?
12. If the school for gifted students was some distance from where you live, what would you think about traveling to that school?
13. What if some of the coursework in the new school for gifted students was online and you could complete the coursework from your home and not travel to the school. What would be your reaction to that?
14. What if the new school for gifted students was a residential school, where you lived there during the week and went home on weekends? What would be your reaction to that?
15. What are some of the most important things that adults should consider when they are thinking about developing schools for gifted students?



and Service Plan for ODE approval. The approval is for using ODE-approved tests with appropriate identification scores and for how LEAs set the criteria for service provision if service is provided to identified gifted students. Ohio does not compel service provision for gifted students

#### Program Plans

Many programs have been recognized as successfully servicing the gifted and talented student population. These include programs for in-class, cross-class, specialized, and pull out services, which may differ by grade level. Overall, programs designed to address gifted and talented students' individual needs demonstrate positive results in both academic progress and social adjustment (Rogers, 2002; Smutny, 2003). What is imperative for successful service to gifted students is assuring differentiation in curriculum (Gallagher, 2015; Rogers, 2002). Critical in designing a program include steps that assure a full assessment of the student, beyond intelligence and achievement and individualized program accommodation led by well-trained teachers.

Intensive programs that group students and create separate sections, classes or schools are among the most successful in integrated curriculum in both academic progress and socio-emotional outcomes (Kim, 2016; Robinson, et al., 2007; Rogers, 2002; Vaugh, et al., 1991). Schools specializing in GATE have great flexibility at leveraging other strategies, such as whole grade or subject acceleration, interest and ability grouping, cross-grade curriculum, deep enrichment, and competition. New York City and Los Angeles are among other areas, primarily urban, developing district-level, public magnet schools to serve gifted students and indications are that the demand for these schools is high, with waiting lists for open slots (Rogers, 2002). In Ohio, Cleveland's Menlo Park Academy is an example of a regionally oriented, community school for the gifted.

Assessing the feasibility of establishing cross-district community schools in Ohio requires examination of how these schools may operate in rural settings. Rural students and communities face different challenges than those in urban or suburban settings, including scarcity of access to appropriate services and supports (Lawrence, 2009).