

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION
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EVALUATION OF THE GIFTED PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) system has many educational programs designed to enhance students' cognitive and affective development, all with an ultimate goal of encouraging learning. One such program available to students is gifted education. During the 2005-06 school year, 25,746 M-DCPS students participated in the gifted program. The instructional program for gifted students emphasizes acceleration and enrichment based on the student's strengths and needs as indicated in the student's educational plan. The grades served by the gifted program range from kindergarten to twelfth grade. In elementary schools, the gifted program is offered on either a full-time or part-time basis. In secondary schools, students attend a gifted content area course or an appropriate elective course.

As part of a District initiative, a request was made by the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Improvement to evaluate the gifted program. The areas targeted for assessment include: program inclusiveness, student performance, participants' opinions of the program and professional training. The specific questions examined in this evaluation and the accompanying results are the following:

What is the academic impact of the gifted program? To examine the impact of the gifted program, student academic performance was tracked from the 2nd through the 10th grade, beginning with the 1997-98 school year. Three student groups were targeted: gifted (students identified as gifted), comparison (academically talented students not in the gifted program), and M-DCPS (students neither gifted nor academically talented). A grand total of 1,079 gifted, 568 comparison and 13,918 M-DCPS students were included in the analyses. Their academic performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test-Sunshine State Standards (FCAT-SSS) and FCAT-Norm-Referenced Test (FCAT-NRT) was examined.

The results show that gifted students tend to perform well when compared to other students from across the country. Gifted students score in the top eight percent of all students nationally, in both reading and math, by the time they reached 10th grade. Furthermore, all students who consistently attend M-DCPS, including the talented and the non-gifted, exhibit academic levels of performance in reading and math that far exceed the national average by the time they reach 10th grade. The test results also indicate that the math scores of gifted students and, to a greater extent, academically talented students, decline during the elementary school years. Additionally, secondary students, both gifted and non-gifted, find it increasingly hard to achieve a satisfactory FCAT-SSS level of reading achievement as they advance in grade.

What is the impact of the varied Gifted delivery programs on student achievement? A comparison was made of the academic performance of elementary students attending different types of gifted delivery models. A total of 1,847 gifted elementary students were included in the analyses. Of these, 370 were "full-time", 956 were "content" and 521 were "resource" model students. Their academic performance was tracked from the 3rd grade (2003-04) through the 5th grade (2005-06).

The results show no difference in academic performance between students exposed to different gifted delivery models. Elementary students receiving the gifted curriculum on either a full time or part-time basis, and those receiving it through a “content” or “resource” model, exhibit similar reading and math gains on the FCAT across a two year period.

What is the enrollment of the Gifted program? Is it representative of all students in the District?

In 2005-06, enrollment in the gifted program was over represented by white and under represented by black students relative to the M-DCPS student population. Additionally, students classified as “other” are also over represented in the gifted program. Gifted students are also less likely to be Limited English Proficient (LEP) or to receive free/reduced lunch as compared to the M-DCPS general student population.

How do parents, teachers, and students perceive the effectiveness of the gifted program? A survey randomly targeted classrooms in all schools that contain gifted programs. Over 95 percent of schools with gifted programs completed surveys; either parent, student, or teacher surveys. A total of 3,495 parents of the gifted, 5,192 gifted students and 205 teachers of the gifted completed questionnaires.

According to survey results, parents, students, and teachers are generally pleased with the gifted program. Almost all parents rate the gifted program as excellent and most gifted students view the program as having desirable social and academic characteristics. Similarly, the great majority of teachers express satisfaction with the gifted program at their own schools.

Are the professional development sessions offered to teachers of the gifted effective for successful program implementation? The teacher survey results show that most teachers of the gifted have attended District sponsored training seminars in the area of gifted education and that most have received State endorsements in gifted education. Teachers, in large part, consider the gifted education staff development experiences provided by the District to be satisfactory and consider themselves prepared for the task of teaching gifted students.

On the basis of these results the following recommendations are made:

1. Track the math and reading FCAT performance of gifted and academically talented students.
2. Review the gifted program’s elementary delivery model for academic and cost effectiveness.
3. Attempt to demographically balance the representation of the gifted model’s student population.
4. Encourage all teachers of the gifted to annually attend gifted education training and to acquire State endorsements in gifted education.

GIFTED PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Division of Advanced Academic Programs provides programs that are tailored to students' cognitive and affective needs, striving to promote learning and to better prepare students for the workplace. One of the programs available to students is gifted education. Students are eligible for the gifted program if they can demonstrate the following: (1) A need for a special program, (2) A majority of characteristics defined as gifted according to a standard scale or checklist, (3) An intelligence quotient of two standard deviations or more above the mean on a standardized test of intelligence, or the ability to qualify under the District's Plan B. Under Plan B, the State of Florida allows counties greater flexibility in criteria used to identify gifted students so as to increase the participation of underrepresented groups. M-DCPS uses a combination of teacher ratings, creativity, IQ and achievement scores to identify gifted students under Plan B.

During the 2005-06 school year, 25,746 M-DCPS students participated in the gifted program. The grade levels served by the program range from kindergarten to the twelfth grade. Close to half of all students in the gifted program attend grades K-6. In elementary schools, the gifted program is offered via three different models: Full-time, Resource, and Content. In the Full-time Model the students are served in self-contained classrooms in which gifted strategies are utilized throughout the school day and across all subject areas. In the Resource Model, students attend the gifted program two days a week and the basic instructional program three days a week. During the two days in the gifted program, students complete in-depth studies in their particular areas of interest with open access to curriculum content. In the Content Model the students attend the gifted program for a block of time of 2 to 2.5 hours each day. The students receive 10 to 12 hours of gifted instruction per week and interdisciplinary instruction around selected basic subjects. In secondary grades, students receive gifted instruction through either the Content or Resource models.

Recently the District has made an effort to address theoretical and practical issues surrounding gifted program education (M-DCPS February, 2006 & M-DCPS June, 2006). At the Board meeting of August 17th, 2005, the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and School Improvement requested that the Office of Program Evaluation conduct an evaluation of the gifted program in grades K-12. After consultation with personnel in the Division of Advanced Academic Programs, a decision was made to investigate specific aspects of the program. The areas targeted for assessment include: program inclusiveness, student performance, participants' opinions of the program, and professional training. The precise questions examined in this evaluation are the following:

1. What is the academic impact of the gifted program?
2. What is the impact of the varied gifted delivery models on student achievement?
3. What is the enrollment of the gifted program? Is it representative of all students in the District?
4. How do parents, teachers and students perceive the effectiveness of the gifted program?
5. Are the professional development sessions offered to teachers of the gifted effective for successful program implementation?

Evaluation Design

Two distinct samples of students were selected for analyses. The first sample was used to track students' academic performance across an eight year period (longitudinal analyses). The second sample was used to compare the performance of elementary students exposed to different types of gifted classes (gifted model analysis). The section that follows describes these samples/analyses:

Longitudinal Analysis

Three groups of students were selected to track academic performance across an eight year period:

Gifted Sample: All 2nd grade gifted students enrolled in M-DCPS during the 1997-98 school year were tracked through 2005-06, i.e., the 10th grade. Students must have been classified as a participant in the gifted program each year. A total of 1,079 gifted students were identified.

Comparison Sample: The academic progress of the gifted students was compared to that of "academically talented" students never enrolled in the gifted program. The comparison sample consisted of all 2nd grade students enrolled in 1997-98 who received scores of Stanine 7 or higher on both the reading and math sections of the 1998 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test-Norm Referenced Test (FCAT-NRT) . A total of 568 comparison students were identified. For the purposes of the present study, comparison students will be occasionally referred to as "academically talented" students.

M-DCPS Sample. Consists of 2nd grade students (1997-98) not in the Gifted or Comparison group.

All students selected, in the gifted, comparison, and M-DCPS samples, must have been promoted each year. Students must also have taken all Stanford/FCAT tests in the first (1997-98) and last year of the analysis period (2005-06). Students must also have continuously attended M-DCPS. As shown in Table 1, the gifted and comparison groups were very similar in ethnicity, gender and Limited English Proficient (LEP) classifications.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Longitudinal Sample.

	Ethnicity				Gender		LEP*
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Male	Female	
Gifted (n = 1,079)	15%	53%	26%	6%	43%	57%	0.2%
Comparison (n = 568)	17%	52%	28%	3%	43%	57%	0%
M-DCPS (n = 13,918)	33%	55%	10%	2%	46%	54%	2.7%

* In 1997-98

The students' annual performance on the Stanford/FCAT-NRT (1998-2006) and on the FCAT-Sunshine State Standards (FCAT-SSS, 2002 to 2006), were compared across time. It should be noted that the FCAT-NRT changed from the 8th to the 9th edition with the 2000 test administration and changed again to the 10th edition with the 2006 administration.

Gifted Model Analysis

All 3rd grade gifted students enrolled in M-DCPS during the 2003-04 school year were tracked through 2005-06, i.e., the 5th grade. To be selected, students must have been classified as gifted each school year. The schools students attended must have had only one type of gifted delivery model and it must have been the same for 2004-05 and 2005-06. All students selected must have been promoted each year and attended the same school in 2004-05 and 2005-2006. Students must also have taken all FCAT-SSS all three years of the analysis (2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06). A total of 1,847 gifted students were identified.

The students were categorized according to the type of gifted delivery model they were exposed to; full time, content or resource. The students' performance on the Stanford/FCAT-NRT and on the FCAT-SSS (2004 to 2006), as well as their attendance rates, were compared across time. It should be noted that the FCAT-NRT changed from the 9th to the 10th edition with the 2006 test administration.

As shown in Table 2, students in the three gifted delivery models were very similar in ethnicity, gender and Limited English Proficient (LEP) classifications. One exception, students in the resource delivery group were more likely to be White and less likely to be Hispanic.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Gifted Model Sample.

	Ethnicity				Gender		LEP*
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Male	Female	
Full Time (n = 370)	12%	60%	20%	8%	45%	55%	1.3%
Content (n= 956)	13%	63%	18%	6%	46%	54%	0.4%
Resource (n = 521)	15%	47%	32%	6%	47%	53%	0.6%

*In 2003-04.

Teacher, Parent and Students Surveys

One classroom from each of the 235 schools with gifted programs was chosen to participate in the surveys. The contact teacher for the gifted program at each school was instructed to select a gifted teacher, the first alphabetically on the basis of last names. The selected gifted teacher was asked to select the first period class that he/she taught. All the students in that classroom, their parents, and the teacher were asked to complete either the Student Questionnaire (Appendix A1), the Parent Questionnaire (Appendix A2), or the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix A3), as appropriate. The Parent Questionnaire was distributed in three languages: English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole.

As shown in Table 3, 87 percent of all targeted teachers of the gifted completed Teacher Questionnaires. Additionally, 91 percent of all gifted classes returned completed Parent Surveys and 92 percent returned completed Student Questionnaires. A total of 205 teachers of the gifted, 3,495 parents, and 5,192 students completed questionnaires.

Table 3. Survey Participation Rates by School Level and Total Questionnaires Returned

	School/Gifted Class Survey Participation			Total Surveys Completed
	Elementary* (n = 162)	Secondary (n = 73)	Total (n = 235)	
Teachers	86%	89%	87%	205
Parents	92%	90%	91%	3495
Students	92%	93%	92%	5192

*Includes seven K-8 Centers, which are not included in secondary school totals.

Gifted and Non-Gifted Inclusion Data.

The enrollment and demographic characteristics data of all M-DCPS gifted and non-gifted students were obtained for the school year 2005-06. The total enrollment and the ethnicity, gender, and ESOL classifications of students were obtained for each grade level for both gifted and M-DCPS students overall. The data obtained was an end of the school year file from June 2006.

Results and Discussion

What is the academic impact of the gifted program?

To examine the impact of the M-DCPS gifted education program, student academic performance was tracked from the 2nd through the 10th grade, beginning with the 1997-98 school year. Three students groups were targeted: Gifted Group (students classified as gifted), Comparison Group (academically talented students not in the gifted program), and M-DCPS Group (students neither gifted nor academically talented). The academic performance of students on the Stanford/FCAT-NRT and the FCAT-SSS was examined. The results are presented separately for each test.

Stanford/FCAT-NRT

The Stanford/FCAT-NRT is useful for comparing the academic performance and progress of M-DCPS students to students nationwide. The Stanford is administered every year and has normative performance data which allows for a direct comparison of the standing of local students relative to a representative sample of students throughout the nation.

Reading Performance. As shown in Figure 1, gifted students maintained a high level of performance across the years on the reading component of the Stanford/FCAT-NRT test. In 2nd grade, gifted students scored at the 82nd percentile on the reading component of the test. By the time they reached 10th grade, they had improved their normative standing to the 92nd percentile. The comparison group also increased their normative standing across the years, from the 84th to the 87th percentile, but the increase was not quite as great as that of the gifted group.

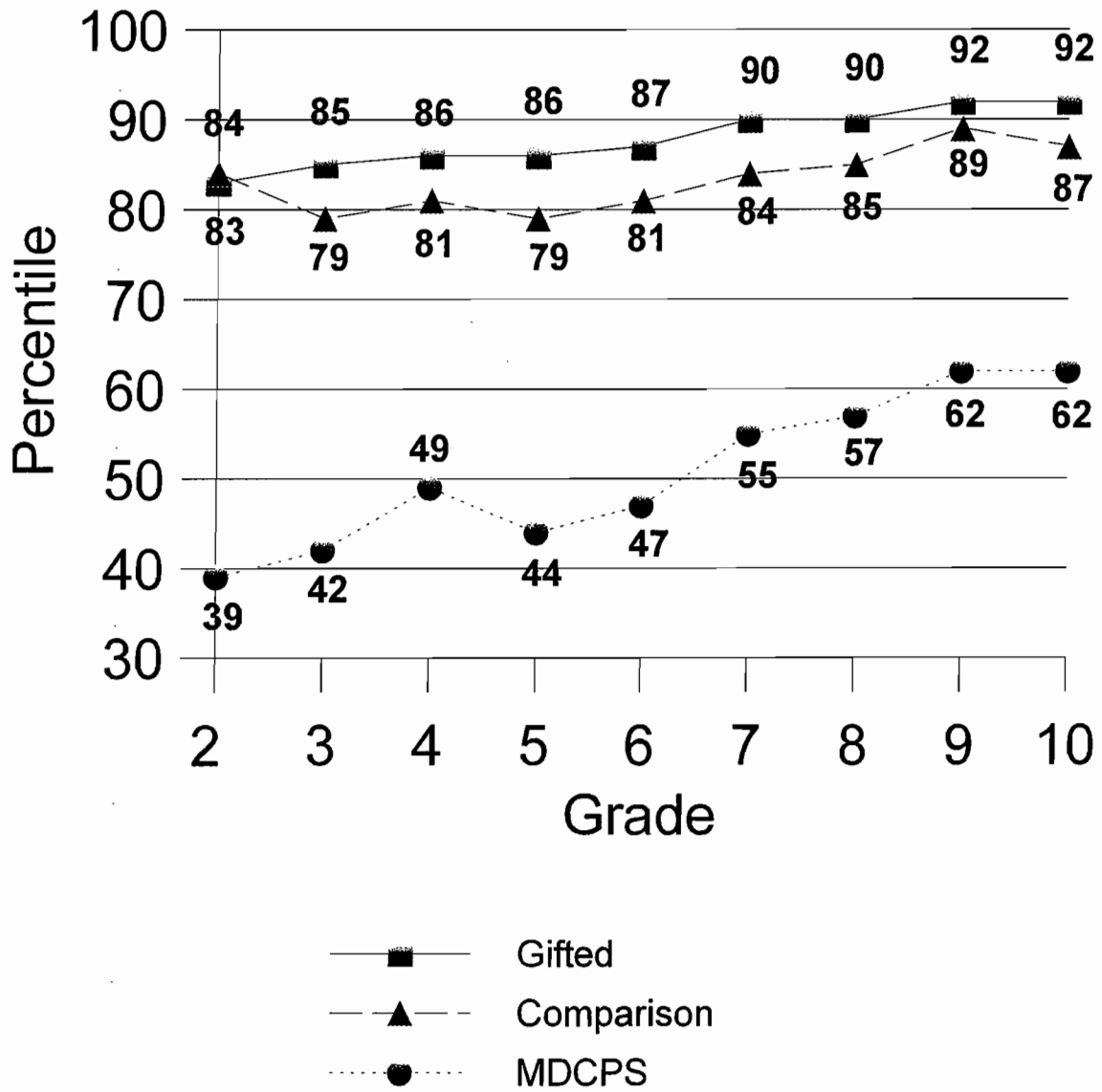
An analysis of the data was conducted to statistically equate the 2nd grade mean scale reading score of the two groups (ANCOVA). This analysis generated an adjusted mean scale score in the 10th grade of 742 for the gifted group and 732 for the comparison group. The difference in 10th grade reading scale scores between the two groups was found to be statistically significant $F(1, 1644) = 61.10, p < .000$.

It can be noted, from a closer observation of Figure 1, that beginning with grade 3, the comparison group performed about as well as gifted students on the reading test. Also noteworthy, the M-DCPS group increased their relative standing in reading considerably between the 2nd grade (39th percentile) and the 10th grade (62nd percentile).

Given that the majority of M-DCPS students are of Hispanic or Haitian origin, and often English is a second language, it is not unusual to see the students' reading scores improve across time. Nonetheless, the present findings show that gifted students 10th grade reading skills, on average, are in the top 8% of all students nationally.

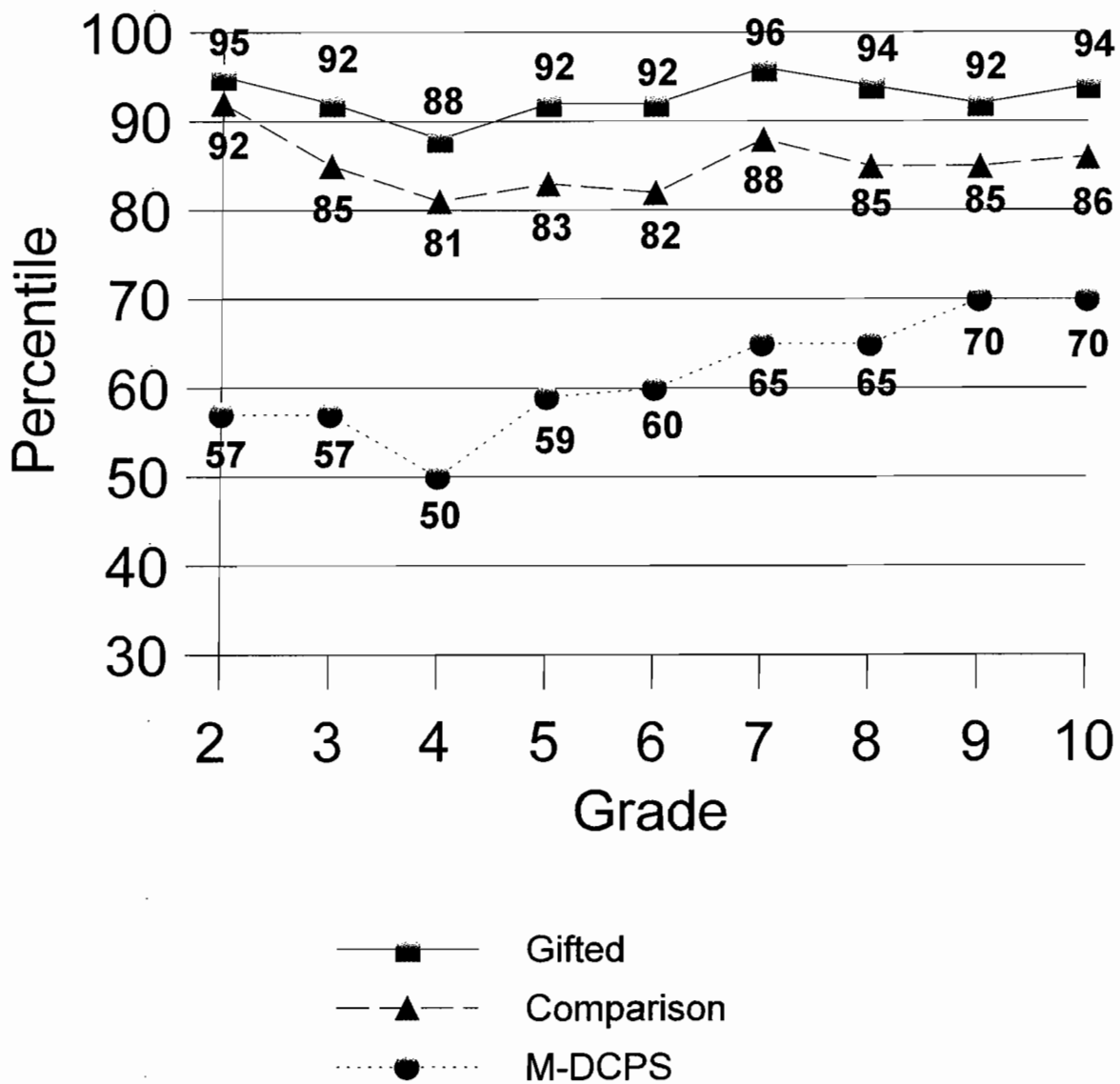
Additionally, the 10th grade reading skills of the comparison students are also extremely high. Students in the M-DCPS cohort also exhibited reading skills that surpassed the national average.

Figure 1. FCAT-NRT Reading: 1998-2006



Mathematic Performance. As shown in Figure 2, gifted students maintained a high level of performance across years on the math component of the Stanford/FCAT-NRT. In 2nd grade, gifted students scored at the 95th percentile on math test. From that point on, gifted students managed to maintain a relatively constant level of performance through grade 10, where on average they scored at the 94th percentile. During this period of time, the comparison group's math scores declined from the 92nd to the 86th percentile.

Figure 2. FCAT-NRT Math: 1998-2006



An analysis of the data was conducted to statistically equate the 2nd grade mean scale math score of the two groups (ANCOVA). This analysis generated an adjusted mean scale score in the 10th grade of 757 for the gifted group and 739 for the comparison group. The difference in math scale scores between the two groups was found to be statistically significant $F(1, 1644) = 124.16, p < .000$.

As was the case with the reading scores, the comparison group performed about as well as gifted students on the math test after grade 3 (see Figure 2). Also, the M-DCPS group increased their relative standing in math between the 2nd grade (57th percentile) and the 10th grade (70th percentile).

Overall, gifted students performed at a consistently high level across time on the math component of the Stanford/FCAT-NRT. Their scores fluctuated between the 88th and the 96th percentile during the period in question. Comparison students exhibited a decline between the 2nd and 3rd grade but then remain relatively constant in their math performance. The M-DCPS group increased their math scores considerably during the period in question. In 10th grade, the average score of M-DCPS students surpassed that of 70 percent of all test takers.

One visible component of Figure 2 is that gifted and comparison students appear to perform better in math once they reach the secondary grades (6-10). There are many possible explanations for this finding, e.g., differences in the tests, changes in the educational administration/curriculum, introduction of policies at the city/national level, etc. Nevertheless, one explanation that should be considered is whether the math being taught at the elementary level to gifted and talented students is sufficiently challenging. Traditionally, students in secondary grades, but not those in elementary grades, select from among math courses with different levels of difficulty. In this way, students select, or are assigned, challenging math curricula. It should be noted that the above effect is also found, although to a lesser extent, among the M-DCPS student group.

In interpreting these and subsequent findings, it is important to remember that the students samples were selected on the basis of having shown academic stability. That is, certain students were excluded, e.g., those who failed courses, dropped out of school, left and reentered the school system, etc. This fact is particularly relevant for the M-DCPS group, where academic instability is more prevalent. It can be assumed that academically stable students are more productive. Additionally, gifted students, and to a lesser extent students in the comparison group, are limited as to how much improvement they can show since they are scoring at a very high level to begin with.

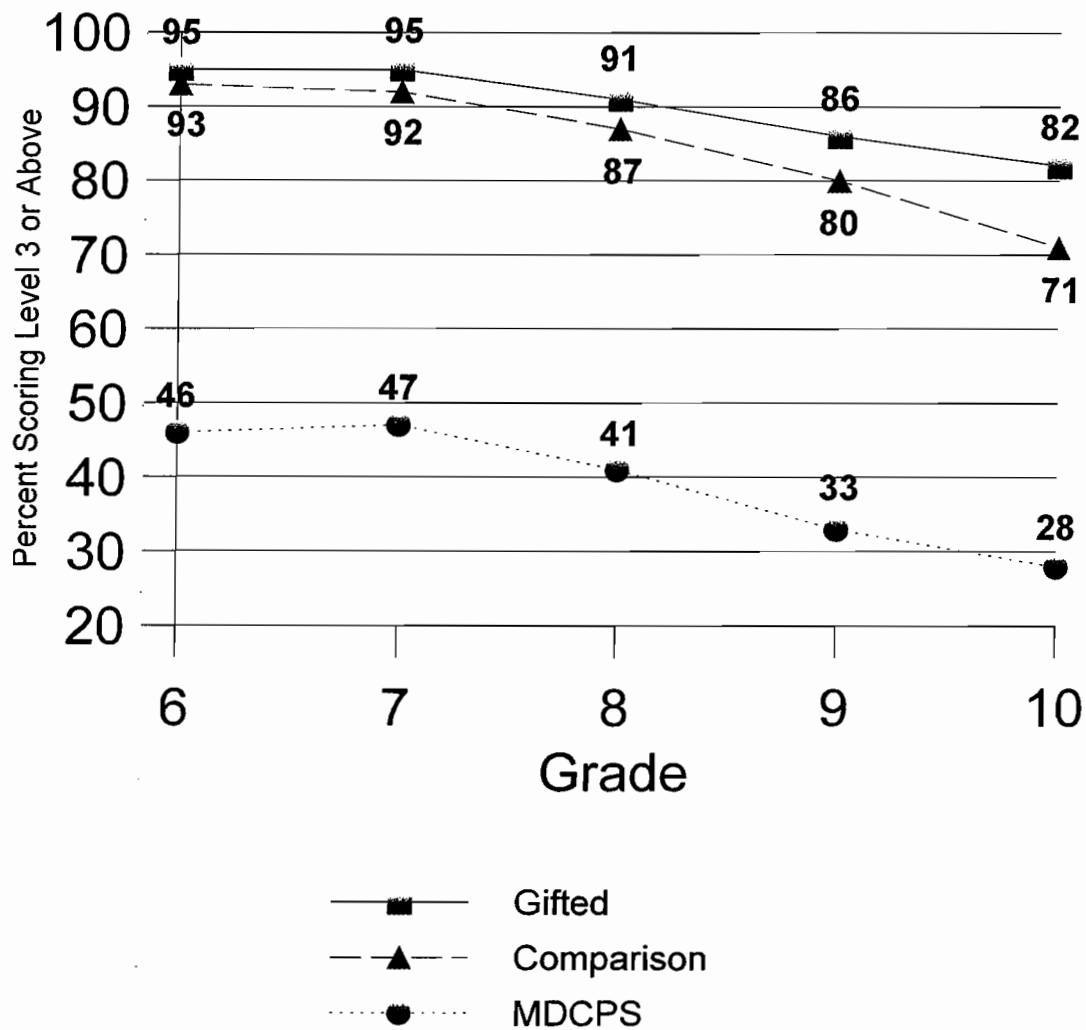
FCAT-SSS

The FCAT Sunshine State Standards is used to assess the extent to which students have acquired knowledge and information deemed by the State of Florida as necessary for achieving a proper education (FIRN, 2006a). Students who expect to graduate from high school must earn passing scores on the reading and mathematics portions of the grade 10 FCAT-SSS. FCAT-SSS Levels range from Level 1, the lowest, to Level 5, the highest. Students achieving a Level 3 score in the reading and math sections of the grade 10 FCAT-SSS are eligible to graduate from high school (The specific FCAT scale score thresholds for graduation are below Level 3 and can be seen at the web site cited in: FIRN, 2006b). Failing students are given numerous chances in grades 11 and 12 to take and pass the FCAT-SSS.

For the present analyses, the same three groups of students described in the previous section were used. Students' FCAT-SSS scores were tracked from grade 6 through grade 10 (2001-02 to 2005-06). Only students who had taken the FCAT-SSS each year were included. A total of 1,021 gifted, 523 comparison and 12,903 M-DCPS students are included in these analyses.

Reading Performance. As shown in Figure 3, all student groups exhibited a percentage decline in achieving a Level 3 reading performance across the secondary grades on the FCAT-SSS. In 6th grade, 95 percent of gifted students scored at Level 3 or above on the reading component of the test. By the time they reached 10th grade, 82 percent scored at Level 3 or above. The decline of the comparison group was steeper than that of the gifted students. The percentage of comparison students scoring a Level 3 or above went from 93 percent in the 6th grade to 71 percent rate in grade 10. The percentage of M-DCPS groups' scoring at Level 3 or above also declined from 46 percent in 6th grade to 28 percent in the 10th grade.

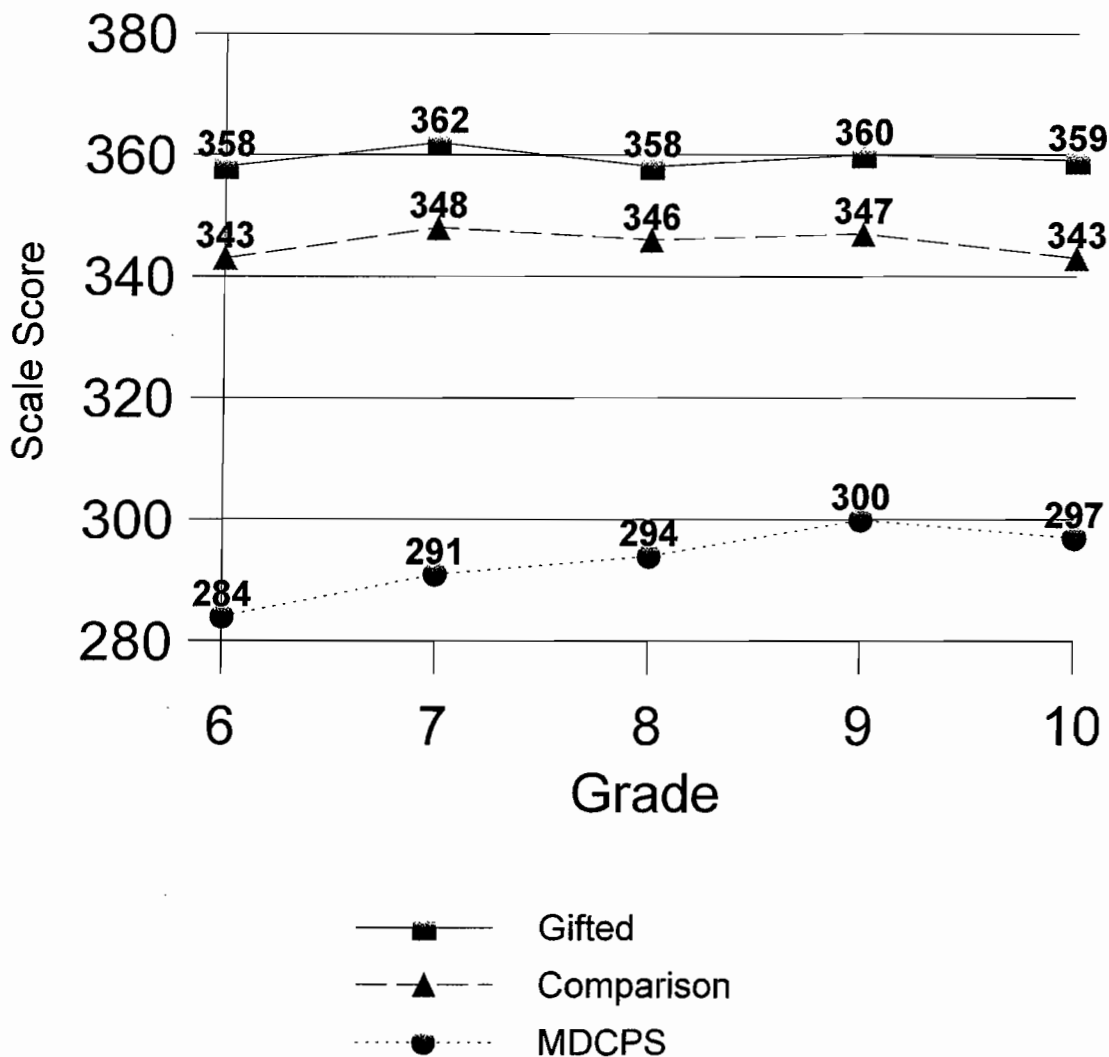
Figure 3. FCAT-SSS Reading: 2002-2006



The previous analysis focused on the percentage of students that reached a minimum standard of achievement on the FCAT-SSS. As expected, gifted students are more likely to achieve the minimum standard of achievement in reading. Another way to look at FCAT-SSS data is to consider the mean scale score. Scale scores of the FCAT-SSS can range from 100 to 500 per grade. The mean scale scores of the three student groups are shown in Figure 4 for grades 6 through 10.

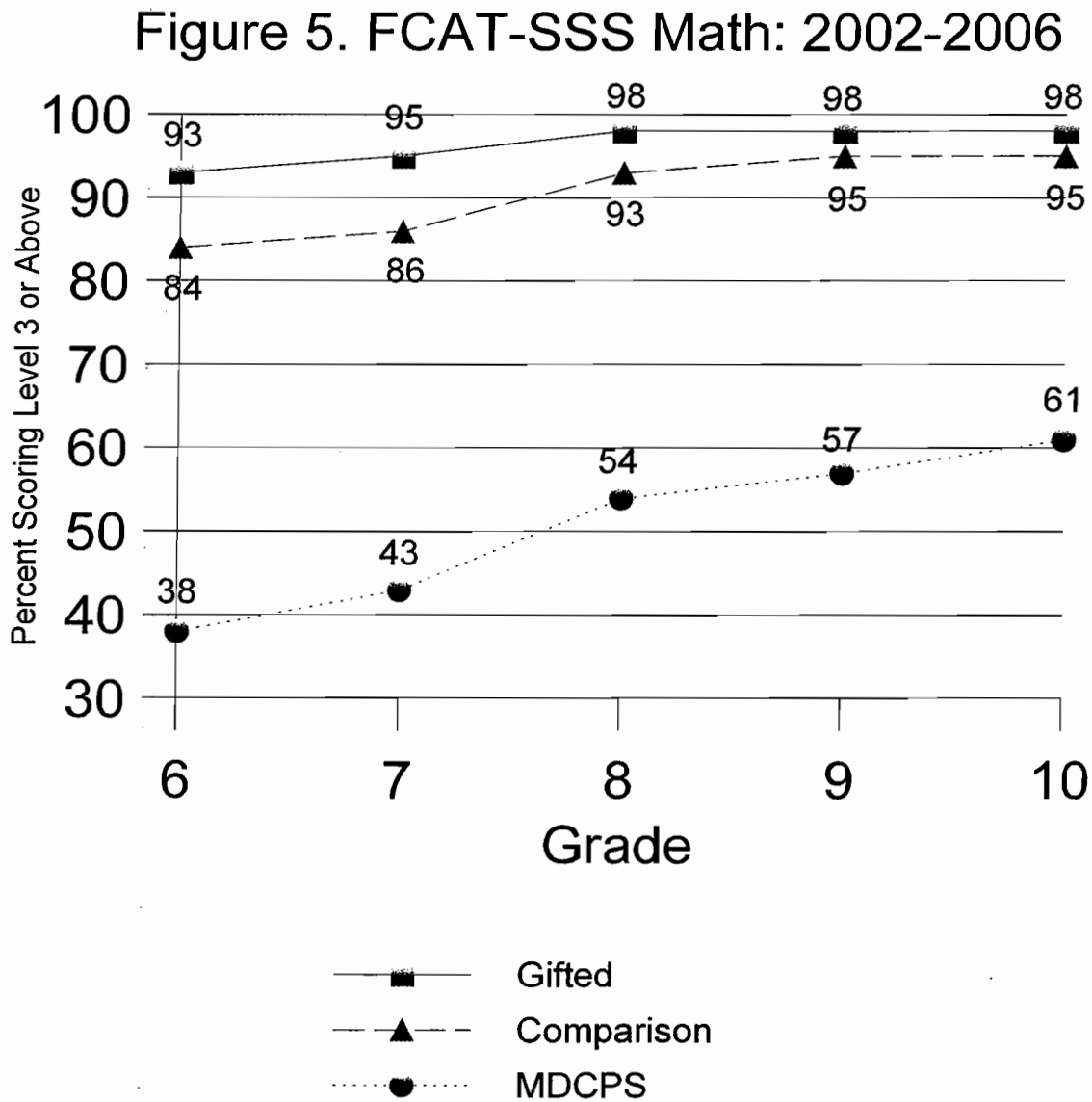
As shown in Figure 4, gifted students' mean scale score remains relatively constant between grades 6 and 10. The same holds true for the comparison students, but they score at a lower level than the gifted group. The M-DCPS students show an increase in their mean scale scores from 284 in grade 6 to 297 in grade 10. A statistical test comparing the gifted and comparison groups' differences in mean scale scores gains between the 6th and 10th grade showed no significant differences between the gifted group ($M=1.7$) and the comparison group ($M = -0.4$), $T(1542) = 1.19$, $p= ns$.

Figure 4. FCAT-SSS Reading: Scale Scores



Mathematics Performance. As shown in Figure 5, gifted students steadily increased their ability to score at Level 3 across years on the math component of the FCAT-SSS. In 6th grade, 93 percent of gifted students scored at Level 3 or above on the math test. By the time they reached the 10th grade, 98 percent of gifted students were scoring at Level 3 or above.

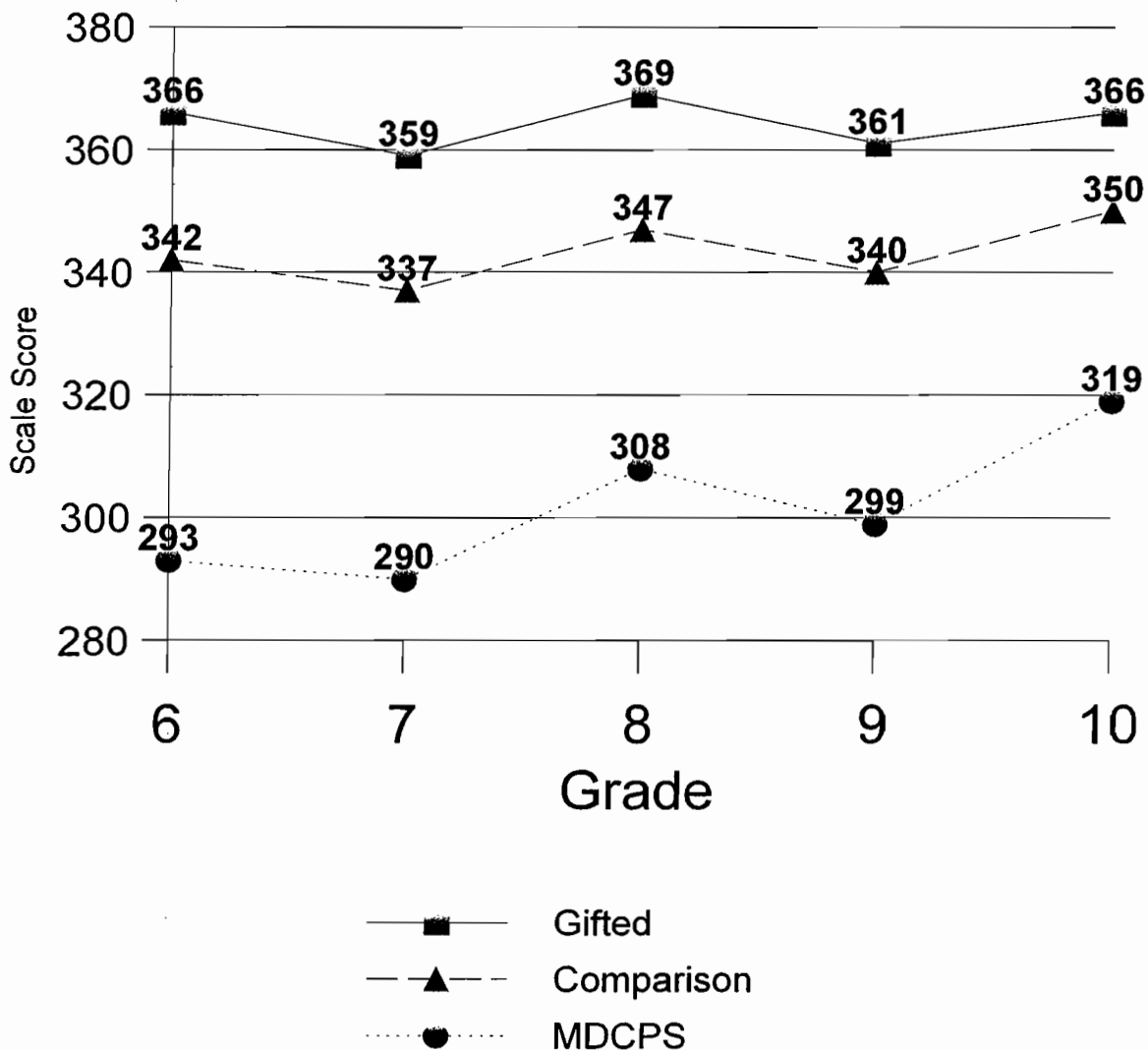
Comparison and M-DCPS students also increased their math performances substantially during the secondary grade years. The percentage of comparison students scoring at Level 3 or above increased from 84 percent in the 6th grade to 95 percent in grade 10. Similarly, the percentage of the M-DCPS students scoring at Level 3 or above increased from 38 percent in the 6th grade to 61 percent in the 10th grade.



As shown in Figure 6, the mean math scale scores of gifted students' remains constant between grades 6 and 10. The gifted students mean scale score is 366 in both grade 6 and grade 10. On the other hand, the mean scale score of comparison and M-DCPS students increase during this period of time. In grade 6 the comparison students average 342 on the math test. By the time they take the grade 10 FCAT-SSS their mean scale score has increased to 350. Similarly, the M-DCPS students' mean scale score in grade 6 is 293 but it increases to 319 by the time the students reach the 10th grade.

In both Figure 5 and 6, it can be seen that the comparison and M-DCPS groups reduced the gap across time between their own math performance and that of the gifted students. More specifically, while the gifted students FCAT-SSS math performance remains constant the other students made gains. A statistical test comparing the gifted and comparison groups' differences in mean scale scores gains between the 6th and 10th grade, showed that the comparison group had significantly larger gains ($M=7.4$) than the gifted group ($M = 0.3$), $T(1542) = 5.26$, $p < .000$.

Figure 6. FCAT-SSS Math: Scale Scores



Summary of Academic Impact of Gifted Program

To examine the effect of gifted program participation on students, their results from eight years of academic testing were compared to students nationally, to students locally and to State designated performance criteria.

The results show that, when compared to other students across the country, gifted students tend to perform well. Gifted students, as a group, scored in the top eight percent of all students nationally, in both reading and math, by the time they reached 10th grade. The scores of gifted students increased across time in reading but remained constant in math, relative to national norms.

Gifted students exhibited mixed results when compared to local students. Gifted students outperformed academically talented students (comparison group), across an eight year period in the reading and math components of the Stanford/FCAT-NRT. But it appears that during the secondary school years, starting with grade 6, academically talented students and M-DCPS students in general improve their math scores at a faster rate than gifted students. This finding can be observed in both the Stanford/FCAT-NRT and the FCAT-SSS results. With regard to this finding, it is possible to speculate that secondary students all have access to advanced and honor courses and therefore equal opportunities for academic improvement.

A related finding is that normative math performance declines for gifted and academically talented students during the elementary school years. Further scrutiny indicates that of the two groups, the academically talented group's math performance declines the most. Therefore, gifted students appear to benefit disproportionately, relative to academically talented students, from receiving gifted instruction during the elementary school years. But the overriding point is that math instruction may not be sufficiently challenging for either gifted or academically talented elementary school students. It should be noted, that the regular M-DCPS student group improved their normative math standing during the elementary years.

When considering the State's performance criteria, gifted students show an ability to meet or surpass the minimum required level of FCAT-SSS math performance (Level 3), in increasing numbers, across the years. Academically talented and general M-DCPS students also reach this performance level in increasing numbers as they progress through the secondary school years. In reading, gifted students, and the other student groups as well, exhibit a decline in their ability to reach a satisfactory level of FCAT-SSS performance. It is not clear why this result occurs since the students perform well in the FCAT-NRT reading test relative to national norms. This result indicates that either the tests are measuring very different skills or that FCAT-SSS Levels are being set, increasingly across grades, at standards that are too high.

In summary, students who participate in the gifted program perform academically at high levels. Furthermore, all M-DCPS students, gifted, academically talented and otherwise, who consistently attended M-DCPS and who participate in all required testing, exhibit academic levels of performance in reading and math that far exceed the national average by the time they reach the 10th grade.

What is the impact of the varied gifted delivery models on student achievement?

Elementary schools, unlike secondary schools, usually have only one of three types of gifted delivery models in operation. Schools either have a **full-time model**, where gifted students remain together the whole day, a **content model**, where students are pulled out of class to receive gifted instruction in language arts, social studies, math, or science for a block of time daily, or a **resource model** where students attend gifted instruction classes two full days a week. A comparison of the academic performance of students attending the different gifted model types was made. Their academic performance was tracked from the 3rd grade (2003-04) through the 5th grade (2005-06).

In order to isolate the effect of delivery models on academic performance, elementary schools who had only one type of delivery model were selected for these analyses. Approximately 95 percent of schools had only one gifted delivery model in operation. Also, selected schools must have had the same delivery model in 2004-05 and 2005-06. All gifted students who were in the 3rd grade in 2003–04 and who attended any of these selected schools for two consecutive years were considered for inclusion in the analyses. Selected students must also have taken the FCAT-SSS in each of the three years in question (2004, 2005, 2006).

A total of 1,847 gifted elementary students were included in the analyses. Of these, 370 were full-time model students, 956 were content model students, and 521 were resource model students. The demographic characteristics of the students in the three model groups are displayed in Table 2. Full-time and content model students were very similar demographically while the resource model students were more likely to be White and less likely to be Hispanic.

FCAT-NRT results. As shown in Table 4, mean FCAT-NRT scores in reading and math did not differ greatly for the three delivery groups across the two school years spanning from grades 3 to 5. The mean scale scores were similar in both reading and math in grade 3 and again in grade 5.

Table 4. 2004 and 2006 FCAT-NRT Mean Scale Scores by Delivery Model

Gifted Model	n	Reading			Mathematics		
		Gr. 3	Gr. 5	Diff. Score	Gr. 3	Gr. 5	Diff. Score
Full-time	368	678	701	+23	667	705	+38
Content	949	677	700	+23	667	706	+39
Resource	520	679	701	+22	667	704	+37

The change in mean scale score across years among the three groups never exceeded two scale score points (see Diff. Score in Table 4). Students in the three delivery model groups improved approximately 23 scale points in reading and 38 points in math across the two year period, give or take one scale point. Upon reaching the fifth grade, and once mean scale scores are converted to percentiles, all three gifted delivery groups are shown to be performing at the 92nd percentile in reading and at the 94th percentile in math.

FCAT-SSS results. As with the FCAT-NRT results, students in the three gifted delivery models did not differ greatly in their FCAT-SSS mean scale scores across the two year span under consideration. The mean FCAT-SSS reading and math scale scores of the students in the three groups were very similar in grade 3, at the outset of the analyses, and again in the 5th grade. As seen in Table 5 (See Diff. Score), upon reaching 5th grade, the scores of the students in the three different gifted delivery models had decreased by one scale score point in reading and had remained relatively unchanged in math.

Table 5. 2004 and 2006 FCAT-SSS Mean Scale Scores by Delivery Model

Gifted Model	n	Reading			Mathematics		
		Gr. 3	Gr. 5	Diff. Score	Gr. 3	Gr. 5	Diff. Score
Full-time	370	369	368	-1	379	379	0
Content	956	368	367	-1	381	381	0
Resource	521	369	368	-1	380	381	+1

Summary of Academic Impact of Gifted Delivery Models

The results of the FCAT-NRT and the FCAT-SSS across a two year period show that gifted students receiving the gifted curriculum on a full-time basis (full-time model) and those receiving it on a part-time basis exhibited the same degree of improvement in reading and mathematics. Additionally, gifted students receiving part-time gifted instruction via either a full day pull-out method (resource model) or content based classroom instruction (content model) also exhibited similar academic progress in grade 3 through grade 5.

What is the enrollment of the gifted program? Is it representative of all students in the District?

The enrollment of the gifted program and of the general M-DCPS student population is displayed in Table 6. The gifted enrollment is also broken down by school level: elementary, middle and senior high school. The school level breakdown shows the relative percentage of gifted White and Black students as being greater in the elementary grades and decreasing as students progress to the senior high level. The reverse is true for Hispanic students. For example, White students make up 22 percent of all gifted students in elementary school but only 19 percent in senior high. Similarly, Black students comprise 15 percent of gifted students in elementary school and 13 percent in senior high. On the other hand, Hispanics represent 57 percent of the gifted population in elementary school but 63 percent of its population in senior high school.

Overall, relative to the M-DCPS student population, gifted students are over represented by White and underrepresented by Black students. Additionally, students who are classified as “Other” are also overrepresented in the gifted program. In 2005-06, White students comprised 10 percent of all M-DCPS students but 21 percent of students classified as gifted were White. Alternatively, Black students represented 27 percent of all students in M-DCPS but only 15 percent of students classified gifted were Black. Gifted students are also less likely to be Limited English Proficient (LEP) or to receive free/reduced lunch (FRL) as compared to the general M-DCPS student population.

The issue of ethnic representation in gifted education was recently addressed by a M-DCPS task force committee which generated recommendations for correcting imbalances in ethnic representation. Among these was the recommendation to introduce non-verbal tests for the purpose of screening potentially gifted students (M-DCPS June, 2006).

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of 2005-06 Gifted and M-DCPS Student Population

	n	Ethnicity					LEP	FRL
		White	Black	Hisp.	Other			
Gifted Elem.	11,579	22%	15%	57%	6%	2%	46%	
Gifted Middle	8,793	20%	15%	59%	6%	1%	43%	
Gifted Senior	5,374	19%	13%	63%	5%	1%	31%	
Gifted Total	25,746	21%	15%	59%	6%	1%	42%	
M-DCPS	343,119	10%	27%	61%	2%	12%	64%	

How do parents, teachers, and students perceive the effectiveness of the gifted program?

The gifted survey of parents, students, and teachers randomly targeted classrooms in all schools that contain gifted programs. Over 95 percent of schools with gifted programs completed surveys; either parent, student, or teacher surveys. A total of 14 percent of all gifted parent/households and 20 percent of M-DCPS gifted students enrolled in the 2005-06 school year completed questionnaires. Additionally, teachers of the gifted in 87 percent of schools with gifted programs completed the Teacher Questionnaire. The results of the parent, student, and teacher surveys are presented below.

Parent Survey. A total of 3,495 parents of gifted students completed the Parent Questionnaire (Appendix A2). The respondents had children attending either elementary (70%), middle (27%) or senior high schools (8%). Their children had either been in the gifted program 3 years or less (51%), 4 to 6 years (35%) or 7 or more years (14%). Most parents responded to the English language version of the Parent Questionnaire (78%) although some (22%) responded to the Spanish version. Less than 1 percent of parents (n = 6) responded to the Haitian-Creole language version of the questionnaire. A number of parents reported that they had more than one child attending the gifted program (30%). There were few differences observed in the responses of parents belonging to different sub-groups, e.g., school level, language of questionnaire, number of years in the gifted program, etc. Differences that did occur are mentioned in the section that follows.

In the first part of the questionnaire parents were asked about the gifted program's students selection process. As shown in Table 7, most parents (81%) indicate that they had been informed about the process used to identify and select students for the gifted program. Almost all parents (92%) rate the students selection process a fair one. This was true for parents who responded in English (85%), Spanish (96%) and Haitian-Creole (100%). Nonetheless, approximately one fourth of parents consider the selection process as either too broad (29%), permitting too many students into the program, or too narrow (23%), excluding students who could benefit from the program.

Overall, parents are pleased with the gifted curriculum and with the teachers that deliver that curriculum (Table 7). Among parents who expressed an opinion, most agree (95%) that the curriculum provided to gifted students is successfully adapted to meet their needs. Parents also agree (90%) that appropriate educational resources and strategies are being used to deliver the gifted curriculum to students. Almost all parents rate teachers of the gifted as well trained to educate gifted students (96%) and as doing a good job of educating the students (97%). Parents rate the communication between parents and teachers of the gifted as good (84%). Parents of elementary school students were most pleased with the level of parent-teacher communication (89%), followed by middle school (73%) and senior high parents (62%).

Most parents consider the amount of homework assigned in the gifted program to be an appropriate amount (78%). A small percentage of parents consider the amount of homework assigned as either too much (14%) or too little (8%). Parents of senior high school students are most likely to consider the amount of homework as excessive (28%) compared to parents of middle (21%) and elementary school students (10%). Parents agree (94%) that homework assigned in the gifted program reinforced the work being done in the classroom and that the homework is challenging for the students (91%).

A large proportion of parents (91%) rate the school and the District as supportive of the gifted education program. Almost all parents indicate (96%) that their children benefited from attending the gifted education program in ways that would not have been possible if they had attended a regular classroom. Over three-fourths of all parents rate the gifted program as either “excellent” (49%) or “very good” (39%). The remaining parents rate the gifted program as “adequate” (11%). Only a few parents rate the gifted program as “inadequate” (1%). Overall, parents are very pleased with the gifted program.

Table 7. Parents’ Survey Responses

Questionnaire Items	Agree
<i>The process for identifying and selecting students for the gifted program is:</i>	
-fully communicated to parents.*	81%
-fair, providing equal access to all students...	92%
-too broad leading to too many students being included.	29%
-too narrow leading to the exclusion of students who could benefit.	23%
<i>The gifted curriculum:</i>	
-is adapted to meet the needs of it students...	95%
-meets the needs of it students by using appropriate educational resources...	90%
<i>Overall, the teachers in the gifted program are:</i>	
-well trained to educate gifted students.	96%
-doing a good job of educating students.	97%
-doing a good job of communicating with parents.	84%
<i>The homework assigned in the gifted program:</i>	
-supports and reinforces the in-class work.	94%
-is sufficiently challenging	94%
<i>(Overall ratings of program):</i>	
-The school and the District support the gifted education program.	91%
-My child has benefited from attending the gifted program...	96%

*The “agree” results for this item includes parents who responded by checking “don’t know” (D/K), since it is assumed that they are not informed about the selection process. The results for all other items exclude parents who respond, “don’t know”, i.e., includes only parents who agree or disagree with the item. See Appendix A2 for the complete wording of the items.

Student Survey. A total of 5,192 gifted students completed the Student Questionnaire (Appendix A1). The majority of students surveyed attended elementary schools (65%) with smaller proportions attending middle (26%) or senior high schools (9%). Approximately half of the students had been in the gifted program for three years or less (53%), and the rest for a period of either 4 to 6 years (35%) or seven or more years (12%). The self-described ethnicity of the surveyed students closely resembled that of the gifted population: Hispanic (60%), Black (19%), White (13%), and Other (8%). There were no large differences among the above subgroups, except as mentioned in the section that follows.

Students were first asked to compare their gifted class to regular classes in their school. As shown in Table 8, most students did not consider gifted classes as easier than regular classes (23%) but most did consider them more interesting (91%). The students rated teachers of the gifted as better (75%) and rated the curriculum material as being covered at a faster pace (82%) as compared to regular classes. About half the students (44%) were of the opinion that gifted classes had more homework than regular classes. This opinion differed on the basis of the students' grade level. About a third of elementary students (34%) reported that gifted classes had more homework than regular classes compared to approximately two-thirds of middle school students (62%) and three-fourths of senior high school students (75%).

Table 8. Students' Survey Responses

Questionnaire Items	True
<i>Compared to regular classes, gifted classes:</i>	
-are easier	23%
-are more interesting	91%
-have more homework	44%
-have better teachers	75%
-go through material faster	82%
<i>Being in the gifted program has helped me:</i>	
-develop my communication skills	86%
-develop my research skills	89%
-develop my critical thinking skills	95%
-meet other students with abilities similar to mine	86%
-to learn school material in a different way	86%

Students were also asked to indicate the effect that gifted classes had exerted on their academic development (Table 8). Again, the great majority of students reported that gifted instruction had helped them develop their communication (86%), research (89%), and critical thinking skills (95%). According to the students, gifted classes had also allowed them to meet other students with similar skills (86%) and to learn school material in a different way (86%).

At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to make an overall assessment of the gifted program. First, students were asked to rate the impact the program had exerted on them along a four point scale: “significant,” “moderate,” “slight,” or “none at all.” Most students (95%) rated the impact as either “significant” (66%), or “moderate” (29%). A small percentages of students rate it as “slight” (4%) or “none at all” (less than 1%). Students were also asked whether they would recommend the gifted program. Almost all students (93%) indicated that they would recommend the gifted program to other students.

In summary, students view the gifted program as having desirable academic and social characteristics. According to students, the gifted program helps them to: develop educational and thinking skills, progress through material quicker, and associate with like-minded students. Overall, students have a positive opinion of the gifted program.

Teacher Survey. A total of 205 teachers of the gifted, each from a different school, completed the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix A3). The majority of the teachers of the gifted participating in the survey taught in elementary schools (68%), the rest taught either in middle (23%) or senior high schools (9%). Most teachers used the content model to deliver gifted instruction (55%), while others used the resource (32%) and/or the full time models (24%). A small percentage of teachers used more than one model (5%). The section below describes the teachers’ responses and when relevant differences are found presents them by school level.

Teachers, for the most part (92%), report being fully informed about the process used by the District to identify gifted students. Teachers were asked about the fairness of criteria used to identify students for the gifted program. About half the teachers (54%) indicated that the criteria used is fair. Approximately one-third of teachers rate the criteria as too broad (32%) and a smaller percentage as too narrow (7%). A group of teachers (7%) marked “other” and explained their reasoning in write-in comments. The exception to the criteria most often mentioned was that students who qualify under Plan B are excluded because they don’t have free/reduced lunch status. Next, teachers were asked to identify students who, in their opinions, do not have equitable access to the gifted program. Teachers most often (23%) select limited English proficient (LEP) students as being negatively impacted by the gifted identification process. This is particularly true among senior high (56%) and middle school teachers (34%). Smaller percentages of teachers single out ESE (16%), minority (13%), and economically disadvantaged students (12%) as being adversely affected by the identification process.

A section of the questionnaire asked teachers to describe the instructional approaches they use in gifted classes and to rate their perceived effectiveness. Although there was wide variability among teachers, on average teachers dedicated about equal time to “direct instruction” (23%), “student discussion” (23%), “individual work/projects” (23%), and “group projects” (26%). A smaller percentage of time was directed to “experienced based activities” such as field trips (10%). From

among these instructional approaches, teachers of the gifted considered “student discussion” to be the most effective teaching tool (87% rated it very effective), followed by “individual work/projects” (78%), and “group projects” (78%). “Direct instruction” (64%) and “experienced based activities” (64%) were rated the least effective of the instructional approaches.

Teachers of the gifted also indicated the extent of usage and the effectiveness of the instructional techniques they used in class. As shown in Table 9, teachers most often used the techniques of “emphasizing higher-order thinking skills” (96% rated it as used ‘often’), “teaching students to be self-directed learners” (93%), and “using advanced instructional materials” (89%). Teachers were least likely to use the techniques of “emphasizing debate” (28%), “emphasizing persuasive writing” (28%), and “teaching the research process” (59%). Similarly, teachers rated these same techniques as most or least effective. The results show that teachers of the gifted devote the most time to the instructional techniques they consider the most effective.

The majority of teachers rate gifted education classes as being “very challenging” for students (62%). The remaining teachers rate the classes as “somewhat challenging” (38%). No teacher rated gifted classes as “not at all challenging”. Elementary school teachers were more likely to rate gifted classes as “very challenging” (65%) as compared to middle (57%) and senior high school teachers (50%).

Table 9. Teachers’ Percentage Ratings of Use and Effectiveness of Instructional Techniques

Instructional Techniques	Often Used	Very Effective
Emphasize higher-order thinking skills	96%	94%
Teaching students to be self-directed learners	93%	89%
Use advanced materials or resources	89%	87%
Integrate material within or across disciplines	76%	77%
Teach critical reading behavior	73%	74%
Compact basic material	61%	59%
Teach the research process	59%	59%
Emphasize persuasive writing	28%	56%
Emphasize debate	28%	31%

Teachers rated their communication with parents of gifted students as either “excellent” (53%), “adequate” (40%), or “poor” (6%). The majority of teachers indicated that they communicate with parents various times during the year (55%). Some teachers reported that they communicate with parents at least once per year (26%) and others stated that they communicate with some parents but not with others (17%). A small percentage of teachers (3%) indicated that they have little communication with parents.

Overall, most teachers report that they are either “very satisfied” (66%) or “somewhat satisfied” (31%) with the gifted program at their school. Only a small percentage of teachers (3%) state that they are “dissatisfied” with the gifted program at their school.

Two thirds of all teachers (67%) took time to write comments at the end of the questionnaire. For the most part, the comments were of a positive nature, with teachers stating how happy they are to be a part of the gifted program. A few of the teachers expressed concern about different aspects of the program. The most often mentioned comment was the need for additional resources; for computers, field trips, materials, etc. Some elementary school teachers wrote that the District mandated reading program interfered with, or was inappropriate for, gifted instruction. Some thought that FCAT preparation hampered gifted instruction and others that large class sizes were not conducive to proper gifted instruction. A few secondary teachers thought that gifted students should be retested in the 8th grade, adding that elementary level classifications are sometimes inaccurate. In a related fashion, some teachers wrote that students should not be admitted to the program based on private testing results because often these students do not perform well in gifted classes. Secondary teachers also opined that students sometimes are gifted in one area, e.g., math, but not in others and that students should not be expected to do well in all areas. Some teachers indicated that children should be selected strictly on the basis of talent, not on the basis of economic status or ethnicity. Others thought that non-verbal or other alternative assessment methods should be used to include more LEP and ESE students in the program. A teacher wrote that labeling kids “gifted” makes them elitist, i.e., makes them think they are better than other kids. One teacher was of the opinion that there should be a gifted program in every school (Appendix B1).

In response to some of the teachers’ comments, it should be noted that the recently approved Regal Plan (June 2006), produced by the gifted education task force, requires that every school in the District provide gifted education to qualified students. In addition, starting in August 2006, the Consultation Model will be introduced to gifted students in grades 9-12 to ensure that students are enrolled in courses commensurate with their intellectual abilities. Also, these students will receive one-on-one monitoring and assistance with internship placements.

In summary, most, but not all, teachers of the gifted are fully informed about the gifted identification process. Among those that are fully informed, some question the fairness of the criteria used for selecting students for the gifted program. Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches and techniques in their classrooms, but they find student discussion and the emphasis on critical thinking to be the most effective among them. Most teachers of the gifted believe that they communicate well with parents. In general, teachers of the gifted find the gifted program at their schools educationally challenging and are satisfied with its implementation.

Are the in-service training sessions offered to teachers of the gifted effective for successful program implementation?

As part of the survey described above, teachers were asked about their educational background and their training experiences in the area of gifted education. The results show that teachers of the gifted are experienced educators. The average number of years that surveyed teachers of the gifted have taught in M-DCPS was 16 years. On average, teachers have been teaching gifted classes for 7 years. The majority of teachers (77%) indicated that they have received an endorsement from the State to teach gifted education. Other teachers have either received an advanced degree in gifted education (6%) or have taken course work in the area (14%). Some teachers (3%) claim no formal training in gifted education.

Teachers were asked to indicate how many District sponsored gifted training sessions they had attended in the past. Most teachers (83%) report having attended one or more gifted seminars or courses during the past year. Almost all surveyed teachers have attended at least one District sponsored gifted education training seminar within the past three years (96%). Alternatively, some teachers claim that they have not attended a gifted training session either in the past year (17%) or in the past three years (4%).

Most teachers rate the District's gifted education staff development offerings as either "excellent" (37%) or "adequate" (55%). A small percentage of teachers rate the District's staff development in the area of gifted education as "poor" (8%). Next, teachers were asked to rate how prepared they are to work with gifted students. All teachers indicate that they are prepared, to a greater or lesser extent, to teach gifted students. Most teachers indicate that they are "very well prepared" (85%). The remaining teachers rate themselves as "somewhat prepared" (15%). None of the teachers categorize themselves as "not very prepared" to teach gifted education.

In summary, teachers of the gifted participate in professional development seminars that enhance their teaching skills. Teachers of the gifted tend to be experienced educators; most having received state endorsements or university training in gifted education. Similarly, most have attended District sponsored training seminars in the area of gifted education. Teachers, in large part, consider the gifted education staff development experiences provided by the District as being satisfactory and consider themselves prepared to teach gifted students.

Conclusion

M-DCPS students classified as gifted consistently perform well academically when compared to students at the national and local level. This is most evident in the students' FCAT-NRT results where 10th grade gifted students scored in the top eight percent nationally in both reading and math and also outperformed, across an eight year period, academically talented M-DCPS students. Overall, gifted and non-gifted students who consistently attend M-DCPS exhibit academic levels of performance that far exceed the national average by the time they reach 10th grade.

Even though students performed well academically, there are areas of concern. Testing results, going back five or more years, suggest that gifted students, and to a greater extent academically talented students, were insufficiently challenged in math during the elementary school years. More recent test results indicate that secondary students, both gifted and non-gifted, increasingly fail to achieve minimum FCAT-SSS standards of reading achievement, as they advance in grade. Although, it is not clear whether this latter finding is a student achievement or a test measurement issue.

Additional findings show no difference in academic performance between students exposed to different gifted models. Elementary students receiving the gifted curriculum on either a full time or part-time basis, and those receiving it through a "content" or "resource" model, exhibit similar reading and math gains. Also, the enrollment of the gifted program is not representative of the M-DCPS student population. Gifted enrollment is over represented by White and underrepresented by Black students.

Parents, students, and teachers are generally pleased with the gifted program. Parents rate the gifted program as excellent and students view the program as having desirable social and academic characteristics. Similarly, the great majority of teachers are very satisfied with the gifted program at their schools. Nevertheless, there seems to be uncertainty on the part of parents and teachers concerning the appropriateness of the gifted program's screening/referral criteria. Some find it too inclusive, allowing students into the program who are not gifted, and others find it too restrictive, limiting entry to students who could benefit from program participation.

Finally, teachers of the gifted are experienced educators with most having state endorsements or university training in gifted education. Most have attended District sponsored training seminars. Teachers, consider the gifted education staff development experiences provided by the District as satisfactory and consider themselves prepared to teach gifted students.

On the basis of these results the following recommendations are made:

1. Track the math and reading FCAT performance of gifted and academically talented students.
2. Review the gifted program's elementary delivery model for academic and cost effectiveness.
3. Attempt to demographically balance the representation of the gifted model's student population.
4. Encourage all teachers of the gifted to annually attend gifted education training and to acquire State endorsements in gifted education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaires

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION
GIFTED PROGRAM EVALUATION
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions. The Miami-Dade County Public Schools is currently evaluating the Gifted Program. As part of the evaluation, we are surveying students in the program. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey by answering the questions below. Respond by thinking of your experiences across all the years you have been in the Gifted Program. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Thank you.

1. What grade are you in? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

2. How many years have you been in the Gifted Program? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8+

3. What is your ethnicity? White _____ Black _____ Hispanic _____ Other _____

4. Compared to regular classes, gifted classes... (circle either True or False below)

True False

- | | | |
|----------|----------|--------------------------------|
| T | F | a. are easier. |
| T | F | b. are more interesting. |
| T | F | c. have more homework. |
| T | F | d. have better teachers. |
| T | F | e. go through material faster. |

5. Being in the Gifted Program has helped me...(circle either True or False below)

True False

- | | | |
|----------|----------|---|
| T | F | a. develop my communication skills (reading and writing). |
| T | F | b. develop my research skills. |
| T | F | c. develop my critical thinking skills. |
| T | F | d. meet other students with abilities similar to mine. |
| T | F | e. to learn school material in a different way. |

6. How would you rate the impact that the Gifted Program has had on your education?

Significant _____ Moderate _____ Slight _____ None at all _____

7. Would you recommend the Gifted Program to other students? YES _____ NO _____

8. Use the space below to write any comments you may have about the Gifted Program.
(You can also write on the back)

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Office of Program Evaluation
Gifted Program Evaluation
Parent Questionnaire**

Instructions: *As you know, your child is enrolled in a Gifted Program. The Miami-Dade County Public Schools is currently evaluating the effect that Gifted Programs schools have on education. As part of the evaluation, we are surveying parents. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. After you finish, enclose the survey in the attached envelope, seal it and have your child return it to his/her teacher at school. Please return the questionnaire prior to April 7th. Thank you for your help.*

YES NO

1. Do you have more than one child attending a Gifted Program? (If YES, please answer questions that follow by focusing on the child who brought this survey)

2. What grade is your child in? (Circle one)

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

3. How many years has the child been in the Gifted Program? (Circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Answer the following based on your experiences with the M-DCPS Gifted Program:

YES NO D/K (Don't Know)

4. The process for identifying and selecting students for the Gifted Program is fully communicated to parents.

5. The process for identifying and selecting students for the Gifted Program is fair, providing equal access to students with differing disabilities, language and ethnic backgrounds, etc.

6. The process for identifying and selecting students for the Gifted Program is too broad leading to too many students being included.

7. The process for identifying and selecting students for the Gifted Program is too narrow leading to the exclusion of students who could benefit.

8. The gifted curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of its students (e.g., emphasizing higher-order thinking skills, moving quicker through material, covering topics in greater depth, etc.)

9. The gifted curriculum meets the needs of its students by using appropriate educational resources and strategies (e.g., work centers, books, software, study techniques, field trips, etc.)

YES NO D/K (Don't Know)

___ ___ ___ 10. Overall, the teachers in the Gifted Program are well trained to educate gifted students.

___ ___ ___ 11. Overall, the teachers in the Gifted Program are doing a good job of educating students.

___ ___ ___ 12. The level of communication between the gifted teacher(s) and parents is a good one.

13. The amount of homework assigned to students in the Gifted Program is:

Appropriate___ Too Much___ Too Little___ Don't know___

___ ___ ___ 14. The homework assigned in the Gifted Program supports and reinforces the in-class work.

___ ___ ___ 15. The homework assigned in the Gifted Program is sufficiently challenging.

___ ___ ___ 16. The school and the District are supportive of the educational activities of the Gifted Program.

___ ___ ___ 17. My child has benefitted from attending the Gifted Program in ways that he/she would not have if he/she had attended a regular classroom.

___ ___ ___ 18. Which statement best reflects your opinion of the Gifted Program:

Excellent___ Very Good___ Adequate___ Inadequate___

19. Please write comments concerning the Gifted Program below (Use additional paper if needed):

**Return this questionnaire in the enclosed envelope or mail to:
Dr. R. Abella, MDCPS, OPE, 1500 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 225, Miami, FL 33132**

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Office of Program Evaluation
Gifted Program Evaluation
Teacher Questionnaire**

Instructions: The Miami-Dade County Public Schools is currently evaluating the Gifted Program. As part of the evaluation, we are surveying teachers of gifted students. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. **After you finish, return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed envelope via school mail. Please return prior to April 21st.** Thank you for your help.

1. What grade(s) are you teaching this year? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

2. How many years have you been a teacher in M-DCPS? _____

3. How many years have you taught gifted classes? _____

4. What is your training/background in gifted education? (Choose one)

- _____ a. No formal training
- _____ b. Some course work in gifted education
- _____ c. State endorsement in gifted education
- _____ d. Advanced degree with concentration in gifted education
- _____ e. Other: _____

5. What model(s) are used in your classes to teach gifted students:

Full-time _____ Resource _____ Content _____ Not Applicable _____

6. Are you fully informed about the process used by the District to select students to the Gifted Program? (If NO, skip to #8)

YES _____ NO _____

7. Which of the statements best describes your perception of the identification criteria for the Gifted Program: (choose one)

- _____ a. The criteria is fair
- _____ b. The criteria is too broad
- _____ c. The criteria is too narrow
- _____ d. Other: _____

Note: Any comments you wish to make concerning any of the questions in this survey should be written in the space provide in item #23. Write the question number followed by the comment.

8. Are there any populations which you think do not have equitable access to the Gifted Program because of the identification process: (check all that apply)

- _____ a. Economically disadvantaged students
- _____ b. Minority students (e.g., Blacks, Hispanic)
- _____ c. Students with English as a second language (e.g., ESOL)
- _____ d. Students with disabilities (e.g., ESE)
- _____ e. Other: _____

9. What percentage of the time do you use the following major instructional approaches in your gifted classes? (Write a percentage for each)

- _____ a. Direct instruction (lecture)
- _____ b. Student discussion
- _____ c. Individual work/projects
- _____ d. Group work/projects
- _____ e. Experience based activities (e.g., field trips)
- _____ f. Other: _____

10. How effective are the following major instructional approaches in your gifted classes? (Check one for each alternative)

Very Effective **Somewhat Effective** **Not at all**

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | a. Direct instruction (lecture) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | b. Student discussion |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | c. Individual work/projects |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | d. Group work/projects |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | e. Experience based activities (e.g., field trips) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | f. Other: _____ |

11. How often do you use the following instructional techniques in your gifted classes?

Often **Sometimes** **Not at all**

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | a. Compact basic material |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | b. Use advanced material or resources |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | c. Integrate material within or across disciplines |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | d. Teach critical reading behavior |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | e. Emphasize higher-order thinking skills |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | f. Teach the research process |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | g. Emphasize persuasive writing |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | h. Emphasize debate |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | i. Teaching students to be self-directed learners |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | j. Other: _____ |

12. How often do you use the following instructional techniques in your gifted classes?

Very Effective **Somewhat Effective** **Not at all**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- a. Compact basic material
- b. Use advanced material or resources
- c. Integrate material within or across disciplines
- d. Teach critical reading behavior
- e. Emphasize higher-order thinking skills
- f. Teach the research process
- g. Emphasize persuasive writing
- h. Emphasize debate
- i. Teaching students to be self-directed learners
- j. Other: _____

13. How challenging are the gifted education classes for the students in your school?

Very Challenging _____ Somewhat challenging _____ Not at all challenging _____

14. How often do you personally (one to one) communicate with the parents of your gifted students?

- _____ a. I have little individual communication with parents.
- _____ b. I communicate with some parents but not with others.
- _____ c. I communicate at least once a year with each student's parents.
- _____ d. I communicate various times a year with each student's parents.

15. How would you rate the communication between you and the parents of gifted students?

Excellent _____ Adequate _____ Poor _____ None exists _____

16. How many District sponsored training sessions related to gifted education have you attended? (Write the number of training seminars/courses, not hours or days)

This past year _____ Past 3 years _____ Ever _____

17. Overall, how would you rate the staff development experiences related to gifted education that the District has provided?

Excellent _____ Adequate _____ Poor _____ None exists _____

18. How prepared do you think you are to work with gifted students?

Very well prepared _____ Somewhat prepared _____ Not very prepared _____

Appendix B: Teachers' Comments

Appendix B: Gifted Teachers' Survey Comments

1- I am thrilled to be a teacher of the Gifted at Air Base Elementary this year. I took over grades 4 & 5 in January and have the support of the administration to improve the existing program. There is a vast amount of material that have been given or purchased for grades 4 & 5 and must utilized such as National Geo., Reading Expeditions, and Scholastic Literary Elements. The Houghton Mifflin Reading Series was also not used much and I have implemented this into the existing program. (Model- Content)

2- I believe the gifted program could be more if only the general education teachers were more supportive and more willing to be flexible. That said, I would also like to say that the administration, mainly the AP, is very supportive, always informing me of any new procedures, and including the gifted program. (Model- Resource)

3- Gifted education at my school has, at times, been made up to be "elitist." The children feel superior as do the parents; however, when expectations are increased and/or taken above grade level they struggle. Many students say that "gifted" is easier than their homeroom. "Gifted" gets less home learning, they also say, not to mention, that they lack many basic skills. (Model- Content)

4- Gifted programs in general offer these children an opportunity to think outside of the box and to be free to express their thoughts in a less restrictive environment. I love my gifted kids and I feel they enjoy my guidance and teaching also. We have a special connection because we have the opportunity to work together for several years. I see them bloom as they grow. (Model- Content)

5- Since the criteria of placing the children in the gifted program has changed through the years, I feel that the caliber of the students has greatly diminished. The students are not as challenging nor as motivated as they have been in the past. Some of them have academic abilities that are comparable to children that are in regular classes. Also due to the over-emphasis on the FCAT, I feel that the students in my class are not receiving sufficient "gifted instruction." Too, too much time is being spent on testing, remediation, and more testing! (Model- Full-time)

6- Having a gifted program at my school is a major benefit to those students who qualify for the program in that it provides a "place" for the student that feels different, outside or under challenged in the regular classroom. This affords these students the opportunity to experience their education among peers of like minds, motivations and abilities. It creates a challenge and differentiation of learning that is not found in the regular classroom and may provide competitiveness and cooperative learning to help round-out the gifted child. Today's limitations are class sizes that are too large, lack of specific materials and teachers being forced to replicate their lessons to be more like the regular classroom teachers' instead of allowing teachers and students to have choices. Further concern of my co-gifted facilitators and myself, is the bright student in the regular classroom who is not being identified through "Plan A." Regular classroom teachers may not be aware or overlook that student not realizing that these students may qualify for the gifted program via free psychological testing by school psychologists. Parents may not be aware of this either! (Model- Content)

7- Research indicate the under representation of minority groups in gifted programs is related to a breakdown in the referral process, the assessment process or both for older students. (Model- Resource)

8- It is a pleasure to work under an administration that supports the gifted program. Any and all ideas are welcomed with open arms. The needs of the student are always considered and nourished. Our program works because all teachers work together as a team. (Model- Content)

9- The benefits of teaching the gifted program is being able to provide a challenged curriculum to the students. The limitation is beginning on the first day of school as district mandates. Teachers of the gifted need to create a differentiated curriculum that will meet the needs of the gifted students as well as integrating the mandated reading series, in addition to teaching to different grade levels, and paperwork. (Model- Content)

10- I enjoy working in the Gifted Program. There are many more resources available than in a regular classroom. Plan B is not the panacea it's believed to be. (Model- Content)

11- The gifted program is growing annually at our school. It will be more beneficial to the students if class surges were reduced. In order for a school to have two units, it must have over two class surges of children (58 students). For one teacher to service 53 or so children 12 hours a week is unreasonable and a disservice to our students. It would also be wonderful to feel that the Gifted Program validated at our school. Homeroom teachers would benefit from an ed. specialist coming to our school to explain the responsibilities of the gifted student while they are attending gifted. There are quite a few conflicts about making up missed class work and scheduling graded assignments for the 3 days the students attend regular ed. classes. Thank you for the continued support from the Division of Advance Academics, everyone in the department does a phenomenal job! (Model- Resource)

16- The gifted program is a rewarding experience that provides the students the ability to explore a variety of topics that are of self interest. (Model- Resource)

17- I feel strongly that private psychological testing be disallowed. In many cases, in financially advantaged areas, a child's gifted label can be purchased through participating psychologist. Many children who enter the program this way are incapable of the work demanded of them. Some may have reading difficulties and other basic skills lapse. These children lower the difficulty of the program for the other who are capable of more challenging work. It is also unfair to financially disadvantaged families who cannot "buy" a gifted label for their child. (Model- Full-time)

18- We have a successful content based, math/science program that encourages hands on science investigation and math problem solving. We promote critical thinking on a daily basis and we compact and accelerate the curriculum, which allows us time to utilize technology, advanced curriculum and high order thinking skills through activities like chess. (Model- Content)

19- #7 IQ scores need special consideration. -112 is too low for participation- minimum of 120 on WISC ought to be required. The program should present curriculum appropriate for the student thus such (112) an IQ prevents presentation on a high level.

20- Our program has gotten off to a slow start, having a program for 2003-2004, and in 2004-2005, and in 2005-2006. My administration actively supports our program. This year one of our biggest challenges was scheduling, have already begun to work on for 06-07. Many of our students who entered on Plan B have limited experiences which we strive to enhance. Many have been introduced to critical thinking for the first time in their lives. I look forward to building our program. (Model- Content)

23- The emphasis on the FCAT district-wide is greatly hampering the gifted program. The lack of field experience during the year until after the test limits the depth of many cross-curricular activities. Also, regular classroom teachers insist on keeping gifted students for routine FCAT practice testing because of fear of failure. The lack of class size restriction and limited materials and space also impede the progress of the most able population. (Model- Resource)

24- This year I have had to incorporate the Houghton- Mifflin core reading program into my gifted curriculum. This has limited the amount of time available for providing individual instruction and developing the creative process. I am trying to make adaptations but still have many concerns- especially since I work with 3 grades levels. (Model- Content)

29- The only problem I have encountered this year which has affected the students and myself equally has been to lose our classroom. Due to construction, we have had to relocate to the media center in a tight area. Not having the space, area, and means to store out resources has been difficult, as well as the space to move around and be creative and spontaneous. I know the students have missed this aspect of my instruction. Luckily this is only temporarily. (Model- Resource)

31- The gifted program provides a medium for the students to acquire skills that are not addressed in a regular class and allow them to grow at their own pace to the best of their abilities. (Model- Resource)

31- Gifted teachers are lucky. We can, as resource facilitators, change the curriculum so that it captures the student's interest and keeps them motivated. (Model- Resource)

35- I truly enjoy working at my school's gifted program. There are many benefits which allow me to take the curriculum in my classroom beyond what any other teacher could. Limitations exist when having to follow curriculum guidelines because of the FCAT. My students are beyond reading from Houghton-Mifflin and don't care about the contextual information. It's not very appealing to them or to me. My belief is that if you follow the curriculum and teach what is supposed to be taught there is no need to teach to the test. (Model- Content)

37- The differentiated curriculum offered by the Gifted Program responds to the unique needs of each student and fosters both critical and creative thinking. Workshops for teachers in the Gifted Program are seldom held. An increase in workshops would benefit both teachers and students. Field trips related to areas of study are needed for gifted students at my school site. Field trips will encourage gifted students to explore and develop new interest. (Model- Resource)

38- Class sizes are smaller and make it easier to be hands-on and personal. The students benefit because they are learning at a more rapid rate, conducive to their learning pace. Our school should provide gifted education for all subject areas, not just reading and language arts. (Model- Content)

40- I love working with Gifted students and I love the fact that Miami-Dade County has a gifted program. I believe that the students attending the program truly benefit from the challenge and stimulation, as well as the opportunity to interact with their 'peers.' Some limitations of the program are: Students are staffed into the program all year. I believe that the program would be more efficient and effective for all involved if the students entered the Gifted Program only at the beginning of the first semester, or the beginning of the second semester, and not any arbitrary day, as it is done now. This constant entering is very disruptive to an ongoing program and does not enhance learning for anyone. Also, "Center" staffing's should be held on Wednesday, so as not to detract from teaching time (days). Also, an aspect of Gifted that has changed considerably is that even though we are still a 'center,' I am but one teacher. The center concept was so dynamic and such an outstanding experience for the students when we were a group of teachers. As a group of teachers we brainstormed and generated so many exciting ideas, and of course, the students profited from all the different areas of expertise. It would be great if we could combine smaller centers so at least two teachers could teach Gifted together. (One teacher seems like a traditional classroom!) (Model- Resource)

41- The Gifted Program at Emerson is very crowded. I have 54 students and I have to stay late to catch up with all the paperwork. Last year I was told that there would be a second unit but it has not happened. It would be in the best of interest of my students to have smaller class sizes. Although I give my students a lot of individual attention, it is a well known fact that all students benefit from smaller class size. (Model- Content)

42- Administration supports our Gifted Program. However, I prefer an Enrichment Program. Other teachers of the Gifted have to focus on FCAT making it hard to do projects and really create a Gifted Setting. Gifted classes should enhance critical and creative thinking, "out of the box" thinking, projects, inventions, etc. Gifted does not mean 'more class work and homework.' Unfortunately many times, teachers are pressured to teach toward FCAT and forget what gifted class is really all about! (Model- Content)

45- The resource program best meets the needs of our students: Parents appreciate students having opportunities for both acceleration and enrichment in all subject areas, not just me targeted by the school. (Model- Resource)

46- Teaching Gifted Language Arts is challenging when I have to address multi-levels. For example, in one class I have kindergarten, 2nd and 3rd grades. It is sometimes hard to give each grade level and the adequate instruction, at their level. My fourth and fifth grades are easier because they are more alike in their levels. If we could start our students, in the Gifted program, in 3rd grade, I think a lot of our problems would be solved. (Model- Content)

47- The gifted program provides many benefits to the students but the new reading program seems to place limitations on what and when we teach during the reading block. I wish we had some clear guidelines on what is expected of the gifted teachers during that time. (Model- Resource)

48- I am truly enjoying working in the gifted program. It's challenging for the students as well as for me, but in a great way. I enjoy preparing lessons on units which will broaden my student's minds and allow their critical thinking to shine. The advanced academics department has been extremely instructional and I feel if I ever have any questions that I could not ask for a better support team. (Model- Content)

49- I think the gifted program at our school truly benefits our predominantly Hispanic population of students because I believe it gives these particular students learning opportunities they traditionally would not have. (Model- Content)

50- #7 Regarding gifted identification: Process too narrow and teachers have upper hand in process. If a teachers (these teachers that actually refer the students but then rate them very low) nomination/Williams Scale totals are low, it is impossible for Plan B students to get the 9 points required on the Matrix. Homeroom teachers should be required to take and absorb the information presented in the Diverse Populations course offered by TEC. In addition, talent in the arts and leadership, among others, should be part of the identification process. All research indicates that other factors must me noted. We need to identify different kinds of "gifts."

#18 Preparation to teach Gifted: I consider myself very prepared to teach the type of students I serve but I don't think that I would be prepared to teach highly gifted (IQ 150+). I need to be exposed to more experience based classes and I would be willing to take them. I wish that we could network with teachers of the highly Gifted, such as the Hollingowrth Center, or the one offered by the Denver School system, of the school funded by the Davidsons in the campus of the Univ. of Nevada. I need that exposure.

19 Regarding Adequate resources: I have spent the entire year using "hand me downs" in order to comply with the mandate of implementing the Houghton Mifflin series. We are almost at the end of the school year and I have not received Theme of Integrated Tests for 2nd & 3rd grade, I don't have T.E. for 2nd, nor do I have the books for guided reading. I have to "invent" to be able to meet goals. When I requested to know what the balance on the funds was for gifted, I was told by the school's treasurer that the administration did not allow her to divulge that information. I placed two orders of books to address the differentiated curriculum mandate of the program and it took the school three months to actually submit the order and this action was only taken after I called the companies and verified that no order had been placed, although the school kept telling me that the delay was due to the hurricane. Last school year, my students had no access to computers. We had 6 in the class that only worked about 3 weeks out of the year. This

year, I teach in the teachers lounge and out of the 3 computers only 2 work and that is, part of the time.

#20 & 21 Regarding Support from ad/District The administration has visited our class five minutes this year (principal) and for the teachers annual eval. (A.P.). There is no "communion" between the program and the ad. I recruit students, do the paperwork for CST, inform parents, etc. Except for administering a psychological test, I do it all. As far as the district's support when the issue of the gifted funds arose, I contacted the Elementary Supervisor to see if I had a right to demand the funds and she told me that she had no power over the principal and that "if the principal wanted to use gifted funds for toilet paper, she actually could." These are textual words. In addition at one of the gifted workshops, several teachers recounted their experiences of teaching without the H.M. materials and, although the District director told us to email/fax a list of the materials we were missing by Nov. 05, I did so and received no response or books. There is very little follow up from the District and, in many cases, the program is not delivered according to mandate. It seems that that department has no jurisdiction and that is up to the principals to supervise the success of the program. That works when you work for a principal who is able but that is not the case often with the "NCLB" the gifted are suffering and we are not taking advantage of their potential. This is terrible for the future of this nation. (Model- Content)

51- The benefits of the Gifted Program are that learners' abilities are challenged via differentiated curriculum strategies and resources. Students' are exposed to a wide variety of genres and literary pieces that enhance critical thinking and comprehension skills. Also, the development of the learner's creativity is fostered and enhanced. Some limitations are that additional enrichment activities are curtailed due to the brevity of time.

52- The Gifted Program provide a vehicle for students to learn information in a more challenging manner. I find that students who aren't encouraged to think outside of the "box," worksheets, etc. can become stagnated. They even read that they can eventually become so bored that they "turn off" to school. I've seen students who were behavior problems, turn out to be model students, once in Gifted. I have students who come to me daily asking if they can be in my class. I guess because we are always doing something a little different. (Model- Resource)

53- It was a great loss that we no longer have an L.D. gifted program with support of an ESE teacher when the students are in the gifted program. There is also a need for gifted students who are recognized as having an attentive deficit or a learning disability to be monitored according to their individual need. The support given at MacMillian Middle should be duplicated at other middle and high schools. (Model- Content)

55- I would like to see an alterative test like the aprenda instituted for the non-Spanish speakers ESOL students. Thank you. (Model-Fulltime; Resource)

56- I enjoy that I learn something new everyday, however, as a new teacher, I have felt extremely frustrated with my position and set up to lose at every turn. Having asked for help at the district level multiple time~ info, suggestions, etc.~ none was forthcoming, and yet a school visit showed what I was not doing right with no info or help on how to correct. The gifted classes offered by the TEC were a complete waste of time, yet because we had to sign our course evaluations, we could not truly critique them honestly. Administration generally gives little support, though with a new AP, I have seen support for the first time- the only reason I have not yet quit my job. (Model- Resource)

57- #19- More computers are needed for research and publishing. #21- Teachers are not supportive of district guidelines- They keep students in class and plan activities on days of gifted classes. #22- I am satisfied with my efforts to create a supportive environment. #8- Multiple avenues to enter gifted program are needed. If achievement is a way to qualify for some, it should be the way to qualify for all students regardless of socioeconomic or ethnic factors. (Model- Resource)

59- As a facilitator of the Gifted Program for 22 years, I have seen many changes. The most significant is that with the advent of the FCAT, more emphasis has been placed on grade level reading and math preparation and less time has been available for the gifted simulations, creative projects, critical thinking activities, etc. I love the concept of the Gifted Program, but other than acceleration, I feel time and other requirements have diminished the intent and soul of Gifted Education. (Model- Full-time Grade 6; Resource Grades 2-5)

59- One of the benefits shared by my parents is the opportunity for their children to learn about and be exposed to other material not covered in their regular classroom; since most classroom teachers have no other option but to teach for the FCAT. (Model- Resource)

61- The implementation of the basal reader in the gifted classroom has relegated more important techniques and strategies to the "back burner!" (Model- Resource)

63- The "Gifted Program" provides a learning environment that is more appropriate for academically talented students. Students are provided with an opportunity to collaborate, learn at an accelerated rate, and pursue individual interests. Further, students are encouraged to express their opinions and creativity. (Model- Resource)

65- The classroom only has one computer and it is very old and slow. This has hampered my ability to educate students as well as I'd like. There are some new computers in the media center but they are not yet connected. Administration (in responding to parent inquiries as well as my own) has advised me that next year, I may be able to obtain a new computer as some are being purchased. Mesa money is very helpful for supplies but it doesn't provide enough funding for a new computer too. Another concern is the time that it takes to test Plan A students. Once we submit paperwork it would be helpful for us to leave feedback on status and students who have qualified and not simply wait for staffing and then investigate whether others qualified or were not yet tested. (Model- Content)

66- In regards to the identification process for gifted students. I think that, in theory, Plan B is a great option. However, in practice it does not always work. Many students in my school have not been accepted for gifted after being given an English-language IQ test by the school psychologist. With LEP children, I think non-verbal IQ tests should always be used. The psychologist, when questioned, stated that the child had been interviewed and it was determined that they spoke English. While these children may have social English skills, academic English skills (such as what is needed for an IQ test) take significantly longer to develop. These factors need to be considered when testing LEP students. (Model- Content)

67- I am truly blessed and honored to teach the Gifted Program at Barbara Hawkins. Mrs. Harrison, our principal, is very supportive of this program. I am very fortunate to have the support of administration, parents and students. I love teaching the Gifted Program. My hope is that I can inspire my students to greatness as they have inspired and have taught me so much. (Model- Resource)

68- I am very happy with the Gifted Program because I know these students need to be in a different learning environment than what is offered in the regular classroom. I do think that having them follow the reading anthology from their grade level often holds them back from doing more challenging stories and activities. Especially in first grade, the reading anthology is not challenging them. (Model- Content)

69- The Gifted Program in our school is in-house and encourages cooperation among the gifted teacher, general education teacher, parents and students. We emphasize investigative research skills and looking at issues with a critical edge. I am honored and blessed to teach lovely students and woven in partnership with supportive parents. I am pleased with district support and in-service trainings from the advanced academic programs. (I wish I could attend more...) (Limitations include paperwork, and extensive planning...) (Model- Resource)

70- Benefits of the Gifted Program: differentiated instruction is allowed and required, supportive parents, students learning needs are met in a creative environment. Limitations: Attempting to adhere to the basic ed. program's reading basal curriculum is extremely limiting and not appropriate for a "differentiated" curriculum where novels and "Time for Kids" news magazines are more appropriate for use by advanced readers, difficult to adhere to the 12 hour requirement in elementary school due to scheduling, \$750 minimum purchase requirement for a purchase order form does not allow teachers to purchase what they truly need, every year we have less and less money to spend. Extremely low funds has made it difficult to enrich and enhance learning in the gifted program. (Model- Content)

71- Our gifted resource program covers all area- language arts, math, science and social studies. Additionally, it has a technology component that integrates all the subject areas. Since our major emphasis is on getting kids to expand and utilize their creative and critical thinking skills in an "ungraded" setting, we see a lot of growth in these areas. Those gifted programs that utilize letter grades tend to accelerate their students rather than broadening and expanding their students thinking. (Model- Resource)

72- I am very happy with the program at our school. The administration is supportive of the program. The students think critically and creatively. I truly believe that their reading/writing skills flourish. (Model- Content)

74- The gifted program at my school affords the students opportunities they would not have in the regular classroom such as curriculum compacting. In addition, because the students are surrounded by other children with the same exceptionality, they are constantly challenging each other to succeed, to go one step further. In my opinion the gifted program is important and serves this population well. (Model- Full-time)

75- The students do benefit from the program; however we are experiencing students who are tested privately enter the program and it is difficult for them to keep pace. (Model- Content)

80- While gifted students receive specialized experiences from our program, the content model restricts enrichment opportunities in areas of students' strengths and/or interests that the resource model would allow. (Model- Content)

83- The Gifted Program at W.L.E. provides an enriching environment to its students. The students are exposed to relevant pieces of literature. The parents are happy with the program and the teachers work together.

85- Benefits: Counselor and AP work well together to ensure a smooth initial educational plan meeting. Parents are informed and helped so that they understand the process. The students are motivated and glad to attend gifted. Limitations: Since this is a resource program, the gifted children attend regular classes also. During the year, it was stressful to the students to complete quarterly tests. Often because of time limitations the gifted too tests during gifted. (Model- Resource)

87- I love teaching in the Gifted Program at my school. I am supported immensely by my school administration including out chairperson. Working with gifted students bring me fulfillment on a daily basis. Of course, I could always use more training in order to learn current, innovative strategies to have the biggest impact on my students. (Model- Full-time)

90- We changed to a Language Arts model this year. District did not provide teacher materials i.e Answer keys until the middle of the year. I appreciate any critical thinking or creative thinking materials- District can provide, especially workshops, also techniques for Language Arts. My students are wonderful learners; I love teaching in the gifted program. (Model- Content)

93- I love teaching my gifted students. My students are all Plan B. I give my students challenging work and they amaze me. Of course this is only when we are not doing the regular curriculum which is what I am forced to teach at a "zone" school. My students find the Houghton Mifflin series boring and so do I. I think I can do a much better job teaching if I could choose what I want teach them. They would also enjoy it more because we could do projects that are educational and fun. Because of time constraints (having to do HM) we cannot really do gifted work. (Model- Content)

94- Some students in my class have been tested privately and have never been evaluated by a school psychologist. I have found great discrepancies in the ability of some privately tested students compared to those tested by the school. In my opinion, schools need to test these students as well before allowing them to enter the gifted program. Perhaps, only school test should be valid in placement. (Model- Full-time)

100- I feel that the gifted program is an excellent program. I am proud to be a part of it. I believe the key to its success is allowing the students to experience activities that are different than the general ed. classes. I would like to be able to take more field trips. (Model- Content)

101- While attending gifted workshops, teachers receive an abundance of information, terrific ideas and materials to use with the students. However, the set-up of the classes hinder the implementation of the gathered resources. The students are receiving very little gifted strategies. The only difference between them and the regular students is, they are in a class with all gifted students. Teachers of the gifted are teaching the same curriculum as the regular students' teachers teach.

The pull-out program does not benefit our gifted students. Resource and self-contained models are more effective. With these two models the students receive both basic and gifted strategies. With the pull-out model students are just as bored as they are in regular class. The purpose of being in the gifted program is to receive a more enriching curriculum to compliment the basic curriculum. This issue needs to be addressed in my opinion the resource model is the best for our gifted students. (Model- Resource)

102- The values of learning in a challenging, open atmosphere with opportunities for creativity and development of individual interests cannot be overestimated for gifted learners. The resource program with academic disciplines addressed affords students with the opportunity to participate in satellite, foreign language and arts programs in addition to work with gifted peers as well as heterogeneous peer groups for various activities. Test success for gifted students requires fewer repetitions of content than for others. Having gifted students out of the basic classroom part of the week addresses this difference. Students who have the opportunity to participate in a gifted program with challenging problems will be leaders in our community and state in the future. (Model- Resource)

103- #7 & 8 It seems some higher IQ students are not qualifying for gifted due to their ethnic and economic status. If IQ scores are at a level for one group, maybe it should be the same for all groups. For me, my limitations are in the schedule. My classes are mixed grade levels and scattered times. It is difficult to organize. (Model- Content)

104- The gifted program allows the children to escape the receptiveness of the regular classroom and to progress at a pace and to a level that they would otherwise not achieve. Scheduling and a lack of computers and internet access limits research and projects in this program. The gifted classroom is located in a portable which is not connected to the internet. There is only one computer in the classroom. Scheduling for the content areas of reading and social studies has been a problem which is not fully solved. (Model- Content)

106- Our gifted program consists of a Language Arts content program. I feel satisfied teaching these students as they are quite bright, creative, and most consistently demonstrate their willingness and desire to learn and achieve. However, I find limitations with the program as well. When I attempt to infuse projects and/or activities that demand just a little more time and effort, some parents immediately react with negativity and comments about withdrawing their child from the program. At times, I feel that I can't challenge my students to their level of capacity. (Model- Content)

107- I enjoy being part of the magic of the Gifted Program. I think there are more "Ah Ha" moments than in general education. The opportunities to affect the future are limitless and exciting. My students energize me each day and teach me as much as I teach them. The most significant benefit is helping children realize their abilities and goals. I have not found any limitations in my teaching career that could not be overcome with a change in my perspective... one of the lessons I teach my students. When we change our view quite often obstacles become invisible because they change into opportunities to problem solve. (Model- Resource)

110- The Gifted Program at Olinda receives considerable support from the administration. The principal orders equipment and supplies that I request to augment our technology-based science, social studies, and language arts curriculum. I have been somewhat disoriented and distracted this year by having to teach reading groups to 2-5th grade gifted students; however, the comprehensive Reading program selections are very good. It does take away time from our science and social studies gifted goals and objectives though. (Model- Full-time)

113- The benefits for students placed in a Gifted Program are tremendous. However, if not in a Gifted center, some accommodations are very limited when there is only 1 or 2 teachers of Gifted and you're required to teach LA/READING and Social Studies in a 2 ½ hour block daily. (Model- Content)

116- I am currently teaching only Math and science to grades 1-5. The reason I marked dissatisfied for question 22 is because this year because of numbers of students at FTE, we didn't qualify for the 2nd gifted teacher. This meant that since I was the gifted teacher, and our gifted subjects were math and science, I was responsible for all 55 students grade 1-5 for those subjects. It would help if the ratio could be lowered possibly 25 to 1, to ensure that schools with lower gifted populations could more effectively teach the students they have and generate a 2nd gifted teacher to share all teaching responsibilities. (Model- Full-time)

120- I feel very limited in my ability to teach within the gifted goals and objectives. We are forced to teach "FCAT" Math and Science within our content based program. I also feel a lack of support from the regular classroom teachers. (Model- Content)

121- Please help the gifted program in our inner-city schools. (Model- Resource)

123- I feel the gifted program and special education are sometimes put on the back burner when it comes to regular ed classes. (Model- Resource)

126- #18. I am in the process of taking Gifted Courses through TEC. #22. Some of the teachers are not very supportive of the gifted program. Students arrive to gifted 15-20 minutes late or don't show up at all. This is a disadvantage to the child/children. Instruction and projects are hindered on those days. (Model- Content)

129- Achievement should drive identification not minority status. (Model- Content)

130- I would like to see more books (trade) and computers for gifted students in my classes. Also, AR books on a higher level (6.0+) are not a priority. The support within my school is fabulous (teachers and administration) as well as parents. (Model- Content)

133- The gifted program (resource) provides an excellent opportunity to challenge students. These kids' mental energy needs to be channeled properly at an early age- this program provides the vehicle needed. (Model- Resource)

135- The gifted program at our school is excellent. We do a lot of hands-on activities and research. For examples, this year we did research on the Titanic, Middle Ages, Renaissance, famous musicians/composers/artists of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. We also did cooperative group projects on this. We read The Chronicles of Narnia and did group projects on it. Overall, the students enjoy the group projects/research the most in gifted. Our administration has been very supportive with us. In conclusion, the district training we've received has been excellent. I learned a lot of creative activities to apply in my classroom. (Model- Content)

138- Our gifted program is limited by the mandate that we must use the grade-level reading basal when even the "challenging" activities are 1-2 grade levels below the abilities of our students. (Model- Full-time)

139- #1 Taught 7 years elsewhere. #5 Criteria is fair for my elementary program. Perhaps "giftedness" is assessed for "Fine Arts" differently. If not, are we losing funding and/or student resources? #12 The rating scale really doesn't match the question. #19 "Micro Tech" has set up our system so that only he can install software. (Our principal feels this is necessary.) This causes a delay in utilizing programs. Perhaps more web based (eg. "Stock Market") would be easier to access. (Model- Resource)

140- Overall the gifted program works very well.(Model- Resource)

140- Our Gifted Program allows students to reach their greatest potential. It also offers our students experiences that are not offered in our regular program. The limitation of our Gifted Program is too much paper work, and testing. (MAT-7)(Model- Resource)

142- As the only gifted teacher in my school, I teach all the classes. When we had the enrichment program this worked beautifully. Now that I teach content (science, soc. Studies, math) it's become a nightmare. Our school does block schedules for grade levels and specials first and my students are scheduled for my classes wherever there is a slot left. This means I sometimes have over 33 end, 3rd, and 5th grade students together- social studies and science 4 days a week, math on Wednesday. During the 4 days, classes are overlapping and students come in as they finish lunch or specials. Highly distracting and

chaotic! There is only room in the school's schedule to allocate 10 hours. For my students; this is not enough time to adequately teach both science and social studies, even though I teach 5 classes a day for an hour each. It is very difficult to teach a content program with only one teacher and the demands and priorities of school wide block schedules. (Model- Content)

143- The biggest challenge I have had is the reading program. Students in the Gifted Program are not allowed to advance rapidly enough. They should not have to remain on grade level. (Model- Full-time)

144- I am very satisfied with the gifted program at our school. However, I think the program needs more funding for resources, especially books, and field trips. (Model- Resource)

145- I feel very strongly about the importance of a Gifted Program. We must meet the needs of our gifted students. I also feel strongly about keeping the resource model. It truly allows a greater opportunity for enrichment. (Model- Resource)

146- Limitations- It is still hard to work out schedule. (Model- Content)

147- #18 My colleagues have helped me a great deal because the district didn't give me everything I needed to teach gifted students. (Model- Content)

148- Gifted children require a gifted curriculum in order to develop their full potential. (Model- Content)

149- The resource model offers the possibility of teaching advanced material in-depth and also gives students time to pursue their interests without the constraints of the regular classroom's schedule. I find that the resource would truly help create an atmosphere where students can become inner-directed. (Model- Resource)

150- Teaching in the gifted program has provided me with positive teaching experiences. The elementary gifted population is a very motivated and driven population. They enjoy taking on challenging projects and activities. For the most part, the parents of the gifted students are also very supportive and involved in their children's educational paths. The program also allows me the ability to be creative within the curriculum and lesson presentations. Yet one drawback to that is, since the program has to be different from the regular classroom, I do spend a lot of my planning time developing lessons and curriculum resources that are state and district appropriate; yet different from the student's homeroom classes. (Model- Resource)

151- The gifted classes are too over crowded. We have 35 students in a class. It is really hard to do a lot of "gifted activities" with so many students. If regular classes are going down with classes sizes so should the gifted classes. It should be allowed for the "gifted" program to do and go on special field trips. The administration will allow it, but our region doesn't approve it. They should be a little more lenient especially if it relates to our curriculum where we could go. Example, I would love to take my students to Rome

during next year how we are studying it all year our region director doesn't allow it. (Model- Full-time)

153- Limitations: 1. Large number of Hispanic children with lower IQs who do not think or perform like gifted students of the past. 2. Being forced to teach H/M reading like the regular classroom- very little time for research based activities or Junior Great Books which my students love! 3. Calls to gifted office do not get returned unless the principal calls- Maybe we should be assigned a person to contact by school or type of program. We realize you are all administrators and we are only teachers, but a return call would be nice/ I also miss the 2 whole days with the kids set up- lots of learning gets done in a while day. Positives- The kids are the best- Parents are positive and left alone to teach- my kids consistently are in the top %. (Model- Resource: Pullout, Content: LA/Soc. Stu.)

155- The gifted program is one that meets the needs of advanced learners. The program allows students to be challenged daily and to learn how to "think outside the box."(Model- Content)

158- This year we have been required to use the Houghton Mifflin series (HM) in addition to our other regular JGB and other reading material. I actually think the HM stories are good for my students and I assess them differently than in the regular class. But, it takes more than the 2 day to complete the long passage effectively. Therefore to also try and do another story in that week is too much. So I do short informational text or plays that can drag on into the following week. I have had a parent question the curriculum. (Model- Content)

161- I believe that there has been a change in emphasis by the entire district. The focus is mainly on low achievers. It seems to me the efforts and dollars are going to those students because gifted students will score in the acceptable range whether or not their needs are met in the classroom. One area that seems to be slowly lacking is funding for technology. There has been some progress made but not enough. (Model- Content)

162- The main concern I have now for the program is that we have to use the same reading program as the regular class. My students hated those 2 days very much and couldn't wait until they got to the 3 days dedicated for gifted activities. They disliked the stories and found them to be a bit boring and the work was never challenging enough. (Model- Content)

163- Sometimes materials are ordered with the funds before I am notified. This year the new form of training and then providing materials I think this will work better, because sometimes you review material that is inadequate for your students if ordered by someone else. (Model- Resource)

164- It allows students of similar abilities to advance by sharing with each other and learning to becoming independent and at the same time self-directed. (Model- Full-time)

165- Would like to see more special funding. For example, computer lab for the gifted with a media projector- students could do more research and create PowerPoint presentations. (Model- Resource)

169- I only wish it were larger, more students. Most students in this area go to Magnet schools for either talented or gifted. Although, it allowed for a more familiar relationship with students, it would be nice to have a wider variety of students with a variety of strengths to share. (Model- Full-time, Resource, Content)

170- I am honored to have been selected to teach an 8th grade gifted class. I am currently taking the 1st series of the curriculum, development for the gifted which has been taught me a lot. I plan to continue with the next over the series over the summer which I feel will better prepare me for next school year. It is a wonderful program, I enjoy it. (Model- Resource, Content)

171- Students should be identified for gifted beyond the elementary school. (Model- Content)

173- Gifted students (the majority) appreciate the opportunity of belonging to a special program. As a teacher, it is very rewarding to teach kids eager to learn. The Gifted Program at Coral Way is organized in an awesome way and I enjoy it a lot. Our principal, Dr. Ortiz, supports the teachers and the program "All the Way" and I'm very thankful for that. (Model- Full-time)

175- You have to stop the insanity. Most teachers are ill equipped to handle gifted kids because they cannot understand them. For the most part, teacher quality is abysmally poor. If you don't have smart teachers how can you have smart kids. Hire gifted teachers, pay them BIG money and stop labeling kids gifted when they are just smart. (Stop allowing PLAN B kids in) This process devalues the system and creates a watered down class. (Model- Resource, Content)

176- I'm not sure about the philosophy of "if you're gifted in one subject, you're gifted in all subjects."- we may be stressing students who are gifted in science but not in language arts (or vice-versa) to take every gifted class. Gifted students have the benefit of having the same teachers. More collaborative lessons are accomplished this way. (Model- Full-time)

177- Overall, I really enjoy being a teacher of the Gifted Program for the challenge. However, I do feel there exists a lack of resources, especially software. I also feel there is a hesitancy to place middle school gifted students only in their strong subjects, leaving some of my students somewhat lost since their strong suit may be math and not language arts. Also, EPs are always a bit of a chaotic process and we are generally encouraged to complete those during our planning and not given knowledge of our EP days. (Model- Content)

179- I do have the support of the administration but that doesn't mean that the situation is perfect. The classes are larger than they should be for full effectiveness. Field trips are limited because of the other special programs and the emphasis on FCAT preparation. (Model- Resource)

182- If the gifted program was treated with the same support as the ESE program it would be an asset to the school and communities. The gifted program teaches students to be leaders, independent thinkers and learners. It gives the students the opportunity to advance and accelerate. This gives the students an opportunity to complete college courses in high school instead of wasting their time with electives. It also helps them financially with their education. A great deal of these students will have financial difficulty in going to college and the gifted program alleviates the financial burden by preparing them for dual enrollment classes. I feel as a teacher of the gifted that Miami-Dade County places very little emphasis on the gifted learner. (Model- Resource)

184- Gifted and honor course students should have access to computers on a daily basis. My school does not provide. Gifted students should be placed in small class settings and evenly distributed throughout the classes. One of my classes is comprised of 34 students while another has 22. Finally, more blacks need to be included in the gifted program. (Model- Not applicable)

185- There needs to be more funding because the money is divided among 9 teachers. (Model- Full-time, Content)

188- The biggest benefits that our program have are Mrs. Strickland, Cory Rodrigues, Ms, Montoya, and the fact that Leah Sapp science chair and Laura Siegmeister math chair are on the gifted team. Sapp and Steve Strongson (gifted team leader) are very innovative and energetic. They bring so much to the program. Finally we have an administrative team that supports them and lets them/us work rather than standing in the way. School wide directives do sometimes hold us back though (that our reading curriculum team comes up). (Model- Full-time, Content)

188- #15 As a full-time program, teachers spiral with the students over three years. Parent meetings are held monthly with 17-25 parents attending. Parent involvement is outstanding! #5 The program is full-time content and a gifted resource class is offered. (Model- Full-time, Resource, Content)

188- I would benefit if I could have pre-advanced placement training, vertical training with a high school A.P. teacher. Differentiated materials would help too. Remove the FCAT shackles- my kids are already at adequate progress and do not need remedial tutoring tools. (Model- Full-time, Content)

189- Our gifted program has decreased in the # of students since 1997 (when the school first opened). The main reason for this population decline has been the elimination of a variety of electives and advanced classes, such as Geometry and Biology. Our gifted students choose to go to other Middle Schools where they have more academic opportunities. (Model- Full-time, Content)

189- One of my problems with the program is that many of the students get to the point where they believe they know so much that they no longer have to put much effort into their work. This seriously affects that students should be retested for the program in the sixth grade. This will allow for late bloomers to be brought into the program, and for those who are struggling to be put into a different program. (Model- Full-time)

189- Our numbers have fallen tremendously since we opened in 1997. We had a dedicated faculty of gifted team teachers who taught only gifted classes and we had a common planning period. We offered a major field trip for enrichment each grading period with close to 100% voluntary participation. Both overnight and day trips were allowed. Now, we are restricted to day trips which are nearly impossible to have approved. We usually end up having an assembly rather than leaving the building. We offer nothing in the way of enrichment or specialties to attract truly gifted and talented students to our school. Most of our students find those programs at Curry MS, and our remaining population are almost exclusively Plan B students. We have no pre-magnet classes to prepare them for high school academies. There are no foreign language, no geometry, no computer classes for any students in Doolin. A lot of us are also required to teach regular or advanced classes in addition to gifted. (Model- Content)

189- The gifted program in my school has too many students in one class; I have all 34 students in one class where you can not properly serve all their strengths. Then there are the students which should not be in all gifted classes; not all students are gifted in all subjects. I believe the Gifted Program should nominate students by their abilities and not be so broad in their criteria, I see too many advanced students in this program. Not all in the program are gifted or advanced. (Model- Content)

189- I do not have much contact with district level personnel for gifted. However, they have been available and supportive whenever I needed them. We need more science teachers confided in gifted. (Model- Full-time, Content)

189- We need to attract our gifted students back to our school. Other schools offer better opportunities which is causing our numbers to decrease.(Model- Full-time, Content)

190- #8 Not sure about access since more are placed in elementary. They really need to qualify. Should be reviewed in middle school. #9 We need hands on field trips. None this year!! #17 None in subject are; none beyond certificate classes. #18 Programs outside of District. #19, 20 Gifted teachers need to be able to order for the classroom not for something for a storage area. Out of sight... Out of use. (Model- Full-time)

191- I believe there are students in my gifted classes that don't belong. Just because you are gifted does not mean you are gifted in every subject. Ex. Student may be gifted in Reading/Lang. Arts, but not math. Then that student should not be in a gifted math class. This should be looked at carefully before putting child in gifted classes. It can be very frustrating to the student. (Model- Content)

196- All schools should have a gifted program. (Model- Content)

197- Gifted program at KB Community School is very successful. The parents are supportive and the students are self- directed learners (with a few exceptions). I appreciate the support from the Gifted Program. We used the science booklets and worksheets (Scientists in Their Time, etc.) this year. I especially appreciate the gifted of USA TODAY. We use it each week to read/respond in the journals. THANK YOU. I also use the math manipulatives provided in the workshop for Gifted teachers of Middle school. (Model- Resource)

199- Benefits: The students are able to benefit from an accelerated program and are able to do challenging courses, thus relieving boredom in many cases. Limitations: Because the students are labeled gifted, they are placed in all gifted classes. This sometimes frustrates students who are not gifted in all the subject areas. (Model- Resource, Content)

201- The gifted program, at this school, is very well organized and prepares the students for higher level courses. It also helps the students to get accepted to magnet programs, IB programs, and advanced placement courses.

201- Gifted Program is an excellent program as it is helpful to students for increasing their skills in every sphere of life. (Model- Full-time, Resource, Content)

202- Benefits at my school- unlimited resources, flexible schedules, support of classroom teachers. Limitations- Combined grades (1, 3, 4) at once! Gifted students entering at various at points throughout the year. Educational level of identified gifted students not at expected level. (Model- Content)

203- Students need to be tested sooner. (Model- Full-time)

204- I feel I am supported by my principal at the ESE department at my school. The only problem I find with teaching gifted is the classes we are required to take for certification. I feel these classes could easily be condensed from 5 courses to 3. (Model- Not Applicable)

205- I feel that the content model gifted program should be expanded to more than just one subject area if not it forces all students to take the specified gifted content area class when that may not be the age in which they are able to excel. (Model- Content)

206- Gifted students should be placed Gifted courses only in the subjects in which they excel. If it truly difficult to teach at a challenging level when half of the students are deficient in the subject. I have had level 2 math FCAT students in a gifted Algebra 2. These students cannot keep up and force me to slow down the pace of instruction. A truly gifted Algebra 2 course should only have students who are gifted in Math. Then the sky would be the limit. Same is true for other subjects. (Model- Content)

209- One of the greatest benefits of the Gifted Program are the smaller class size and the teacher to student ratio. This setting provides students with a friendlier and more comfortable environment that facilitates the trust to enhance student learning. (Model- Content)

213- I have spent countless hours and money in making sure that the students are academically challenged. This school does not have adequate funds to facilitate a productive program. I have made my classroom what it is. More funds are needed. An order was placed at the beginning of the year, I still am waiting for the order. (Model- Resource, Content)

214- Benefits- Allows truly gifted students to accelerate at an appropriate pace in a comfortable setting that emphasizes their academic focus. Limitations- Students accepted into program only through alternative guidelines, or by purchased private psychologist certification find it extremely frustrating to not be able to excel, or easily manage the fast pace of the course. (Model- Content)

216- I realize that current economics won't allow classes of 3 or 4 students, but I've found through the years that in a class of up to 44 "Gifted" students only a handful would qualify (according to the original definition of Gifted). The students have told me that they especially enjoyed Gifted in Middle school- they felt protected from most of the middle school weirdness. (Model- Content)

218- Needs more technological resources like software and desktop computers for students. Also personal lap top for each gifted teacher. This will help to continue creating projects at home from online resources which was started in class. (Model- Content)

219- The main problem is being able to complete Gifted Educational Plans. Time should be set up two weeks before school starts for Gifted Teachers (with LEA) to complete all EPs before school starts and use the (4) days for subs to assess student progress using data- such as graded work to support progress or need to write a new EP. Also, Gifted Teacher's schedules must depend on the LEA's schedule to meet with parents. Many times, it does not seem to work out. Teachers now do not have enough time to complete forms that take 40 minutes (using computer) and meeting with parents to complete all EPs. (Model- Resource, Content)

222- Gifted kids=smart kids, in general. But, what is true for the proper instruction of "gifted kids" is true for all kids! I agree with the advanced and accelerated curriculum, but the "special ed" label is not warranted. Also, students are not "gifted" for life. They should be reevaluated in 5th and 8th grade to determine whether they still belong in the program. (Model- Full-time)

227- When placing students back into the gifted program after an absence one must check the academic and effort grades. (Model- Full-time, Content)

230- The program is at its inception. The teachers, for most part, an enthusiastic, but more courses need to be added in order to develop the program. The drawback is that many teachers at the H.S. level feel that "gifted" classes are unnecessary, and some have been quite vocal about it. Nonetheless, it is hoped that our program will continue to grow, and that more classes in different subjects will be added. (Model- Content)

231- Some of the students aren't all that "gifted." My school does a good job of maintaining the program as focused as possible. Students who are not performing are exited. The most limiting factor in any case is the FCAT. If some students have a 2 or 3 in reading, you must address basic skills that gifted students should be proficient. (Model- Content)

232- Dade county doesn't have a gifted program. When I teach a child with a 112 full scale IQ, a 2.8 reading level, and 2's on her NRT's and I can't get her into remedial

reading because she's "gifted," there are problems all around. She's not gifted is the start. This country is too worried about being P.C. that they are doing a disservice to their truly gifted students. We don't have the resources to truly differentiate the curriculum. This program needs an overhaul. The place to start is with principals who don't like it because its "elitist." Then get more district support. Allow us the flexibility to remove non-performing students from the program- failure to thrive. Scope and sequence doesn't allow differentiation class size or 30 or more is not differentiated instruction. (Model-Full-time)

236- With this being my first year as a gifted teacher, I have learned very much. My certification classes have prepared me but nothing is like being the classroom. Resources and technology have been beneficial as well as staff and administrative support. My only limitation would have to be my experience with gifted but that will change as I become better prepared. (Model- Resource, Content)

237- The gifted program works well and benefits students. –Limitations are the EP set up with documentation of general ed teacher. At the high school level it is impossible to have general ed teacher sit in on EP and it makes it very difficult for the gifted teacher doing EPs to run around getting documentation when we teach 5 periods. However, I do understand that these are state issues. (Model- Full-time, Content)

239- The program is very good. The teachers are excellent. The students are highly motivated. However, I feel that we could accomplish more if we were not limited by a lack of resources; especially computers and software. (Model- Full-time, Resource)

240- I think that some things that would benefit the program would be to have the students involved in gifted clubs (such as Mensa or National Honor Society). More activities as a gifted group would, I believe, motivate them more. (Model- Full-time)

280- Gifted students benefit from participation in homogeneous groups where instruction follows a pace level that is more complex. Also, the level of abstractness in gifted classes is consistent with the gifted students abilities and instructional needs. (Model- Content)

999- I would like to have more education resources for example HOT (high order thinking) worksheets or student activities. I would like funds to take my students on educational field trips. My class is multi-graded. It is hard at times because of the maturity levels, experiences, and socioeconomics. I would like my school recruit more students so I could have more students of a particular grade level(s).(Model- Content)

PLAN OF ACTION FORM

Name and Title of Respondent: Ms. Antoinette P. Dunbar, Deputy Superintendent

Bureau/Office: Curriculum Instruction and School Improvement

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Title of Report: Evaluation of the Gifted Program

Recommendation 1 **of** 4 : Track the math and reading FCAT performance of gifted and academically talented students.

Check one: X **I agree with this recommendation (discuss below)**
 _____ **I disagree with this recommendation (discuss below)**

If you agree with the recommendation, please describe your Plan of Action. Otherwise, provide your rationale for disagreement.

The Division of Advanced Academic Programs will work with Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis to develop an automated report to track the FCAT performance of gifted and advanced students and target programs with greatest need.

Teachers in the programs with the greatest need will receive individualized professional development from Curriculum Support Specialists assigned to the Division of Advanced Academic Programs that will address students' weaknesses; in addition, coaching, mentoring, curriculum differentiation, and assessment techniques will be provided to ensure quantitatively differentiated curriculum based on content, concepts, processes, and applications.

PLAN OF ACTION FORM

Name and Title of Respondent: Ms. Antoinette P. Dunbar, Deputy Superintendent

Bureau/Office: Curriculum Instruction and School Improvement

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Title of Report: Evaluation of the Gifted Program

Recommendation 2 **of** 4 : Review the gifted program's elementary delivery model for model academic and cost effectiveness.

Check one: _____ **I agree with this recommendation (discuss below)**

_____ **X** **I disagree with this recommendation (discuss below)**

If you agree with the recommendation, please describe your Plan of Action. Otherwise, provide your rationale for disagreement.

The Gifted Task Force reviewed all the elementary delivery models (Resource K-5/6, Content K-5/6, Full time K-5/6) and made specific recommendations for each of them, with regards to academic effectiveness, that have been implemented since the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. Staff from the Division of Advanced Academic Programs is working with schools to ensure that:

1. Specifically designed instruction and related services, as required and defined by the Florida Department of Education for continued funding, are designed to meet the unique needs and goals of each gifted student;
2. Delivery models provide for the special needs of gifted learners and the maximum development of each student's academic talents;
3. Instructional programs emphasize acceleration, enrichment, and differentiation based on students' strengths and needs; and
4. Varied delivery options are available to meet student's special needs based on the student's Educational Plan.

Cost effectiveness is impossible to measure since all programs receive the same funding based on enrollment. If cost effectiveness were to be measured by student performance, the following were the results of the analysis conducted by the Gifted Task Force:

1. Full time programs were the most cost effective since student performance is highest in these programs;
2. Content programs (Language Arts/Social Studies and Mathematics/Science) provided the next level of student performance; and
3. Resource programs demonstrated the lowest levels of student achievement with mean FCAT NRT scores in Reading Comprehension of 77.5% and Mathematics Problem Solving mean FCAT NRT scores of 82.5%

A review of the gifted program's elementary delivery model for academic and cost effectiveness would be a reiteration of work that has already taken place.

Name and Title of Respondent: Ms. Antoinette P. Dunbar, Deputy Superintendent

Bureau/Office: Curriculum Instruction and School Improvement

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Title of Report: Evaluation of the Gifted Program

Recommendation 4 of 4 : Encourage all of the gifted teachers to annually attend gifted education training and to acquire State endorsements in gifted education.

Check one: **I agree with this recommendation (discuss below)**

I agree with this recommendation (discuss below)

If you agree with the recommendation, please describe your Plan of Action. Otherwise, provide your rationale for disagreement.

Professional development opportunities specifically in the areas of curriculum differentiation, curriculum design, and assessment and evaluation are targeted for delivery during Summer HEAT to approximately 120 elementary and secondary teachers of the gifted. During the school year the three abovementioned components will be offered to teachers of the gifted that were not impacted during Summer HEAT. Curriculum Support Specialists will ensure systematic implementation of instructional practices.

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational programs/activities and programs/activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education, and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for all as required by:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 - prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), as amended - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended - prohibits sex discrimination in payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same establishment.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - prohibits discrimination against the disabled.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public service, public accommodations, and telecommunications.

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