

Fall 2008

Strategies Used in Implementing the Multiple Eligibility Criteria Rule in Georgia Elementary Schools to increase Representation of Black American Students in Gifted Education

Emily Byas Felton

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STRATEGIES USED IN IMPLEMENTING THE MULTIPLE ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA RULE IN GEORGIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TO INCREASE
REPRESENTATION OF BLACK AMERICAN STUDENTS IN GIFTED EDUCATION

by

EMILY BYAS FELTON

(Under the Direction of Abebayehu Tekleselassie)

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. The framework for this qualitative research project used a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens while employing ethnographic study methods. The instruments for this study incorporated interviews, focus group discussion, and observations.

The analysis of the research from this study found that multiple identification standards such as, motivation, creativity, class performance, love of learning, interest, as well as academics is beneficial when identifying Black American students. Data from this study suggested professional development in student identification and cultural awareness and differences of Black American students is helpful for identification. Enhanced parental support and teacher/parent communication would further improve efficiency when identifying gifted Black American students in the present identification system. The multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia is sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students, according to research however, schools must

take advantage of the different testing assessments available. Having this flexibility in place widens the options for Black American students.

INDEX WORDS: Black American Students in Gifted Education

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2008

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Electronic Version Approved:
December 2008

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to first thank God Almighty for giving me the strength, determination and the stamina to complete this dissertation. It was because of Him this was possible. To my loving husband Eugene for speaking the words of success over my life throughout this study. To my loving parents, Carl and Ann Byas, no matter how many degrees I obtain, I will never be smarter than my father whose experiences in the military and overall life experiences surpass all my degrees. My mother never lets me forget I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me. To my sisters, Carletta and Cynthia you are always there with words of encouragement. To my best friend and sister, Marie you always were there to lift me up in prayer before every defense and in my life. You all are truly the wind beneath my wings. I love you all very much.

Thank you to my principal Jim Allen for his support during my study. I wish to thank St. Matthew Elementary School, principal and teachers for your support and flexibility; a completed project would have never been achieved without your help and encouragement.

I would also like to thank Reagan Payne for assisting with transcribing the interviews and focus group discussion tapes. I know this was a tedious task and you handled the task with professionalism and grace.

I had numerous quality educators throughout my education experience, but I never had anyone who helped me re-direct my way of thinking until working with my committee members, Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson and Dr. Linda M. Arthur. I appreciate your advice and coaching me from start to finish. I especially want to thank my chair, Dr. Ababayehu Tekleselassie, for his encouragement, patience, support, guidance, and

time invested in me and this dissertation. My life has been shaped by your invaluable teaching. I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Mallory and Dr. Tekleselassie for nominating me for the Dr. Malcom Katz Memorial Scholarship Award; it was because you saw the possibilities in me that I was the recipient of such a prestigious award.

Lastly, I want to thank all my family members, friends, and Cohort XIII who constantly encouraged and supported me by praying and asking about my work. There are too many to name, but they know who they are. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On June 24, 1998, the Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1998 (H.R. 4127) was enacted (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). According to the Act, gifted students demonstrate evidence of high performance capability in academics, or in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capabilities. Gifted students require services or activities not ordinarily provided by a school in order to fully develop their capabilities. Gifted programs can help more students achieve at higher levels and will assist them to perform in highly innovative and creative jobs in today's workplace (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

The main purpose of gifted education is to meet the needs and interests of gifted children in ways that will expand their knowledge and talents, as well as prepare them for productive and rewarding lives when their formal schooling ends. Gifted education is designed to provide students with enriched learning opportunities that are seldom available in the regular classroom setting. Gifted children are from all cultural, racial, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some gifted children have disabilities and some speak English as a second language.

Subjectivity

For six years the researcher has served in the position of on-site gifted coordinator at her prior county. The researcher also had an opportunity to be on a gifted eligibility task force that evaluated the current referral process, identification and gifted referral forms. Advocating for gifted students and gifted programs has always been a priority.

The researcher believes, as do other researchers, that early identification of giftedness and placement in a gifted program can make a difference in the education of Black American students (Ford, 2003; Gallagher & Coleman, 1992). However, the researcher has seen first hand the disparity between Black American representation in the gifted program as compared to their representation in the general school population.

For six years the researcher has perceived that it is much easier to identify the problems of educating culturally diverse exceptional children than it is to solve the problems, which might include: parents' and educators' lack of knowledge of gifted traits, inadequate identification procedures with the multiple eligibility criteria, researchers' lack of agreement on the definition of "gifted," keeping culturally diverse students in gifted programs, and the gap between theories or policies and actual identification practices.

The researcher is aware by her own experiences and had to first make specific biases explicit. One bias the researcher had was anger in identifying Black American students by the teachers, why was teachers having a difficult task identifying these students, would they not want them to be in a higher level-thinking classroom. Another bias was attitude that all counties had the same testing assessments and there were not many options available to the local school systems.

The researcher had to continuously remind herself during the focus group discussion and individual interviews not to interject her biases and opinions. Keeping an open mind allowed the researcher to explore rich, untapped sources of data not mapped out in the research design (Fetterman, 1989). The researcher was excited and anxious by

learning something new about school systems taking every advantage of the options given to them by the Georgia Department of Education.

Background of Study

The process for the identification of gifted students has historically relied on the IQ test (Evans, 1997). The status quo has narrowly defined the gifted population in order to identify who is gifted and who is not (Evans, 1997). Researchers have argued that traditional identification processes have excluded many children from gifted programs (Bittker, 1993; Evans, 1997; McBee, 2006). Evans (1997) states that district-wide norm-referenced test scores are used as part of the student search process to ensure that all students are considered for possible gifted program placement. Identification within local school districts use three of four defined selection criteria, which include an intelligence test score at or above the 95th percentile, achievement test score at or above the 95th percentile, a creativity test score, and a standardized motivational test score at or above the 90th percentile or a combination of the four (Bernal, 2000; Bittker, 1993; Gallagher & Coleman, 1992) (See Appendix A).

Georgia's on-going challenge to increase the representation of minority students led to the adoption of Georgia's multiple eligibility criteria rule in 1993 (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). This rule (160-4-2-.38) changed a thirty-year practice of identifying gifted students by relying unilaterally on aptitude scores achieved on standardized tests (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). These revised rules changed the procedures by which Georgia's public schools identify gifted students and moved from a one-dimensional, IQ-based process to one that recognized different types of giftedness and broadened and expanded the definition of giftedness. This revised

definition extended beyond aptitude and achievement as measured on standardized instruments and included creativity and motivation as additional criteria to determine giftedness (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). Aptitude scores had been the gatekeepers of gifted programs; no matter what other positive abilities or characteristics were present, a student could not be placed in a gifted program in Georgia without a qualifying IQ score.

Gifted students from at-risk populations have not been represented in gifted programs in the same percentage that they exist in the overall population (Evans, 1997). In revising Georgia's gifted identification procedures, advocates for change intended to make gifted programs more inclusive and more representative of the state's diverse population. However, there is still a significant gap in the underrepresentation of Black American students in gifted programs. Gifted program enrollment statistics for the 2006-2007 school year, provided by Mark Vignati, Operations Analyst Technology Manager the Georgia Department of Education, indicated that White American students made up 47 percent of Georgia's total population and 72 percent of Georgia's gifted population. Black American students who composed 38 percent of the population composed 15 percent of the state's gifted population. These statistics also indicated that Asian American students composed 3 percent of the total population and 6 percent of the gifted population and Hispanic students composed 9 percent of the total population and 3 percent of the gifted population (See Appendix B).

Presently, the State Board of Education requires and authorizes each local board to develop curriculum for its gifted students in grades K-12 (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). Various gifted delivery models for elementary programs are approved

by the state and are the basis for the state funding program, Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). Elementary students identified as eligible for gifted services must receive a minimum of five (5) FTE segments per week (Georgia Department of Education, 2006).

Gifted services in Georgia differ between school sites, grades, semesters, and/or grading periods. Basically, there are three state-approved elementary service delivery models for gifted elementary students. Delivery models are organized by Direct and Indirect Services (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). Direct Services for elementary students include Resource Class and Cluster Grouping. The only approved Indirect Services for elementary services is the Collaborative Teaching model. However, the Georgia Department of Education encourages the development of innovative programs for gifted students that are in accordance with the needs of the community and the philosophy of the district (Georgia Department of Education, 2006).

According to Ford and Harris (1996) differences in achievement orientations, communication styles, behavioral styles, and learning styles are used to describe Black students' poor school performance compared to White students. Black students' attitudes toward school and achievement orientation influence their achievement behaviors and motivation. Bernal (2000) and Harmon (2001) found that Black students who dropped out of school had significantly higher IQ scores but lower achievement orientations than those who stayed in schools. One of the reasons that Black students decided to drop out was the lack of opportunity for minority groups (Bernal, 2000). Black students developed ineffective coping styles that alienated them from school. For instance, in a predominantly White gifted program, Black students may limit or avoid completely any contact with their White peers; they may deliberately exert little effort in school because

it is associated with the White culture or they may choose not to remain in the gifted program (Bernal, 2000 & Morris, 2001). Harmon (2001) has suggested that adopting multicultural and broader definitions of giftedness and creating better tools for assessing and identifying gifted African American students represent small steps toward equitable education for all students.

Ford, Harris, Tyson, and Trotman (2000) stated the reasons for the underrepresentation of African American, Hispanic American, and American Indian students in gifted education programs are recruitment issues, identification, and screening which consisted of definitions, instrumentation, policies, and procedures. Teacher training, teacher expectations, student-teacher relations, and peer relations and home environment are also factors in underrepresentation (Ford, et al., 2000). According to Schneider (2006), a student can be identified as gifted in one state, but not in another, based upon the definitions that each district has adopted. Forty-five states use an achievement and/or aptitude test in the identification process. However, in February of 1958, the Georgia House of Representatives passed HR-246 “providing for the study of needs and proposals for increasing educational advantages for gifted children in the public school system of Georgia” (Williams, 2000, p. 62). Minority students are likely to be placed in low ability groups or in a vocational preparatory track, which decreases the likelihood that these students will be identified as gifted (Bernal, 2000; Ford et al., 2000; Golden, 2004). By 1995, the Georgia State Board of Education passed a multiple criteria rule to include the use of data in the areas of motivation and creativity, as well as ability and achievement for identifying gifted students.

Statement of Problem

For 35 years, placement in gifted programs has depended almost totally on strict psychometric measurement of intellectual or academic ability and scholastic achievement. Students identified for gifted programs were those few students who performed well on standardized tests. Georgia's multiple criteria guidelines for gifted identification were designed primarily to reverse the underrepresentation of at-risk gifted students in the state's gifted program by ensuring equitable access for all students, regardless of their income, social class, background, or status. Because giftedness is a multidimensional concept, no one source provides enough information on which to base identification and placement decisions (Ford & Harris, 1990).

Multiple eligibility criteria now used in Georgia consist of four categories of assessment: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation; students may demonstrate these areas in a variety of ways. The student may qualify by meeting the standards in any three of the four data categories. Mental ability tests are the most current and measures intelligence or cognitive ability. Students' scores should range within the 96th percentile on a composite or full-scale score. (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). Typical components of the mental ability tests include Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning subtests. An example of a mental ability test is the COGAT (Cognitive Ability Test). A mental ability test score is only one part of a student's intellectual and creative strengths.

SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 education program for gifted students allows on-site gifted coordinators to use either age or grade norms for standardized achievement test scores (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). It is recommended that systems use

grade norms, since the purpose is to evaluate the child's achievement in comparison to other children in that grade level. Students' scores should be in the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math, or total reading section(s) of a standardized achievement test. An example of a standardized achievement test is the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills). Standardized achievement tests should be the most current editions of tests that measure reading skills, including comprehension, and should give a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in math concepts and applications (Georgia Department of Education, 2006).

Students must score in the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a standardized test of creative thinking or, from a panel of three or more evaluators, score 90 on a scale of 1-100 on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and/or performances (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). An example of a standardized test of creative thinking is the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. These tests are the most current editions of tests that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration.

As evidence of motivation, students may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products/performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators. Students should score in the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale (Georgia Department of Education, 2006). An example of a standardized motivational test is CAIMI (Children Academic Intrinsic Motivation Instrument) (See Appendix A). Assessing motivation levels among very young children has proven to be one of the most difficult areas of assessment in the multiple criteria rule.

The construct of intrinsic motivation of young children is often not as clearly defined as it is later in students' school careers (Georgia Department of Education, 2006).

Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality. In addition, some students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or behavioral problems may be found to be gifted. The flexibility of Georgia's multiple criteria rule should be used to promote equity in identification of gifted students from all groups. Unfortunately there is still a discrepancy of Black American students when compared to their representation in the general school population. All Georgia school systems are given the flexibility to choose their own gifted testing assessment.

As education accountability grows increasingly important in America, Georgia is committed to increase the representation of Black American students in gifted education programs. The disproportionality of Black American students in gifted programs has been explored and dissected. However, there appears to be little research on strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to close the gap of the underrepresentation of Black American students in the gifted program.

To date, little data regarding how the establishment of multiple eligibility criteria procedures have affected elementary schools in areas of increasing representation of Black American students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule of Georgia Elementary Schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted programs.

Research Questions

1. What strategies are currently used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools?
2. What factors influence the decision of gatekeepers who preside on gifted education committees?
3. How is the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted programs?

Significance of the Study

The faces entering the doors of the public schools today are not reflected in the classroom of gifted programs. Georgia's multiple eligibility criteria guidelines for gifted identification were designed primarily to reverse the underrepresentation of at-risk gifted students in the state's gifted programs by ensuring equitable access for all students, regardless of their income, social class, background, or status. The purpose of this study was to provide gifted coordinators, gifted teachers, and regular education teachers with data to support new strategies and guidelines to assist in increasing the number of Black American students in gifted education. This study will be valuable, to a gifted coordinator, in assisting teachers with the most effective and equitable means of identifying Black American students.

Delimitations

According to Best and Kahn (1993), limitations are conditions that are beyond the control of the researcher that may affect the conclusions of a study and delimitations are the boundaries of the study. The delimitations in this study are:

1. This study describes only the criteria examination of gifted programs in one county in the state of Georgia.
2. This study explores only the underrepresentation of Black American students; however, there are other minority underrepresented gifted populations including Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Multi Racial students.
3. This study describes only the gifted programs in elementary schools; however, middle and high schools also identify and test gifted students.

Research Methods

Research Design

This study will seek to describe and analyze the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. The framework for this qualitative research project uses a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens while employing ethnographic study methods. According to Glesne (2006), ethnographic study methods uses the openness of qualitative inquiry that allows the researcher to approach the intricacy of social engagement, in an effort to gain an understanding of how various participants view the world around them. Ethnographic study methods use a variety of methods including collecting data through interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and documents (Glesne, 2006). Critical Race Theory focuses on and learns from the assortment of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by certain groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged (Yosso, 2005). Minority groups bring with them various forms of aspirations, social, and family backgrounds from their homes and communities into the classroom Critical Race Theory acknowledges

these various forms (Yosso, 2005). Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers a view that affirms the cultural identity of racial minorities, and uses five tenets to exposes structural inequities that schools perpetuate. Given this foundation, Critical Race Theory has evolved around these tenets: Counter-Storytelling, The Permanence of Racism, Critiques of Liberalism, White Flight and Interest Convergence. Some of these tenets and how they make up the researcher's study will be discussed throughout chapter five.

The report will reduce the data using thematic analysis and according to Ezzy (2002) is the process of identifying themes or concepts that are within the data.

Population

This study identified an elementary school from a Georgia Department of Education school system. The researcher used a pseudonym to describe this system - St. John County. St. John County is a suburban public school system, which houses nineteen elementary schools, seven middle schools, and four high schools. St. John is one of the most culturally diverse counties in the nation and has a student enrollment of more than 23,000. St. John's demographics are 1% Asian, 44% Black, 43% White, 8% Hispanic and 4% Multiracial (See Appendix C). St. John County calls their gifted program, Program Challenge. Georgia Department of Education school systems refer to their gifted programs by names determined by the local school systems. A pseudonym was also used for the elementary school - St. Matthew Elementary School. St. Matthew's has a student enrollment of 658. The demographics for St. Matthew's Elementary School are 1.3% Asian, 47% Black, 43% White, 4.1% Hispanic and 4.8% Multiracial (See Appendix C). The researcher chose this elementary school because of the number of Black American students in the gifted program. St. Matthew has 160 students enrolled in their

gifted program. Black American students make up 30% of St. Matthew's gifted population. Elementary schools were used because most students are referred for initial gifted screening in elementary schools.

Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling finds subjects who fit the purpose of the study by providing the most information about the research questions (Glesne, 2006). According to Glesne (2006) purposive sampling is important in naturalistic inquiry because it increases the range of data exposed as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered. Purposive sampling also provides excellent sources of information from key informants, who often possess knowledge about the topic and are willing to provide specific details to the researcher. Participants in this study were seven kindergarten through fifth grade regular education teachers, one kindergarten through fifth grade gifted teacher and one kindergarten through fifth grade gifted lead teacher. The researcher conducted individual interviews with these participants. A focus group discussion was conducted with the St. Matthew Elementary School gifted eligibility team, which consisted of regular education teachers, a gifted teacher, and a lead gifted teacher. These groups of educators were selected because of their knowledge and background of referring students to gifted programs and teaching students that are considered gifted.

Instrumentation

The instruments for this study incorporated interviews, focus group discussion, and observations. Observations, focus group discussions, and interviewing are data collection of qualitative research (Glesne, 2006). It is a powerful way to gain insight into

educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals (Glesne, 2006).

The researcher's interviews were flexible, open ended, informal and semi-structured (Creswell, 2003) and focus centered on the research questions. The research questions were used to develop the interview guide and were the focus when the interview questions were developed. While conducting interviews, the researcher followed the advice that Weis and Fine (2000) offered to interviewers that some people offer information more readily and easily than others and that interviewers must be prepared to help those who are less talkative and less willing to offer information. Suggestions like these included providing a relaxed atmosphere, demonstrating interest in what the subject has to say, phrasing questions which elicit more than one-word responses, and being willing to probe for more complete information. According to Weis and Fine (2000), one of the most effective types of probes is simply to withhold a response and be silent in order to give a respondent an opportunity to provide details and/or clarification.

The researcher observed a gifted eligibility team meeting that consisted of the following members: regular education teachers, gifted teachers and the lead gifted teacher. The eligibility team meeting determines if further evaluation of the student is warranted. Observing these proceedings will give the researcher a first hand account of the identification process within a system that has a high representation of Black American students. A focus group discussion will be conducted with the eligibility team members.

Data Collection

After obtaining approval to conduct the study from the dissertation committee, St. John County's Department of Research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee, the researcher contacted the principal to ask permission to allow four – seven regular education teachers and one – five gifted teachers from grades K-5, to participate in individual interviews. Permission was also requested to observe a gifted eligibility team meeting. By observing these proceedings, the researcher had the opportunity to witness the identification process of St. Matthew Elementary School. A focus group discussion was conducted with the eligibility team members.

The researcher conducted a pilot study involving regular education and gifted education teachers within the researcher's prior county. The results and feedback received from the pilot study assisted the researcher in rewording or clarifying the interview questions and the focus discussion questions. An interview guide was sent to the principal, along with the informed consent, prior to the interviews. The consent form included the name of the researcher, the purpose of the study, and most importantly the benefits this study will have to offer assistance with increasing representation of Black American students or any minority group. Contact information of the researcher and the faculty advisor was listed, so if the participants had any questions about the study or concerns for their rights, information was available. Participants have the option of not participating in the interviews and there was not a penalty for deciding not to participate in the study. After obtaining permission from the principal and receiving names of the teachers who participated in the interviews, the interview guide was sent via email prior to the actual interviews. The regular education teachers and gifted teachers knew, prior

to the interviews, what questions would be asked. With permission, the interviews, observations, and focus group were tape recorded to ensure accuracy. If participants would like a copy of the results, they had the opportunity to email the researcher the request.

Data Analysis

This method of sorting data enables the researcher to search for patterns, consistencies, and discrepancies that lead to generalizations (Glesne, 2006). The researcher will analyze data by a process of sorting the data into large categories which will be coded to keep track of each particular category.

Transcribing the audiotapes was one of the first steps in thematic analysis. Ezzy (2002) states thematic analysis themes are not decided prior to coding the data and are more inductive than content because of this reason. Using this form of research will open up doors to issues and problems the researcher has not anticipated (Ezzy, 2002). Seidman (2006) also recommends that the researcher read the text and mark passages that are interesting. Once the text was read, a) codes or themes was created, b) common threads/frequencies were identified, c) how the researcher explained these connections, d) what the researcher understood as a result of the interviews, d) what unexpected information was found, and e) look for consistent or inconsistency within the literature (Glesne, 2006; Seidman, 2006).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The steady growth of research investigating the underrepresentation of Black American students in gifted programs has resulted in a substantial body of literature. The review of literature begins by examining several areas relating to gifted education: historical overview of gifted education and gifted education in Georgia, identification process of gifted students using the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina, and implementation of multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia through the role of teacher, gifted teacher, and county gifted coordinator. The next section will discuss the major issues of implementing the multiple eligibility criteria. The literature review concludes with a summary of recommended practices that should be considered by schools that are striving to improve the identification of Black American and other underserved populations in their gifted programs.

History of Gifted Education in the United States

Before the 1950s, American public schools gave little attention to the education of gifted students. In 1950, the Educational Policies Commission expressed concern for schools' neglect of mentally superior students. In 1951, the Ohio Commission on Children and Youth reported that only two percent of schools in the state had special classes for the gifted and only nine percent of the schools had any type of gifted enrichment in the classroom. According to a 1955 report presented at the 93rd Annual Convention of the National Education Association, the consequences of neglecting the brightest students could result in the United States losing its superiority to the Soviet Union in the area of technology (Tannenbaum, 1988). Despite the concerns expressed by

educational organizations, no serious action took place until Sputnik was launched in 1957. Suddenly the education of highly intelligent students became “a key to the survival of the free world” (Tannenbaum, 1979, p. 17). Education and defense were combined to create the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which provided funds to strengthen American education. One of these components was the identification of gifted children. According to Tannenbaum (1979), “there is no way of knowing precisely what percentage of our schools offered something special to the gifted in the years immediately after Sputnik” (p. 19) because many of the programs were not taken seriously enough to last long.

In the early 1960s, gifted adults were glamorized through President John F. Kennedy’s “Whiz Kids.” These were scholars at leading universities and “idea men” in industry whom the President selected as advisors. Giftedness was further reinforced through employment opportunities in Science, which was considered to be “one of humanity’s most exciting modern frontiers” (Tannenbaum, 1988, p. 21). These attitudes toward giftedness resulted in educational efforts such as the Georgia Governor’s Honor Program in 1964 and the Louisiana Governor’s Program in 1965, both of which were residential programs for gifted students. Along with the outpouring of enrichment activities in the schools during the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was a massive amount of research activity dealing with gifted student identification and education. This research focused primarily on topics such as: (a) social status and its effect on motivation to learn, (b) the effectiveness of gifted program design, such as acceleration, ability grouping, and classroom enrichment, (c) nonintellectual factors that affect intelligence,

and (d) the causes and treatment of underachievement in children with high potential (Tannenbaum, 1988).

Changes in attitudes toward giftedness took place in the late 1960s due to factors such as the civil rights movement and school integration. The 1954 Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools gradually changed the focus of education from saving the free world to the education of the disadvantaged in order to close the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged (Tannenbaum, 1988). President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program encouraged school administrators, college professors, curriculum specialists, and educational researchers to become committed to the education of the disadvantaged. This new advocacy movement contested two features of gifted programs: (a) the use of IQ tests to identify giftedness, and (b) placing students in special classes based on their performance on these tests. The IQ test came under attack for being biased against some racial groups and against low socioeconomic status children because they were said to be the norm on privileged populations. Because of these perceived test biases, critics also believed that ability grouping for gifted students was racial segregation (Tannenbaum, 1988). Today, the makers of intelligence tests are still addressing this concern of bias. To reduce bias, tests were standardized through the use of large nationwide sample population that includes factors such as race, geographic location, gender, and socioeconomic status of test-takers (Tannenbaum, 1988).

According to Tannenbaum (1988), the decline of interest in gifted education in the late 1960s was alleviated by a 1970 Congressional mandate that added Section 806, "Provisions Related to Gifted and Talented Children" to the Elementary and Secondary Educational Amendments of 1969 (Public Law 91-230). This legislative decision caused

gifted children to be among those who received help from Titles III and V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Teacher Fellowship Provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1956. This decision directed Commissioner Sidney P. Marland Jr., to: (a) find the extent to which gifted education programs were necessary or useful, (b) show which federal assistance programs were being used to meet the needs of gifted children, (c) evaluate how federal educational assistance programs could be used more efficiently to meet the needs of gifted children, and (d) recommend new programs to meet those needs. Gifted children were defined as the upper three to five percent of children who were outstanding in any of six categories: (a) general intellectual ability, (b) specific academic aptitude, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) visual and performing arts, and (f) psychomotor ability (Marland, 1972).

In 1971-1972, Marland issued a report of his findings and recommendations. He estimated that only a small percentage of the 2.5 million gifted school-age children were receiving programming for gifted students. Based on his findings, Marland initiated major activities at the federal level in hopes of inspiring commitment from the nation's schools (Tannenbaum, 1988; Marland, 1972). The Marland Report (Marland, 1972) was issued by the U.S. Office of Education, which defined giftedness as those children who have demonstrated abilities in achievement, potential abilities as measured by IQ tests, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability. These reports lead to Public Law 91-230 that defined gifted and talented in five of the original six categories. According to Marland (1972), the education of gifted children was of such little official concern to the federal, state, and local governments and education agencies that it best could be described as

nonexistent. Gifted children were not being identified in schools, and the federal government was doing virtually nothing to solve the problem. Marland (1972) stated that gifted children in our schools today are locked in by structural and administrative restrictions that inhibit their development. As a result of Marland's report, the following changes took place: (a) an Office of Gifted and Talented was established in the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, (b) approximately 80,000 students nationwide were receiving gifted education, the office's goal was to double the figure during the following five year period, (c) federal funds were allocated to states to encourage them to create programs for the gifted, (d) leadership training institutes were established on the national level to work with all state education departments, and (e) in-service workshops were offered to educators in the absence of graduate training in the field of gifted education (1972).

In 1974, the Office of the Gifted and Talented was given official status by legislation. By 1979, the following changes had taken place: (a) almost 75 percent of the states had definitions of "gifted," (b) 66 percent of the states reported an increase of nearly 25 percent over the pervious year in the number of gifted children served, (c) 62 percent of the states increased their appropriations of gifted education by 50 percent, and (d) 42 states required training for persons serving the gifted, a 110 percent increase over the pervious year (Tannenbaum, 1988).

In the 1970s, more activity directed toward gifted education was focused upon creating enrichment programs than upon research. These enrichment programs were based on instructional adaptations of these theories: (a) Alfred Binet, with the aid of his student, Theodore Simon, developed the first I.Q. test in 1904; (b) Benjamin Bloom's

Taxonomy of Educational Objectives; (c) Joseph Renzulli's Enrichment Triad; and (d) E. Paul Torrance's writing on the subject of creativity (Tannenbaum, 1988).

A name synonymous with the education of the gifted is Alfred Binet, who with the aid of his student, Theodore Simon, developed the first I.Q. test in 1904 and paved the way for future psychologists to refine these instruments. Ironically, Binet, a director of the psychology laboratory at the Sorbonne, began his studies by examining skulls and using the data of his predecessor, Paul Broca, who had concluded that the size of a human's cranium determined his level of intellect. Binet also detected flaws in this theory and concluded that psychological, rather than physiological factors were instrumental in the study of human intelligence (Gould, 1981). In 1916, Lewis Terman, an educator, produced his first revision of Binet's test, which he called The Stanford-Binet test. This was a standard for virtually all IQ tests that followed (Gould, 1981). A German scientist, William Stern, first used the term "intelligence quotient." Terman asserted that "his test constituted a valid measure of intelligence that the IQ was constant, and that it was greatly influenced by heredity" (Chapman, 1988, p. 35). These beliefs stirred controversy since age, home environment, and school instruction were not taken into account. Furthermore, the norms he selected were mostly middle-class, native born Caucasians, further irritating those who did not agree with Terman and other misguided educators and scientists who assumed superiority of the white race in the area of mental acuity. Many feel Black American children are locked out of educational advantages because of Terman's theories (Chapman, 1988).

According to Clark (2000), Benjamin Bloom is probably best known for his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (also known as Bloom's Taxonomy) published in

1956. Bloom identified three types of learning: cognitive (mental skills), affective (attitudes and feelings), and psychomotor (manual or physical skills). Bloom's Taxonomy is used by classroom teachers to identify instructional outcomes and to design appropriate instruction. Bloom's Taxonomy can also be used to examine which process skills gifted students have developed and which need further development (Clark, 1988).

Joseph Renzulli's Enrichment Triad, also known as Renzulli's Three-Ring Conception of Giftedness (Renzulli, 1986), was based on "research on creative-productive people has consistently shown that although no single criterion can be used to determine giftedness, persons who have achieved recognition because of their unique accomplishments and creative contributions possess a relatively well-defined set of three interlocking clusters of traits" (p. 65). Renzulli (1980) believed that (a) mistakes could be made in the gifted identification process due to deficiencies in identification instruments, and (b) despite the research on multiple criteria for gifted student identification, too much emphasis was placed on the use of predetermined cutoff scores on intelligence tests.

E. Paul Torrance is Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the University of Georgia, a former high school teacher, and former instructor at Georgia Military College. Torrance became interested in learning how to use creativity in a positive manner during his teaching years when he taught boys who were almost intolerable due to their negative use of creativity. He later became interested in developing a creativity test during his experiences of conducting research in support of the United States Air Force Survival School (Test Developer Profiles, December 2000). Torrance (1976) believed research in the area of creativity was important because "we may be discovering a few clues that will

enable us to educate to a higher degree many people whom we have not been very successful in educating, such as the vast army of dropouts and other less educated groups” (p. 10). Torrance (1976) denied that there was any advocacy on his part for replacing tests of intelligence with tests of creativity. The fact remains that there are racial and socioeconomic differences in measured intelligence and that these are fairly consistent. Torrance (1976) further stated that his tests of creativity showed no racial or socioeconomic differences and a major reason for this, is that creativity test tasks are open-ended and a child may respond to them in terms of his own life experiences. According to Torrance (1976) this is not true of intelligence tests.

History of Gifted Education in Georgia

Georgia has long been on the cutting edge in providing differentiated curriculum for gifted learners. It was one of only two states, along with Pennsylvania, to mandate services and programs for the gifted by 1964, seven years before the 1972 Marland Report (Passow & Rudnitski, 1993). On January 1, 1997, Georgia implemented the multiple criteria rule. In an effort to be more inclusive and to recognize different kinds of gifts, the state added the criteria of motivation and creativity to its existing criteria of aptitude or ability and achievement. The focus was on providing equitable access to gifted services for students from all backgrounds, cultures, income levels, and geographic regions (Williams, 2000).

Williams (2000) stated that the move from the unilateral reliance on a single aptitude score toward the use of many different pieces of information to determine the appropriateness of gifted program placement has been a slow and sometimes tedious process. This change has been the result of dedicated efforts by individuals who realized

that gifted children exist in every culture and in every socioeconomic group and who were concerned about the discrepancy between the numbers of White American and Black American students in Georgia's gifted programs.

Since 1967 this statistical discrepancy had existed, when Georgia established its sole reliance on IQ scores for placement in gifted programs. This identification requirement made the procedure of referring to gifted education more stringent, inflexible, and exclusive. The Georgia Legislature reversed this trend in 1994, when it passed the multiple eligibility criteria law for the identification of gifted children and marked the beginning of a new era in gifted identification in Georgia (Georgia Department of Education, 2006).

In 1958, the Georgia House of Representatives passed House Resolution No. 246, "providing for study of needs and proposals for increasing educational advantages for gifted children, in the public school system of Georgia" (Williams, 2000, p. 62). The Georgia Department of Education (DOE) continued to make plans for identifying and serving gifted students in Georgia and in July, 1958, hired Margaret O. Bynum as the Consultant in Education of the Gifted to serve on the staff of the Department of Programs for Exceptional Children (Georgia Department of Education, 1961). Bynum spent her first few years investigating the status of gifted programs across the state. Bynum wanted to establish a plan for serving gifted students. In September, 1959, Bynum and the Division of Instruction, Services for Exceptional Children, published a revision of their 1958 paper on identifying gifted children (Williams, 2000). Even back then Bynum displayed insight when referring to the identification of gifted children. Bynum stated that the identification process is continuous and made up of comprehensive and

systematic observation and testing. However, Bynum failed to mention the effects of poverty or cultural diversity on students involved in these measures and cautioned that teachers should not expect every child to exhibit every trait of giftedness (Williams, 2000).

It wasn't until 1967 that the Georgia House of Representatives passed House Bill 453, mandating gifted services be implemented in each school district by 1975-76 (Marland, 1972). Bynum in 1967, presented a draft of revised gifted policies to the Georgia Department of Education Committee on the Gifted. The definition of gifted students in these new policies was somewhat different than earlier definitions and represented the first official recognition that performance can be used to provide evidence of giftedness (Georgia Department of Education, 1967). The new plan defined the gifted as children and youth whose mental ability, determined by a standardized intelligence test, is in the upper two percent of the national school population; children who have one or more specific aptitudes are those who have exhibited, through performance or through aptitude tests, the ability to be outstanding in the performing arts (Georgia Department of Education, 1967). This plan contained several elements that appeared as part of the multiple criteria regulations that went into effect 30 years later.

In June 1986, the State Board of Education approved a new set of regulations and procedures for gifted identification and service which took effect on September 1, 1986. This included a new, more restrictive definition of gifted, which stated, according to Georgia Department of Education (1986), that a gifted student is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual ability and who needs special instruction in order to achieve at levels that commensurate with his intellectual ability. Under the 1986 Georgia

Department of Education guidelines, any student in grades K-12 who scored at the 99th percentile on a mental ability test qualified automatically (Georgia Department of Education, 1986). These procedures included an element which later became a part of the multiple criteria procedures; this part is called an automatic referral, which allowed the evaluation of potentially eligible students who might not otherwise be referred. Each district had to designate a score on a system wide achievement test as the level for automatic referral; students scoring at or above this score automatically received further evaluation.

Multiple Eligibility Criteria Rule in Georgia

A final change in the new rules removed the requirement for a re-evaluation of students in gifted programs every three years and allowed each local system to decide the criteria which students must meet to continue in a gifted program from one year to the next (Georgia Department of Education, 1986). Although it was not represented in the revised rules and regulations, the idea of multiple criteria procedures had been a topic of debate and discussion within the 1985 task force discussing the revision of Georgia's identification procedures (Williams, 2000). Joyce Gay was a gifted consultant with Bynum in the state department and had provided this task force with leadership and guidance regarding the identification of Black American students. Gay described her role in the development of Georgia's multiple criteria procedures as that of a catalyst (Williams, 2000). In 1987, Gay had recognized in Black American students many of the general traits identified in the literature as being typical of gifted children; she further stated that these children manifest their giftedness in ways that are different from the ways mainstream students exhibit their abilities. Because of this, these areas must be

explored (Williams, 2000). The multiple criteria elements proposed by Gay and this committee were all rejected at that time. Ruth Cowen, the Coordinator of Gifted Programs in Gwinnett County, attributed this rejection of the multiple criteria by the legislature to the fact that it was not concrete enough and because law makers feared that multiple criteria would allow many more students to qualify, requiring more funding (Williams, 2000).

Educators noticed that socioeconomic status and race were affecting equitable access for certain students. Statistics showed that students in north Fulton public schools were seven times more likely to be placed in gifted programs than students in south Fulton (Parker, 1987). As of May 1987, 13.8 percent of students from affluent north Fulton schools were identified as gifted; in south Fulton, where the economic level of families was much lower than that of families in north Fulton, only 1.2 percent of the students were classified as gifted. The disparity was even worse between Black and White students. Ten percent of White students in Fulton County participated in gifted programs, as compared to only 1.2 percent of Black students (Parker, 1987). Because of this disparity, Fulton county officials asked the state to reconsider its current definition that defined gifted students based solely on IQ scores. But state official Elloise Collins, the Director of Special Programs for the state of Georgia, remained firm to the belief that standardized testing is the only fair, objective way to identify gifted students (Parker, 1987).

The NAACP was trying to rectify the discrimination against Blacks in admission standards to gifted programs. Benjamin Marsh, Chairman of the Education Committee for the Clayton County NAACP, cited statistics showing that even though Blacks made

up 23 percent of Clayton County's student population, they comprised only one percent of the county's gifted population (McGreevy, 1989). Kathy Kennedy, gifted educator, stated that the district's automatic referral program gave every child equal access to gifted services (McGreevy, 1989).

In 1994, at Brandon Elementary School, located in upscale north Atlanta, 158 students of the mostly white student population left regular classes behind for an hour each day to study opera, explore paintings, and study master geometry. West Manor Elementary School, an all black school a few miles south in a middle class neighborhood, had no gifted program. In a district where nine out of ten students were black and blacks dominated the school board and top administration, white students occupied half the gifted slots (Hagans, 1994).

In May 1990 the University of Georgia became a part of the first National Research Center for the Education of Gifted and Talented children (Hardie, 1990). This event had a tremendous impact on Georgia's efforts to provide equitable access to gifted programs to all students. The center and its director, Dr. Mary Frasier, received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund research on identifying and teaching poor and limited English proficient gifted students. Other local educators shared Frasier's concern that many gifted disadvantaged or minority students were being overlooked because of rigid identification procedures (Hardie, 1990). The 1994 publication of *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talents*, published by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, disapproved of current practices of serving and identifying gifted students. It criticized the use of limited, narrow definition of giftedness and expressed concern for those

children often excluded because they do not fit traditional conceptions for giftedness (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). The report encouraged higher expectations for all students and urged educators to do a better job of meeting the needs of underrepresented children. It also criticized existing educational services as being inappropriate, unchallenging, insufficient, and limited and recommended the creation of flexible schools where all students can be grouped according to their needs, interests and abilities (Burson, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Research on the development of multiple criteria procedures began with the goals of designing and testing ways to identify more culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, and limited-English-proficiency students who had been overlooked under traditional methods (Frasier, 1997). A task force was established including Dr. Frasier and other University of Georgia personnel. Dr. Frasier based her work on the premise that many gifted minority or disadvantaged students would fail to qualify for gifted programs unless they were evaluated on the basis of multiple criteria (Frasier, 1997).

Supporters of the use of multiple criteria guidelines expressed suspicion and concern at the lack of official and community public support. Some state coordinators voiced no public support for the changes and would not comment to questions by reporters (Williams, 2000). Parents of gifted children were upset with the state's plan to change the definition of gifted program. Some parents feared that the broadening of the criteria would result in a dumping ground of the state's gifted curriculum. Other parents believed that the new multiple criteria would lead to watered down programs for the truly gifted (Hansen & Linden, 1990). One angry parent was interviewed in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* as saying that the need to lower the standards and admit more

students into the gifted program made the gifted program less special. She went on to say the state needs to quit lowering the standards just to appease people's feelings. If students cannot get into the program it is the fault of the parents for not teaching their student (Hammonds, 1994). However, advocates of the proposed legislation were surprised that it did not take the slow pace that they had anticipated. The multiple criteria gained much support and passed through both the House and Senate committees unanimously on the first vote (Williams, 2000). In March 1994, the Georgia Legislature finally passed HB 1768 requiring that multiple criteria be used in identifying gifted learners (Williams, 2000).

This legislation was the culmination of the dreams and efforts of many different people working together and it revolutionized the way that Georgia students would qualify for gifted services. A single IQ was no longer acceptable; educators would consider achievement test scores, creativity, and motivation when determining placement qualifications (Williams, 2000). The new legislation also ended a practice by which students who did not qualify for services when tested at school could qualify on the basis of private testing done at parent expense (Stepp, 1994).

In August 1996, Sally Krisel became the state Coordinator for Gifted Education. She expressed the concern that many educators felt about the inadequacy of Georgia's identification procedures for identifying disadvantaged and other at-risk gifted students. Krisel stated that another goal of multiple criteria procedures was improved instruction. She pointed out that a 99th percentile score on an aptitude test tells a teacher little about a student's instructional needs. Krisel also stated that the use of multiple criteria

procedures gives teachers information that they need to refer students to gifted programs and to meet instructional goals (Williams, 2000).

The following referral process is taken directly from the Rule 160-4-2-.38 *Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services* (2005, p. 7), which describes in detail the referral process and the multiple eligibility requirements needed for a student to be considered in gifted education.

1. Reported Referral. A student may be referred for consideration for gifted educational services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self and other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities.

2. Automatic Referral. Students who score at specified levels on a norm-referenced test as described below shall be considered automatically, as defined in Appendix A of the Georgia Department of Education *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, for further assessment to determine eligibility for gifted program services.

(a). Local boards of education shall establish the criterion score needed on these norm referenced tests for automatic consideration for further assessment.

(b). Local boards of education shall ensure that any tests or procedures used in the referral process and to determine eligibility for gifted education services meet standards of validity and reliability for the purpose of identifying gifted students, and shall be nondiscriminatory with respect to race, religion, national origin, sex, disabilities or economic background.

(c). Consent. Local school systems shall obtain written consent for testing from parents or guardians of students who are being considered for gifted education services.

Written consent from parents or guardians is also necessary before students determined to be eligible for gifted education services can receive these services.

(d). Eligibility. The local board of education shall not adopt eligibility criteria that are inconsistent with this rule.

(e). State Reporting Requirements. The local board of education shall submit to the Georgia Department of Education a copy of its administrative procedures for the operation of a program for gifted students in grades K-12. The local system shall review and revise (if revisions are needed) its local administrative procedures at least annually. An updated copy of the local administrative procedures shall be submitted to the Department of Education whenever changes are made.

(3) Initial Eligibility. To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either

(a). Score at the 99th percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96th percentile (for grades 3-12) on the composite or full scale score of a standardized test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria described below, or

(b). Qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability (intelligence), achievement, creativity and motivation.

(c). Student must meet the criterion score on a nationally normed test and either have observational data collected on his or her performance or produce a superior product as described below. Information shall be collected in each of the four data categories for all students who are referred for gifted program evaluation. Any data used in one area to establish a student's eligibility shall not be used in any other data category. Any test score used to establish eligibility shall be current within two-calendar years.

I. Mental Ability. Students shall score \geq the 96th percentile on a composite or full scale score or appropriate component score, as defined in Appendix A of the Georgia Department of Education *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*, on a standardized test of mental ability.

(a). Mental ability tests shall be the most current editions of published tests that measure intelligence or cognitive ability, have been reviewed for bias and normed on a nationally representative sample that included minority representation within a 10-year period (group tests) prior to administration. These tests shall yield percentile rankings by age(s).

(b). Mental ability tests that were designed to be administered individually must be administered by a qualified psychological examiner.

II. Achievement. Students shall (a) score \geq the 90th percentile on the total battery, total math or total reading section(s) of a standardized achievement test; or (b) have produced a superior student-generated product or performance, where the superior performance is one that can be translated into a numerical score \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators.

Standardized achievement tests shall be the most current editions of tests that measure reading skills, including comprehension, and shall give a total reading score and/or a total mathematics score based upon a combination of scores in math concepts and applications. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and normed on a nationally representative sample that included minority representation within a 10-year period prior to administration. These tests shall yield percentile rankings by age(s) or grade(s).

(b). Performances and products shall be judged by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators and must have been produced within the two years prior to evaluation.

III. Creativity. Students shall (a) score \geq the 90th percentile on the total battery score of a standardized test of creative thinking, or (b) receive a score \geq the 90th percentile on a standardized creativity characteristics rating scale, or receive, from a panel of three or more qualified evaluators, a score \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100 on a structured observation/evaluation of creative products and/or performances.

A. Standardized tests of creative thinking shall be the most current editions of tests that provide scores of fluency, originality, and elaboration. Minimum requirements also include: (a) outside empirical support for the test; (b) long-term follow-up studies; and (c) comparison measures against other recognized measures of creativity. These tests shall have been reviewed for bias and normed on a nationally representative sample that included minority representation. These tests shall yield percentile rankings by age(s) or grade(s).

B. Rating scales used to evaluate creativity shall relate to the construct of creativity and differentiate levels such that judgments equivalent to the 90th percentile are possible.

C. As evidence of creativity, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances completed during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products/performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators as part of a comprehensive portfolio of creative productivity.

IV. Motivation. Students shall (a) receive a score \geq the 90th percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, or (b) receive from a panel of three or more qualified evaluators a score \geq 90 on a scale of 1-100 on a structured observation/evaluation of student generated products and/or performances, or (c) have a

grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, where a 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, using an average of grade from the regular school program over the previous two school years if the student is in grades 3-12.

A. Rating scales used to evaluate student motivation shall relate to the construct of motivation and differentiate levels such that judgments equivalent to the 90th percentile are possible.

B. As evidence of motivation, students, or individuals on behalf of students, may submit products or evidence of outstanding performances made during the two calendar years prior to evaluation. The products/performances submitted shall be reviewed by a panel of three or more qualified evaluators as part of a comprehensive portfolio that demonstrates a high degree of motivation and consistent productivity.

C. Assessment data that were gathered and analyzed by a source outside the student's school or school system must be considered as part of the nomination and evaluation process. However, these outside data shall not be substituted for data the school generates during the testing/evaluation process and may never be the sole source of assessment data. Systems shall never rely on them exclusively for determination of eligibility for gifted program services. Instead, outside test data may be used as part of a comprehensive profile of test and non-test evidence of advanced instructional needs.

Georgia Department of Education Student Talent Search Flowchart taken directly from the Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services illustrates the phases of referring a student to gifted education (See Appendix D).

Local boards of education shall review the progress of each student receiving gifted education services every year. Provided the student demonstrates acceptable

performance in regular and gifted education classes the student shall continue to receive gifted services. The local boards set the parameters of the length of the probationary period and what happens if students fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in both regular and gifted education classes. Georgia Department of Education provides sample guidelines which are indicated in the Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services taken directly from the Rule 160-4-2-.38 *Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services* (2005, p. 104).

Guidelines:

I. Satisfactory Performance – Regular Classroom

Satisfactory performance in the regular classroom shall be based on the student maintaining passing grades in all academic subjects according to the regular standards of the system and an overall 3.0 average for the grading period. This applies to high school, middle school, elementary schools, and primary schools.

II. Satisfactory Performance – Gifted Education Classes

Satisfactory performance in gifted education classes shall be based on passing grades in the gifted class according to the grading standards of the system and an overall 3.0 average for the grading period.

III. Probationary Period Incidence

Generally, a student should not be placed on a plan of improvement more than one time in an instructional level (primary, intermediate, middle, and secondary). Referrals to the local school counselor or for current assessment information are appropriate during a plan of improvement. The ultimate goal is to assist gifted education students who may be having difficulty in the regular classroom and/or the gifted program.

This Continuation Policy that has been approved by the individual school systems Board of Education and is on file with the State Department of Education, Programs for the Gifted.

- Parents of students whose performance is deemed satisfactory will be notified of the recommendation for continuation in the gifted program.
- When a student's performance is deemed unsatisfactory in either the regular classroom or the gifted education classroom, a referral shall be made to the eligibility team and the parent(s) will be notified that the student's placement is in jeopardy. The eligibility team will design intervention strategies that will be used over a prescribed period of time by the classroom teacher and/or the gifted education teacher. Following the prescribed period of time, a second meeting will be scheduled to review the student's progress. If the problem(s) persists, a meeting of the eligibility team will be scheduled for the purpose of designing a plan of improvement for a prescribed period of time. During this time, the student's placement for receiving gifted education services is in jeopardy and the student is on probation. The plan of improvement describes the goals that must be met in order for the student to continue to receive gifted education services. The student continues to receive gifted education services during the probationary period. At the conclusion of the probationary period, the eligibility team reviews the goals of the plan of improvement. If the student has been able to meet the prescribed goals, placement in the gifted education program will continue; if the goals are not met, gifted education services will be discontinued following written notice to the parent(s). Once a student has been withdrawn for the gifted program, (s) he will be eligible to reenter the program if he/she a) meets the goals of the plan of improvement if dismissal

occurred as a result of unsatisfactory performance, and b) meets the eligibility criteria in place at the time of the request. The assessment data presented for re-entry shall not be more than two years old.

Further study in this area would be critical to determine if Black American students in gifted programs are able to maintain and remain in the program according to the standards set by their local school boards.

Multiple Eligibility Approach in Alabama

In 1996, the Alabama State Department of Education reviewed the identified numbers of gifted students in Alabama and discovered that Alabama school districts had several groups that were underrepresented in the gifted program (Pearson, 2001). The Gifted Education Specialist launched an initiative to review Alabama's identification procedures for gifted programs. The committee was comprised of university personnel, coordinators and teachers of the gifted, special education coordinators, and parents. The committee found that Alabama's reliance on a single-score identification system did have a negative impact on the identification of Hispanic and African American students (Pearson, 2001). Additionally, systems reported that a disproportionately low number of Hispanic and African American students are referred each year, which is the first step in the identification process (Pearson, 2001).

As Passow and Rudnitski (1993) state, there has been a significant increase in both numbers and proportions of ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged students in the public population. Under representation of these students in programs for the gifted has not changed substantially. In Alabama, data indicated that culturally diverse children are disproportionately represented in gifted programs. In 1999, 61% of

the general school population was Caucasian, whereas 84.7% of the gifted program population was Caucasian. Of the general school population, 36.4% was African American, but only 12.3% of the gifted program population was African American. Of the Hispanic general school population of 1.1%, only .48% of the gifted program population was Hispanic (Pearson, 2001).

On January 1, 2000, systems in Alabama moved to a multiple criteria approach. Students still qualify automatically for the program if they score two standard deviations above the mean on either an individually administered intelligence test or the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. If a student does not meet this automatic eligibility criterion, a system must implement a multiple criteria approach utilizing the State adopted matrix for eligibility (Pearson, 2001). According to Alabama's multiple criteria approach the matrix requires systems to collect information in three different areas. The first is aptitude; scores can be obtained from an individually administered I.Q. test, a group aptitude test, or score from the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1976). The second area is characteristics, which require a score from one of four accepted behavior-rating scales, completed by someone knowledgeable of the child, usually the classroom teacher. The third area requires three different performance indicators from the following categories: grades, achievement test scores, work samples, leadership or motivation checklist, products, and portfolios. The three scores are averaged, multiplied by two, and added to the other two areas of aptitude groups (Pearson, 2001). The State Department's Task Force worked over the next several years to develop new referral and eligibility determination procedures based on current research in the field. All systems were required to implement the changes beginning January 1, 2000 (Pearson, 2001). The

qualitative study conducted by Pearson (2001) on the policy changes made to the identification process for gifted services in Alabama is described in the table of major studies of gifted education.

The following referral process is taken directly from the *Alabama Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services* (2000, p. 3), which describes in detail the referral process and the multiple eligibility requirements needed for a student to be eligible for gifted education.

1. Fill in all of the personal data in the top box.
2. Note the date and results of vision and hearing screening in the spaces provided.
3. Consider Automatic Eligibility first. Test scores to consider at this point are:
 - a. Individually administered tests of intelligence that are considered appropriate for making placement decisions (as opposed to a test that is considered a screening instrument). Use only the composite or full-scale score at this point. The obtained score must be two standard deviations above the mean or higher. If standard error of measurement must be considered to include the needed score, then the matrix must be applied. Only obtained scores at the required level are acceptable here.
 - b. A Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Figural or Verbal) with a Verbal Average Standard Score or Figural Creativity Index at or above the 97th national percentile.
4. If the scores meet the Automatic Eligibility criteria, then go to the bottom of the form and date, check the decision, and sign. If the scores do not meet the Automatic Eligibility criteria, then proceed with the matrix.

5. The matrix requires information in all three areas. The highest applicable score should be applied to each area.
 - a. Aptitude—You may use individual tests or group tests, screeners, or placement instruments. You may use full-scale or composite scores, or next level sub-composite scores such as the Verbal Scale or Performance Scale or the WISC-III.
 - b. Characteristics—Examine the sub-scale scores of the behavior rating scale that was administered. Leadership and/or motivation scores may be used here or in the performance area but not in both.
 - c. Performance—Three items are required for this area. Use the Performance Area Scoring Criteria charts/rubric to determine points. Products/Portfolios/Work Samples could come from home or school. Achievement Test Scores can be from any standardized achievement test, group or individually administered. Acceptable scores are Total Battery, Total Language, Total Reading, or Total Math. Grades should be from the last full semester. If grades are reported in a format other than “A, B, C” and can be converted to a similar points system, then they may be used. If they cannot be converted to a point system, then they may not be used.
 - d. Average the three scores, and multiply that number by two to get the points earned for the Performance area.
6. Record the points earned for each area on the matrix. Total the points earned in all three areas, and record the total in the space provided. If the student earned 17 or more points, then she/he should be determined eligible for gifted services.

7. Team members should enter the date in the space provided, note the team's decision, and sign the form to show either agreement or disagreement with the decision. Dissenting members should attach their reason(s) to the form.

Multiple Sources of Data in North Carolina

In North Carolina, African American students comprise over 30% of the total school population. However, African American student enrollment in academically gifted programs remains steady at less than half of their enrollment in the general school population, representing 10% for the 1999-2000 school year (Darity, Castellino, Tyson, Cobb & McMillen, 2001). African American males represent approximately 4% of the total enrollment of students in gifted programs in North Carolina's 115 school districts, 6,539 of 145,467 academically gifted students (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2004a). The quantitative study conducted by Hargrove (2007) on the perceptions of teachers and administrators of barriers to identification of Black American males in academically gifted programs is described in the table of studies related to gifted education.

The screening process in North Carolina focuses on equal opportunity and equitable access to all students. The elements included in the process are the use of multiple criteria for decision-making that includes informal assessments. The identification or screening of students is done without using single cutoff scores or summed matrix scores. In addition, professional development is offered for all staff that provides services to academically gifted students (Darity et al., 2001). The use of a variety of checklists and scales has been recommended to identify more African American students, and other minority students, for gifted programs.

The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), California Achievement Test (CAT), and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) conventional models should be adapted to identify more diverse students. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), the Kaufman-Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), Raven Standard Progressive Matrices, and others have shown promise (Frasier, 1987; Patton, 1997). The Group Inventory for Finding Talent (GIFT), the Group Inventory for Finding Interest (GIFFII & II), and the Frasier Talent Assessment profiles (Patton, 1997), are also recognized as effective alternatives to standardized testing for IQ and achievement. The Program for Assessment, Diagnosis, and Instruction (PADI) was found effective in identifying large numbers of African American students (Johnson, Starnes, Gregory, & Blaylock, 1985). Naglieri and Ford (2005) report that the use of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) is effective in identifying gifted minority students. Furthermore, they assert that nonverbal tests are more appropriate of culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Fischetti, Emanuelson & Shames (1998) find that the use of multiple criteria increases the number of students identified in North Carolina. Approximately 13% of students have been identified since the beginning of the implementation of the multiple sources of data for gifted programs. The state of North Carolina has made progress in refining and revising its definition and policy guidelines for gifted education. The increased use of a more inclusive definition and multiple criteria has shown promise for the enrollment of more minority students overall (North Carolina Department of Public, 2004a).

Role of the Teacher in Identifying Gifted Students

Frequently teachers are the first individuals asked to select students whom they believe would be good candidates to be screened for giftedness. Many students who are referred for screening into gifted programs have been nominated by their classroom teachers. However, the accuracy of teacher judgments has been criticized in the literature (Clark, 1997; Cumming, 1997). Teachers often focus on physical appearance, alertness, good manners and neatness as factors indicating giftedness (Cumming, 1997), so that the prime target being selected for potential giftedness is the quiet, well-behaved, well-dressed child. In addition, the majority of teachers consider high grades and academic success as crucial in identifying gifted students (Cumming, 1997). Teachers becoming aware of the subtle factors that may be influencing the identification process is the first step in making concentrated efforts to bring more proportionate numbers of Black American students into gifted program (Jacobs, 1972; Jencks, 1998).

Expectations play a key role in how teachers view students. Teachers should expect all students to succeed. There can be little doubt that understanding teacher expectancies is an important part of comprehending the nature of teacher evaluation of students (Dusek & Joseph, 1983). Dusek suggested that race and social class might influence teacher expectations. This was based on observed differences in the interaction by teachers with students from lower and middle-class backgrounds. Teachers appeared to pay more attention to the latter group of learners. An analysis of the teacher expectations research (Good, 1981) revealed that some teachers treat students differently based on their ability, and that there appears to be a positive correlation between expectations and achievement. Good's research findings conclude that low achieving

students receive less attention, are called on less, are criticized more for incorrect responses, get praised less, are provided less detailed feedback, and receive fewer demands for effort and work. When Dusek and Joseph (1983) reviewed 29 studies, they discovered that Black American students were expected to perform significantly less than their White peers. Even when Black Americans are identified as gifted, their teachers may still have low expectations for them (Ford, 1996). Research has shown that teachers have lower expectations for minority students, and perceive them as low achievers. When teachers view Black Americans as a group that generally performs at a substandard level, an individual look for giftedness or potential is unlikely to happen. The low expectations placed on minority students appear to be a reality in the classroom, and among those entering into the teaching profession (Ford, 1996). Burstein and Cabello (1989) found that 38% of student teachers believed that the poor performance of minority students resulted from cultural deficits.

Achievement has been gauged by a student's grade point average, scores on intelligence tests, teacher evaluations, or scores on standardized achievement tests (Shade, 1978). The lack of individualization makes the standardized test a wrong place to begin the identification of gifted Black American students (Rhodes, 1992). Unfortunately, defining academic success in terms of results on standardized tests can also factor low expectations for Black Americans. Research has consistently shown that Black Americans score lower on standardized cognitive and achievement tests than their white peers (Ford & Harris, 1990). Differences in tests scores between Black American and White American students may result from a range of factors, including lack of preparation, poor skills or knowledge, inadequate exposure to the material tested, poor

motivation, or problems with the test itself (Ford & Trotman, 2000). This trend of low scoring prevents teachers from considering Black Americans as possible candidates for gifted recommendation. Kaufman and Harrison's (1986) thoughts on the need to focus on the individual during intelligence testing can easily be related to all types of standardized testing. If an examiner only concentrates on intelligence test scores and does not observe other criteria of the individual and incorporate the criteria into test interpretation, the examiner is doing a disservice to the individual (Kaufman and Harrison, 1986).

Classroom performance may also be a cause of low expectations. Siegle and Powell (2004) suggest that the inclination of classroom teachers to focus on student weakness may serve as a barrier in rating students for gifted programs. Perceptions of deficiencies, rather than difference, within Black American students may be fostered from a lack of displaying their gifts and talents in the same manner as White American students (Ford & Harris, 1994). Strong sources of deficiency perceptions result from the existing emphasis on verbal skills in the classroom, especially at the elementary level. If students and teachers differ in language, teachers may use their language as a normative reference (Hilliard, 1989). Therefore, the use of nonstandard English by Black American learners may increase the low expectations. Critical race theory analysis suggests that "race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 50). In literature review by Bowie and Bond (1994), they found that, although educators lack the knowledge regarding Black American English, they still possess negative views about it.

Inevitably, lower expectations will result when opportunities to tap areas of strength are never called upon through classroom instruction. Renzulli (1999) stresses the importance of encouraging and seeking out expressions of creativity and task commitment within the classroom situation. The classroom environment should provide an outlet for traits that are commonly recognized and valued as signs or potential signs of giftedness. Teachers have the potential power to wield a lot of influence among their students. The research finds are clear in showing an association between expectations and achievement. Simply stated, low teacher expectations and negative teacher perceptions of students result in the low referral rates of Black American for gifted programs (Ford, 2003).

A common criticism among Black American students is that giftedness is defined from the perspective of white, middle class Americans (Frasier, 1997). Teachers' expectations of their students reflect their own cultural orientations; they often disregard the experiences and orientation of their students (Burstein & Cabello, 1989). According to Graybill (1997), teachers bring their own culture and values with them into the classroom. According to Yosso (2005) Black American students also bring into the classroom their own culture, values, and family background from their homes and communities. Therefore, when teachers face a conflict in cultural values, they often react by rigidly adhering to their own set of values; this behavior can interfere with or limit the learning of their students.

Role of the Gifted Teacher in Accommodating Gifted Students

Despite the many obstacles Black American students face in society and schools, Black American students are realizing success in the classroom. The inclusion of Black American students and other sub-populations in gifted services poses many questions regarding additional needs students must have to be successful. Only through the recognition of their unique needs can appropriate educational programming be realized for Black American learners (Ford, 1998). Laws do not mandate accommodations for the gifted student; therefore, their participation depends on the discretion of the teacher (National Research Council, 2002). The issue of identification and programming for gifted students is challenging, especially when trying to address individual needs and strengths. Gifted programs need multiple kinds of learning experiences and several different types of school organizational patterns that provide talented students with choices for learning that respect individual ability styles, and product preferences (Renzulli, 1999). However, lack of accommodation for minority gifted students is a trend in gifted and talented programs (Ford & Harris, 1990). Ford (1998) discovered that limited research existed that focused on Black Americans. Broader identification procedures must be complemented and accompanied by changes relating to curriculum, instruction, and ethnic identity (Ford et al., 2000).

Gifted services can better accommodate Black American learners by helping them to develop skills that are of universal value, and providing instruction that helps teachers with the skill of moving between at least two cultures (Ford & Harris, 1996). The Critical Race Theory draws on the knowledge that minority students bring with them what they know and skills from their homes and communities into the classroom

(Ladson-Billings, 2000). In 1899, W.E.B. DuBois addressed the need for Black Americans to be able to view the world through Black and White-eyes. He referred to it as being “double conscious,” so an individual can understand which behaviors are appropriate for a particular situation, and make the necessary behavioral adjustments to function effectively. Critical Race Theory approach to education involves a commitment to develop schools that acknowledge these multiple strengths (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Standardizing school practices without regard to diversity tends to thwart the discretion schools required to improve educational experiences for children (Ford & Harris, 1993). Being culturally sensitive requires an understanding that gifted Black American students, as well as other people of color, experience more educational difficulties than gifted students from the dominant culture (Ford & Harris, 1990). The difficulties they face may be academic or social emotional. Mackler (1970) notes that gifted Black American students must learn to cope more effectively with being both Black and gifted, thereby increasing their self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and ability to deal effectively with barriers to help ensure school and later life success. Gifted programs are criticized for failing to meet the affective needs of Black American students and enhance their self-esteem. The classroom environment needs to be accepting and safe in order for Black American students to take risks and to thrive. The teacher must also play a leadership role in developing harmony and acceptance among the children (Clark, 1988). Counseling strategies and discussions may prove to be instrumental in assisting Black American gifted learners to better deal with these difficulties. Issues of major importance are negative peer pressures, poor peer relations, feelings of isolation from both peers and

teachers, and sensitivity about feeling different as one of few Black students in the gifted programs (Ford, 1994).

Role of the County Gifted Coordinator in Educating Gifted Students

Financial cutbacks to gifted education have resulted in drastic changes in the number of districts offering either comprehensive programs or any programs at all (Renzulli, 1999). Monetary constraints usually force schools to select what they value most and provide gifted services for that (e.g. writing, athletics, music, reading, Science, or Social Studies). Because of this fact, schools can fail to meet gifted needs that lie outside the framework of services that the reality of budgeting forces them to exclude. Some are, by default, being excluded because resources are limited (Renzulli, 1999; Ford & Harris, 1990).

While it is true that financial issues are a major nemesis to gifted education, they cannot be deemed as the sole problem to Black American learners thriving in gifted programs today. Unfortunately, schools are failing to meet the needs of populations of learners that have qualified for existing services in gifted programs. The standard of giftedness may need to be modified in order to actualize the potential in Black Americans (Clark, 1988). In an interview conducted by Duckett (1988), he equates excellence with creating the right conditions for minority learners. Black Americans may require a more personalized education, especially in the gifted programs.

When one program is provided to all, it increases the likelihood that minority children will experience some degree of failure because of a lack of some prerequisite skills; or minority children will feel displaced because values they possess are never included (Clark, 1988). The assumptions, perspectives, and insights that students derive

from their experiences in their homes and community cultures are used as screens to view and interpret knowledge and experiences that they encounter at school (Banks, 1993).

Too often, the established program and its components (goals, objectives, content, and instruction) are criticized for strictly meeting the educational needs of White middle class students as opposed to learners from a wide variety of backgrounds. An obvious solution may be to offer a variety of programs within a school's gifted services to meet the educational needs of all the students (Hilliard, 1992). However, issues of funding, staffing, and how to evaluate the various programs are limiting and constricting realities most American schools have to face (Clark, 1988).

To achieve the goal of functioning in their own community and the dominant community simultaneously, schools must celebrate diversity while retaining some common aspects among schools. Gay (1990) identifies the new efforts to desegregate the curriculum in order to deal fairly with issues of diversity. The histories, heritage, cultures, experiences, and ultimate destinies of all groups and individuals are presented as interdependent, interactive, and complementary. Gay (1990) continues to stress academic excellence should be encouraged without personal identity and/or cultural integrity becoming casualties.

Curriculum, instruction, and evaluation are areas in need of scrutiny in order to better meet the needs of Black Americans in gifted programs. The finding that traditional programs are the norm, and more tailored or personalized approaches are the exception, even when advertised programs for disadvantaged learners are provided is particularly surprising (VanTassel-Baska, 1989).

Problems with Implementation of the Multiple Eligibility Criteria

Educators and parents criticized the subjectivity of the guidelines and expressed that the new guidelines would lead to less academic rigor in gifted programs. Some parents worried that very bright children might not qualify because of creativity or motivation (Williams, 2000; Frazier, 1997). The comments of Herbert W. Garrett, superintendent of Jefferson City Schools in 1995, stated that any amendment to the old rule would be nightmare and was concerned if the state was going to provide funding for the increased number of students in the gifted program and any testing expenses that would occur because of the number of students eligible to take the tests (Williams, 2000). Elizabeth S. Redden from Columbus, in 1995, was concerned that the new revision would result in watered down programs. Ms. Redden continued to imply that the new criteria would allow students to enter the program and not be able to keep up with the current curriculum and that standards would have to be changed to accommodate these students (Williams, 2000). Representatives of the Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC) expressed concern about the emphasis put on the products and those students who had involved, aggressive parents would help their children, while disadvantaged children might not have access to those resources to create acceptable products. Using the composite score would negate the value and importance of being able to identify student strengths in different areas and this change wouldn't do anything to increase the under-identification of minority, disadvantaged, or limited English proficiency children (Frazier, 1996). Another concern of the GAGC is that the multiple criteria approach to identification is more in line with current theories of intelligence and giftedness, but are still ineffective in identifying certain populations when the cut-off scores are too high.

When this occurs students are simply required to jump through more hoops (Frasier, 1996). Gifted teachers expressed their concerns about whether the State Board will provide additional funding for professional learning to address diversity sensitivity training so teachers will be able to assist with student diversity in the classroom (Harmon, 2001; Frasier, 1996). Another problem with the multiple criteria procedures has been that the paperwork involved in examining all students for evidence of giftedness is extremely time consuming (Williams, 2000).

Practices to Improve the Identification of Black American Students

Ford and others (2002) outline their ideas to include culturally diverse teaching materials, modified instructional strategies based on learning styles, integration of culturally relevant issues and concepts viewed from a multiple perspective approach, and gifted program policies and procedures that have an excellence and equity focus (Ford, 2002).

While the pursuit of knowledge is a valuable activity, if knowledge of one's own cultural history is not included, then the activity is incomplete, at best, destructive at worst (Harmon, 2001). Hilliard (1976) suggests that teachers utilize music, religion, and language when working with Black American to better achieve a sense of multiculturalism. If additional learning opportunities are going to be extended for the gifted, this means that opportunities for gifted Black Americans should be increased (Ford & Harris, 1992). A more personalized education for gifted Black Americans would follow an adaptive education mode. It would match content, the pace and the teaching style of education to each child's interest, abilities, and potentials (Birch, 1984).

Borland & Wright (1994) suggest the use of transitional services, interventions implemented to assist the learner in being successful in a gifted program. Lohman (2004) also endorses the need to make accommodations for students that demonstrate potential but lack all of the academic skills to be successful in gifted program; such students should be provided educational opportunities that aim to develop academic skills needed to participate in advanced-level coursework. Teachers who recognize, accept, and adapt to differences are more likely to identify gifted Black American students than those who perceive these differences as educationally irrelevant (Ford & Webb, 1994). Administrators' attitudes and the climate of potential for all displayed throughout the school is important for student success in all areas (Ford & Webb, 1994).

Rhodes (1992) emphasizes the need for professional development to recognize giftedness in minorities. According to Mims (1988), teachers' limited knowledge of gifted characteristics, low teacher expectations, and the slow rate of referrals are major contributors to underrepresentation of minority students in gifted programs. Other researchers have found teachers to be very efficient in identifying gifted students (Hunsaker, 1994). Hunsaker (1994) found that teachers of the gifted recommend more training in giftedness for regular classroom teachers and administrators. Siegle and Powell (2004) found that teachers were more effective in identifying characteristics after a professional development session.

Increasing the number of Black American and minority teachers has also been suggested in order to address the problem of disproportionality in academically gifted programs, special education, and the regular classroom setting (Brown, 2001).

Summary of Literature Review

The traditional definition of giftedness as described in the historical background of this literature review has suggested there is more to giftedness than a high score on a standardized test of intelligence. When identifying students for placement in a gifted program, over-reliance on IQ tests can cause many gifted students to be eliminated from the identification and placement process. According to the review of literature, Georgia's intent of implementing a multiple criteria approach to identification is to make the selection process more inclusive concerning different types and different cultural displays of giftedness. Georgia is not the only state with a multiple criteria guideline. Alabama and North Carolina currently use a multiple criteria to improve identification of Black American students and other underserved populations in their gifted programs. Several critical issues in the field of gifted education became evident in this review. First, most leaders in the field believe that giftedness is multifaceted, and, therefore, too complex to be assessed by a single, standardized test (Frasier, 1996; Stepp, 1994; Harmon, 2001; Harris & Ford, 1991). Second, the literature supports perceived barriers to identification of Black American students through the role of the teacher, gifted teacher, and county gifted coordinator. According to the literature, all three groups contribute to the problem of underrepresented groups in gifted programs. This negates the possibility of an easy solution. The literature is clear about the fact that Georgia, through implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule, is going in a positive direction to rectify the underrepresentation problem; however, there are still concerns and problems regarding the multiple eligibility criteria rule as described in the review of literature.

Third, the teachers' lack of professional development in cultural differences and identification of giftedness in minorities and cultural biases contributes to the underrepresentation of Black American students. Since the classroom teacher is often the first to nominate a student for initial screening for giftedness, recognizing giftedness in Black American students is a topic needing further study. Recommendations for impacting change in the identification and referral process of Black American students has been explored in this study. Overcoming the barriers to identifying Black American gifted students as described in the review of literature is an important step in reaching this goal.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study sought to describe and analyze the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools in an effort to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. The framework for this qualitative research project used a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens while employing ethnographic study methods. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is based on the idea that economic and political power are unequally and unjustly distributed in society (Yosso, 2005). Critical theorists such as Peter McLaren (1998), Paulo Friero (2000), Henry Giroux (2001), and Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) suggest that the poor educational performance of most students from diverse backgrounds comes from the existing curriculum and pedagogical practices that do not meet the needs of all students. The dominant school culture generally represents and legitimizes the privileged voices of the white middle class and upper classes. The report will reduce the data using thematic analysis and, according to Ezzy (2002), is the process of identifying themes or concepts that are within the data.

Research Questions

1. What strategies are currently used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools?
2. What factors influence the decision of gatekeepers who preside on gifted education committees?
3. How is the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted programs?

Research Design

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is closely related to critical theory. Advocates of critical race theory such as, Gloria Ladson-Billings suggest that analyses based on theories of gender and/or class are insufficient in their discussions of social and school inequities. Ladson-Billings (2000) argues that racial inequality is persistent and pervasive despite the legal gains promoted by liberalism. Critical Race Theory is a framework that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on social structures, practices and communication (Ladson-Billings, 1995). By designing the study through Critical Race Theory lens, the researcher acknowledged the assumptions that tend to follow minority students. Educators most often assume that schools work and that students, parents, and community need to change to conform to this already effective and equitable system (Yosso, 2005). The researcher used ethnographic study methods of collecting data through interviews, observations, and documents (Glesne, 2006). By employing ethnographic study methods the researcher began by acknowledging biases and preconceived notions about gifted education. Being an on-site gifted coordinator of six years, the researcher first made specific biases explicit. When biases are controlled, biases can focus and limit the research effort (Fetterman, 1989). According to Glesne (2006), qualitative research methods are used to examine questions that can best be answered by verbally describing how participants in a study perceive and view various aspects of their environment. The report will reduce the data using thematic analysis and, according to Ezzy (2002), is the process of identifying themes or concepts that are within the data.

Population

The population contacted in this study identified an elementary school from a Georgia Department of Education school system. The researcher used a pseudonym to describe this system - St. John County. St. John County is a suburban public school system, which has nineteen elementary schools, seven middle schools, and four high schools. St. John is one of the most culturally diverse counties in the nation and has a student enrollment of more than 24,000. St. John's demographics are 1% Asian, 44% Black, 43% White, 8% Hispanic and 4% Multiracial (See Appendix C). A pseudonym was used for the elementary school - St. Matthew Elementary School. St. Matthew's has a student enrollment of 658. The demographics for St. Matthew's Elementary School are 1.3% Asian, 47% Black, 43% White, 4.1% Hispanic and 4.8% Multiracial (See Appendix C). The researcher chose this elementary school because of the number of Black American students in the gifted program. Elementary schools were used because most students are referred for initial gifted screening in elementary school.

Participants

Participants in this study were seven kindergarten through fifth grade regular education teachers, two kindergarten through fifth grade gifted teachers. The researcher conducted individual interviews with these participants. A focus group discussion held with the St. Matthew Elementary School gifted eligibility team, which consisted of the students' regular education teachers, gifted teachers, and the lead gifted teacher. Each participant received a consent letter prior to any observation, discussion, and interview (See Appendices E, F, G). These groups of educators were selected because of their knowledge and background of referring students to gifted programs, teaching students

that are considered gifted, interpreting and implementing the gifted guidelines from the Georgia Department of Education. Each participant completed a demographic sheet prepared by the researcher (See Appendix H).

Sample

Purposive sampling finds subjects who fit the purpose of the study by providing the most information about the research questions (Glesne, 2006). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) purposive sampling is important in naturalistic inquiry because it increases the range of data revealed as well as the likelihood that other issues or concerns will be uncovered. The researcher used purposive sampling because it provides excellent sources of information that come from key informants, who often possess knowledge about the topic and are willing to provide specific details to the researcher. To conduct research within St. John school system the researcher had to request permission to conduct research in the St. John County School System. All requests must conform to specific guidelines adapted by St. John County School System research department. According to St. John County School System the guidelines were established for the following reasons: (a) to protect the rights and privacy of students, parents/guardians, and staff, (b) to protect instructional time, (c) to promote continuous program improvement, (d) to add to the body of knowledge in the field of education. The researcher obtained approval from St. John County School System after approval was given from The Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee (See Appendix P).

Instrumentation

The instruments for this study incorporated focus group discussion, individual interviews, and observations. Observations and interviewing are data collection methods

used in qualitative research (Glesne, 2006). It is a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals (Glesne, 2006). The researcher's interviews were flexible, open ended, informal and semi-structured (Creswell, 2003) and focus centered on the research questions. The research questions were used to develop the interview guide and were the focus when the interview questions were developed.

While conducting interviews the researcher followed the advice that Weis and Fine (2000) offered to interviewers that some people offer information more readily and easily than others and that interviewers must be prepared to help those who are less talkative and less willing to offer information. Interviewing is one of the best-known representatives of qualitative research (Glesne, 2006). It is a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives center around education (Seidman, 2006).

The researcher used the following interview guidelines by Seidman (2006):

1. Use primarily open-ended questions. This allows the interviewer to explore participants' responses to questions. The research will use interview guides (See Appendix I) to increase comprehensiveness, as recommended by McMillan and Schumacher (1997). The interview guides will be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee and St. John County School System research department.
2. Make contact with the principal and with each participant before conducting the interview. This will build a foundation for the interview relationship.

3. The interview guide will be emailed prior to the interviews and focus group discussion; interviewees will be more at ease knowing the questions prior to the session. The interview guide was emailed to the principal, lead gifted coordinator, regular and gifted education teachers, to prepare them for the individual interviews and focus group discussion.

According to Krueger & Casey (2000) the purpose of a focus group is to listen and gather information. It is a way to better understand how people feel or think about an issue. The researcher created a permissive environment in the focus group that encouraged participants to share perceptions and points of view without pressure to vote or reach a consensus. A focus group discussion was conducted with the St. Matthew Elementary School gifted eligibility team, which consisted of the lead gifted teacher, regular education teachers, and gifted teacher. The focus group discussion questions were centered around the research questions (See Appendix J). The researcher tape recorded the session to ensure accuracy and then transcribed for analysis and interpretation. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed by a third party. The purpose of the focus group was to gather more data on the evaluating process, information on the Georgia Department of Education multiple eligibility criteria, if the criteria rule has benefited or limited the gifted program, and if the current screening/evaluation process is broad enough to allow for the participation of Black American students in the gifted program.

One of the advantages of the focus group discussion was that it involved the participants of the team eligibility meeting in a more relaxed atmosphere. Focus groups

are especially useful for exploring unanticipated issues and encouraging interaction among participants. One disadvantages can be wasted time, if a group discussion drifts off course or is dominated by a few vocal individuals (Jick, 1990), however in this case the lead gifted teacher Lead Lucy and the other gifted teacher Gifted Gloria dominated the conversation.

Before the discussion began, the researcher stated the purpose of the focus group discussion, the approximate length, and confidentiality was discussed with the participants before the discussion began (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 2003). Since the focus group discussion interview guide was sent previously, the participants had an idea what the discussion would be about. The researcher collected the signed consent letters. Creswell (2003) suggested reading through each interview, making notes, and sorting the information into similar clusters of major topics. This made the patterns and common themes readily apparent to the researcher. The researcher became familiar with the data by reviewing the transcribed data to determine what patterns or common themes existed. The researcher also read through notes taken during the focus group discussion to find the similarities and differences in the data, as well as search for patterns and themes.

The researcher also arranged to observe the St. Matthew Elementary School gifted eligibility team. The gifted eligibility team meeting determines if further evaluation of the student is warranted. At that time, the students proceed to the next step, which includes a battery of tests. Observing these proceedings gave the researcher a first hand account of the identification process within a system that has a high representation of Black American students in gifted education.

Using multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews, focus group discussion, and observations provided a variety of methods for obtaining the information needed to answer the research questions. Using these different sources, along with different researchers and different theories, is a popular validation strategy called triangulation (Shank, 2007). According to Jick (1990), the use of triangulation in the social sciences can be traced back to Campbell and Fiske (1959) who developed the idea of multiple observationism. Campbell and Fiske (1959) believed that if data were collected using more than one method the researcher could be more assured that the variance was a reflection of the characteristic and not of the method. In this study, a triangulation of sources was attained through the collection of data utilizing four different methods. The first method was the use of direct observations made during an actual gifted eligibility team meeting. The second method was the focus group discussion with the eligibility team members. The third method was informal interviews with the regular education teachers and the gifted education teachers. The fourth method was the use of program documentation such as the referral log and portfolio, observation checklist, program description, and the eligibility and non-eligibility report. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), triangulation is a method of increasing validity.

Data Collection

According to Seidman (2006) the goal of data collection in the interview process is to be able to trace the interview data to the original source at all stages of the research. Data collection/management requires that forms are copied and filed safely, and audiotapes are labeled accurately. Seidman (2006) recommended that the researcher

should avoid in-depth analysis of the interview data until all interviews are complete. This prevents the researcher from imposing meaning from one interview to the next.

After obtaining approval to conduct the study from the dissertation committee, St. John County's Department of Research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee, the researcher contacted the principal to ask permission to allow four – seven regular education teachers and one – five gifted teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade, to participate in individual interviews. Permission was also requested to observe an eligibility team meeting. By observing these proceedings the researcher had the opportunity to witness the identification process of St. Matthew Elementary School. A focus group discussion was conducted with the gifted eligibility team members.

The researcher conducted a pilot study involving regular education and gifted education teachers within the researcher's prior county. The results and feedback received from the pilot study assisted the researcher in rewording or clarifying the interview questions and the focus discussion questions. The lead gifted teacher, Lead Lucy collaborated with the teachers and scheduled all the meeting times and place and emailed the researcher with the information. The researcher informed Lead Lucy to be diversified in her selection of teachers and to include gifted teachers as well as regular education teachers. Before beginning the interviewing process, the researcher planned and introduced the interview process. Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (2003) noted that the introduction should be designed to develop rapport with the participants and explain the general procedures of the interview. The title of the study, the purpose of the interview, the length of the interview, and confidentiality was discussed with each participant before the interview began. Prior to the interview, the interview questions,

demographics, and the consent form were emailed to the participants (See Appendix G). By doing this, the participants were familiar with the questions and were more at ease knowing they would not be asked anything to which they would feel uncomfortable responding. The researcher asked each participant if they had any questions about the consent form they signed. The researcher collected the consent forms and demographics from the participants. Participants had the option of not participating in the interviews and there was not a penalty for deciding not to participate in the study.

The researcher used a tape-recorder along with handwritten notes to gather information from the participants. Creswell (2003) recommended that researchers audiotape each interview to assure accuracy along with taking notes in the event that the tape recording equipment fails. According to Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick (2003) the use of the tape recorder allows the researcher to have more eye contact while still documenting the dialogue. Therefore, the researcher only used handwritten notes when clarification was needed or when the researcher did not want to lose a thought. The data recorded from each interview were transcribed by a third party and checked by the researcher for accuracy. The researcher listened to the tapes and made note of any unusual tone and feelings that were apparent in the participants' voices and inflections. Codes and frequency of themes were developed.

If participants would like a copy of the results, they would have the opportunity to email the researcher their request.

Data Analysis

Transcribing the audiotapes is one of the first steps in thematic analysis. Seidman (2006) recommends hiring a transcriber not only because it can take four to six hours to

transcribe one 90-minute interview but also because the work is tiresome and demanding, and the interviewer can easily lose enthusiasm for interviewing as a research process. The researcher hired Reagan Payne, a professional law secretary for Thomas, Means, Gillis and Seay, PC. Mrs. Payne transcribed the interview tapes and focus group discussion tapes and was instructed to transcribe verbatim. The transcripts were saved on the *Microsoft Word* processing program. Because in-depth interviewing can generate an enormous amount of text, the researcher will go through and reduce the text to a manageable amount. Seidman (2006) recommended that the researcher read the text and mark passages that are interesting.

After the material was marked, the researcher could analyze and present the data.

Seidman (2006) recommended the following steps:

1. Create themes by using Word program to create a new document for each theme. By cutting and pasting, divide the selected excerpts from the transcripts into categories that have emerged through reading and comparing. These categories are called themes.
2. Interpret the information by addressing these statements, then write the findings in narrative form: (a) what the researcher has learned from doing the interviews, (b) what connective threads have been found, (c) how the researcher may explain these connections, (d) what the researcher understands as a result of the interviews, (e) what unexpected information was found, and (f) how the interviews have been consistent or inconsistent with the literature.

The researcher used these guiding statements to assist in managing the data.

Data Presentation

The data presentation was divided into three sections: individual interviews of regular and gifted education teachers; observation of an eligibility team meeting that consisted of the following members: a school administrator, regular education teacher(s), gifted teachers, and a lead gifted teacher; and focus group discussion of the eligibility team. All three provided an in-depth look at gifted education and how the multiple eligibility criteria is used to increase representation of Black American students. All interviewees' names and references to other individuals cited during the interviews or focus group discussions were changed. Research Questions will be used to structure the findings. Themes that emerged over the course of this study are presented as subheadings.

Summary

The present qualitative research sought to describe and analyze the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. Critical Race Theory in gifted education provides a lens for identifying Black American students in gifted education. Critical Race Theory exposes the official school curriculum as a carefully scripted means to maintain White American supremacy primarily by legitimizing the perspectives of White American students, while simultaneously omitting or distorting the perspectives of people of color (Ladson-Billing, 2000). By conducting interviews, observations and focus group discussion, the researcher was able to ascertain how effective the multiple eligibility criteria rule in gifted education is in a Georgia elementary school. The results of this study will provide educators with data to

implement new strategies and guidelines to assist with increasing Black American students in gifted programs.

Chapter 4 will present the focus group discussion and interviews using thematic analysis and, according to Ezzy (2002), is the process of identifying themes or concepts that are within the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data collection for this ethnographic study used a variety of methods including regular education and gifted teacher interviews, gifted eligibility team observation, focus group discussion and documents from Georgia Department of Education and St. John County.

This study will be valuable to gifted teachers to assist regular education teachers with the most effective and equitable means of identifying Black American students. St. John County is in the state of Georgia which relies on the multiple eligibility criteria rule to assist teachers. This is due to state laws and regulations that must be followed in order for schools to obtain state funding for gifted programs.

Research Questions

This study described and analyzed the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the framework for this qualitative research project while employing ethnographic study methods. Ethnographic study methods used a variety of methods including collecting data through interviews, observations, and documents (Glesne, 2006). This framework was designed around three research questions:

1. What strategies are currently used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools?

2. What factors influence the decision of gatekeepers who preside on gifted education committees?
3. How is the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted programs?

Research Design

By designing the study through Critical Race Theory, the researcher acknowledged the assumptions that tend to follow minority students. Educators most often assume that students, parents, and community need to change to conform to this already effective and equitable system (Yosso, 2005). Throughout the researcher's findings, St. Matthew Elementary School currently uses a plethora of strategies when implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule. An example of Critical Race Theory the researcher found in St. Matthew's county is the choice of tests available for lead teachers to use for assessment. Georgia State Department gives local counties the discretion to choose the gifted assessment to be used. According to the lead gifted teacher, Black American students have shown they do better with the nonverbal assessments. Therefore, if a student doesn't meet the acceptable score with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a mental abilities test, the student can be given the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI-3). By having this process in place, the eligibility team tries to make sure students have assessments to fit their strengths and not the other way around. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), Critical Race Theory challenges the ways race implicitly and explicitly impact social structures, practices, and communication.

Using ethnographic study methods the researcher collected data through interviews, observations, and documents (Glesne, 2006). Collecting data is beneficial for

the gatekeepers when deciding whether a student will be recommended for gifted evaluation. The researcher's data illustrated that teacher input and parent input are factors that influence the decision of gatekeepers who preside on gifted education committees. The researcher observed the seriousness of acquiring teacher comments from an example of a student's folder during the gifted eligibility team meeting. Gatekeepers also acquire additional documents from student's permanent records, if necessary, in making a decision for further gifted evaluation.

Prior to the focus group discussion, the researcher conducted a pilot study involving regular education and gifted education teachers within the researcher's prior county. The results and feedback from the pilot study generated a minor change with question four of the focus group discussion. Instead of using the words "minority students," the pilot study members suggested using Black American students to remain consistent throughout the study. The pilot study members agreed the focus group discussion questions and the interview questions were clear and concise and no other changes were needed.

This chapter will proceed with a table of the demographic profiles of the respondents. The researcher's discussion analysis of the gifted eligibility team meeting will be explored. Research questions used to structure the findings and themes that emerged over the course of this study are presented as subheadings.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Focus group discussion participants were given pseudonym names by the researcher. The following profiles were created to illustrate the participants gender, ethnicity, areas and grades taught and the number of years as an educator.

Table 4.1 Profile of Focus Group Discussion – Participants

Pseudonym Names	Gender & Ethnicity	Grades Taught	Years In Education	Regular Education or Gifted Education
Lead Lucy	White Female	4 th grade & 5 th grade	17 years – regular 9 years – gifted	Gifted Education
Gifted Gloria	White Female	1 st grade & 3 rd grade	19 years – regular 4 years – spec. ed. 3 years – gifted	Gifted Education
Regular Rose	White Female	1 st grade	16 years	Regular Education
Regular Regina	White Female	3 rd grade	13 years – regular gifted certified	Regular Education

Table 4.2 Profile of Individual Interviews – Participants

Pseudonym Names	Gender & Ethnicity	Grades Taught	Years In Education	Regular or Gifted Education
Lead Lucy	White Female	4 th & 5 th grade	17 years – regular 9 years – gifted	Gifted Education
Regular Roberta	Black Female	5 th grade	10 years	Regular Education
Regular Ruby	Black Female	4 th grade	5 years	Regular Education
Regular Regina	White Female	3 rd grade	13 years – regular gifted certified	Regular Education
Regular Renee	White Female	Kindergarten	12 years	Regular Education
Gifted Gloria	White Female	1 st & 3 rd grade	19 years – regular 4 years – spec.ed. 3 years – gifted	Gifted Education
Regular Rose	White Female	1 st grade	16 years	Regular Education
Regular Robin	White Female	1 st grade	23 years gifted certified	Regular Education
Regular Renita	White Female	2 nd grade	11 years	Regular Education

Gifted Eligibility Team Meeting

The researcher had an opportunity to observe a gifted eligibility team meeting which consisted of St. Matthew Elementary School principal, lead gifted teacher, gifted teacher, and regular education teacher. The gifted eligibility team determines if further evaluation of the student is warranted. At that time the students then proceed to the next step which includes a battery of tests. By observing the process of the gifted eligibility team meeting, the researcher had an opportunity to see how St. Matthew Elementary School gifted eligibility team selects students to proceed for further testing evaluation. The researcher tape-recorded the eligibility team meeting to assure accuracy.

Immediately, the researcher observed the lead gifted education teacher was leading the meeting even though the principal was in attendance. The leader of the meeting is a twenty-six year veteran teacher with seventeen years as a regular education teacher and nine years as a gifted teacher. Lead Lucy is a lead gifted teacher, her experience was apparent in the meeting and the other members turned to her for her expertise. Lead Lucy started with letting the researcher and the other committee members know the process of the gifted eligibility team meeting. The eligibility team meets twice a year, fall and spring, to evaluate students, from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, for further testing evaluation. Referrals come from teachers and parents. Students can also be eligible for evaluation by an automatic referral, which is an achievement score of 90% on the ITBS Reading or Math or on the composite score. Local boards of education shall establish the criterion score needed on these norm-referenced tests for automatic consideration for further assessment (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). Referring teachers complete a referral form packet (See Appendix K). To assist the

teachers with referring students to the gifted eligibility team; teachers are given a bright child vs. gifted child sheet by Janice Szabos, 1989 (See Appendix L). The researcher, during the individual interviews, perceived that was an issue for teachers who refer students to the eligibility team. Teachers also supply work samples, test scores, and included students' strengths. When all information is compiled the gifted team leader creates a portfolio for the gifted eligibility team.

During this eligibility team meeting, the researcher observed there was a total of thirty student referrals. Fourteen Kindergarten referrals, three first graders, three second graders, six third graders, one fourth grader, and three fifth graders - a total of thirty folders examined. Lead Lucy stated before the discussion that there are more Kindergarten referrals during the spring session and teachers are discouraged from referring Kindergarten students during the first semester. Kindergarten students need to get acclimated to the elementary school setting before being referred. The researcher observed that the eligibility team looks through each student's folder independently in its entirety and no comparisons are made. The researcher also noticed that race is not discussed during this time nor is it documented anywhere on the 'Program Challenge Referral and Portfolio' that the teacher completes on the student. However, on the 'Eligibility Team Multiple Criteria Referral Log' there is a space to include the ethnicity (See Appendix M). The researcher observed this was not being completed during the time of the eligibility team meeting. The researcher followed up with Lead Lucy later to inquire about this area. Lead Lucy stated this area is completed after testing. The researcher observed how extensive the discussion of each student was; this is done by grade level. Since Kindergarten students do not have standardized test scores, it is

imperative that the teacher is very descriptive in his/her recommendation. The researcher noticed, during the upper grades evaluation, more emphasis was placed on prior standardized test scores.

Each gifted eligibility team member looks thoroughly through the folder and asks questions among the other team members. The researcher observed the eligibility team members review a Kindergarten student's folder who was tested from another state, her test scores was not high enough and her mental ability test score was low. Gifted Gloria stated she would have the student take another mental ability test called CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) and see how she did. The researcher made note of the options of assessments that can be used to highlight a student's strengths. Having this process in place definitely widens the options for students. This reminds the researcher of a former professor, Dr Walter Polka, who stated, "It is like trying to fit round pegs in square holes." By having this process in place, the eligibility team tries to make sure students have assessments to fit their strengths and not the other way around. During the discussion of another Kindergarten student more information was needed to make a recommendation to allow this student to proceed further to the testing evaluation process. The researcher observed that, instead of the committee saying no and going by what they had in front of them, the folder was put aside to obtain more information from the teacher. This process happened with a couple of folders. Another incident the researcher observed was the principal needed more information from a student's permanent folder because clarification was needed to make a determination. These extra steps are examples of making sure no child is left behind or overlooked because of incomplete data. Out of the thirty folders examined was not recommended for further evaluation and

will be looked at again in the fall of 2008. Parents of the students who will go further in the gifted evaluation process will be invited to attend a Parent Information meeting about the gifted program and expectations of the testing evaluation. When parents are notified, students then go through a series of tests.

According to the Resource Manual for Gifted Education (2005), local school systems can choose the types of testing instruments used in each area. The test scores are documented on the Gifted Program Eligibility/Non-Eligibility report (See Appendix N). The lead gifted teacher completes the description of the Program Challenge Plan for the student for the school year (Appendix O).

The researcher followed up with Lead Lucy concerning the thirty portfolios that were evaluated by the gifted eligibility team. Out of thirty student's portfolios that were evaluated, sixteen were Black American students and fourteen were White American students. Thirteen out of the sixteen Black American students have qualified and eleven out of fourteen White American students have qualified for gifted education. One of the reasons St. Matthew Elementary School has a high representation of Black American students is because the gifted eligibility team looks at several variables to determine further evaluation for gifted education, taking these variables into consideration is a tedious but necessary task to determine student eligibility.

Work Samples, Previous Test Scores, Teacher and Parent Input

When the gifted eligibility team evaluates students to determine if further evaluation is warranted for acceptance into the gifted program they use work samples, previous test scores and teacher and parent input. Kindergarten children do not have previous standardized test scores so things to look for in their folders are writing samples,

details in drawing and teacher comments. The researcher observed the seriousness of acquiring teacher comments from an example of a student's folder during the gifted eligibility team meeting. The entire committee was on the fence with this student, and the teacher did not give thorough comments about the student. Evidence of this was observed during the gifted eligibility team meeting when Lead Lucy stated, "We will put this student's folder aside until more information can be obtained from the teacher."

The researcher's follow-up with Lead Lucy reflected that the student will move forward for further evaluation. Obtaining teacher input is important when evaluating a student's portfolio because according to the researcher's observation of the gifted eligibility team some teachers do not indicate all the student's strengths and abilities on the necessary required paperwork. Therefore, if the eligibility team is unable to make a decision based upon what the teacher submitted it is important to obtain additional information from the teacher in order to make a decision.

The gifted eligibility team also solicits parent input. The researcher observed that parents can request to have their child tested for gifted education. This type of request from parents in an automatic referral however, according to Gifted Gloria this can be stressful to the student and the student's teacher. Gifted Gloria, a White American twenty-six year veteran gifted teacher acknowledged:

When you have prior ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) test results and the child is borderline being remedial and the parents want them tested, it is a great deal of stress, because the child is bright not gifted. We try to explain the situation to the parent ahead of time but sometimes we are not successful, and we go ahead and test the child.

However, Gifted Gloria recognized that it is a challenge when it comes to parent input or referrals because parents do not witness the content of the classroom instruction when it is in regard to their child. Teachers have evidence what their child is capable of doing academically and when the child goes through the gifted eligibility testing process and does not succeed that child feels like they failed. Gifted Gloria indicated this point is explained to the parents ahead of time but sometimes they do not listen.

Parent referrals can also be an opportunity for students because some parents know their child and what they are capable of doing outside of the classroom. Regular Renee described a personal situation with her own child:

From a parent point of view, you know he is gifted and he is not in the program. He is gifted through creativity. He writes cartoons, he makes journals, and books those kinds of things. He has a high vocabulary; the interests are there they are not like the normal third grader. His interests are in museums and exhibits and higher level things, but in the classroom it is a different story. I think when you are a parent of a child, but even from a teacher point of view too, you see these kids that are off the wall brilliant in something that is not necessarily math or reading. In a way, to me that does not get recognized the same and it is up to the parent to step in and refer their child.

After the researcher observed St. Matthew's gifted eligibility team meeting a focus group discussion was conducted to obtain additional information concerning gifted education.

Focus Group Discussion

Finding Tests That Highlight Students' Strengths

Participants in the focus group discussion were very adamant that they do not deviate from what the Georgia Department of Education has in place. There are several assessments available that can be administered to students. If a student does not do well with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), which is the primary mental ability test, that student can be retested with other mental ability measurements, Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI-3), Nagleri Nonverbal Analogies Test (NNAT) and Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT-R). During the focus group discussion Lead Lucy stated:

If you think they are close there are other tests that can be given to see if maybe they are not a good verbal person, so a nonverbal test might be a better option for them. Sometimes African American kids do not do as well on the CogAT, but they might do better on the TONI. The Test of Nonverbal Intelligence is an appropriate individual ability test where reading is not required.

Critical Race Theory is based on the idea of acknowledging differences in order to pursue a commonality among students (Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1995). According to the Resource Manual for Gifted Education (2005), local school systems could choose the types of testing instruments to use in each area. St. John County, according to their testing procedures, has several choices of tests/retests to administer to students. The choice of tests to administer in St. John County are: OLSAT (Otis-Lennon School Ability Test), KBIT (Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test), TONI (Test of Nonverbal Intelligence), NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Analogies Test), CogAT (Cognitive Abilities

Test), SIT (Slosson Intelligence Test), WJ (Woodcock-Johnson), TTCT (Torrance Test of Creative Thinking), and CAIMI (Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory).

The different assessments used for eligibility into the gifted program are an excellent way for Black American students to have the opportunity for gifted education. However, teachers first have to identify these students in their classroom. During the focus group discussion teachers use a variety of strategies when identifying gifted students.

Strategies

"I Saw the Bright Qualities in That Child"

Monitoring a student until spring or fall, is another strategy, especially, if that student falls under the bright student category (See Appendix L). This strategy is handled very carefully because if a student is tested for gifted education and does not make the eligible scores for gifted education that student will not be evaluated again for two more years. During the focus group discussion Regular Regina stated:

It is difficult for me and I do pull out that list (Bright vs Gifted) to see where students place on that. I do talk to parents and tell them if we do not test them now, it will be another two years, and we can try it now or we can wait. It is difficult.

Teachers make the determination if a student is bright or gifted by what the student demonstrates in the classroom. This decision can be a very tedious task.

Regular Rose shared one of her strategies:

I saw the bright qualities in that child at the beginning of the year. I was on the fence. I chose to wait till the spring because I would have more of the school year to determine if, in fact, she was really a gifted child.

The test score requirement for gifted education is from the state and local school systems cannot deviate from what is in place.

The context of evaluating students and eligibility criteria guidelines are essential to understanding the research questions as it underlies the strategies currently used in Georgia elementary schools when implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule. Also, the determining factors that influence the decision of gatekeepers who preside on the gifted eligibility team to decide if further gifted evaluation is warranted. Using what is in place by Georgia Department of Education and taking advantage of local school systems' discretion given to them by the Department of Education, St. Matthew Elementary School has used those options to their students' benefit. This has allowed St. Matthew to increase their representation of their Black American students. Even though it was a consensus that having these options was beneficial for Black American students, the committee also agreed, when evaluating these students, they are gifted in different areas not addressed by the assessments.

Evaluating

"We Are Not All Gifted in All Areas"

The participants of the focus group discussion agreed the state needs to put a minimum on the mental ability. All four participants had been in education for over ten years, two participants had twenty-six years each, and they all remembered the former

gifted eligibility criteria. All four participants stated the multiple eligibility criteria rule allows more students the opportunity for gifted education. According to the Georgia Department of Education Resource Manual for Gifted Education (2005) a student qualifies, through a multiple criteria assessment process, by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability (intelligence), achievement, creativity, and motivation. Lead Lucy and Gifted Gloria, during the focus group discussion, stated when a student meets gifted eligibility in the areas of achievement, creativity and motivation and they have a low mental ability (intelligence) often times those students struggle in the gifted classes.

We have children in there that has a thirty-three mental ability and they may be highly creative and have done well on academic but they have a hard time. I have no problem with the multiple criteria. I realize we are not all gifted in all areas. I would like to see a minimum mental ability for the children. It doesn't have to be ninety-six. That is extremely high but I have found any student that I have, seventy and up maybe did not qualify in mental ability. We can do a whole lot. If the mental ability is less than seventy the student struggles.

Gifted Gloria remembers when there were not the four areas so a lot depended on mental ability for student eligibility.

There were fewer kids in the gifted program when there was only one criteria which was mental ability. When the state opened it up and put in the four areas you do not have to qualify for mental ability. You can qualify for achievement, creativity and motivation and more kids qualify now, so in one way it benefited, but in another way it limited because if students do not score high in mental

ability they really struggle in the program. It does not matter what race they are, it is the mental ability, if students score low they really struggle with the problem solving and the higher-level thinking. It is a double edge sword.

Having opportunities available for all students is important according to the gifted eligibility committee.

Opportunities

“Good Kids Stand Out No Matter What Color”

All participants agreed that they do not look at race when evaluating students. The current student evaluation process according to the focus discussion participants is broad enough for Black American students in the gifted program. However, the participants stated color is not an issue - good kids stand out no matter what color. Gifted Gloria’s response was:

Up to this point I do not have a clue how many African American kids are in my class. I had to pull out my class book and say that one is black, that one is black, I had no idea. There are teachers and schools I worked at, who do not look at the race of the child to decide if they are an exceptional student. If they are well behaved it does not matter what race they are.

For Lead Lucy, Regular Regina and Regular Rose equity in the classroom is important. They all agreed, “Good kids stand out no matter what.” One of the documents the researcher collected was titled, ‘Eligibility Team Multiple Criteria Referral Log’ (See Appendix M). The form had a place for ethnicity; however, the researcher noticed, during the observation of the team meeting, that it was not completed. The researcher later discovered this area was completed after the student was evaluated. The participants

agreed that the type of assessment was important. An example of this was shared by Lead Lucy during the focus group discussion.

This child scored well. Even if it is in the seventy percentile, the evaluator will say some African American children score ninety percentile on the TONI, so what do you say we give them a TONI-3 which is a nonverbal assessment. A lot of communication, we talk with the teacher and ask her how far do we take this.

Gifted Gloria felt it was important to share that it did not matter what color the student was in her classroom. “We do that with every child, no matter what race they are - a White child, Asian child, and Black child, whatever, we do that with all of them.”

Finding the right combination for Black American students is important for an opportunity into the gifted program. This strategy was described by Lead Lucy:

It depends on how close they are what should we do. Let us hold off, give them another achievement test in the spring, especially if they have a mental ability of 95%. That is a killer because the minimum is 96%, and we decide to wait because test scores are good for two years and go back again because we know it is there. We just have not found the right combination.

How is the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted programs if gifted teachers do not even realize how many Black American students are in the program? This attitude does not support the results of other studies (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Ford & Harris, 1993; Mackler, 1970) that conclude acknowledging these differences are important in order to pursue a commonality among students. Researcher Jenny Gordon (2005) also does not support this mind-set which states that White American teachers do and more often do

not address race. Gordon (2005) identified this implication of colorblindness for teacher education. Gordon (2005) concluded White American faculty members must move beyond colorblindness and toward racial consciousness. Therefore, according to Ladson-Billing & Tate (1995), in order to better understand and confront the problems associated with race and racism, a form of emancipatory dialogue is needed.

During the individual interviews, regular and gifted education teachers had the opportunity to answer a variety of questions about the Georgia multiple eligibility criteria rule of gifted education, identifying students, issues with identifying students, referring students to the eligibility team committee and, with the present identification system, what can further increase the chances of identifying gifted Black American students. Having individual interviews gives teachers the opportunity to express themselves in a more private one on one setting.

Individual Interviews

After transcribing the interviews and teasing out common threads, Creswell (2003) outlines ways to approach analysis that include highlighting the findings, displaying the findings, and following and reporting systematic procedures. The frequency of the codes that emerged during the individual interviews are presented as subheadings. Using Creswell's (2003) suggestions to interconnect multiple common themes and frequency of the themes extracted from the data with the focus of the research questions provided a vehicle for organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the research. Regular and gifted education teachers, according to the interviews, use a variety of strategies when identifying students within their classrooms.

Strategies

“Students Motivation for Learning”

Perceived creativity, motivation, and classroom performance influenced teachers’ decisions to identify students for testing into the gifted program. Although academics was also a determining factor it was not the only factor for further evaluation into the gifted program. Regular Roberta is a Black American regular education teacher with ten years teaching experience. Regular Roberta vocalized the strategies she uses to identify gifted students in her classroom. She stated:

I look at their class performance, their motivation for learning, the desire, their interest in just knowing about anything and everything, not just what the teacher is teaching in class but beyond, just a curiosity for knowledge, not just academics. Some students have very high grades and some of them do not, but they have the potential.

Although, Regular Roberta recognized the need for looking at the potential of a student, she also has conversations with those students who are not making the grades but she knows the potential is there. She continues:

In class I know they know it, they can give the assignment back to me, they can explain it inside and out, but when it comes down to put it on paper, they cannot transfer from what is in their head to paper, for whatever the reason, but I know they know it. That kind of limits the students. I sit down with them and have a conversation and I can say okay they understand this skill or that concept.

Regular Rose who is a sixteen-year White American veteran teacher also recognized the need to look at additional characteristics other than academics. She stated, “They are

unique problem solvers, they are voracious readers, and often very good writers and have outstanding logical reasoning.”

Regular Regina’s passion was apparent when she answered the question. She responded,

I do not zone in on achievements, because some children are not necessarily going to meet that criteria, but they are very creative and they have got the other categories – of being motivated, because they are hard working. In addition to that they are creative, and in addition to that they have got the mental abilities, but maybe not the achievement.

This understanding of impartiality in the classroom sustains the results of other studies (Williams, 2000; Stepp, 1994) that postulate that the single IQ was no longer acceptable; educators would consider achievement test scores, creativity, and motivation when determining placement qualifications. Students who did not qualify for services because of mental ability now have the opportunity, under the multiple eligibility criteria rule.

Once teachers identify students for gifted evaluation there appears to be a disconnect with the process after the referral; such as, what are the different types of test assessments given to the students to determine gifted education.

Evaluating

“Students’ Strengths, Weaknesses, and Work Samples”

How students are evaluated for gifted programs once teachers refer the students to the gifted eligibility team appear to contradict each other. However, they did not know very many details of the tests that were used for identification or what happens after they referred a student to the eligibility team committee. Regular Roberta was not quite sure

what the process is after she completes the gifted checklist as she acknowledged during her interview.

Maybe I am wrong, but when it is referral time the gifted teachers give us a checklist that we use to look at the different areas, that they are reviewing and we score them in those certain areas as far as what we see in the classroom.

Regular Renee, a regular education teacher with sixteen years in the classroom, had an idea of the different assessments once students are identified by the teacher. However, she did not know what the assessments are as indicated during the individual interview.

Well, I know that they are pulled for testing. I do not know what the tests are about. They do not let us know, really what they will be tested over. Once we recommend, we fill out a packet of information on what we think, their strengths, their weaknesses, work samples. The gifted teachers will come around and pull them for a series of tests, but we do not know what they are.

Georgia Department of Education *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services* (2005), indicates to be eligible for gifted education services, a student must meet the criterion score on a nationally normed test. There was an obvious disconnect between regular education teachers identifying students for evaluation and knowing what assessments are used for the multiple criteria. The researcher could not establish during the study if this disconnect would be detrimental to possible gifted students because teachers did not know more about what assessments were given to the students.

Regarding identifying gifted students in the classroom, Gifted Gloria, a twenty-six year veteran gifted teacher who just received her gifted certification three years ago stated:

Yeah, there are characteristics that you probably would not really identify as a gifted kid. Yes, I think having gone through the process of gifted certification made me better able to identify them in the classroom. I always have a lot and I always referred kids and most of them qualified, but it is easier now being on the flip side of it.

Regular Regina just received her gifted certification, when asked if going through the process of gifted certification has helped with identifying students to the gifted eligibility program she responded, “Going through the program has helped me see the difference between a bright student vs. a gifted student.” If teachers are familiar with the eligibility process, they would know more on what to look for when identifying students.

Continued professional development in this area is another strategy Lead Lucy who is a twenty-six veteran gifted teacher stated:

St. Matthew has professional development for all teachers, especially in the area of gifted identification. The gifted teachers address the Bright Child vs. Gifted Child worksheet, teachers used this form to help them determine if a student is bright or innately a gifted child. Having professional development in this area is very helpful and the teachers tell us that and we are also available if they have any questions about referring a student.

“It is a Challenge to Distinguish Between a Gifted Learner and a Bright Child”

The participants’ expressed concerns about some of the issues teachers have had when identifying students is determining if a student is a bright learner or innately a gifted student. Regular Regina recalled a situation concerning bright versus the gifted student.

A lot of the time a child that is well behaved and they turn in their homework and they seem to be on top of it. Sometimes it makes you think that maybe they are gifted but they are not gifted, they are just responsible, and they fall into the bright child category.

Regular Renita, an eleven-year regular education teacher believes the decision to determine if students are bright or gifted is a challenge.

Sometimes there is a challenge to distinguish between a gifted learner and a bright child. I have taught for eleven years and you have students who stand out because they are excellent readers or excellent mathematicians and they seem really, really bright because they stand out from the others. That does not mean they would not qualify to be in the gifted program. I am very reluctant to refer a child unless I feel they excel in more than one area not just academic.

Factors that influence the decision of gatekeepers according to the research is relying on teachers to appropriately tell the difference between a bright or a truly gifted student. Even with professional development according to the researcher's data this is still an issue and because of this determining factor Black American children may be falling between the cracks of the bright vs. gifted student debate.

“Because We (gatekeepers) Know That Teachers Know Their Students”

Teachers acknowledged they never had an eligibility team committee determine a student was not eligible for further evaluation. Lead Lucy the gifted lead teacher stated, We get the teachers' input for sure. You know teachers have a lot to do, so a lot of times they are not clear enough on the gifted referral paperwork. There are times when we have gone back to the teacher and asked for clarification on the

student referral, especially if the committee is on the fence. Because we know that they know their students.

There are occasions where the gifted committee members may wait till the next evaluation which may be spring or fall. Regular Rose recalls,

I did have one that we decided to wait until spring, only because there was a lot going on in the child's life. Daddy was going to be deployed to Iraq right around the testing time so we decided to wait until spring because she was very upset about daddy leaving.

The researcher noticed how passionate the teachers felt about the students they refer and if the eligibility committee had questions or concerns the teachers felt obtaining additional information to assist with determination for further evaluation was very beneficial. Providing an opportunity for all children seems to be a consistent response by the interviewees; however, there appear to be some situations where teachers would not refer students for further gifted evaluation.

Opportunities

"People Think Gifted Children are All Just the Perfect Ones, and They Are Not"

Participants' perceptions, when they felt a student may be gifted but was not recognized because of nonacademic issues, elicited a plethora of responses. As Lead Lucy could not think of one personally however, being a lead teacher she hears the comments from her teachers.

Teachers talk to me about students who are very, very, bright but immature acting. A lot of people think that the gifted children are all just the perfect ones and they are not. Some of them have major issues. We have had children with

Aspergers Syndrome that have been in the program and some who have anti-social issues. A lot of truly gifted children are different.

Regular Regina acknowledged sometimes students who are immature are not able to handle the workload so; therefore, she waits to refer them to the gifted program.

I find that if they are not mature enough to handle the extra additional amount of homework, I prefer to wait until the end of third grade because either they are immature and they cannot even get their stuff done in the classroom. Even though they are gifted and they could academically do it, but you know, emotionally they are not ready.

Behavior is another issue that some teachers use to determine if they would refer a student to the gifted program. Gifted Gloria responded that she would not refer a student if they had behavior issues.

It might be someone who had behavior issues and because of the behavior issues did not perform in class. You hate to refer somebody who is not performing in class and if they are not going to do what you need them to do in the regular education classroom they are probably not going to perform in the gifted classroom. That might be one issue that will hold people back from referring kids, because of behavior. Sometimes it might solve those children's behavior issues, you never know.

The behavior of this student could be a reflection of the student's own cultural orientations. According to other studies (Frasier, 1997; Burstein & Cabello, 1989; Yosso, 2005) teachers' expectations of their students reflect their own cultural orientations or belief. They often disregard the orientation of their students. Black American students

also bring into the classroom their own culture, values, and family background from their homes and communities. Some students may come from an aggressive or defiant environment. Therefore, according to the researcher's data, teachers should recognize, accept, and adapt to these differences (Ford & Webb, 1994) and not let behavior be a reason or a possible indicator for not referring a student to gifted education.

However, Regular Roberta, a Black American regular education teacher, by her own admission, does not look at behavior as an issue when it comes to referring a student to gifted education.

I guess I kind of got passed that behavior, because I am not one of those teachers who, you know, I am like – get it together and let us move on, we have got work to do. I would not perpetuate that behavior, I would tell him to bring it down, let us get back to work. I saw the potential in him. When he knew he was going to be tested for the gifted program, he said I need to focus and get it together.

Knowing students well includes learning about students, their families, and their communities; establishing relationships for the purpose of improving instruction, and identifying students, whether it is for gifted education or special education. Furthermore, Regular Roberta states,

I saw the motivation in that young man. I knew that he had the drive to want to do better, to make the grades. He knows he has to perform in order to stay in the gifted program, gifted was a way to get that behavior under control. So it just kind of led him on the right path and he is doing great in the program.

According to the research the multiple eligibility rule does not apply to behaviors that might keep a student from being referred.

“Children Have Different Learning Styles”

Students develop giftedness in specific areas of interest. This belief supports the research by Clark (1988) who believed that gifted children are different from other children because they have developed and used accelerated brain function through the learning procedures and through interaction with an enriched environment. Having the different criteria would ensure that all students will be considered for gifted education.

Regular Ruby, a Black American regular education teacher, agrees,

Every kid is not gifted in every area. When you deal with gifted, I think it is very fluid. It is not black and white, because being that we are human, everybody has different talents so having one set of criteria you are missing a population of kids.

Regular Renita recalled the time when a struggling reader had other gifted attributes.

I had a student who was a struggling reader and, because of the other areas, I am not just looking at academics, I am looking at other areas they can excel in, such as, creativity and motivation. The multiple criteria rule is definitely giving them an opportunity. Because you know children have different learning styles.

“Parents See the Importance of Academics, They Are Very Supportive”

Parental involvement is important to further increase the chances of identifying Black American students into gifted education. Regular Regina stated she had plenty of Black American children in the gifted program and she saw the trend of supportive families who have positive role models in their immediate families. She responded as follows:

The African American kids that have been in PC (gifted program), or have been qualified to be in PC, it is because of their cultural background. They are from

families that have working parents, they have gone to college, they support the school system, they are actively involved, they are always emailing me constantly asking how they are doing, how are they performing and I think that is the key. It is the parents, from the beginning, supporting those children and giving them academic opportunities and cultural opportunities and all those things that are allowing those kids, at least at our school to move forward into those categories of being gifted. It is just the involvement, they see the importance of academics in the world, and they are very supportive.

Regular Regina had a similar response and has also witnessed the affects of having supportive and encouraging parents, “I have had plenty of African American children in the gifted program, and what I will tell you about their families - they are very supportive.”

“Other Cultures Raise Their Children Differently”

Based upon Regular Renita’s prior knowledge, she thought about what she did in her classroom to further increase the chances of identifying gifted Black American students.

I thought about that question, teachers should keep work samples of all their academic strengths and documentation of their motivation in the classroom, their creativity in their learning environment. Teachers need to keep documentation of all that, so when it comes to referral time you have all that. That is what I do.

While the researcher was examining the transcripts of the individual interviews it was ironic that both Black American teachers gave similar responses.

Regular Roberta, a regular education teacher, communicated,

A better understanding of African American culture, the different learning styles, and the way African American students think is a plus. I mean to have a little bit more understanding to the culture. I think sometimes our African American children are just viewed as smart, you know, may not be exceptional. It may be because they may not have that understanding of that child's upbringing and things like that, because it is different. What it all boils down to is that other cultures raise their children differently.

Regular Ruby, also a regular education teacher, responded similarly:

I think understanding African American culture. I think if they understand our culture when they are making these tests for these children they might have a little bit more consideration for asking certain questions that may relate more to the African American students. Not just for African American cultures, but all cultures because I think we miss kids that speak other languages or they come from different cultures.

Summary

This study describes and analyzes the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas (1995) stated that Critical Race Theory examines the terms by which race and racism have been pervaded into American consciousness. Cornel West (1993) takes it a step further and proposed that race does matter and it forces everyone to confront the tragic facts of poverty and paranoia, despair and distrust. West (1993) postulates that, for Black

America, the struggle is daily and unless the dominant power structures still insist that there is no conflict in today's society, America will not move forward as a democracy. In this ethnographic study, four sources of data were used: observing a gifted eligibility committee meeting, conducting a focus group discussion with eligibility committee members, nine individual interviews, and collecting documents.

Observing the gifted eligibility committee meeting, the researcher observed firsthand one of the reasons why St. Matthew Elementary School has a high percentage of Black American students in the school's gifted program. The eligibility members take time to look through each student's folder; they discuss, ask questions, and even request additional information from the referring teacher if the committee is undecided on a student.

The focus group discussion questions were centered around the research questions. Common themes were established and the emerging themes are presented as subheadings. One of the strategies used is taking advantage of local discretion given to the county by Georgia Department of Education. Having the choice of assessments lead teachers can use for gifted eligibility testing is an advantage. For example if a student doesn't meet the acceptable score with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a mental abilities test, the student can be given the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI-3). Research indicates Black American students do better with nonverbal assessments. St Matthew's teachers look at various criteria other than academics, which is also beneficial when identifying students for gifted education.

During the individual interviews, the researcher perceived that teachers' trying to determine if a child is bright or gifted is very complicated. There is not a sure way to tell

if a student is just bright or if they are gifted. The teachers are given a checklist to assist with this decision. Professional development is available for all teachers; however, because of this determining factor, Black American children may find themselves between the teacher's decision of whether they are innately bright or truly gifted and may not be identified by the teacher.

Critical theorists suggest that the poor educational performance of most students from diverse backgrounds comes from the existing curriculum and pedagogical practices that do not meet the needs of all students (Freire, 2000). Bright vs Gifted is an existing pedagogical practice that does not meet the needs of all students. The multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia opens the doors for all students to display certain gifts other than academics. During the researcher's interview, a Black American teacher had a Black American student with behavior problems, she adjusted and looked beyond the behavior and decided to refer him to the gifted eligibility committee in spite of his behavior issues. This student is currently in the gifted program. The White American teachers, during their interviews, stated that race is not an issue; the multiple eligibility criteria rule opens the door to all students and affords everyone the opportunity for gifted education. All participants stated that supportive parents are a plus for all students to be successful.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Georgia's multiple eligibility criteria guidelines for gifted identification were designed primarily to reverse the underrepresentation of at-risk gifted students in the state's gifted programs by ensuring equitable access for all students, regardless of their income, social class, background, or status. This study will present gifted coordinators, gifted teachers, and regular education teachers with data to implement new strategies and guidelines to assist with increasing Black American students in gifted education.

Summary

The analysis of this study provides a detailed description of the Georgia multiple eligibility criteria rule used throughout schools in the state of Georgia. The rule was designed to reverse the underrepresentation of at-risk gifted students in the gifted program. However, the faces entering the doors of the public schools today are not reflected in the classrooms of gifted programs.

This study described and analyzed the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education provided the lens for this qualitative research project. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995), Bell (1992), Delgado (1995), and Crenshaw (1996) described five tenets of Critical Race Theory:

1. Utilization of a variety of methods - this tenet is a means of giving voice to otherwise silenced minorities, also known as, Counter-Storytelling. Some of these methods include storytelling, parables,

poetry and other literary forms to give power to discourses on racial justice (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

2. The Permanence of Racism - this tenet offers an evaluation of how racist views are created and maintained within our everyday lives (Bell, 1992). Delgado, (1995) postulates that racism is normal, not aberrant, in American society.
3. Critiques of Liberalism - this tenet argues that liberal perspectives, race and race consciousness, past and current racial reforms are not adequate for executing the sweeping fundamental changes that must take place to bring about equity and justice (Crenshaw, 1996; Taylor, 1998).
4. White Flight - this tenet suggests that the civil rights movement, up to this point, has promoted hegemonic practices, that have actually benefited Whites in areas such as voting, citizenship and education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).
5. Interest Convergence - this tenet refers to the interest of Black Americans in achieving racial equality and has been accommodated only when this goal has converged with the interest of powerful White American (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

According to the researcher's finding, Critical Race Theory (CRT) evolved around three of the five tenets.

The framework for this study was designed around three research questions:

1. What strategies are currently used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools?
2. What factors influence the decision of gatekeepers who preside on gifted education committees?
3. How is the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted programs?

After obtaining approval to conduct the study from the dissertation committee, St. John County's Department of Research and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee, the researcher identified an elementary school from Georgia Department of Education school system. St. Matthew Elementary School is a pseudonym given to the school by the researcher. St. Matthew Elementary School was chosen because of the number of Black American students in their gifted program.

Observation of a Gifted Eligibility Team Meeting

By observing a gifted eligibility team meeting, the researcher was able to establish firsthand how St. Matthew's eligibility team determined students for further evaluation. Each student folder was discussed, analyzed and, if additional information was needed, either by asking the teacher or going to the permanent folder, it was obtained. The gifted eligibility team did not leave a stone un-turned when it came to the student's folder. Research has shown educators would consider achievement test scores, creativity, and motivation when determining placement qualifications (Williams, 2000; Stepp, 1994; Frasier, 1997). Research also stated that the use of multiple criteria procedures gives teachers information that they need to refer students to gifted programs

and meet instructional goals (Williams, 2000). St. Matthew Elementary School assists the teachers by allowing them to use a bright child vs. gifted child worksheet by Janice Szabos (1989) when identifying students, this strategy is consistent with the research literature. This worksheet, according to the individual interviews, is helpful; however, teachers are still torn between identifying a student as gifted or if that student is just a bright student.

Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion with the gifted eligibility team members illuminated more discussion about the evaluation of students to determine if further evaluation was warranted. One of the advantages of the focus group discussion was that it involved the participants of the eligibility team meeting in a more relaxed atmosphere. Thoughts about deviating from Georgia Department of Education multiple eligibility criteria guidelines were discussed. The comments from the eligibility committee revealed they do not deviate from what they are given by the Department of Education. However, according to the research, the state gives Georgia local school systems discretion on what type of nationally normed test assessments schools can use with students to determine their advanced abilities (Georgia Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services, 2005). Taking advantages of this opportunity and listening to the teachers' comments have been successful for St. Matthew Elementary School, which has used this discretion to their benefit to further open the door for Black American students. Critical Race Theory acknowledges these differences in order to pursue a commonality among students (Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1995).

The eligibility team members agreed the multiple eligibility criteria rule has assisted with increasing the number of Black American students in the gifted program. Prior to the change, the gifted program was dominated by White American students. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) posited that this attitude evolves around one of the five tenets of Critical Race Theory; ‘White Flight,’ the tenet that suggests that the civil rights movement, up to this point, has promoted hegemonic practices that have actually benefited Whites. The transformation of the multiple eligibility criteria rule has allowed more opportunities for Black American students in gifted education.

Individual Interviews

The individual interviews included regular education teachers, gifted teachers, and a lead gifted teacher; the questions ranged from identifying students, issues identifying students, and what would increase the chances of identifying gifted Black American students. All the participants identified a plethora of characteristics within their classrooms when identifying students for gifted education. Research has shown that teachers often focus on physical appearance, alertness, good manners, and neatness as factors indicating giftedness (Cumming, 1997). Data from this study suggested creativity, motivation, class performance, in conjunction with academics, are just a few of the characteristics teachers look for in gifted students. Teachers made reference to the bright vs. gifted checklist they complete which assists them with identifying students; however, it is still a critical issue to decide if a student is innately bright or truly gifted. Therefore, St. Matthew Elementary School has professional development for their teachers on this subject.

Themes that emerged from this study can be incorporated into the broader discussion of gifted education, strategies used for student identification, evaluating gifted test assessments, and opportunities given to gifted Black American students. In the remainder of this chapter conclusions about key findings are situated within the broader research literature cited in Chapter Two. The contribution to this study, in relation to the research literature was also addressed, along with recommendations for further research.

Discussion of Research Findings

Strategies

When teachers identify more gifted characteristics, other than academics, the chances are more Black American students will be identified. However, research has shown the accuracy of teacher judgments has been criticized (Clark, 1997; Cumming, 1997). This contrasts with the research in this study that indicates teachers at St. Matthew Elementary School used creativity, motivation, class performance, love of learning, critical thinking, fluency in reading and academics when identifying students for gifted education. Teachers also supply the gifted eligibility team with work samples, test scores and a completed teacher's referral that allows the teacher to include the student's strengths. Ladson-Billings (2000) examined the five tenets of Critical Race Theory; one of the tenets employs a variety of methods which include storytelling, parables, poetry and other literary forms to give power to discourses on racial justice. The researcher was able to witness this tenet in action during the observation of the gifted eligibility meeting and hear firsthand the different strategies teachers used when identifying students during the individual interviews.

According to the research, Siegle and Powell (2004) suggest that the inclination of classroom teachers to focus on student weakness may serve as a barrier in rating students for gifted programs. To assist them with referring students to the gifted eligibility team, teachers are given a bright child vs. gifted child sheet by Janice Szabos (See Appendix L). St. Matthew's teachers expressed concern that using this sheet, even though it is helpful, is not a sure way to tell if a student is innately bright or truly gifted. Therefore, some Black American students may be falling between the cracks of bright vs. gifted and not getting identified because of this worksheet.

Expectations play a key role in identification of gifted students. Research has shown there can be little doubt that understanding teacher expectancies is an important part of teacher evaluation of students (Dusek & Joseph, 1983). Data from this study indicate this same attitude - realizing when you expect the best you get the best. Black American teachers described, during this study, overlooking behavior and focusing on the potential is necessary for identification of Black American children. This is in direct contrast with Ford & Harris (1994) who stated perceptions of deficiencies, rather than differences, within Black American students may be fostered from a lack of displaying their gifts and talents. These teachers overlooking the deficiencies gave Black American students the opportunity to display their gifts. Ladson-Billings (1995) stated that within the five tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), utilizing a variety of methods is a means of giving voice to otherwise silenced minorities. The researcher proposed this was a comparison with the Black American teachers overlooking insufficiency and looking for strengths of Black American students.

Evaluating

Research suggested that achievement has been gauged by a student's grade point average, scores on intelligence tests, teacher evaluations, or scores on standardized achievement tests (Shade, 1978). Black Americans score lower on standardized cognitive and achievement tests, according to Ford & Harris (1990). Data from this study affirmed that St. Matthew's county realizes these differences and takes advantage of local discretion, such as the choice of tests available for lead teachers to use for gifted testing. If a student doesn't meet the acceptable score with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), a mental abilities test, the student can be given the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI-3). According to the lead gifted teacher, Black American students have shown they do better with the nonverbal assessment. This is consistent with Gay's (1990) view recognizing that Black American children manifest their giftedness in ways different from the ways mainstream students exhibit their abilities (Gay, 1990). Ladson-Billing & Tate (1995) stated, in order to better understand and confront the problems associated with race and racism, a form of emancipatory dialogue is needed. Once you address the problem then progressive and constructive solutions can happen.

The development of multiple criteria as defined in Chapter two began with the goals of designing and testing ways to identify more culturally diverse students who had been overlooked under traditional methods (Frasier, 1997). We are not all gifted in all areas emerged as a significant component in the study. The participants in the focus group discussion addressed concerns with the mental ability criteria, even though the multiple eligibility criteria rule allows more students the opportunity for gifted education. However, the participants agreed that a minimum mental ability is needed for those

students who met the criteria in the other three areas: achievement, creativity, motivation. When a student has a low mental ability, often times those students struggle and are unable to keep up with the current curriculum. Therefore, according to Williams (2000), this was a concern when the multiple eligibility criteria was first established. Students would not be able to keep up with the current curriculum and standards would have to be changed to accommodate these students. Even though the participants stated the current curriculum hasn't changed, students do struggle and have a hard time keeping up and eventually are on probation. Data from this study suggested that by recognizing the unique needs of Black American learners appropriate educational programming can be realized (Ford, 1998). Data further state, gifted programs need multiple kinds of learning experiences and several different types of organizational patterns that provide talented students with choices for learning that respect individual ability styles (Renzulli, 1999). Without these multiple kinds of learning experiences and patterns as suggested in the researcher's study, Black American students will continue to struggle while in the gifted program. Hilliard (1976) suggests that teachers utilize music and language when working with Black American students to better achieve a sense of multiculturalism.

The research data illustrated that teacher input and parent input are factors that influence the decisions of gatekeepers who preside on gifted education committees. Ford (2002) states factors from the teachers include culturally diverse teaching materials, modified instructional strategies based on learning styles, integration of culturally relevant issues, and concepts viewed from a multiple perspective approach. Teachers becoming aware of the subtle factor according to the research influences the student identification process into the gifted program. The researcher witnessed these factors

during the observation of the gifted eligibility team meeting. The committee could not make a decision based upon information acquired from the teacher and instead of saying no and not considering the student for further evaluation, the lead teacher followed up with the teacher. The researcher found out later from the lead teacher, based upon the teacher's additional comments, the team considered the student for further evaluation.

The researcher observed that parents play a major role in the evaluation process. Hansen & Linden (1990) stated parents believed that the new multiple criteria would lead to watered down programs for the truly gifted. Some parents worried that very bright children might not qualify because of creativity or motivation (Williams, 2000; Frazier, 1997). The researcher's study indicated when parents insist that their child should get tested, the eligibility team members automatically test these students even though the child's teacher does not agree with the decision of the parent. However, communication with the parents is important to let the parents know about the advantages of waiting and the affects of a student testing prematurely and not meeting the required score. The student may feel like a failure.

Opportunities

The multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia, according to the focus group discussion and interviews, is sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted programs. Research has consistently shown that Black Americans score lower on standardized cognitive and achievement tests than their white peers (Ford & Harris, 1990). This contrasts with what Lead Lucy stated, "Sometimes African American kids do not do well on verbal tests, but they might do better on the TONI, where reading is not required." St. Matthew's teachers realize these differences and have

strategies in place to assist with those differences such as, different testing assessments and identification practices. Acknowledging these differences is in direct correlation with Critical Race Theory (CRT). Critical Race Theory acknowledges these differences in order to pursue a commonality among students (Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1995). According to Ladson-Billing & Tate (1995), in order to better understand and confront the problems associated with race and racism, a form of emancipatory dialogue is needed.

Rhodes (1992) emphasizes the need for professional development to recognize giftedness in minorities. According to the findings of the researcher, even though the current multiple eligibility criteria rule is sufficient, educators must not negate the fact that professional development in gifted education is important to continue to educate teachers on the difference between bright vs. gifted and cultural awareness. Siegle and Powell (2004) found that teachers were more effective in identifying characteristics after a professional development session. There is always a need for professional development to recognize giftedness in students. St. Matthew Elementary School's lead gifted teacher conducts professional development with teachers and according to the individual interviews, those sessions have helped with determining the difference between bright vs. gifted. These issues, according to the individual interviews, were very poignant when teachers are identifying Black American students.

The framework for this qualitative research project used a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens. According to Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995), Critical Race Theory (CRT) suggests that "race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation" (pg. 50). This quote is in direct contrast with both Black American teachers who gave similar responses, "they have a better understanding of Black American culture and they have an

advantage of identifying Black American students because they are Black.” Since Critical Race Theory (CRT) draws on the knowledge that minority students bring with them what they know, skills from their homes and communities into the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2000) teachers having a common knowledge about those skills is a plus. White American teachers interviewed at St. Matthew Elementary School stated race is not an issue and until the researcher brought the topic up, race was never an issue. This is inconsistent with research literature in gifted student identification. According to Ford & Webb (1994) teachers who recognize, accept, and adapt to differences are more likely to identify gifted Black American students than those who perceive these differences as educationally irrelevant. Researcher, Jenny Gordon (2005) describes this mind-set as ‘colorblindness’ when White American teachers do not see race as an issue. During the focus group discussion the White American participants acknowledged they do not have a clue how many African American kids are in their class. During the individual interviews several White American teachers indicated they do not see color; another White American teacher stated that all her students are purple. These comments according to the research are in direct contrast with Bell (2003) who stated individuals who do not see color forgive themselves of racism. White American people believe acknowledging race is assuming one is racist (Bell, 2003). The teachers that participated in the researcher’s study are not racist; however, moving beyond colorblindness toward racial consciousness (Gordon, 2005) would be another positive step toward cultural awareness. Delgado (1995) postulates this exact position with the tenet ‘Permanence of Racism.’ He indicates that racism is normal and maintained in American society.

According to Ladson-Billing & Tate (1995), in order to better understand and confront the problems associated with race and racism, a form of emancipatory dialogue is needed.

The researcher suggests professional development in cultural differences or awareness, which will ensure open discussion and continue to benefit St. Matthew Elementary School in identification of Black American students in gifted programs.

Conclusions

The researcher's examination of the data presented in this study was to describe and analyze the strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. The research also provided a description of ethnographic study methods which was the framework for this qualitative research project. Adapting Critical Race Theory (CRT) for educational equity means that St. Matthew Elementary school will have to expose race issues and propose solutions for addressing it. This research found that multiple identification standards such as, motivation, creativity, class performance, love of learning, interests, as well as academic is beneficial when identifying Black American students. The research has shown that if a teacher only concentrates on test scores and does not observe other characteristics of the student, the teacher is doing a disservice to the individual. Data from this study suggested having some cultural background knowledge of Black American students is helpful for identification and effective teaching styles. The researcher's analysis of the data supported the need to continue professional development in student identification and cultural awareness/differences.

Teachers who refer students to the gifted eligibility team for further evaluation supply work samples, test scores, and include students' strengths. When all information is compiled the gifted team leader creates a portfolio for the gifted eligibility team. It is very important for the teacher to submit detailed information about the student. What research has shown is that classroom teachers focus on a student's weakness, which may serve as a barrier in rating students for gifted programs. However, if additional information is needed to make a decision, the team leader obtains that from the teacher. This strategy is very effective and is used on several occasions. St. Matthew Elementary School teachers are very effective in highlighting a student's strength and creativity and the gatekeepers on the eligibility team are very effective in obtaining the additional information for clarification on students for further evaluation.

St. Matthew Elementary School is successful in identifying Black American students because they recognize different characteristics in students. The analysis of the research from this study found parental support, teacher and parent communication would further increase the chances of identifying gifted Black American students in the present identification system.

The multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia, according to the researcher, is sufficient for promoting representation of Black American students in gifted education; however, according to research, schools must take advantage of the flexibility Georgia Department of Education gives to local school systems. St. John County has several choices of test/retests to administer to students. Black American students statistically do not do well with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), which is the primary mental ability test. The gifted team leader allows for another opportunity to take a nonverbal

intelligence test, which is the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI-3). The research found that comments of this nature are in direct correlation with Critical Race Theory (CRT), which states there are differences among races. In order to pursue some commonality, teachers must acknowledge these differences and make adjustments. Once these differences were acknowledged by St. Matthew Elementary School they increased their representation of Black American students in gifted education.

Implications

The implications of this study highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia elementary schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted education. For example, one of the strengths with the identification of Black American students is using different identification techniques, other than academics, allowing students to utilize their strengths. All teachers, during their interviews, acknowledged using creativity, motivation, love of learning, class performance, as well as academics, when identifying students for testing into the gifted program.

Another strength that is highlighted is the Georgia Department of Education (2005) policy, which refers to assessment options in each of the data categories – mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. St. John County has several gifted testing assessments lead gifted teachers can utilize when testing students. Consequently, gifted evaluators give this option to Black American students who statistically do well on nonverbal assessments. Georgia Department of Education (2005) is committed to the belief that gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, and nationality.

One of the weaknesses the researchers identified in this study was the lack of professional development. Professional development in the areas of student identification and cultural awareness would be beneficial. Knowing how to determine if a student is innately bright or if they are truly gifted would further increase the number of Black American students in gifted education as well as increasing awareness of one's background or culture.

Another implication highlighted in this study is the need for regular education teachers pursuing their gifted endorsement. According to the individual interviews, two regular education teachers who just received their gifted certification endorsement stated this additional knowledge has helped them when identifying students in their classroom.

In districts where state funding is limited for gifted education, the more teachers that obtain gifted endorsement certification, the more teachers will be able to serve the gifted student population. According to the Georgia Department of Education resource manual for gifted education, school districts receive Gifted FTE funds which go directly back into the school system. Partial funds can be spent on instructional materials for gifted education. The importance of educational leaders continuing to review their gifted program within their schools and take part in the gifted eligibility team process can address needs before issues occur.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Further study to determine if Black American students are able to maintain and remain in the gifted program by the standards set by the Georgia Department of Education and local school boards when identified in elementary schools.

2. A study based on the mental ability criteria, if students meet gifted eligibility requirements in the other three areas: achievement, creativity, and motivation and have a low mental ability score, do they perform the same or better than students who have a high mental ability score.
3. A study based upon strategies implemented to ensure that Black American students experience success in gifted education once identified and placed in gifted programs.

Dissemination

The results of this study will be shared at several conferences throughout the state of Georgia. The researcher is associated with many organizations that have conferences every year: The Student Assistance Professional Association (SAPA), American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Georgia School Counselor Association (GSCA), Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) and the Georgia Middle School Association (GMSA). Being actively involved in these associations will afford the researcher with many opportunities to present the results of this study. The researcher will also take advantage of other conferences that will benefit from the results of this study. Manuscripts are accepted and reviewed in the quarterly publication of Roeper Review. The Gifted Child Quarterly also publishes articles. The researcher will take advantage of these periodicals and similar publications.

Concluding Thoughts

Georgia's on-going challenge to increase the representation of minority students led to the adoption of Georgia's multiple eligibility criteria rule in 1993. This rule changed a thirty-year practice of identifying gifted students by relying on aptitude scores

achieved on standardized tests. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide gifted coordinators, gifted teachers, regular education teachers with data needed to implement new strategies and guidelines to assist with increasing the number of Black American students in gifted education. Continuing to assess gifted programs will assure that faces entering the doors of the public schools today will be reflected in the classrooms of gifted programs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GEORGIA ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR GIFTED PROGRAMS

Georgia Department of Education
Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services

Gifted Program Assessment and Eligibility Criteria

<i>Mental Ability</i>	<i>Achievement</i>	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
<p><i>Standardized Test of Mental Ability:</i> Full scale or appropriate component score = the 96th percentile (by age)</p>	<p><i>Standardized Test of Academic Achievement:</i> Score = the 90th percentile (by age or grade) on -- Total Reading, or Total Math, or Total Battery</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><i>Superior Student generated Product or Performance:</i> Score = 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of 3 or more qualified evaluators</p>	<p><i>Standardized Test of Creative Thinking:</i> Score = the 90th percentile (by age or grade) on the Total Battery</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><i>Standardized Creativity Characteristics Rating Scale:</i> Score = the 90th percentile</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><i>Superior Student generated Product or Performance:</i> Score = 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of 3 or more qualified evaluators</p>	<p><i>GPA = 3.5</i> (as defined in Rule and Regulation) on a 4.0 scale</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><i>Standardized Motivational Characteristics Rating Scale:</i> Score = the 90th percentile</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p><i>Superior Student-generated Product or Performance:</i> Score = 90 on a scale of 1-100 as evaluated by a panel of 3 or more qualified evaluators</p>

Information shall be gathered in each of the four data categories. At least one of the criteria must be met by a score on a nationally normed standardized test. Any data used in one category to establish a student's eligibility may not be used in any other category. Assessment data must be current within two years.

APPENDIX B
STATISTICAL DATA – STATE OF GEORGIA

STATISTICAL DATA

Mark Vignati, Operations Analyst Technology Management
 Georgia Department of Education
 2006-2007

State of Georgia
 Enrollment: 1,562,308

Ethnicity	Population	% Total Population
Asian	46,168	2.9%
Black	594,579	38%
Hispanic	143,706	9.1%
White	732,797	47%
Native Amer/Alaskan Native	2,178	0.13%
Multiracial	42,880	2.7%

Gifted Population
 Enrollment: 152,535

Ethnicity	Population	% Total Population
Asian	9,881	6.4%
Black	24,215	15%
Hispanic	4,705	3.0%
White	109,319	72%
Native Amer/Alaskan Native	235	0.15%
Multiracial	4,180	2.7%

Summary Report

Ethnicity	Total Population	Gifted Population	% Population
	1,562,308	152,535	9.76%
Asian	46,168	9,881	21.4%
Black	594,579	24,215	4.07%
Hispanic	143,706	4,705	3.27%
White	732,797	109,319	14.9%
Native Amer/Alaskan Native	2,178	235	10.7%
Multiracial	42,880	4,180	9.75%

APPENIDIX C

STATISTICAL DATA – ST. JOHN COUNTY

STATISTICAL DATA – ST. MATTHEW ELEM. SCHOOL

St. John County (pseudonym)
 Enrollment: 24,000

Ethnicity	Population	% Total Population
Asian	240	1%
Black	10,560	44%
Hispanic	1,920	8%
White	10,320	43%
Native Amer/Alaskan Native	0	0
Multiracial	960	4%

Gifted Population
(Grades K – 12)
 Enrollment: 2,358
 Percentage of Students: 9.8%

St. Matthew Elementary School (pseudonym)
 Enrollment: 658
 (PK – 5th)

Ethnicity	Population	% Total Population
Asian	9	1.3%
Black	308	47%
Hispanic	27	4.1%
White	282	43%
Native Amer/Alaskan Native	0	0
Multiracial	32	4.8%

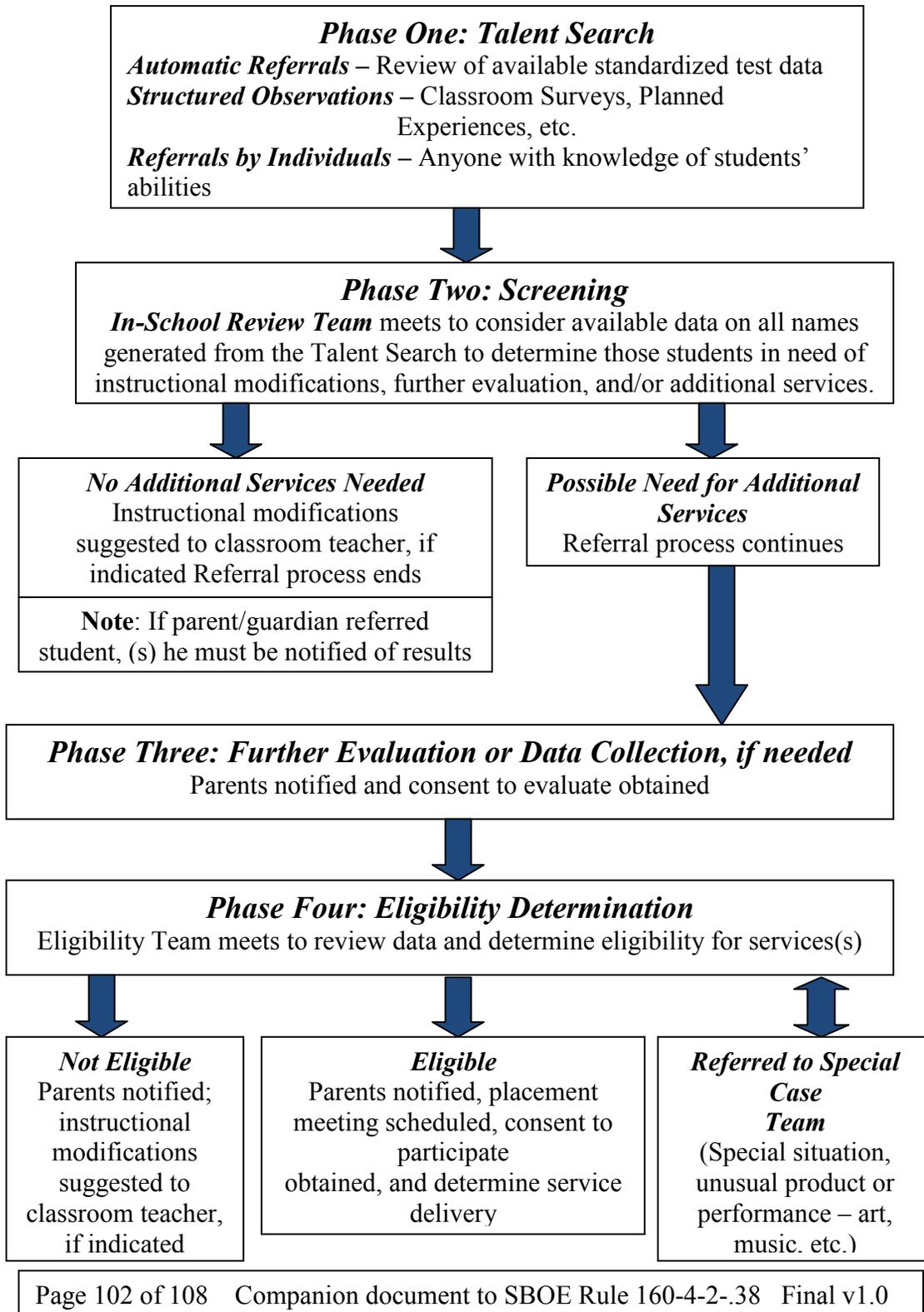
Gifted Program
 Enrollment: 160
 Percentage of Students: 24%

Ethnicity	Population	% Total Gifted Population	% Total Population
Asian	2	1.2%	.03%
Black	48	30%	7.3%
Hispanic	6	3.7%	.09%
White	97	60%	14.8%
Native Amer/Alaskan Native	0	0	0
Multiracial	7	4.3%	.10%

APPENDIX D

GEORGIA'S STUDENT TALENT SEARCH FLOWCHART

Georgia Department of Education
Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services
7.7.1 SAMPLE STUDENT TALENT SEARCH FLOWCHART



APPENDIX E
LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL



LETTER TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Dear Elementary School Principal:

My name is Emily Felton; I am currently a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed.D in Educational Leadership, a process that should conclude in the summer of 2008.

The purpose of this study is to understand strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule of Georgia Elementary Schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted programs. To complete my study, I would like to interview five – seven (K – 5th grade) regular education teachers and two – five (K – 5th grade) gifted education teachers. The interviews will allow me to obtain strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia Elementary Schools. The interviews will be tape recorded to ensure accuracy. No names of individuals will be used in the final study.

I would like to observe a gifted eligibility team meeting that might consist of the following members: School administrator, central office representative, student's regular education teacher(s), gifted teacher, and other members deemed appropriate, such as counselor, special education teacher, etc. Observing these proceeding will give me a first hand account of the identification process. I would like to also conduct a focus group discussion with the participants of the eligibility team. I will conduct all interviews, observation, and focus group discussion at your elementary school. The observation and focus group discussion will be recorded by audio tape and the tape will be transcribed. The tape and related documents will be destroyed in August 2008 at the completion of the study. Mrs. Reagan Payne, will assist me with the focus group transcription. Mrs. Payne is a professional law secretary with experience with typing various documents.

Your assistance in obtaining the teachers for participation is appreciated, there isn't a penalty should they decide not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and should not pose any risk or discomfort to them. Their participation is greatly appreciated and their responses will be confidential according to applicable Georgia laws. As a participant they have the right not to answer any questions with which they feel uncomfortable. I will not share any information that would identify any participant individually.

As explained above, the gifted eligibility team members will participate in the focus group discussion. I intend to use the information from the interviews, observation, and focus group discussion for two purposes. First, the information obtained from you will allow me to complete the research process required for my dissertation in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. Second, I intend to share the results of this study with you and other educational leaders across the state at conferences in the near future. The results of this study will prove helpful to gifted coordinators, gifted teachers, regular education teachers with data to implement new strategies and guidelines to assist with increasing Black American students in gifted programs. This study will also be valuable to gifted coordinator to assist teachers with the most effective and equitable means of identifying Black American students.

If you have any questions or concerns related to the purpose of this study, please contact me at (770) 651-5813(wk) or (770) 969-1878 (hm) or (478) 461-1116 (cell). You can also reach me by email at ebyas@bellsouth.net. My mailing address is 3830 Ailey Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia 30349. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Ababayehu Tekleselassie at (912) 681-5567. Also, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681- 0843 or at oversight@georgiasouthern.edu if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study.

Thank you for taking the time to assemble the participants for this study. I will make contact with you to schedule the exact date of the interviews, observation, and focus group in the early spring 2008. I appreciate your support and look forward to sharing the results of this study as we all work to improve the representation of Black American students in gifted programs.

Sincerely,
Emily B. Felton

Title of Project: Strategies Used in Implementing the Multiple Eligibility Criteria Rules in Georgia Elementary Schools to Increase Representation of Black American Students in Gifted Education

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Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO GIFTED ELIGIBILITY TEAM MEMBERS



LETTER TO GIFTED ELIGIBILITY TEAM MEMBERS (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, CENTRAL OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE, REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHER, GIFTED TEACHER, AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Dear Gifted Eligibility Team Members:

My name is Emily Felton; I am currently a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed.D in Educational Leadership, a process that should conclude in the summer of 2008.

The purpose of this study is to understand strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule of Georgia Elementary Schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted programs. To complete my study, I would like to observe a gifted eligibility team meeting that consist of the following members: School administrator, central office representative, student's regular education teacher(s), gifted teacher, and other members deemed appropriate, such as counselor, special education teacher, etc. Observing these proceeding will give me a first hand account of the identification process.

I would like to also invite you to participate in a focus group discussion after the gifted eligibility team meeting. I intend to use the information from the observation, and focus group discussion for two purposes. First, the information obtained from you will allow me to complete the research process required for my dissertation in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. Second, I intend to share the results of this study with you and other educational leaders across the state at conferences in the near future. The results of this study will prove helpful to gifted coordinators, gifted teachers, regular education teachers with data to implement new strategies and guidelines to assist with increasing Black American students in gifted programs. This study will also be valuable to gifted coordinator to assist teachers with the most effective and equitable means of identifying Black American students.

The observation and focus group discussion will be recorded by audio tape and the tape will be transcribed. The tape and related documents will be destroyed in August 2008 at the completion of the study. Mrs. Reagan Payne, a professional law secretary will assist me with the focus group transcription.

There isn't a penalty should you decide not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and should not pose any risk or discomfort to you. Your participation is greatly appreciated and your responses will be confidential according to applicable Georgia laws. As a participant you have the right not to answer any questions with which you feel uncomfortable. I will not share any information that would identify any participant individually.

If you have any questions or concerns related to the purpose of this study, please contact me at (770) 651-5813(wk) or (770) 969-1878 (hm) or (478) 461-1116 (cell). You can also reach me by email at ebyas@bellsouth.net. My mailing address is 3830 Ailey Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia 30349. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Abebayehu Tekleselassie at (912) 681-5567. Also, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681- 0843 or at oversight@georgiasouthern.edu if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study.

I will make contact with you in the early spring 2008 to discuss when you conduct your gifted eligibility team meetings. I appreciate your support and look forward to sharing the results of this study as we all work to improve the representation of Black American students in gifted programs.

Sincerely,
Emily B. Felton

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Strategies Used in Implementing the Multiple Eligibility Criteria Rules in Georgia Elementary Schools to Increase Representation of Black American Students in Gifted Education

Principal Investigator: Emily Byas Felton
3830 Ailey Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30349
(770) 969-1878
ebyas@bellsouth.net

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Abebayehu Tekleselassie
Georgia Southern University
P.O. Box 8131
Statesboro, GA 30460-8131
(912) 681-5567
atekleselassie@georgiasouthern.edu

Participant Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

LETTER TO THE GIFTED AND REGULAR ED. TEACHERS



LETTER TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Dear Elementary School Teacher:

My name is Emily Felton; I am currently a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University completing the dissertation requirements for my Ed.D in Educational Leadership, a process that should conclude in the summer of 2008.

The purpose of this study is to understand strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule of Georgia Elementary Schools to increase representation of Black American students in gifted programs. To complete my study, I would like to interview five – seven (K – 5th grade) regular education teachers and two – five (K – 5th grade) gifted education teachers. The interviews will allow me to obtain strategies used in implementing the multiple eligibility criteria rule in Georgia Elementary Schools.

I would like to take this opportunity to request that you participate in the interview process. I will conduct all interviews at your elementary school. The interviews are on a voluntary basis, and no names (of individuals or schools) will be used in the final study. The interviews will be recorded by audio tape to ensure accuracy and the tape will be transcribed. The tape and related documents will be destroyed in August 2008 at the completion of the study. Mrs. Reagan Payne, a professional law secretary will assist me with the transcription.

I intend to use the information from the interviews for two purposes. First, the information obtained from you will allow me to complete the research process required for my dissertation in Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. Second, I intend to share the results of this study with you and other educational leaders across the state at conferences in the near future. The results of this study will prove helpful to gifted coordinators, gifted teachers, regular education teachers with data to implement new strategies and guidelines to assist with increasing Black American students in gifted programs. This study will also be valuable to gifted coordinator to assist teachers with the most effective and equitable means of identifying Black American students.

There isn't a penalty should you decide not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and should not pose any risk or discomfort to you. Your participation is greatly appreciated and your responses will be confidential according to applicable Georgia laws.

As a participant you have the right not to answer any questions with which you feel uncomfortable. I will not share any information that would identify any participant individually.

If you have any questions or concerns related to the purpose of this study, please contact me at (770) 651-5813(wk) or (770) 969-1878 (hm) or (478) 461-1116 (cell). You can also reach me by email at ebyas@bellsouth.net. My mailing address is 3830 Ailey Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia 30349. You may also contact my chairperson, Dr. Ababayehu Tekleselassie at (912) 681-5567. Also, you may contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681- 0843 or at oversight@georgiasouthern.edu if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study.

I will make contact with you to schedule the exact date of the interviews in the early spring 2008. I will forward the interview questions prior to the interview for your perusal. I appreciate your support and look forward to sharing the results of this study as we all work to improve the representation of Black American students in gifted programs.

Sincerely,
Emily B. Felton

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

Title of Project: Strategies Used in Implementing the Multiple Eligibility Criteria Rules in Georgia Elementary Schools to Increase Representation of Black American Students in Gifted Education

Principal Investigator: Emily Byas Felton
3830 Ailey Avenue
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Georgia Southern University
P.O. Box 8131
Statesboro, GA 30460-8131
(912) 681-5567
atekleselassie@georgiasouthern.edu

Participant Signature

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator Signature

Date

APPENDIX H
DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics

1. What is your gender? male or female
2. What is your ethnicity? _____
3. How many years experience do you have as a:
 - Gifted coordinator _____ yrs.
 - Gifted teacher _____ yrs.
 - Regular education teacher _____ yrs.
 - Other: _____, _____ yrs.
Please specify
4. How many gifted students do you have in your school district K – 5th grade? ____
5. How many Black American students do you have in your gifted education program? ____

APPENDIX I
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

1. How do you make your decisions in identifying students for testing into the gifted program?
2. How are students identified for the gifted program in your school?
3. What are some of the issues you have had with identifying students for gifted education?
4. Describe a time when you felt a student maybe gifted but was not recognized because of nonacademic issues?
5. Describe a time when you referred a student to the eligibility team committee and the team did not determine if further evaluation is warranted?
6. Describe how the state's multiple eligibility criteria rule affects your school's gifted population?
7. What would further increase the chances of identifying gifted Black American students in the present identification system?

APPENDIX J

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. How do you make your decisions in evaluating students to determine if further evaluation is warranted?
2. Can you deviate from the Georgia Department of Education multiple eligibility criteria guidelines that are in place for gifted education when evaluating students?
If so, describe a time when you deviated from the guidelines to evaluate a student for placement or non-placement?
3. Do you feel the criteria rule has benefited or limited the gifted program?
Please elaborate.
4. Do you believe the current student search/screening/evaluation process is broad enough to allow for the possible participation of Black American students in the gifted program?
Why or why not?

APPENDIX K

ST. JOHN COUNTY'S PROGRAM CHALLENGE REFERRAL FORM

Social Security No. _____

PROGRAM CHALLENGE REFERRAL AND PORTFOLIO

Name _____ D.O.B. _____

Grade _____ Date _____ School _____

Grade _____ Date _____ School _____

Eligibility Process

Name	Date	
_____	_____	Initiated Referral: Teacher _____ Parent _____, Individual _____
_____	_____	Portfolio Sent to Eligibility Team.
_____	_____	Recommendation Form completed.
_____	_____	Not Eligible for Evaluation/Contact _____
_____	_____	Eligible for Evaluation/Sent to Evaluator.
_____	_____	Received by Evaluator.
_____	_____	Parents informed of Eligibility Status.
_____	_____	Consent for Placement.
_____	_____	Returned to Gifted Teacher.
_____	_____	Other _____

Previous Test Scores : Current within two calendar years

Date: _____ Mental Ability Test (NPR by age)

_____ OLSAT _____

_____ COGAT _____

_____ OTHER _____

Date: _____ Achievement Test (NPR):

_____ Reading (total) _____ Math (total) _____

_____ Composite (total)

_____ Other: _____

Additional Testing:

Date:

Previous Gifted testing:

Date:

Grade Point Average (3.5 on a 4.0 scale in grades 4-5; attach copies of report card(s).)

GPA's are determined by calculating the grades earned during the two years prior to evaluation in the subjects of mathematics, science, language arts, social studies and foreign language (if available).

Observations of Gifted Characteristics and Behaviors
 Circle one: (Teacher, Parent, Individual, Automatic Referral)

Signature _____ Date _____

Please check as many as you feel applies to this student:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> uses advanced vocabulary accurately</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> knows about things of which other children of the same age are unaware</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> has quick mastery and recall of materials presented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is an alert observer</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> reads a great deal on his/her own</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is superior in math, particularly in problem solving</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> has advanced understanding of abstract relationships, asks "What makes it tick?"</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> tries to reason out complicated material</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> dependable, carries responsibility well</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> self-confident</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> well-liked by classmates</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> enjoys being with people, socially cooperative with teachers and peers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is adaptable and flexible to new situations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> can verbally express himself/herself well</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is active in school social activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> excels in athletics, well-coordinated</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> tends to dominate others when working</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> does not complete tasks on time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> questions rules, policies and authority</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is curious about a variety of things</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> has numerous ideas and solutions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> expresses unusual or "way out" ideas</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> has keen sense of humor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> non-conforming, individualistic, does not fear being different</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> responds to beauty, not aesthetic qualities of things</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> shows originality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> high level of sensitivity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> shows imagination, fantasizes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> difficulty in accepting criticism</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is talented in music, art or drama</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> becomes absorbed in certain topics</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> self-assertive (sometimes aggressive)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is easily bored with routine tasks</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> prefers to work independently with little direction from teacher</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> is interested in many "adult" problems, religion, politics</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> likes to organize and bring structure to things, people and situations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> concerned with right and wrong, good and bad</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> passes judgment on events, people and things</p> |
|---|--|

Comments:

Please list factors which may affect the performance of this student on an intelligence test (i.e. restricted experiences, medication, chronic illness, emotional stress, test anxiety,

 _____

Cover Sheet for Portfolio Work Samples
Included with Program Challenge Referrals

Name of Student _____
Name of Teacher _____

Please answer the following questions about the work sample you are including with the student's portfolio.

1. The assignment given was _____

2. This is an outstanding example of this assignment because

3. Please check the most appropriate description of this student's work sample.

_____ The student consistently does this caliber of work on ALL assignments.

_____ The student does this type of work more than half the time.

_____ The student performs at this level inconsistently (depends on level of interest, type of product required, topic studied, etc.).

_____ The student rarely produces this type of work.

4. I feel this student should be tested now (rather than next year) because

APPENDIX L

BRIGHT CHILD/GIFTED LEARNER FORM

CHALLENGE

Reaching & Teaching the Gifted Child

BRIGHT CHILD	GIFTED LEARNER
Knows the answer.	Asks the questions.
Is interested.	Is highly curious.
Is attentive.	Is mentally and physically involved.
Has good ideas.	Has wild, silly ideas.
Works hard.	Plays around, yet lets a well.
Answers questions.	Discusses in detail, elaborates.
Top group.	Beyond the group.
Listens with interest.	Shows strong feelings and opinions.
Learn with ease.	Already knows.
6-8 repetitions for mastery.	1-3 repetitions for mastery.
Understands ideas.	Constructs abstractions.
Enjoys peers.	Prefer adults.
Gives the meaning.	Takes inferences.
Completes assignments.	Influences projects.
Is receptive.	Is inferne.
Copies accurately.	Creates a new design.
Enjoys school.	Enjoys learning.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.
Technician.	Inventor.
Good memorizer.	Good guesser.
Enjoys straightforward, sequential presentation.	Thrives on complexity.
Is alert.	Is keenly observant.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is highly self-critical.

by Jenifer Szabo

APPENDIX M

ST. JOHN COUNTY'S ELIGIBILITY TEAM REFERRAL LOG

APPENDIX N

ST. JOHN COUNTY'S ELIGIBILITY/NON-ELIGIBILITY REPORT

COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
GIFTED PROGRAM - ELIGIBILITY/NON-ELIGIBILITY REPORT

REFERRAL DATE: _____	SCHOOL: _____	GRADE: _____
STUDENT NAME: _____		BIRTH DATE: _____
ADDRESS: _____		
STREET: _____	GA STATE: _____	ZIP: _____
PARENTS/GUARDIANS: _____	HOME PHONE: _____	WORK PHONE: _____

	Test Administered	Test Data	Score (20%)	Requirement	ELIGIBILITY
Mental Ability: Aptitude	COGAS		Verbal: Quantitative: Non-Verbal: Total:	≥90%ile	
Achievement	Other: Other: ITBS:		Reading: Math: Composite: Reading: Math:	≥90%ile	
Credits	TTCT - Regular: Regular: Harman Scale: Other: Other:			≥90%ile	
Portfolio	GES: Regular: Harman Scale: Grade Point Avg: (GPA): Other:		Admission: Total: General: Subtests:	≥90%ile or ≥90%ile or 100%ile in math, 100%ile in language or, 100%ile in reading or writing	

English Language Proficiency: In order to be eligible for gifted services, a student must meet the criteria in THREE of the FOUR areas listed above.

This student is _____ eligible for gifted services and _____ ineligible.

PLACEMENT INFORMATION

DATE OF ELIGIBILITY: _____	DATE OF PLACEMENT: _____
INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL: _____	PROGRAMS PER WEEK: _____

DISCUSSION: _____

ELIGIBILITY TEAM MEMBERS

APPENDIX O

ST. JOHN COUNTY'S PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
PROGRAM CHALLENGE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Below please find a description of the Program Challenge Plan for year(s) of for the school year _____

Name: _____ ID No. _____

School: _____ Grade _____ EOC _____

DELIVERY MODEL: Resource Room Acceleration Contract
 Collaborations Mentor Seminar
 Internship Joint Enrollment Other (Specify)
 Independent Study Adv. Placement Advanced Content

CURRICULUM FOCUS: Language Arts Social Studies
 Math Science
 Fine Arts, Vocational/Technical

OBJECTIVES: To develop:

Area I	Cognitive Skills	Area II	Learning Skills
Area III	Research & Reference Skills	Area IV	Communication Skills
Area V	Inquiry/Independent Guided Study Skills		

Segments of Contact: (Day/Week) _____

If you have any questions, please contact me at _____

Signature of Resource Teacher: _____ Date _____

(CP-Revised 8/00)

APPENDIX P
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-681-8465

Vealey Hall 2127

Fax: 912-681-0719

IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

P.O. Box 3005

Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Emily Felton
3830 Arley Avenue
Adams, GA 30649

Abhayesh Tekleselassie
P.O. Box 8131

CC: Charles E. Partesen *CP*
Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IRB/IRB)

Date: January 22, 2008

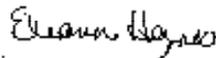
Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project number: 1108120, and titled "Strategies Used to Implementing the Multiple Eligibility Criteria Rule in Georgia Elementary Schools to Increase Representation of Black American Students in Gifted Education", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk; (2) appropriate safeguards are planned; and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of its event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to making any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer